



Paper B

The 2017 public consultation on Midlothian Council's savings proposals

Individual comments received from residents and
joint responses received from residents,
businesses, community groups and other
organisations

February 2018

October - December 2017

Paper B*

Individual comments received from residents and joint responses received from residents, businesses and community groups

* *Supplementary paper to 'Paper A: Summary findings of the 2017 public consultation on Midlothian Council's savings proposals'.*

Please note that page 3 also contains references to a number of written submissions which have had to be scanned, the contents of which are not included in the main body of this report. These documents (Appendices 1 and 2 to Paper B) are available on the council's website at www.midlothian.gov.uk/shapingourfuture and should be read in conjunction with this paper (B).

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Education

1. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services (a reduction of 4 Children and Family Practitioner posts)..... you are having a laugh. Our most vulnerable children need more supports not less
2. GIRFEC what happened to Getting It Right For Each Child....with more learning assistant cuts and more children with additional/specific needs coming into mainstream education, how will they realistically expect teachers to meet all the children's needs.
3. Almost 2,000 people have already signed this petition to say no to cutting funding for music tuition. <https://www.change.org/.../janet-lay-douglas-midlothian...>
4. Education, Classroom Learning Assistants - Reduce Learning Assistants budget by 10% over all. " To reduce the universal learning assistants budget by 10% . This equates to 12 learning assistants.." Totally unacceptable - Midlothian schools are, and have been for a long time, unable to cope with children who have additional support needs (Autism, emotional difficulties, Downs Syndrome, developmental delays, Dyspraxia etc..) due to a serious lack of Learning Assistants. I have had first hand experience of this. Children are not attending school, being excluded, parents are suffering too because there is simply no one there in school to attend to or support them. I have had a Head teacher say to me "I have run out of ideas and do not know what to do with (child's name)." I have seen children spend their school days, over the period of a year or more, in the medical room on their own because there was no one to be with them and their class teacher had to get on with attending to the rest of the class pupils. I've seen children spend their school days in the care of the school janitor, day after day, due to lack of staff. This proposed cut is insane.
5. Reduce Learning Assistance - I am a parent of two Primary children and having spoken to teachers it is blatantly obvious that they require more not LESS support in class to deal with the numerous issues they face. Why else would teachers frequently have to ask if any parents are available to help out in class ?? Teachers do a fantastic job in raising our next generation of responsible citizens, we should be helping them not hindering them. Appalled.
6. Charging for Instrumental Tuition - This should be a right for children to experience alongside the traditional subjects of maths, English, science etc. Imagine your child struggled in school but had a gift for music but this couldn't be afforded by the parents/carers ?? Just like sport, Music can open doors to a whole world of experiences for children both academically and socially and I have seen myself how music can give a child confidence and self-esteem where they might otherwise not have any.
7. Reduction of learning assistants: I feel very strongly that if Scotland is going to improve standards of education, then maintaining or increasing the resources applied to the education sector is absolutely critical. You're proposing to cut it. Scotland has a worldwide reputation for a wonderful education system. It's a myth, a complete fallacy. Clearly no Council appears to be in a position to employ more teachers and reduce class sizes (despite Nicola Sturgeon's ongoing grand promise). But the role of learning assistants is at least a step in the right direction.

8. My views on saving the council money, I think they should cut any expenses given to head teachers and staff for food allowances in schools as they earn enough to get their own, and stop giving overtime to supervisors to come in and cover holidays in the Costa cafes when the cafe should just be closed at an earlier time in advance on school holidays.
9. I write to express my concern at the proposed rent increase for the after school clubs of 5% to 50% of the full rent.

As a single parent I rely on the after school service to enable me to work full time, if the rent is increased so steeply then this will inevitably result in either closure of the service or highly increased rates. My son is only 5 so I see myself utilising the service for some years yet if it were to continue, without it however I would be unable to work full time and, if working part time would have to rely on housing benefit top ups to pay my rent and council tax.

I appreciate cuts have to be made but, as I cannot be the only single parent who would find themselves in this position, should the service rates increase dramatically or the provision have to close it may be that as much revenue is lost to housing benefit assistance than is gained by the potential increase in rent.

10. After School Clubs, it seems outrageous to expect a 50% increase in charges, this would have to be done on a sliding scale, so that the children most at risk were getting the care they need. Not every household is a 2 wage one. Everyone is on a budget.
11. I agree with most of the proposals but believe the following should not happen - increase in school meals. Often the only hot and healthy meal a child gets. Already expensive - a lot of people would be better off financially by quitting work and going on benefits to get this free.
12. "Education" is vital to the future of Midlothian and cannot be decimated as proposed.
13. Personally I am very concerned with the proposed cuts to education because I think they will impact very severely on families who depend on those services
14. I think cuts in learning assistants is extremely short sighted. Children who need additional support can only divert the teachers time and resources. How can those with additional support needs hope to become valuable citizens if education at the appropriate time is not provided. How can teachers hope to provide adequate stimulation for main stream children if there time is taken up coping with those who are less able or disruptive. Also, on the subject of education. Can I emphasise the need for early years literacy.
15. Charging for music tuition is another example of the less well-off being disadvantaged. I know you say those on free school meals would be exempt. What about the working poor?????
16. Surestart contract: If this has any impact on the provision of the Dads group that is run then I must object. Again this has been essential for me to meet other people in the community and for my son to have a safe environment in which to play.
17. Charging after school clubs: It would be important that these charges weren't passed on to the people who use them.

18. Cafe style school dinner service sounds great as long as fresh food is involved, with the accompanying reduction in fat, salt and sugar. I am sure the schools dental service would approve of that!
19. Review let charges for after school clubs – Don't do this. The After School Club (we use Newtongrange) is a vital service for working parents and part of the attraction is the affordability of the service. Increasing the charge for use of this service (I have no doubt that the increase in rent will be passed on to those who use this service) will penalise working parents and the After School clubs themselves who try hard to provide a good service at a reasonable cost.
20. I would like to comment on the proposed budget cut 10% learning assistants in Education. I work in a school and wonder how we can maintain Getting it right for every child whilst cutting the number of LA's in schools. They provide a vital support to children in every aspect of school life. I suggest Midlothian council make cuts in other places/ services.
21. Reduce learning assts and - review for efficient use before you do anything.
22. Surestart contracts – as above
23. Review Devolved School Management budgets – Fine
24. Lifelong Learning - review for efficiency and see what savings can be made without reducing the service.
25. Your music provision is poor, survey pupils on the service, (especially Beeslack!) before you do anything. Good music provision is a win-win situation, bands and orchestras could be a good advert for the council. You shouldn't be charging for tuition, but you need to get value for money.
26. Increase let charges for after school clubs - Not much point if you're running them, fine if they're run by third parties.
27. Learning Assts – need more rather than less
28. Lifelong learning and employability – need more rather than less
29. After school club lets – this could seriously reduce clubs
30. After School clubs are extremely valuable. Any increase in cost to them will probably result in a staff reduction, resource availability and the cost being passed onto parents who cannot afford private sector care, the knock on effect is disproportionate to what would be raised in revenue.
31. If increasing the cost of school meals the level of service would need to increase e.g. children coming home saying no choice available; didn't get their choice or not understanding how the whole canteen works.
32. After school clubs. Increasing rent tenfold at very short notice will have an impact on all users of these services as the cost will have to be passed on and may make the service unaffordable, You need to work with the clubs to manage this situation in a less draconian manner.

33. No to increase school meals cost.
34. Cafe style meals – No – only real meal some get each day.
35. Learning assistants - teachers struggle currently with numbers of pupils in class - they need more not less.
36. Early intervention services have been recommended by various Govt policies and have been proven to provide the most effective support in reductions of long-term problems with children and families. As you know, we must get to them early, as it were, to prevent future problems. This will lead to an INCREASE in spending longer term.
37. Lifelong Learning and Employability - all of these proposals potentially fail vulnerable child, young people and their families and may increase the risk of child protection issues, educational failure and behaviour problems in schools and in the community. They may also prevent those at risk of poor outcomes from achieving their potential and contributing to society.
38. Charging for Instrumental Tuition - those on low incomes but not in receipt of free school meals also gain confidence and intellectual stimulus as well as opportunity from music tuition. They may not be able to afford lessons if fully charged.
39. Review let charges for after school clubs - probably prohibitive for many clubs
40. The reduction of key services such as Learning Assistants and School Janitors will have a highly detrimental impact on the needs of any school community. As a Headteacher, I am concerned about a wide range of Health and Safety issues that are very likely to occur (from previous experience of working in other Councils) through a reduced janitorial presence. From experience, I worry that my own workload will be impacted on as a result of having to frequently respond to situations that a janitor would normally deal with in the first instance. Learning Assistants are not only important in terms of supporting a range of ASN, including ever increasing medical needs, but are also crucial to the efficient running of the school day. This includes playground and dining hall support. My Management Team is already heavily deployed in supporting pupil's ASN, and in the day to day operational running of the school. Therefore, any reduction in Learning Assistant staffing will impact negatively on our own workload. School based staff consistently work 'for free', well beyond our contractually paid hours. Both of these budget cuts would be very concerning in terms of the future wellbeing of school-based staff, the ever increasing needs of children, and the in-school support available to vulnerable families.
41. Education increasing let charges for after school clubs seems reasonable but are the parents paying for this service for the club provider? Has the council been subsidising private service providers or does this model save the council money in some way?
42. Education should be the last sector to receive cuts. We need future generations to be better educated so that the same financial mistakes are not made in the future.
43. After School clubs are being hit by the Let Charges at such a high rate which we will have to put directly on to parents fees. This is extremely unfair. Midlothian Council first needs to

address the groups that are not paying so there is a realistic figure on the income generated by lets.

44. I have seen the impact on reduced learning assistant hours in education. I could go on and on about it but in short, this is what is happening: Morale is at an all-time low; LAs are paramount to GIRFEC but they feel totally undervalued and like they've been slapped in the face. Teachers are spending time dealing with behaviour management, sourcing resources, day to day minutiae of classroom management, all of which they are perfectly willing and capable to deal with but gets in the way of QUALITY learning and teaching. Because of point 1, absence rate is high of teachers and LAs, which leaves an even more stressed system in place. This has resulted in many highly skilled and experienced members of staff leaving MC. This is both sad and demotivating.
45. Stop free lunches for P1-P3.
46. I think the proposal to reduce learning assistants is shocking. There is already not enough. How do you expect children to reach their potential in schools when you are stripping support out? I am a teacher and I would not be doing as good a job without the support of learning assistants.
47. I feel that cutting education support within vocational training is short-sighted....if school leavers are not equipped to find work, they then become a burden on the state rather than contributing to the local economy.
48. Many of the proposals are cutting early intervention schemes. Most notably Surestart, prevents families from needing social service involvement. Cutting early intervention is false saving as it costs more to cope with crisis.
49. I am disgusted that learning assistants are to be cut. Education is an area where staff are struggling daily as it is reducing staff even more is asking for more problems.
50. We are already lacking in learning assistants in our schools, we are already failing our children, to cut learning assistants by a further 10% would have a devastating effect on our learners.
51. Building a new high school half way between Penicuik and Loanhead is a mad idea. Virtually all the children will have to be bussed to it, at cost to the Council and bad for the children's health. Retention of Beeslack will save a vast amount of money. Links with research organisations at Bush could be established just as easily from Beeslack as from any other location in the Penicuik-Loanhead area.
52. Could we know if the rent charged to after school Club covers the cost of electricity and heating? If so by increasing this rent you are penalising young families.
53. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%. This is abhorrent. The services are completely strapped already. This is NOT Getting It Right For Every Child. My child has required learning support and this has been a battle. I would question whether this could be legally allowed in reference to the government's commitment to 'Getting It Right for Every Child'. If we do not support children with their learning, then we risk them falling into a negative spiral through

lack of hope and self-esteem. Negative spiral? - again consequences where the council will in the end have to pay.

54. Surestart. Is this not a vital service? Is there evidence to support its ineffectiveness and therefore removal?
55. Lifelong Learning and Employability - a reduction in direct, face-to-face work with children, young people and adults at risk of poor outcomes. Why would you reduce help for those who are at risk? This cannot comply with government policy, especially for children. I am a tutor for Midlothian LLE, and have seen first-hand that this is a lifeline for those who are isolated. This is a welcome meeting point for mental health patients, elderly, retired, unemployed and helps them to progress. Removing this will be a backwards move and risk of isolation and depression - is it the council's plan to dump this on the police and strapped NHS services? These classes are a LIFELINE for many.
56. Reducing the amount of vocational opportunities. If this is vocational, could the employers not take on more of the costs? Are the council negotiating well here? Reducing the vocational opportunities will lead to children only feeling successful if they excel in academic subjects. If a student is poor at traditional academic subjects and has no or limited vocational options, they will feel rejected and self-esteem low, leading again to risk of mental health and anti-social behaviour.
57. Charging for Instruments. A few years ago, parents were asked to pay a little, those on benefits paid nothing. I imagine if council had stuck with this logical solution, there would be no need for a cash shortfall. It has been again and again proven, that music helps vulnerable students and young people in general towards happiness and life satisfaction and away from anti-social behaviour, drink, drugs and other problems that will cost the council in the end. This has been proven with the Raploch Music Project in Stirling. Get those who can to pay a bit, those who can't get it free.
58. Let charges - the council shouldn't price itself out of the market. If classes for after school clubs etc. go up, parents won't pay. Then you have no income. You have unhappy, bored children, who end the end could turn to anti-social behaviour etc.
59. Don't take anything away from education especially free music tuition.
60. Most concerned about instrumental tuition cuts and after schools clubs fees increases.
61. Transfer funding for Gaelic tuition to subsidise music for all in Schools
62. Some of the proposal are not great, cutting learning assistant when there is very few in schools is not good.
63. All incomes should be assessed for tuition fees-some folk on benefits get more money than those who work!
64. 10% cut to Additional Support Needs Assistants in schools is unacceptable when schools and children are already desperately struggling and there are not enough (in many cases NO) Classroom Support Assistants available leading to children being unsupported and often excluded.

65. Why pay for music lessons when the parents should pay for the extra lessons not taken out council budget?
66. Certainly don't cut anything to do with children. It's important to remember they are our future and you should lead by example.
67. Don't stop the careers advisers as that is our future employment!!!! If kids don't get a job they will be the next drain on the future.
68. Research has shown how important early years' services are.
69. Do not agree with increasing Afterschool Club rent to 50% - working parents uses these services!
70. Shocked at the suggested changes to Education and Libraries. If Midlothian is to improve standards of education, cutting Teaching Assistants, increasing price of school meals, increasing cost of after school clubs and closing libraries, is not going to achieve this. Education and Libraries should not be touched. Schools are struggling with budgets as it is and these cuts would have further negative impacts. Additional investment required if anything.
71. I support some of the proposals but not closure of libraries or the removal of music tuition. This will largely hit children and there is other members of our community that could pay.
72. If the council believe that parents will accept huge increase in after school club fees or closing these clubs due to the costs they will have a massive publicity campaign against this, be warned!
73. I use an after school club regularly and am lucky enough to be able to cover my costs but if the proposed changes in rent means raised fees then I would probably struggle along with hundreds of other families and would have to reconsider using this amazing facility.
74. Do all schools need a headmaster? Why not make big savings here by pooling schools under groups of, say, four or more.
75. Have anyone checked the waste in schools?
76. I am very unhappy at proposed charge for music tuition. It is absolutely criminal to charge £400 a year for this. It will rip the heart out of the service and all the young musicians. The uptake will be so much less I would be surprised if the council actually made the proposed saving!
77. I understand that the cuts in spending are necessary, but the proposals seem to herald doom and gloom for us all in Midlothian. Reducing learning assistants in schools when actually more are required to assist the teachers who are already overstretched. Reducing the amount of janitors in schools, they actually save the schools money therefore the council due to being around and preventing issues.
78. Can't believe that the most in need are the ones most likely to be effected.
79. The use of school premises for afterschool activities could generate income as well as during school holidays and expanding nursery times to allow parents to pay for additional nursery

care would also generate considerable income. This would be an innovative and forward thinking solution to the problem which many parents who live in Midlothian but have childcare needs face. It would also be in line with SG's expansion of free early learning and childcare from 2020.

80. Costs such free music tuition for those who can afford it should be cut.
81. Also, the cutbacks proposed for learning support staff seem to fly entirely in the face of the council's stated goal of improving educational outcomes, and in particular bridging the attainment gap that the council's ruling party keeps harping on about. I am left wondering whether this cut is a veiled attempt by the council executive to achieve the political goal of making their main Holyrood opponents look incompetent, rather than being a decision made out of necessity.
82. A reduction in learning assistants is exactly the type of area where an impact assessment is required as their role is not to be under-estimated.
83. Increasing the charges for after school clubs may not result in the increased income shown but rather a reduction in this type of activity, with consequent harm to children and parents.
84. Cutting educational budget disgusting...children need all the help they get, learning assistants do an amazing job, as there aren't enough teachers...this is a disgrace.
85. Reducing LLE provision is counter-productive in terms of future tax income to the Council, as well as compromising young people's ambitions. Music tuition is not an add-on and should be fully funded for all pupils - it gives more chances / choices in careers.
86. Please, please do not increase rent charges on the after school clubs. This is a vital service for families and the only (almost affordable) option for many people. We are supposed to be investing in childcare and our future generations not putting further burdens and concerns on hard up working families. If we want parents to be able to contribute to the economy we need access to affordable services like this. If you increase rents by such significant amounts these services may be no longer viable unless significant costs are passed on to parents. Also how are teachers going to cope with less able children without the help of learning assistants or are these children to be left to hang as they grow
87. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%: schools are already struggling as it is to support children with additional needs etc., negative impact on level of education.
88. Charging for Instrumental Tuition: music is proven to have many positive outcomes for children, charging will highly reduce take up & create social gaps.
89. Stop subsidising children so much parents responsibility to look after them put the money into the elderly who have paid taxes all their life and also disabled children, single parents and free childcare is given out too freely and should be stopped NOT increased.
90. Penicuik lags far behind other Midlothian towns too in terms of secondary school provision which for a town of its size which also contributes a greater council tax revenue per head of population we are getting very little for our money.
91. Also Sure Start, this service is vital to many families.

92. Lastly there is nowhere near enough learning assistants in schools now, this service must not be reduced any further, they are absolutely vital in a Childs learning and a huge support to the class teacher and school activities. We need to support all children and ensure all children have a positive destination. Cutting vital support and services will lead to more children with negative destinations and more crime in the community.
93. Close Glencorse Primary School.
94. I would like to express my concern with regard to the cuts in relation to education, in particular the proposal to cut classroom assistants. With class sizes higher than they have ever been there is a huge pressure on teachers and it is becoming much harder to achieve classroom attainment. Classroom assistants play a vital role in the classroom and our children's education will suffer if these cuts go ahead.
95. I also have concerns around increased school meal costs and musical instrumental lessons as this may push many working families into poverty. But my biggest objection sits with classroom assistant reduction.
96. I am concerned about the proposed cuts in education. Particularly cuts to learning assistants. I feel learning assistants are pivotal in assisting teachers learning programmes. Class sizes are increasing and learning assistants provide the additional support teachers require to raise attainment within the school.
97. The cuts to spending on children and vulnerable young people are short sighted. If these people are not supported at vital stages of their lives then they will not grow up to be independent and will have to rely on the benefits system, and therefore the local and national government to support them.
98. After school clubs - I feel this is a double hit when we already pay our taxes, council tax which will also be increasing it's not our fault that the council has miss spent 20 million of its reserve money, Councillors should be brought to task not past onto their constituents, I am fully aware that the budgets have been cut year on year but don't understand why you have waited until now to go and fight Midlothian's cut in budget when its growing so fast this is a reaction not fore planning done too late Working poverty - many families who use LASC are working families who are already under strain from austerity from little or no wage increases for years, living prices rising etc. who don't qualify for any benefits which does not mean they earn too much and are more than likely in poverty and now the council think it's acceptable to put more strain on us for your (council) mistakes
99. After school clubs - We are shocked at the proposed increase... if this was to go ahead we will sadly have to remove our 3 children as we would not be able to afford it...
100. After school clubs - I am writing to offer support regarding the proposal by Midlothian Council to increase the rent for LASC. At the moment we benefit greatly from having access to affordable childcare and if the proposal to increase the rent was implemented, it would mean we would no longer be able to afford the fees you would be obliged to charge. I am currently in full time employment but would have to consider giving up work if we were unable to continue using LASC. I feel strongly that Midlothian Council should be encouraging families in employment by supporting the excellent work you do in the local community and

not creating barriers to employment by enforcing unreasonably excessive price increases. I intend writing to my local councillor to ask her to give her support and intervene if possible.

101. After school clubs - The increase is massive and implication to parents will be enormous. I am a single parent with two children and make use of a number of the services that the after school club provide so this will have a big impact for me. I can't work without paying for childcare and this will ultimately reduce the income available to my household. Childcare is already the second biggest outgoing I have. I hope that Midlothian Council are able to rethink this increase.

102. Firstly, I would like to say that ten-fold immediate increase in charges for any services is "criminal" and doing so for child services is appalling regardless of how big the council budget hole is because for many families this is simply not sustainable. Surely, there must be a legislative cap to this purpose. In my personal circumstances such increase, together with other proposed measures such as increased council tax, additional payment for garden waste, additional payment for music tuition and other, is impossible to accept. I am a single parent, raising my child on my own without any support whatsoever, trying to maintain our household with one reduced salary working 4 days a week. After paying all the bills and repaying interest on debts (I was left with debts after splitting with my husband and I do not receive regular child maintenance), there is simply not enough disposable income to absorb all these charges increased by the council, unless we do not eat or wash clothes! I am afraid that if all the measures go ahead, and the rent increase is the biggest issue, I will be forced to quit my job, go on benefits and live off the state because I will not be able to afford the afterschool or holiday cover childcare. And it must be highlighted that the level of care and the environment offered to our children by LASC is not only fantastic - it is exceptional and I cannot fault it. My child is thriving there and it definitely helped him gain his confidence back after the breakup of our family. I am sure that there are plenty of other parents in a similar situation and trying to raise money for the council budget (which you could argue has been mismanaged by the council and the government) by ripping off hard working families is just appalling.

103. I am writing to you [LASC] regarding the [After School Club] rent and fees increase notification. The information is very disappointing for all parents and kids using your service. I am consider the club is expensive as it is and introducing further 15% increase will force me to stop me with using this type of child care. Many parents are using LASC because they need to go to work however when the fees increase the working will becoming worthless. Council is planning to increase unemployment in Midlothian area? How parents can afford paying for so expensive childcare?

Based on the below after increase parent will earn 4.46 a day (excluding commuting costs).

1 day Holiday	increase	1 day holiday club after increase	2 children	Wage for 1 day work
4	15%	4.60	9.20	
18.35	15%	21.10	42.21	
1.8	15%	2.07	4.14	

24.15

15%

27.77

55.55

7.5 per hour *
8hours

60

4.46

Where is the sense of going to work? Does council thought about their residence? In the above example is better to stop working and ask council for more benefits. Is it the strategy of council to increase unemployment? Government increase the minimum wage to encourage people to work however Midlothian council is working toward other direction. I strongly encourage council to reconsider this decision because it could have very negative influence on Midlothian residence.

104. After school clubs - Thanks for your [LASC] recent emails regarding the Council's proposed rent increase and your request for responses from parents. This is our response and I'm happy for you to use it in your discussions. Both my husband and I work and our two children attend After School Club five days a week. If the fees were to increase as proposed, we would have to reconsider my working hours and whether it would be cost-effective for me to continue working. Separately, I feel that LASC (after school club and nursery) is a vital part of the Loanhead community and I would be concerned about the impact of such a rent increase on the wider community and families that would be worse affected than ours.
105. After school clubs - I am deeply troubled to hear of the potential 1000% increase in rental costs for LASC as undoubtedly this will increase childcare costs for myself and numerous other families, when childcare costs are high enough as it is and I don't have the luxury of not working. I would like to offer my wholehearted support to LASC for opposing this rental hike.
106. After school clubs - The proposed increase to prices would be devastating for many families who already struggle to pay for childcare. I include myself in this and do not know where I would find the extra money each month to pay for nursery. I currently work full time and pay for my son to attend three days, as quite honestly it is all I can afford. This means I have to rely heavily on family members helping me out, causing a great deal of stress month to month sorting out timetables etc. If the price increase were to go ahead I would be forced to look at dropping my son to two days as I would struggle financially to incur the proposed hike in prices as I am sure many other families would. This would then result in even more stress when looking to organise childcare. This matter is something I strongly feel should be reconsidered as the detriment it would bring to local families would be devastating.
107. Thank you [LASC] for raising awareness of this matter to me. I am very concerned about the proposed Midlothian Council rent increase. The LASC gives my son an opportunity to have challenging and fun play with his peers. Unfortunately as a child with ASN he misses out a lot on peer activities (birthday party invites, play dates etc.). He loves going to LASC as it's fun, he is encouraged to take part in games and activities, and he has made friends there. As a parent I am so delighted that LASC offer an additional needs services. I have struggled to find a club, activity or child care locally for him that is inclusive. If the Midlothian Council rent increase goes ahead, I worry that the LASC fees may become unaffordable for parents, we may lose the additional needs service being provided by LASC and it will yet again restrict play opportunities for my son. Last year the Midlothian play and activity scheme was cancelled and it was a huge loss for families with children with additional needs, ourselves

included. I would like to understand how the proposed rent increase fits with the Scottish government's GIFREC and pledge to make sure that Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up by putting children and their families at the heart of policy making and service delivery.

108. After school clubs - My wife and I are PhD graduates, but at the moment only one of us work due to the prohibitive costs of childcare before our daughter started primary school. As my daughter is now old enough and able to attend LASC, we have been able to revisit this decision. However, if the LASC is forced to increase its charges as indicated in response to rent increase, it'll almost certainly force us to remain a single-earner household for the foreseeable future. I doubt that we'll be unique in that case; our household income is (as I understand it) above the area average, and if it childcare ends up being prohibitively high then I imagine a lot of two-worker households will see one parent forced into giving up work or cutting down hours. I would hope the council also realizes that this would have further reciprocal impact upon their ability to raise funds and/or the general local area economy. I'd also like to express a personal concern that imposing punitively high rent increases upon facilities such as LASC will be a self-defeating act, by driving away those parents using the services and consequently removing their ability to self-sustain. This would seem an obvious and intuitive risk, and I'm honestly quite surprised the council seems to have resorted to such a huge rent increase.
109. After school clubs - much of a price increase would mean me having to reconsider working at all. We are not eligible for tax credits etc. so fund all of our childcare costs ourselves and the amount of money I would be left with at the end of the month would really make it hardly worth going to work. I think this proposal will affect many many working families across Midlothian and will have the knock on effect of taking people out of the workforce. I hope these cuts are reconsidered, though I know they have to come from somewhere!
110. After school clubs - Just wanted to send my support and outrage at this proposal. Especially considering the email yesterday regarding increased nursery hours - which seems a direct conflict to the increase in rental. I know at this stage it's just a proposal but I strongly object to increasing costs to childcare providers in any form, being a working mum and having affordable childcare is essential to our family. I sincerely hope this proposal does not go ahead - I understand the council budget is severely stretched but this is a really poor thought out idea.
111. After school clubs - I was astonished to learn of the proposed letting fee increase from 5% to 50%, nearly a 1,000% rise. Many working parents rely on after-school care; a fee increase, which would be inevitable should the letting charges increase, would put a heavy burden on family finances, many of which are already under pressure. Leaving parents to either pay increased fees, or reduce working hours, both significantly reducing family income.
112. After school clubs - Thank you [LASC] for letting me know about the potential rent increase. It is terrible news for parents with children who attend breakfast and after school clubs! As a full-time working mom, I strongly protest against Midlothian council's rent increase proposal! It is not acceptable! I don't know what they are doing for supporting families and what they are doing for supporting younger children's development! At this stage, probably nothing! It is a horrible and insane decision that they are making. Rent increase 1000% for our school club is not acceptable! I hope they would stop doing stupid

things and focus more on how to improve their service and give more care and support to children and young families.

113. After school clubs - From my point of view, I would find it difficult to comprehend how rent could increase that extreme and expect parents to be able to afford to pay. You would end up with parents removing kids and putting into unlicensed local childcare, which isn't practical or right for the child. Childcare expense is high enough - Midlothian has a mix of income, so I would anticipate many parents getting into real difficulty on how to make this work.
114. I would like to raise my concern at the proposed Midlothian Council rent increase to after school and community nursery voluntary organisations. As a parent who has used Loanhead Community Nursery weekly from 2012 & the After School Club from 2015 I know what an amazing service they provide to families not only in Loanhead but the surrounding communities. They provide a flexible service that you just do not get anywhere else, fitting into people's daily lives so we are not paying for hours of childcare we do not need and allowing people to work. I have seen the nursery grow from small numbers to big and it is only getting bigger with the amount of new housing that is going up around our town. It has been invaluable to my family and I and so to hear it may be forced to increase fees by a minimum of 15% due to Midlothian Council trying to make savings to their budgets and proposing increasing their rent by 1000%!! I am shocked and saddened that LASC would be made to do this which would obviously impact on the number of people who could continue to use the facilities. 15% a year on top of the standard yearly fee increase would mean a lot of added financial pressure to families, that some may not be able to afford. I know it would impact myself and put a strain to my monthly outgoings if you include the afterschool club and holiday club as well as nursery all going up. I hope the council can come to some other decision on how they are to make savings.
115. I currently have 2 children in the Roslin ASC. I was upset to read of Midlothian Council's plans to remove the subsidised rent for the service. Whilst I understand that the council has difficult decisions to make, I feel that they should be doing all they can to support working parents. The flexible, affordable and reliable childcare that LASC offers enables us to continue to work and when I compare the service my children get to those some of my friends are offered in Edinburgh I am extremely grateful for the LASC provision. A 15% increase in the charges would be a significant additional amount of money for us to find each month. If the council were able to reconsider this removal of the subsidy, it would be very much appreciated by me, my children and I'm sure all the other working parents who make use of the excellent service.
116. After school clubs - My husband and I think that it is appalling that working families, who are already paying an increased council tax, are having another increase in childcare costs due to Midlothian council's desire to increase rents. I work as a teacher and the value of my pay has actually fallen in value over the last decade due to austerity measures, so increases in bills and childcare costs are increasingly difficult to manage. We hope that the council can have a change of heart and realise it's not fair to penalise working families.
117. Just a wee email to let you know I am backing your [LASC's] opposition to the proposed rent increase for LASC. I believe this would be very detrimental to most families, especially single parent families who struggle to pay the standard fees as it is.

118. After school clubs - With the consultation about increasing free childcare allowances for 2-5 year olds at the moment, it feels like the council are giving with one hand and taking with another. From a personal point of view, we wouldn't have a problem paying an increased fee and in some ways prefer that to some of the other options being suggested by the council for cuts. However, not all families are in our position. Whilst families using the community nursery would in theory be able to shop around and compare costs /convenience of other private nurseries, this is not the case for those who use the after school club. There is no alternative and therefore I feel like the council is holding parents to ransom with such a drastic increase.
119. After school clubs - I would like to feedback that while I understand an increase is always going to happen and sometimes the increase is higher than originally thought, but to set such an increase before the general business increase is not acceptable! Why should members of the Midlothian community pay for the incompetence of the council administration! The facilities in the new Loanhead community centre and all local at heart and only have the interest of the community in mind! As far as I can see there are only 2 private business, sure start and lasc! Otherwise it is steal from Peter to pay Paul exercise so the o let facilities to struggle will be the two previously mentioned! I am a full time working member of the community and so is my husband! After next year I will require 2 spaces at LASC to continue working so I can contribute financially. By introducing this impulsive increase will cause detrimental effects to my family and a large number of others within the community!
120. After school clubs - I was extremely shocked and surprised reading about the increase in rental costs of 50% and then 100% and would like for you to pass my views on to the relevant parties. I am concerned how this will impact on the amount I pay for my two children as my husband and I work full time. I am shocked that this increase has been proposed as the Scottish Government have been focusing on childcare across the board and looking at making childcare more accessible and affordable for working families. I understand that increases are inevitable but strongly disagree with such a huge percentage over a short period of time which in no way reflects inflation figures. The Council must take into consideration that childcare organisations have to implement fee increments of their own to cover ever increasing running costs. I know the LASC Childcare Services that I use always tries to keep these increases to minimum as they are well aware how much increases can impact on families. The Ethos of their organisation is to provide an affordable and valuable resource for their community which it does wholeheartedly and without profit. It would be appreciated if this proposal can be thoroughly reviewed and a more realistic approach is taken when looking at rent increases in the future.
121. After school clubs - I have already signed a petition at Lasswade as I am horrified at the suggestion that the fees will be put up from 5% to 50%. As a single working parent , who has just come out of 4 yrs of private nursery fees I felt the service offered at breakfast and after school clubs are a)affordable and b) exceptional in what is offered I utilise the 7am drop off to enable me to leave work to collect the girls from school but would not be able to afford using the service were the fees to go up I am sure there are many families who feel the same and I am more than happy to sign a petition if that will help.

122. After school clubs - I have received notification of proposal of rent increase from the council. I clearly see the after school fees will go up by significantly and impact our finance. How the council is justifying 1000% increase? This fees is beyond the inflation factor. I cannot afford this to pay. Can you please keep me informed on this? I will do everything again this proposal.
123. After school clubs - Thanks for your [LASC] email. Clearly the increase in fees is scandalous and I can't see how this could actually be implemented. If it was surely this would mean LASC could no longer operate which would be devastating for the local community. A 1000% increase couldn't possibly be passed onto parents as this would mean an after school club session increasing from £9.20 to £92! Even passing on a 100% increase (an increase to £18.40) would be unaffordable for most parents including us.
124. After school clubs - My children have been attending the breakfast and after school clubs in Rosewell since the summer and both have settled very well in to the routine - mainly helped by the friendly environment created by ??? and ???. The hours allow me to be able to fit childcare around my work perfectly. In Rosewell, there are few other options for childcare - unlike at many of the other Midlothian schools. Both happy days and Pinocchios provide wrap around care for a number of schools in the area for little more than we pay at LASC. While none of these suit my needs at the moment, they are priced competitively and could result in more parents opting to use private nurseries rather than LASC of the fees were to increase much more - especially since they all have mini buses for drop off and collection. I would be reluctant to move the boys, and do not want to unsettle them.
125. After school clubs - I'm writing to convey my surprise but also confusion at the communication issued [by LASC] regarding the proposed increases from Midlothian council. Firstly are we absolutely sure this is the case as the increase rate is absurd? And that it is due to change in 2018 as that would be incredibly short notice for such a huge change? Assuming the above are confirmed, I'd like to state that I believe the service provided by LASC, its staff and financial supporters is second to none. LASC makes it possible for working parents to live in Midlothian and in many cases commute to work - without a service like yours this would be impossible for many. It's affordable for working parents, covers all ages and provides special needs support - such a variety of services and flexibility that I haven't yet seen in any other childcare provider. I am appalled at the suggested changes by the council which threaten your business. I have a number of questions I feel it's important to have answers to, some of which you [LASC] may have already:
- . Is this increase effective from 2018? I do not believe it to be sufficient notice for such an increase if so
 - . In which areas have the councils costs risen by 1000% to warrant this?
 - . Why only after school club/childcare provisions? Why the seeming desire to push these to private ownership?
 - . Can they provide evidence that the 1000% increase that the propose would be market rate for the hours required in these properties?
 - . Can they explain why they would threaten such a service in an area where they are incentivising building of family homes and have invested in a bigger school?

. Do they recognise that before/after school provision is a major deciding factor for many people in choosing areas to live? Services like yours actively attract working families to this area.

. Why are they making decisions which widen the gap between cost to parents/service providers and early years funding while to government puts plans in place to lower this?

. Given that based on published financials Midlothian council is only forecasting an annual increase in services income of c. £120k across the entire council why is it seeking to levy 90% of this increase on a single organisation.

Pursuing a 1000% increase in charge with c.6months notice could be seen as deliberately attempting to force closure of LASC service - if this what is planned, you may want to seek legal advice.

Ultimately without knowing the details of your [LASC] contract with the council it's very difficult to provide more than an emotion response to how unjust it seems,

126. I know that you [LASC] are looking for emails from families that detail the impact that the increase in fees will make to their families. We can't write that email as, fortunately for us, we would not be adversely affected by the proposed 15% in fees. However, we know that many families will be and fully support your campaign. I've done a wee bit of research and put together some notes that may be of some use to you. They should certainly be taking into account the human rights of the children and young people for whom this decision

This decision would negatively impact families who rely on affordable childcare and appears to be in direct opposition to the first of Getting it right for Every Midlothian Child Board's 2016/17- 2019/20 financial year outcomes as:

Outcome 1: children in their early years and their families are being supported to be healthy, to learn and to be resilient.

As well as Outcome 4: children and young people are supported to be healthy, happy and reach their potential Outcome 5: inequalities in learning outcomes have reduced.

Has Midlothian Council undertaken an Impact Assessment on this proposal to ascertain the affect that it will have on children in the area? For example, the Scottish Government Child Rights Impact Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA).

Every child in Scotland has the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). With more than one in four (260,000) of Scotland's children are officially recognised as living in poverty[i], any decision such as this will adversely affect families.

Midlothian Council should also have the best interests of children central to its decision-making process on this (Article 3, UNCRC) and also must seek the views of the children affected (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

This decision could push families into poverty.

Child Poverty

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified by the UK in 1991. It sets out the minimum rights a child or young person under the age of 18 in a signatory country can expect to enjoy.

Article 6 of the Convention recognises that ‘every child has the inherent right to life’ and that the government must ensure ‘to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child’.

Article 27 states that every child has the right ‘to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development’.

Article 24 also ‘recognises the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health’.

Other children’s rights relevant to child poverty include Article 3 (child’s best interests), Article 12 (right to express a view), Article 23 (right for a physically or mentally disabled child to enjoy a full and decent life),

Article 24 (right to health), Article 26 (right to social security) and Articles 28 & 29 (right to education).

Holiday Club

Of particular concern is the impact of this increase in fees on families around holiday times. There are peaks in food bank use during the holiday periods when working families have the added financial burden of holiday childcare.

According to The Trussell Trust, a third of people who rely on foodbanks are children and they observe that diet related health inequalities can have a major impact on their educational attainment, emotional wellbeing and long-term quality of life.[1]

The Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland details ‘affordable childcare’ as one of the steps that needs to be taken in order to alleviate child poverty.

“As well as easing pressure on family budgets, increased provision of affordable, high quality childcare would facilitate access to employment for parents and carers and improve outcomes and educational attainment for children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds.” [2]

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill is currently going through Parliament and it places a duty on local authorities and health boards to produce ‘local child poverty action reports’.

Midlothian Council will have a duty to report on the actions which have contributed to the achievement of the child poverty targets. How would this decision square with that?

[1] <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>

[2] <http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

127. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children.

I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects.

1. Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services 2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10% 3. Review Surestart contracts 4. Reduce lifelong learning and Employability 5. Reduce DSM carry-forward allowance 6. Charging for instrumental tuition 7. Review charges for after school clubs 8. Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2 9. Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches 10. Reduction of library services 11. Removal of the non-statutory school crossing service 12. Increasing the charge for school meals 13. Reduction of high school lunch provision to 'soup and a sandwich' 14. Reduction in janitorial services 15. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges 16. Stopping sporting grants 17. Reducing lifeguard cover at pools.

All these changes will seriously affect our children's futures. I am sure you want to help us develop our young people with the skills necessary to build and support our community.

Without this, the long-term future of Midlothian is bleak.

* I ask you to put all your efforts into fighting these cuts and preventing this disaster from happening.

* I ask you to explore the ideas that people have proposed to bring in revenue to Midlothian from the Scottish Government and the private sector as a matter of urgency.

* I ask you to make the case to the Government that such deep, ongoing cuts to local authority funding is squeezing the life out of our community.

Cutting education and young people's services is not a viable solution.

128. Teachers' assistants do a great job and with class sizes increasing due to lack of teachers a full complement is necessary.

129. Vocational Learning – many of our young people find school a challenging place to be. One way schools can engage these pupils and help increase their chances of achieving a positive destination when they leave is through vocational learning opportunities. Should these be reduced we are increasing the burden on our schools and limiting the life chances available to these, often already disadvantaged, young people.

130. Your proposal to reduce learning assistants by 10% - how will this support teachers and schools to raise the attainment gap? LA's are essential in providing support to our most vulnerable young people and helping enable each and every pupil to achieve of their best. Pupil support is being decimated as I fear it is viewed as an easy area to cut but this results in the needs of many of our young people not being met and instead they are left to struggle. I am deeply concerned at the proposal to cut by 10% the provision of learning assistants. I find it staggering that in an authority are where 1 in 4 children are identified as having an additional support, forming nearly a third of pupils, that this can even be a consideration. If it is the presumption that firstly pupils will enter main steam education there must also be a presumption that the appropriate support is available to enable these children to become successful learners who are in a safe and nurtured environment as per the GIFREC directive. I have experienced first-hand the outcome of the lack of appropriate

support being available to support my child in mainstream education, this resulted in him suffering a physical assault by another learner whom was subsequently charged by the police. The ongoing trauma of this incident continues to be an addition barrier to my son and we as a family are finding this difficult to overcome. At present Penicuik schools have no specific provision available unlike other areas of Midlothian, I struggle to understand the logic behind this as it is one of, if not the, largest town in Midlothian. As this areas is already clearly being failed in terms of support any suggestion of reducing learning assistant provision is not only foolhardy by undermines the safety of young vulnerable learners within your care. This cut will not enable our schools to Get It Right For Every Child!

131. Cuts to lifelong learning and employability services provided will basically stuff those with poorer academic abilities leaving us with a larger unskilled unemployable workforce than we currently have
132. Charging for instrumental lessons. Something which has only recently been made free again, even though it was a Scottish Govt directive, will once again reduce uptake and opportunity for less advantaged pupils.
133. It makes my blood boil. Music is part of education and culture. Look at all the silver/brass bands and community bands, music ensembles and projects we have in Midlothian. I bet the majority of their players learned their instruments at school. In 10-20 years where will they be with a lot less kids coming through because learning a musical instrument in school was not affordable.
134. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children.

I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects.

1. Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services
2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Review Surestart contracts
4. Reduce lifelong learning and Employability
5. Reduce DSM carry-forward allowance
6. Charging for instrumental tuition
7. Review charges for after school clubs
8. Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2
9. Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches
10. Reduction of library services
11. Removal of the non-statutory school crossing service

12. Increasing the charge for school meals
13. Reduction of high school lunch provision to 'soup and a sandwich'
14. Reduction in janitorial services
15. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges
16. Stopping sporting grants
17. Reducing lifeguard cover at pools.

All these changes will seriously affect our children's futures. I am sure you want to help us develop our young people with the skills necessary to build and support our community. Without this, the long-term future of Midlothian is bleak.

- I ask you to put all your efforts into fighting these cuts and preventing this disaster from happening.
- I ask you to explore the ideas that people have proposed to bring in revenue to Midlothian from the Scottish Government and the private sector as a matter of urgency.
- I ask you to make the case to the Government that such deep, ongoing cuts to local authority funding is squeezing the life out of our community.

Cutting education and young people's services is not a viable solution.

135. As a parent of children with ASN that attend Midlothian schools, I find a cut to Learning assistants very worrying. It's already short staffed at my son's school so this would impact greatly on any SFL he requires,
136. Musical tuition is as much education as anything else. What is the point of the Council charging for it if you can pay anyway with a private tutor.
137. Most after school clubs will simply close. Hardly the way to improve educational standards!!
138. I thought primary school children had free meals anyway. Page 95 sounds sensible, the secondary school meals one, and if so why has it not yet been done?
139. I strongly disagree with the cuts to learning assistants. The Scottish Government is looking to increase free childcare for 3& 4 year olds and I know learning assistants work in nurseries. Surely a cut to this service is detrimental to the way in which the nurseries will be able to provide this service.
140. PAVE/PAVE2: stop paying pupils a £ 10bonus for attending & stop providing the £3.00 per day lunch allowance if there is no entitlement to free schools meals.
141. Personally as a mother of a two year old autistic child, I think that cutting the education systems and particularly nurseries is ridiculous, it is a strained enough job with the numbers they have now never mind if you cut them. Cutting services to people that really do need them is a ridiculous choice as well.

142. As a Midlothian resident who benefitted greatly from free instrumental lessons I would hate to see charges re-introduced for lessons. As a teacher in Midlothian I see what a great difference learning an instrument can make to young people's learning across the curriculum. Instrumental lessons definitely help pupils to reach positive destinations and can also help with social mobility, breaking out of cycles of poverty which in the long run would save the council money.
143. I am also concerned at the proposed reduction in children's services, particularly in Early Intervention and Prevention Services, Learning Assistants and Surestart contracts.
144. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services (a reduction of 4 Children and Family Practitioner posts): disastrous. Children's lives might be further blighted, at worst lost, without the intervention of this team. This represents a cost increase to society in the long run.
145. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%. Reduce direct, face-to-face work with children, young people and adults at risk of poor outcomes through a reduction in Lifelong Learning and Employability staffing. Reduce the vocational opportunities available to schools and young people, adults and families: our young people's future should not be a Cinderella service. Realising their potential is important to all of us. Not a saving because society pays for picking up the pieces later down the line.
146. I think learning assistant cuts should be avoided, our schools are so busy already and high-needs children can have a big impact on a class if there is no learning assistant. These assistants keep the whole thing running, please keep them in their present amount.
147. Item 6 after school clubs. An increase from 5% to 50% of full let charge is too much. 25% max charge would be reasonable (p44).
148. My first and major concern is increase in let charges for after school clubs. And why, if it is only a proposal at this stage for public consultation, was it already notified to Loanhead after school club that they will have to pay a significant increase in rent from next year? Ten-fold immediate increase in charges for any services is "criminal" and doing so for child services is appalling regardless of how big the council budget hole is because for many families this is simply not sustainable. Many families will be put in huge distress not being able to afford after school childcare, juggling work and childcare or choosing to resign from work and living off benefits. Surely, there must be a legislative cap to this purpose.
149. Charging for instrumental tuition – whilst some contribution towards the lessons can be expected, paying in full (that is over £400 pa) will be unaffordable for some parents which in turn will mean that the children from less affluent background will have no chance to experience music tuition and lose out on developing creative skills and future opportunities and even inborn talent. This in turn will contribute to widening of inequalities in Midlothian and an increasing rich-poor gap.
150. Regarding proposal to review let charges for after school clubs. Currently after school clubs pay only 5% of the full let charge for the use of council buildings. It is proposed to increase this charge to 50% of the full let charge. I strongly object to the council's proposal to increase rental to after school clubs. I am most concerned about the impact this will have on families who will of course bear the brunt of any increase when organisations are forced

to pass on the cost to families by increasing fees for childcare. The proposed increase is massive and therefore will have a massive impact on children with working parents. I work in the NHS and have been subjected to a pay cap for the past 10 years. I would struggle to afford childcare if the proposal was to go ahead. It could actually mean the difference of working or not for many people. I urge the council to reconsider this proposal.

151. There should be no reduction in the number of learning assistants in any school in Midlothian. School staff in all schools in this area are already outrageously overworked and schools are presently understaffed, notably when sickness or extended absence occurs. No reduction of staff is acceptable under any circumstances, (other than redeployment within the teaching community together with post replacement of the redeployed person). Increase the number of supply teachers to cover the afore mentioned circumstances.
152. Reduce learning assistants by 10%. Teachers are already under huge pressures and often are doing crowd control management, learning assistants do a fabulous job supporting not only teachers but children who require extra support.
153. I would like to express my concern at the proposed cuts that I have read in 'Summary of Proposed Savings'. As a teacher at Saltersgate Special Needs School, I am particularly concerned at how these cuts look like they will impact the special needs pupils who attend this school. Namely, the 10% reduction in learning assistants. A proposed drop of staffing in the school of this level is deeply worrying. The cuts in funding to voluntary groups, increased costs for after-school care schemes, changes to school catering, and closure of libraries and overall erosion of community services will also impact especially hard on special needs children and families. I am unsure of exactly how these cuts will be made but it looks like there will also be a big impact on adult services which again are accessed by many of the pupils from Saltersgate following school. The savings needing to be made by the council are enormous from what I understand. I can see that there are no easy decisions to be made and no easy solutions either. I hope that it is possible to avoid some of the cuts which are going to have the most impact on the most vulnerable in our community. I can see that increased revenue through council tax increases would be sensible to protect services if this option is possible.
154. Maintain teaching assistants and school budgets at their current levels to maximise opportunities for our young people. Reductions in this area will only lead to higher unemployment and social problems in future.
155. Maintain instrument tuition and after school clubs. Maximising future opportunities for young people should be a key priority for the council as they are the key to future prosperity and social mobility in our county.
156. I am extremely concerned that the council is proposing to increase the charges for establishments offering wraparound care at schools in the local area. I am a user of Bonnyrigg breakfast club and after school club, as well as the wraparound service provided for Bonnyrigg Nursery school. My children have settled in well in both settings and greatly enjoy the time they spend there. This has enabled me to increase the number of days which I work, which was necessary as a period of ill health has meant that my parents are no longer able to provide the childcare solution they once did. I'm sure that I am not alone in relying on the excellent service provided by the wraparound services which are available.

157. The cost of the clubs has certainly allowed me to increase my working hours to support my family, and I believe that the Council has done a good job to date of supporting this service. I am extremely disappointed therefore that the Council are now proposing to attack this community facility by greatly increasing the rent which they are being asked to pay. Not simply a rise in line with inflation, but a frankly ludicrous increase. Are they being seen as an easy target, with little regard for the knock-on consequences for local parents? Parents who are working hard to support their families, and provide a stimulating environment for their children both in the home and outside. Is there no regard for the potential drop in user numbers and therefore the staff who can be employed by the service? A financial attack on this community service cannot be justified, and while I appreciate that the Council's budgets are being cut, I suggest that there are many other areas which could more easily absorb additional costs, without the service users being asked to foot the bill and suffer. I understand that these proposals will be voted on at a future Council meeting in February, and I trust that you will give this matter ample consideration before then, and choose against the proposal to increase the costs at the level currently proposed.
158. Music Tuition - it is appalling that the Council propose to charge £400 per year for tuition. This will deny many of our children the chance to learn a musical instrument, the benefits of which are well known and documented. Music tuition is part of education and should be protected.
159. Attainment levels will fall, less children will be able to take music as a subject as playing an instrument is a requirement to pass the SQA exams. Although SQA students may receive free tuition you cannot learn to play an instrument and expect to pass an SQA exam by merely beginning in S4. Learning to play to the required standard begins in primary school/S1 where tuition would not be free. The downturn in those receiving music tuition would be such that the Council would not make their predicted saving. It is a complete false economy and beggars belief it has even made it to print. The Council should be ashamed to even bring it to the table.
160. I think the savings proposal is really short sighted and in the long run will cost the government more. Education cuts - The cuts to Education will most likely mean more jobless young people and more people setting out on the wrong path and getting into trouble with the law, costing everyone more money in the long run. More police, more people in prison, more unemployed.
161. Increased charges for after School clubs - There is talk about getting more people back into work after having children but by charging more for after school clubs it is likely to make working less and less affordable for many, as the cost of childcare increases. Causing an increase in the unemployed.
162. Reduction of learning assistants (10%) will have a serious impact on being able to deliver a high quality service.
163. I strongly disagree that learning assistants should be reduced by 10%. I have no child in the education system so this objection is without bias but this reduction would massively impact on the work of teachers and the achievement of all pupils.

164. Finally having less Learning Assistants in schools would be so damaging for so many children and staff. Why is it that it is the most vulnerable that are always hit hardest with cost cutting? Why can't people who have more money pay extra to help those who are the most vulnerable? Less learning assistants mean teachers have to spend more time with those who need more help, which takes time away from other pupils and puts a lot of additional stress on to the teachers.
165. Firstly, as a retired Head Teacher, I do not think that reducing classroom assistants by 10% is an option. These people are crucial to the support of those children requiring extra support in the classroom. Teachers need that extra help in the classroom to progress learning at all levels. I also made the point that Education Buildings and Grounds are under-used and could be more widely used by the whole community and using their facilities would enhance the lifestyle of Midlothian residents. For example- Art, Music, Theatre and Film are very low in priority compared with other Scottish Regions and to charge for any of these facilities in schools is to diminish the quality of life for children and adults alike.
166. Perhaps more volunteers could be used in these circumstances but any investment would obviously enrich the lives of all those who participated and give them greater opportunities for personal development.
167. Regarding proposal to review let charges for after school clubs. Currently after school clubs pay only 5% of the full let charge for the use of council buildings. It is proposed to increase this charge to 50% of the full let charge.
168. I strongly object to the council's proposal to increase rental to after school clubs. I am most concerned about the impact this will have on families who will of course bear the brunt of any increase when organisations are forced to pass on the cost to families by increasing fees for childcare. The proposed increase is massive and therefore will have a massive impact on children with working parents.
169. I work in the NHS and have been subjected to a pay cap for the past 10 years. I would struggle to afford childcare if the proposal was to go ahead. It could actually mean the difference of working or not for many people.
170. I urge the council to reconsider this proposal.
171. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%. Reduce direct, face-to-face work with children, young people and adults at risk of poor outcomes through a reduction in Lifelong Learning and Employability staffing. Reduce the vocational opportunities available to schools and young people, adults and families: our young people's future should not be a Cinderella service. Realising their potential is important to all of us. Not a saving because society pays for picking up the pieces later down the line.
172. I am deeply concerned by the cuts you propose, and deeply disappointed that your assumption is that we can cut our way out of this problem. Where is your vision? Your creativity? What kind of place do you think Midlothian will be to live in 5 years' time? Will you want to live here? Your children and grandchildren? The cuts are hugely damaging to children and young people. I draw your attention to the response from Kings Park Parent Council and ask you to consider the overall punitive impact on children and young people.

173. There are many alternatives to cuts. I draw your attention to the response from Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council and ask you to take the alternatives proposed seriously.
174. There is also widespread opposition to your plan to cut free instrumental tuition. Over 2400 people have signed a petition against this <https://www.change.org/p/janet-lay-douglas-midlothian-gov-uk-say-no-to-the-proposed-budget-cut-of-our-midlothian-schools-music-tuition-service>
175. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children.
176. I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects.

1. Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services
2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Charging for instrumental tuition
4. Review charges for after school clubs
5. Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2
6. Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches
7. Reduction of library services
8. Removal of the non-statutory school crossing service
9. Increasing the charge for school meals
10. Reduction of high school lunch provision to 'soup and a sandwich'
11. Reduction in janitorial services
12. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges
13. Stopping sporting grants
14. Reducing lifeguard cover at pools.

All these changes will seriously affect our children's futures. I am sure you want to help us develop our young people with the skills necessary to build and support our community. Without this, the long-term future of Midlothian is bleak.

177. I ask you to put all your efforts into fighting these cuts and preventing this disaster from happening.
178. I think learning assistant cuts should be avoided, our schools are so busy already and high-needs children can have a big impact on a class if there is no learning assistant. These assistants keep the whole thing running, please keep them in their present amount.

179. There should be no reduction in the number of learning assistants in any school in Midlothian. School staff in all schools in this area are already outrageously overworked and schools are presently understaffed, notably when sickness or extended absence occurs. No reduction of staff is acceptable under any circumstances, (other than redeployment within the teaching community together with post replacement of the redeployed person). Increase the number of supply teachers to cover the fare mentioned circumstances
180. Education: item 6 After school clubs A increase from 5% to 50% of full let charge is too much . 25% max charge would be reasonable (p44)
181. I am writing to express my concern about the proposed savings by Midlothian Council as set out in the Change Programme Document. As much as I agree and support some of the proposals, there is a list of those that are hardly justifiable, target middle class families and jeopardise equality in our society.
182. My first and major concern is increase in let charges for after school clubs. And why, if it is only a proposal at this stage for public consultation, was it already notified to Loanhead after school club that they will have to pay a significant increase in rent from next year? Ten-fold immediate increase in charges for any services is "criminal" and doing so for child services is appalling regardless of how big the council budget hole is because for many families this is simply not sustainable. Many families will be put in huge distress not being able to afford after school childcare, juggling work and childcare or choosing to resign from work and living off benefits. Surely, there must be a legislative cap to this purpose.
183. Charging for instrumental tuition - whilst some contribution towards the lessons can be expected, paying in full (that is over £400 pa) will be unaffordable for some parents which in turn will mean that the children from less affluent background will have no chance to experience music tuition and lose out on developing creative skills and future opportunities and even inborn talent. This in turn will contribute to widening of inequalities in Midlothian and an increasing rich-poor gap.
184. In my personal circumstances such increase, together with other proposed measures such as increased council tax, additional payment for garden waste, additional payment for music tuition and other, is impossible to accept. I am a single parent, raising my child on my own without any support whatsoever, trying to maintain our household with one reduced salary working 4 days a week. After paying all the bills and repaying interest on debts (I was left with debts after splitting with my husband and I do not receive regular child maintenance), there is simply not enough disposable income to absorb all these charges increased by the council, unless we do not eat or wash clothes! I am afraid that if all the measures go ahead, and the rent increase is the biggest issue, I will be forced to quit my job (I am a chartered accountant), go on benefits and live off the state because I will not be able to afford the afterschool or holiday cover childcare. And it must be highlighted that the level of care and the environment offered to our children by LASC is not only fantastic - it is exceptional and I cannot fault it. My child is thriving there and it definitely helped him gain his confidence back after the breakup of our family.
185. I am sure that there are plenty of other parents in a similar situation and trying to raise money for the council budget (which you could argue has been mismanaged by the council and the government) by ripping off hard working families is just appalling.

186. Midlothian council are proposing to increase rent by 1100 percent to afterschool clubs who meet in school premises - this cost will have to directly passed on to parents and careers and based on our school (Newtongrange Primary) this will be a large monthly increase for each child. How does this support the policy of getting parents in to work and providing quality affordable childcare? And in turn paying taxes to help pay for these services?
187. Reduce the number of Learning Assistants by 10 percent - how does this support the ethos of getting it right for each child and also about getting as many children with additional support needs in to mainstream schooling? Midlothian have safeguarded teacher numbers (under your directive) however a cut in learning support staff will have a direct impact on teachers and schools who are already under great pressure due to their currently been a great shortage in supply staff resulting in deputy and head teachers regularly having to teach classes or remove challenging children from classes to be taught on a one to one basis.
188. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10% - This may impact on people with learning difficulties. People First believes that people with learning difficulties should be schooled in mainstream schools. The right support for this is essential to ensure the person gets the best opportunities in a learning environment.
189. Lifelong Learning and Employability Reduction - People with learning difficulties have already been affected by the reduction of services. A further reduction for young people and adults at risk of poor outcomes would mean that less people would be supported into employment.
190. Letter below sent by two different people:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children.

I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects. The proposed cuts will have a significant impact on our children's future in many ways; those we have particular concerns about are:

1. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services
2. Reduction of Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Review of Surestart contracts
4. Reducing the existing provision of the Devolved School Management carry-forward allowance from 2.5% to 1.5% resulting in a saving of 1%.
5. Charging for Instrumental Tuition.
6. Review of let charges for after school clubs, proposing an increase from 5% to 50% of the full let charge.
7. Reduction in Library Services.
8. Withdrawal of supported bus grants and reduction in community transport support.

9. Increasing the charging for school meals.

I urge you to ensure that thorough impact assessments of all proposed cuts are undertaken and that the risks and consequential cost implications are fully understood. We would urge you to consider carefully the longer term implications of these measures, both for future distribution of costs and the future of our children's health, wellbeing, education and opportunities.

We would also urge you to lobby Members of the Scottish Parliament to oppose the reduction in Local Authority funding which necessitate the proposed cuts.

191. I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive, and their future prospects.

Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services

Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%

Review Surestart contracts

Reduce lifelong learning and Employability

Reduce DSM carry-forward allowance

Charging for instrumental tuition

Review charges for after school clubs

Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2

Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches

Reduction of library services

Removal of the non-statutory school crossing service

Increasing the charge for school meals

Reduction of high school lunch provision to 'soup and a sandwich'

Reduction in janitorial services

Increase sport and leisure fees and charges

Stopping sporting grants

Reducing lifeguard cover at pools.

192. Reduce learning assistants by 10%. Teachers are already under huge pressures and often are doing crowd control management, learning assistants do a fabulous job supporting not only teachers but children who require extra support.

193. Maintain teaching assistants and school budgets at their current levels to maximise opportunities for our young people. Reductions in this area will only lead to higher unemployment and social problems in future.

194. Maintain instrumental tuition and after school clubs. Maximising future opportunities for young people should be a key priority for the council as they are the key to future prosperity and social mobility in our county.

195. While many of the cuts proposed in non-statutory services are undesirable, I think that a number will have a disproportionate effect, especially those relating to Education in its wider sense. Therefore I would wish the following to be protected:

Early Intervention and Prevention Services

Employment of Learning Assistants

Instrumental tuition

Retention of branch libraries

196. I am writing to convey my grave concern about the budget cut proposals you have put forward in response to the reduced budget allocation expected from the Scottish government in the 2018 budget.

197. The proposed cuts show a desperate lack of vision and hope for our vibrant Midlothian community. As a parent to three young children under 10yrs, I am shocked by what lies ahead for them and their peers.

198. My eldest daughter has additional support needs and I know from personal experience that her caring and under-appreciated support staff are already over-stretched in the school setting. Reducing numbers of Learning Assistants, even by the fraction that you have identified and as confirmed by Mary Smith in the public consultation that I attended at Council Chambers, will lead to poorer outcomes for our children as it's not only the supported children who will suffer, but their peers as the ripple effect of fewer staff and resources is felt over the next few years. Is this what we want for our young people? Our future innovators?

199. Your proposals as they stand will be hugely damaging to our young people, their opportunities for development and engagement in their community and their environment and the resources in their area. Those families who can privately fund the services which the council plans to remove, will opt out all services or attempt to find the money to pay for instrumental tuition for multiple children, school lunches, books and experiences normally supplied by libraries but what about those families struggling with deprivation and poverty who will have no resources to draw on? Those children whose lives are enhanced by the egalitarianism of the musical education programme, early intervention and prevention services, the open access library services, after school clubs and playing fields? The proposed cuts, if carried out, will further entrench our society into a 2-tiered system of have and have-nots and the dream of inclusion and equal opportunities for all will vanish.

200. Over 1800 people have signed a petition against the short-sighted plan to close local libraries: <https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s->

201. Over 2400 people have signed a petition against plans to cut free instrumental tuition <https://www.change.org/p/janet-lay-douglas-midlothian-gov-uk-say-no-to-the-proposed-budget-cut-of-our-midlothian-schools-music-tuition-service>

202. From a policy perspective, how would the proposed cuts enable the Local Authority to comply with the duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to ensure they are taking account of children's rights in fulfilling their functions?
203. The cuts would nullify the benefits of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and run contrary to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Scottish GIRFEC national approach.
204. Your proposals run contrary the Scottish Ministers ambition: that Scotland is the best place to grow up and bring up children. "This is a high aspiration and one that will require all of us - politicians, parents, public services and the public - to play their part."
205. It means the stated aim for Public Services in GIRFEC is not being met : "For public services our aim is to work in the best possible way to improve outcomes for all our children and young people. And to do so in a way that respects rights and encourages early appropriate help - not once issues have become too acute."
206. Closure of school libraries will contravene the plan and strategy for development and delivery of School libraries announced by the Deputy First Minister in November 2017.
207. As part of my feedback I would draw your attention to the response from Kings Park Parent Council, Tynewater Parent Council and Lasswade Parent Council and ask you to consider innovative ways of raising capital rather than succumbing to punitive cuts, particularly to services affecting children and young people. The Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council's detailed and well-thought out open letter outlines imaginative alternatives to the severe austerity proposed by your documents. Women for Independence Midlothian's open letter suggests making full use of funding sources such as City Deal and Borders Blueprint Funding and encouraging supporting local businesses and entrepreneurial ventures to build a sustainable body of community resources.
208. I would like to express my concern at the proposed cuts that I have read in 'Summary of Proposed Savings'. As a teacher at Saltersgate Special Needs School, I am particularly concerned at how these cuts look like they will impact the special needs pupils who attend this school. Namely, the 10% reduction in learning assistants. A proposed drop of staffing in the school of this level is deeply worrying.
209. Reduction in Lifelong Learning and Employability staffing should be avoided.
210. These cuts are going to affect the poorer or lower income and also middle income families who are often struggling financially - within our communities the most. Those with the greatest need. Learning support staff within schools are essential for those kids with asn, struggling to cope and often forced into mainstream and they also support teachers massively.
211. Taking away these posts will pushing our kids into not achieving their potential and cause more problems within schools.
212. Hitting vital services like these and also Surestart etc. will cause far greater problems in the years to come. Early intervention has been proven to work!

213. I think the cuts in education (especially for learning assistants) would be catastrophic for our young people
214. I agree that after school club rent should be increased, to only be paying 5% for a fully serviced room/space that really cannot be used by any other community group is far too low.
215. As a teacher I am shocked at the number of education managers the council employs. While we struggle in schools it seems the council employers senior school manager after senior manager. It's like the managers don't want to manage so they employ more and more school managers when the government is saying schools should manage their own affairs
216. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children. I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects.
- The proposed cuts will have a significant impact on our children's future in many ways; those I have particular concerns about are:
- Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services
 - Reduction of Learning Assistants by 10%
 - Review of Surestart contracts
 - Reducing the existing provision of the Devolved School Management carry-forward allowance from 2.5% to 1.5% resulting in a saving of 1%.
 - Charging for Instrumental Tuition.
 - Review of let charges for after school clubs, proposing an increase from 5% to 50% of the full let charge.
 - Reduction in Library Services.
 - Withdrawal of supported bus grants and reduction in community transport support.
 - Increasing the charging for school meals.
- I urge you to ensure that thorough impact assessments of all proposed cuts are undertaken and that the risks and consequential cost implications are fully understood. I would urge you to consider carefully the longer-term implications of these measures, both for future distribution of costs and the future of our children's health, wellbeing, education and opportunities.
- I would also urge you to lobby Members of the Scottish Parliament to oppose the reduction in Local Authority funding which necessitate the proposed cuts.
217. I am writing to convey my grave concern about the budget cut proposals you have put forward in response to the reduced budget allocation expected from the Scottish government in the 2018 budget.

The proposed cuts show a desperate lack of vision and hope for our vibrant Midlothian community. As a parent to three young children under 10yrs, I am shocked by what lies ahead for them and their peers.

My eldest daughter has additional support needs and I know from personal experience that her caring and under-appreciated support staff are already over-stretched in the school setting. Reducing numbers of Learning Assistants, even by the fraction that you have identified and as confirmed by Mary Smith in the public consultation that I attended at Council Chambers, will lead to poorer outcomes for our children as it's not only the supported children who will suffer, but their peers as the ripple effect of fewer staff and resources is felt over the next few years. Is this what we want for our young people? Our future innovators?

Your proposals as they stand will be hugely damaging to our young people, their opportunities for development and engagement in their community and their environment and the resources in their area. Those families who can privately fund the services which the council plans to remove, will opt out all services or attempt to find the money to pay for instrumental tuition for multiple children, school lunches, books and experiences normally supplied by libraries but what about those families struggling with deprivation and poverty who will have no resources to draw on? Those children whose lives are enhanced by the egalitarianism of the musical education programme, early intervention and prevention services, the open access library services, after school clubs and playing fields? The proposed cuts, if carried out, will further entrench our society into a 2-tiered system of have and have-nots and the dream of inclusion and equal opportunities for all will vanish.

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From a policy perspective, how would the proposed cuts enable the Local Authority to comply with the duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to ensure they are taking account of children's rights in fulfilling their functions?

The cuts would nullify the benefits of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and run contrary to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Scottish GIRFEC national approach.

Your proposals run contrary the Scottish Ministers ambition: that Scotland is the best place to grow up and bring up children. "This is a high aspiration and one that will require all of us – politicians, parents, public services and the public – to play their part."

It means the stated aim for Public Services in GIRFEC is not being met: "For public services our aim is to work in the best possible way to improve outcomes for all our children and young people. And to do so in a way that respects rights and encourages early appropriate help – not once issues have become too acute."

Closure of school libraries will contravene the plan and strategy for development and delivery of School libraries announced by the Deputy First Minister in November 2017.

As part of my feedback I would draw your attention to the response from Kings Park Parent Council, Tynewater Parent Council and Lasswade Parent Council and ask you to consider innovative ways of raising capital rather than succumbing to punitive cuts, particularly to services affecting children and young people. The Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council's detailed and well-thought out open letter outlines imaginative alternatives to the severe austerity proposed by your documents. Women for Independence Midlothian's open letter suggests making full use of funding sources such as City Deal and Borders Blueprint Funding and encouraging supporting local businesses and entrepreneurial ventures to build a sustainable body of community resources.

The figures you have offered in your proposals where you list the potential staffing implications of 240 front line staff in contrast to only 2 executive posts are staggeringly offensive to the general public and the 240 who face the loss of their livelihoods. A shocking case of sacrificing the many for the few. How can this be justified? Why is there no mention in your proposals of resistance? The option to put pressure on the Finance Minister Derek McKay and the SNP government to revisit their own budget cuts that are being handed to the councils to carry out? Do Midlothian Councillors feel able to justify the case for increased funding to Midlothian from COSLA? More should be done in these areas to show me that my council wants to fight back on this budget.

218. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian services from 2018 and in particular, the effect these will have on the wellbeing of our children. I highlight those cuts which will have a direct and immediate impact on our children's educational attainments, their ability to thrive- and their future prospects. The proposed cuts will have a significant impact on our children's future in many ways; those we have particular concerns about are:

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8. Withdrawal of supported bus grants and reduction in community transport support.
9. Increasing the charging for school meals.

I urge you to ensure that thorough impact assessments of all proposed cuts are undertaken and that the risks and consequential cost implications are fully understood. We would urge you to consider carefully the longer-term implications of these measures, both for future

distribution of costs and the future of our children's health, wellbeing, education and opportunities.

We would also urge you to lobby Members of the Scottish Parliament to oppose the reduction in Local Authority funding which necessitate the proposed cuts.

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All these changes will seriously affect our children's futures. I am sure you want to help us develop our young people with the skills necessary to build and support our community. Without this, the long-term future of Midlothian is bleak. I ask you to put all your efforts into fighting these cuts and preventing this disaster from happening. I ask you to explore the ideas that people have proposed to bring in revenue to Midlothian from the Scottish Government and the private sector as a matter of urgency, and also savings to be made within the management structure within the council. I ask you to make the case to the Government that such deep, ongoing cuts to local authority funding is squeezing the life out of our community. Cutting education and young people's services is not a viable solution.

Above response submitted separately by 3 residents

Health and social care

1. As we are all aware of people living much longer and more complex and challenging .I have to say I feel very strongly on this getting cut again .staff are already working under serious pressure..if anything management need to be looked at being paid huge sums for making decisions that experienced staff could make. The restructuring that has went on is a shambles..and lies were told nurses were brought in and 2 are now leaving after a year in this establishment..please please listen to the carers who know what is required in this establishment...continuity is a major, major thing for especially clients with dementia...we are running with very low morale and can't speak about it due to being put down and shut up..thanks
2. I must protest at proposed cuts to Child and Adult services, could the council link in with NHS Lothian to provide this service? In a bid to reduce costs. These people need this service. It's like saying shut down the Royal Infirmary, where would people go to for help?
3. "Rebalancing Care, Rebalancing Expectations, Models of Care will be reshaped" - very worrying terminology and along with "externalisation of services and closer integration of service teams" - can only mean one thing i.e. decimation of these services and an opt out by Midlothian Council. "Privatisation and/or Voluntary Sector appears to be a recurring aspect within these proposals!
4. Rebalancing Care: Although this is very vague in the "summary document" it does outline different models of provision. I work on a project called "Break Away - City of Edinburgh Council". This project is based on the Self Direct Support model of care and we support our customers to manage their respite budget, we have continued to grow and now work with 140 families across Edinburgh. This has proven to be much cheaper than traditional respite models (i.e. building based) as we are purchasing things within the community. It is important to note though that this model shouldn't be used as a money saving model but that as result of meeting peoples outcomes using Self Direct Support it can inherently save money. I would be more than happy to talk through the model further if it were of interest. This model could be used within other areas of health and social care.
5. Even if you weren't looking for savings you need to make sure every part of the service is working as efficiently and flexibly as possible.
6. I work closely with a council funded team and see first-hand some of the disruption and inefficiencies caused by reduced funds in social care. For example, due to lack of homecare available in the community, or a long waiting list for a stairlift assessment, a frail elderly person may end up waiting in hospital or an intermediate care bed longer than necessary. Perhaps a solution for things like a stairlift wait would be to allow some council employees some discretion in reprioritisation of waiting lists? In homecare, the job is exhausting, stressful and financially unrewarding. Though provision of free homecare for the poorest of our elderly is a wonderful thing, is it possible that those who could make more of a contribution would have the opportunity to do so?
7. Rebalancing Care – Rebalancing Expectations - clearly an area of great challenge and any outcome needs to meet the needs of users.

8. Having an adult son with a learning disability we are very concerned about potential cuts to social care provision.
9. Retain help for elderly victims of dementia. My wife recently died from dementia. Before admission to hospital she had considerable help from carers who became her friends.
10. Stop outsourcing carers.
11. The biggest single proposed saving of £4.62 million is in this area, representing 26% of the total savings net of new income. It is not at all clear how this is to be achieved at a time when the elderly population is growing and the demand for these services is increasing. The risk to health and well-being of savings in this area must be high and caution will be required.
12. What money has the NHS got that it could be investing in more preventative solutions like contributing to social housing and other policy areas?
13. The most important issue of how we fund the future cost of caring for older people less able to care for themselves needs much wider discussion. Older people have enjoyed various opportunities in their lives. Retired people are frequently relatively well-off compared to young families struggling with mortgages and childcare costs. A range of local options along with a creative use of resources in partnership with voluntary agencies to maintain independence should be considered.
14. I can see that Midlothian Council have a major underfunding problem and sympathise over the difficult decisions you have to make. I notice that there is nothing about any savings that could be made over care home provision, which must be a heavy burden on resources. I think the time has come for people to be realistic and pay more for their residential care and not expect ratepayers to fund it. It is not unreasonable for property to be sold or savings used up. I can see that this might require long term planning as people just about to go into care may not have made provision believing that the council will pay. It's not fair that the parsimonious pay but the profligate get bailed out.
15. I didn't think much of any of the cuts to Adult social care.
16. A reduction in adult social care is of great concern to me.
17. I am concerned by the proposals to cut Adult social care budgets - these teams are already overworked and at the end of their tethers. I think the council would be better advised to go into debt than cut these services.

Children's services

1. Children's Services, Reduction in Early Intervention and Prevention Services- this is totally unacceptable. From your own document.. "Description of savings proposals. A 10% reduction equates to 4 Children and Families Practitioners across the service which equates to a 30% reduction in the preventative workforce. The Children and Families Practitioners are key in supporting the service to identify families at an early point of intervention therefore there will have to be some changes in the way we work going forward in order to manage this loss of workers. "This service, already under funded and under staffed, is vital in

accessing children at risk. This service needs MUCH MORE FUNDING, STAFF, ORGANISING AND REINFORCEMENT.

2. It is absolutely imperative that these reductions are resisted. It cannot be acceptable that "Early Intervention & Prevention" are reduced to the level proposed. Children and young people are the future of Midlothian and as such must continue to be invested in.
3. Review the service, ensure it's efficient, there is no point cutting the service to save money when the result could be expensive problem kids later.
4. Children need more not less protection.
5. Again it seems as if the vulnerable are being unduly targeted. But are these job losses going to occur because the Council took over areas from Social Work when there was no need to? It may appear there are poor outcomes in the short term but early input can have a major impact on later outcomes, often not quantifiable.
6. Early intervention services have been recommended by various Govt policies and have been proven to provide the most effective support in reductions of long-term problems with children and families. As you know, we must get to them early, as it were, to prevent future problems. This will lead to an INCREASE in spending longer term.
7. Absolutely disgusted by cuts that effect children there is already enough child poverty in Midlothian. We are already failing our children which are our future.
8. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services (a reduction of 4 children and family practitioners posts). This seems to be again counter productive – surely preventing is better than paying for consequences? Or are you hoping that police and the mental health services will pick this up? Only if there were sound unbiased evidence that this service was ineffective, could its removal be considered.
9. I think that reducing social work numbers is putting children at risk, and would undoubtedly prolong the length of time it would take to take them out of dangerous situations. Having seen the pressure social work are already under in North Lanarkshire - where the council recently cut back provision - I wouldn't want to see this mistake repeated here.
10. I don't think intervention services for families should be cut because the future costs of crime etc. would be far higher.
11. Early intervention and prevention services are vital and need to be introduced in some cases as early as possible. If the opposite happens the problems that arise are going to be deep seated and are more difficult to address.
12. Maintain current levels of early intervention and prevention for children and families. Cuts in this area will result in future social problems, damaging lives and communities and ultimately incurring much greater costs for council and community.
13. I am also concerned at the proposed reduction in children's services, particularly in Early Intervention and Prevention Services, Learning Assistants and Surestart contracts.

14. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services (a reduction of 4 Children and Family Practitioner posts): disastrous. Children's lives might be further blighted, at worst lost, without the intervention of this team. This represents a cost increase to society in the long run.
15. Reducing the Early Intervention and Prevention Services is indefensible and places many children at risk.
16. Maintain current levels of early intervention and prevention for children and families. Cuts in this area will result in future social problems, damaging lives and communities and ultimately incurring much greater costs for council and community.

Property and facilities management

1. I would be worried about community groups taking on control of halls and pavilions as they might not be big or strong enough to sustain these buildings and ultimately I fear they would be lost to the community.
2. It is recognised that some savings are likely, but the proposal "to set up an Arms Length External Organisation" to generate income by "trading in land and building assets smacks of "selling off the family silver".
3. Transferring "all halls and pavilions to community groups etc.", to us is another example of the Council abdicating its responsibilities, to either the private or voluntary sector. What happens when the private company or indeed local community group finds it can no longer provide this facility? We are not confident that these necessary facilities would return to a council responsibility.
4. I do not agree with the plan of trying to pass roles over to the community, as this type of strategic type of belief always ends in failure, but concerning is the fact that MDC has then abdicated themselves from any responsibility when the community group fails.
5. Building services company - Any Building Firm making 3% profit should be shut down, what planet are you on? Margins in the Building Trade are much higher than that.
6. Reduction in housing voids standards - bear in mind you have to have them in a lettable condition. You might need to provide rent-free periods to compensate.
7. Construction and design consultancy/ Professional consultancy. The accountants need setting on this one, to check viability. It's not viable unless there is a constant work stream.
8. Increase school meal charges - No. You need to increase volumes not prices. Additionally why do you supply lunches to Free School lunch kids on a Friday. That's not on unless you feed the rest too.
9. Share catering mgt. With neighbouring councils - This should be happening already, Why isn't it.
10. Cafe style meals in High Schools - Check what the kids who walk out of the gate are getting and supply it inside the school. (Try and make it a bit healthier!).

11. Internal catering to cover costs - I always wondered why Senior Management seemed to live on free coffee and biscuits, while the rest of us had to buy them!
12. Expand catering function. Fine, and...Pensioners lunches in schools on Fridays?
13. Cafe service/ social enterprise branding - Unless you call them kids in education might you have to CRB check them?
14. Shared janitorial service - Fine
15. Renegotiate Skanska sub-contract - Fine
16. Property Company - Property and land should be valued, bought, and sold, using external experts. Your staff might think they're experts. They aren't.
17. Renewable energy. You'd probably save more, with less risk, and little expense, by switching the lights etc. off! Mauricewood Schools external lights were on all day all summer for instance.
18. PPP shared management with other councils - Fine, why's it not been done?
19. PPP maximised use of contract hours - Get on with it. How much has not using the hours cost?
20. Transfer running of smaller leisure centres to community partnerships. Significant safety issues here.
21. Transfer halls and pavilions to community - Fine
22. Merge S&S/FM staff in hubs - They won't like it but needs must.
23. Selling project co-ordinator services to other councils - Shared service might lead to more co-operation.
24. Destination Hillend - Fine. It really does need its profile raising.
25. Increase leisure charges - Fine, slowly.
26. Points 1 3 4 9 13 14 and 25 [Property Company, Design Consultancy, Expand Catering Service, etc.] read more like job creation schemes for Management rather than any savings!
27. [Reduction in housing voids standards] Point 2. How about recovering rents owed?
28. [Janitorial services; Lifeguard cover] Points 11 and 20. There is the potential for dangerous situations to occur when staff are spread so thinly with a planned reduction in janitorial services and lifeguard cover. There is no safety net.
29. Overall the proposals look at a disproportionate reduction in customer related services compared to any loss at management level.
30. [Community transfers] Where will the staff for these come from? How will they be funded, paid and staffed?
31. Tenants to decorate their houses.

32. Internal catering – Pay (including council members/ support staff) for coffee like others have to.
33. Expand catering, function service – Yes.
34. Destination Hillend – Yes.
35. The community centre is well used for many local groups, such as baby and toddler groups, exercise classes, rainbow guides. Maybe independent exercise instructors could be encouraged to contribute toward the premises for their business?
36. Café style high school meal service - A cooked meal at school is sometimes the only nourishing food available to some vulnerable children. How would this be addressed?
37. Transfer all halls and pavilions to community groups - Community groups would need professional, networking and financial support initially and should be given favourable rates to take over this responsibility. What about communities where valuable local services happen in facilities which are not taken over by community groups. Potentially very harmful for vulnerable people.
38. If janitorial cover is reduced at Beeslack which is a community school, it could have a severe impact on its use by community groups, particularly older adults and those with disabilities. One janitor between two primary schools raises a number of health and safety issues
39. Sharing a janitor between 2 schools...? Maybe you should try and do this yourself before expecting others to do it?
40. Stop using an external contractor to carry out portable appliance and water temperature checking.
41. Reduction in housing void standards - this is unlikely to succeed
42. Construction and design consultancy - worth a try
43. Shared janitorial service -don't agree
44. Renegotiate Skanska subcontract - agree
45. Property Company - there must be a limit to the amount of assets the council can flog off. So is this investment of public money into a property gambling scheme? Who would be accountable if it doesn't make its proposed returns?
46. Renewable sources of energy - agree
47. PPP shared management with other Las. This is a speculative proposal rather than an real money saving one
48. PPP maximised use of contracted hours - why is the council not doing this already?
49. Community transfer of halls and pavilions - are we giving away the assets or lending them out?

50. Construction and Design Service Consultancy & Income from Professional Consultancy both are moves away from the provision of essential services by the council, into competing with the private sector. It would be more efficient for the Council to close these services and allow local businesses to flourish rather than subsidise in-house services through the provision of marketing, office space etc. Why should local professional services have to compete with the Council for work?
51. Start using Midlothian Council's own workforce to do maintenance work and not using outside firms that charge extortionate prices. Training e.g. food hygiene is being delivered by an external organisation which is costing the council a lot of money can this service not be delivered by Council's own workers. Similarly First Aid etc.
52. Remove top pay and have a look at the amount of theft from your work force in the building services department gardens and parks. You don't maintain anything at the moment the amount if theft from your building service e.g. joinery workshop and Clark if works doing deals and doing out their own homes with council materials that tax's payers pay for.
53. Snow sports centre could and should be s valuable resource, must be promoted at all times by Authority and elected members to generate maximum exposure.
54. Why serve sugar laden puddings with school meals when fruit is already available? Children don't need such a range of puddings to choose from. Not a big saving, but still a saving, both for the council and for child physical and dental health.
55. Reducing janitorial staff in Primary schools from 22 to 11 by sharing the service is putting a great deal of pressure onto these employees – you are increasing their workload and level of responsibility and this will reduce their ability to provide an acceptable level of service.
56. Transfer of halls and pavilions to community - Again, you are relying on communities to take on this responsibility – they are in essence being asked to invest privately. This will have a more severe impact on more deprived communities.
57. [One of] the main issues I have is that the council's proposal on saving money on health (hot meal for kids) knowing that obesity is a very big issue in Scotland does not make any sense.
58. Don't give free school meals to children who can afford to buy it themselves.
59. I am concerned that many of the saving proposals will affect the safety of the children in Midlothian. For example one janitor covering two primary schools. No lollipop men/women and reducing the numbers of lifeguards on duty! This is not acceptable.
60. School janitor reduction - is this really feasible? Won't this mean headteachers will end up spending time dealing with maintenance issues instead of focusing on education which the government insists is a priority.
61. It seems the council are expecting volunteers in the community to take over a lot of tasks. People will then question what they pay council tax for?
62. What do you mean by community run gym - not volunteers I hope?

63. How would community groups be able to pay for the maintenance etc. of all halls and pavilions? (again I can't help hearing 'what are paying council tax for?'). I imagine the halls etc. are used for sports etc. Any risk to this, risks working to government policy of tackling obesity.
64. PPP and reduced maintenance savings next year will simply increase costs in later years. Please do not do those.
65. Stop supply of bottled water to schools. Many times I've saw a child open the bottle at lunch take a sip then throw it away. Surely some sort of mains fountain can be provided instead?
66. Make lighting in public buildings sensors. I often see lights burning in council buildings when they are shut.
67. Unnecessary renovations in council offices!
68. Sell off council assets and rationalise assets.
69. Sell unused properties, or rent out.
70. Allow private cafe vendors to tender and take over school canteens and sports centre cafes, much like cafe milk in the free-market gallery.
71. Keep public toilets available but introduce charges similar to Borders Council.
72. The proposed new Council facility at Hopefield is not welcomed by local residents. Save money by not building it.
73. Reducing maintenance is ludicrous as it is well known that this is false economy because in the long term repairs will cost more due to neglect. More should be done to share cost between neighbouring councils as this would be more efficient cost and labour wise.
74. The idea of creating an at arms length building company to deal with repairs and maintenance is a very good one as long as they operate like any private company and should be able to adjust staffing to meet their workload.
75. School meals are already poor value for money. Making them more expensive will just send kids to eat pasties in Tesco and Lidl. Brilliant idea for increasing the obesity and diabetes problems. Well done Midlothian Council. Not sure a soup and sandwich counter is going to solve that problem either.
76. Reductions to Janitorial services for primary schools will probably lead to all sorts of problems.
77. Transfer of halls to community groups - no doubt for one or two years maintenance would occur but then there would be a decline, likely damage by those that like doing that with the consequence that sport suffers. We already pay in Council tax for all of these things
78. I appreciate the scale of the funding deficit, and agree with many of the proposals, particularly those for devolving responsibility for upkeep and management of public spaces and buildings to local communities. I would be happy to be involved in any such projects in my local community.

79. Hot lunches for children – on the one hand we are told how essential this is for deprived youngsters, now it is under threat. On reading the summary of proposed savings, I see that café style meals will continue.
80. Janitorial Service shared between 2 primary schools. Cutting the numbers of janitors from 22 to 11: how can one person do the work of two? The school environment for our children is important. The work of the janitors is essential to maintaining this environment.
81. Renewable Sources of Energy. By investing in renewable sources of energy a targeted saving of 10% of the current expenditure (£2.8m) should be achievable: yes!
82. Cuts that could be made I think with less impact include the [Roslin] community pavilion, loved though it is, its costs more to run for less overall benefit.
83. Increased charges for school meals - school meals should only cost the underlying cost of the meal. Making a profit out of children is just unethical. This will only contribute to widening of inequalities in Midlothian and an increasing rich-poor gap.
84. Shared janitorial services – how do you intend to address the issue of compromised children safety at schools, due to failed maintenance?
85. Reduced numbers of janitors in schools. Another false economy where the cost of increased vandalism might well outweigh the savings.
86. Property Company - We should not be selling OUR land and buildings for short term, once-off gain.
87. Transfer Halls and Pavilions to Community Groups Most groups are very small and will probably be unable to cover full costs of a valuable facility without some help from the council.
88. Destination Hillend It seems to be a success story; why spend a lot of extra money unnecessarily?
89. Community Pavilions must be maintained for the same reasons of increasing social cohesion, provision for activities, physical exercise and activities for children, mothers with small children and older people in particular.
90. Keep school caretakers/ janitors at their current levels. Reducing in- house staff will ultimately result in greater costs through the use of contractors and decrease working life of buildings.
91. Keep school caretakers/ janitors at their current levels. Reducing in- house staff will ultimately result in greater costs through the use of contractors and decrease working life of buildings.
92. Cutting janitorial services so drastically could well put children in our primary schools at risk
93. I also agree that changing the high school to a café style menu would be something that kids of this age would like and would have no concern in this being offered to my children as their lunch option.

94. Janitorial Service shared between 2 primary schools. Cutting the numbers of janitors from 22 to 11: how can one person do the work of two? The school environment for our children is important. The work of the janitors is essential to maintaining this environment.
95. Increased charges for school meals – school meals should only cost the underlying cost of the meal. Making a profit out of children is just unethical. This will only contribute to widening of inequalities in Midlothian and an increasing rich-poor gap.
96. Shared janitorial services – how do you intend to address the issue of compromised children safety at schools, due to failed maintenance?
97. I don't understand how primary schools can share a janitor and remain a safe place for our children (i.e. with locked gates etc.)
98. Increasing the charges for school meals may deprive many youngsters of one good wholesome daily meal - another public health issue. I hope these issues will be taken into consideration,
99. Expand Catering / Functions Service - support this proposal.

Finance and support services / general budget issues and responses

1. Yes also to (savings in) cars, why does the council not go for a few cars that can be used. Like the NHS have crown cars
2. I would like to know why the Council has such a deficit of funds and why they have to make these cuts. In all businesses there has to be at least a 5 yr budget plan and I am not seeing any evidence of this. Given the recent announcement and proposed cuts. Surely someone is responsible and should be accountable for this.
3. Having gone through the proposed cuts several times I am so so very angry at the way it has been handled. I think I am not alone in this.
4. The government spends money on many initiatives which are really not needed, for example giving baby boxes to families that can well afford to pay for the items themselves. I am not surprised therefore that the coffers are empty!!! Perhaps if the government tightened up their budgets there would be more money available for much needed services which are in danger of being cut.
5. We understand that the services provided by Midlothian Council have to be paid for; and also that budgets are becoming increasingly tight and thus putting pressure on the Council in relation to both statutory and non-statutory services. We also have an understanding with regard to the relationship between local authority and Scottish government funding and budgets. We do not wish at this time to comment on the political aspect of these proposals; but do feel strongly that a better understanding by Scottish government is required when allocating budgets to local authorities.
6. The reduction in staffing in these areas will definitely negatively affect the services currently provided. "Redesigning Services or stopping those that do not add value or support delivery of the council's priorities" is one that provides a "catch-all" for cuts that will impact severely on council services and the loss of many jobs.

7. A further move towards “Digital by Default” is a worrying strategy i.e. although the use of modern technology is supported; it has to be recognised that a significant number of our community are not in a position to do so. This strategy has already caused problems within central governments and has resulted in those most in need being excluded from accessing these services.
8. When it comes to the extent of having to withdraw and reduce service such as early intervention child protection and reducing the lifeguards at pools.... You are really scraping the barrel. I accept the overall budget cut is not Your choice and is being imposed on them but there are better ways of managing it.

The revamp needed here is more than a shuffle of senior management but more a clear out and replaced with Individuals with no over inflated egos and with a fraction of common sense who can rebuild the Community that is currently being destroyed.

9. How, if our financial matters are so well scrutinised, do we have a million plus deficit. Why continue with the regeneration of certain areas of Midlothian and build new schools for example, if in the long term we would not be able to afford it. Basic budgeting would tell not to spend or do get an excellent accountant to complete your finances for you. There are people who have been very “blinkerred” over the years, closing their eyes and hoping!
10. Within the council you should look to either
 - Reduce staff costs- e.g. close any final salary pension scheme
 - centralise council buildings and locations
 - Outsource services
 - Find out who is responsible for the council being in such a financial mess and sack them
 - Not sure if bonuses are paid, but if so cancel them all
 - Reduce salaries for all over £50k by 10%. Those receiving this amount have obviously failed in their jobs if we are so short of budget and reserves.
 - Remove all non-required internal spend.

If the blame really does lie with the Scottish government then

- Take legal action against the Scottish government if cuts are actually that bad, or at least take legal advice
- Increase council tax by more than 3% and fight the cap legally, similar to what Moray Council tried to do I think, appreciate that I will have to pay more, but that is at least a choice
- The customers, that’s us, should be the last to be impacted, that’s how companies work, sadly we don’t have a choice other than to pay our council tax and accept whatever nonsense you decide. If this is the best you can do then what is the point of a local authority, why not get rid of you and have a centralised Scottish government running it, that would save plenty and the management couldn’t be any worse than what you are proposing.

11. I have read the summary document and sympathise with the predicament the Council finds itself in. In my opinion it was inevitable that the years of council tax freezes would impact on services eventually. It is clear that the council have considered a wide range of proposals which impact on services right across the spectrum. I appreciate therefore that prioritising one service over another is very challenging.
12. I appreciate the budgetary constraints but personally feel that local authorities need to stand up to the Scottish Government for more central funding and capacity to increase local taxes beyond the cap. The other thing which is not clear is whether the council have discussed initiatives with neighbouring authorities to share services, create efficiencies and learn from best practice.
13. I think that a large number of the proposals represent a huge backward step on the provision of services within the communities as a whole.
14. I am not very pleased at these proposals. You have received more money this year than ever before with people paying bands E upwards an extra 3% and everyone paying a 3% increase, it is now time for the council to contract out all its services or call in the receivers to have an investigation as to what is happening as it is quite clear the present council cannot manage the public affairs all these cuts are being done on a political basis and it is not fair to treat the people of Midlothian in this way.
15. Detailed document very difficult to read. No mention of total budget to allow thought on scale of proposed reductions. Appears to be little consideration of effects of some proposals on other, but related, services
16. I do hope that that efficient savings is being done by the council's workforce, and someone is looking how council money is being spent to the best effect way and expenses are being monitored as cuts cannot be justified. If the council is wasting money, like the tram rail services in Edinburgh, and holidays being paid by the people's taxes. Also the council should have deadlines for work being carried out by contracts when contracting services out and fines should be implemented to raise money, when these deadlines have been broken.
17. Digital services review – fine
18. Digital by default - Might want to engage online from my library!
19. Reduce capital spend. Finances may improve in the years ahead.
20. May already be in some of your improvement plans but consideration to outsourcing some more services to the third sector may bring savings e.g. care contracts, youth services with funding via contracts not grants.
21. Lobbying the government for an increase in taxes.
22. Public consultation handled well.
23. Having read your document about the proposed money saving measures in Midlothian I would like to register my absolute disgust with Midlothian council. Can someone please explain why public services are constantly being cut or stopped? As a taxpayer I feel I have the right to know where my money is going and at the moment it appears to be going

nowhere. How on earth can you justify parents having to pay for instrumental tuition? Parents who are working to support their families are expected to pay whilst those on benefits get it for free? Have you even taken into account that some working families barely make ends meet without any help from our completely useless council? The proposal to reduce road maintenance is laughable with the current state of our roads and this is before the bad weather hits. As a public sector worker I can see an already stretched service and people are suffering as a result. So cuts to what LIMITED amenities we have would be a disaster. I suggest you leave our public services and education alone and find other means to reduce your budget. Stop punishing the tax payer for the council's failures.

24. I would like to strongly oppose the proposal of shutting down the libraries in Midlothian. I find this proposal incomprehensible and cannot believe that it is being considered. I have just moved to Penicuik in December 2016 and use the library twice weekly for not only its Bookbug sessions for my 20 month old which he loves but also on a personal level as I have to commute into Edinburgh for work. There is a great sense in community around the library and it would be a big loss to the town. It also depresses me that I may have moved somewhere that my baby will no longer have easy access to books-something I always had as a child. I have also read the other proposals and I must say nothing has saddened me more since choosing to move out here than to read what may happen to the area. It seems the proposals will get rid of everything that I have fallen in love with living outside of the city-the beautiful scenery in the parks, the Sure start program that runs for the Dads group on a Saturday-my husband attends this every Saturday and has given him the confidence and opportunity to meet fellow dads, something which he never had in Edinburgh.

We attended the Penicuik Gala this year and was so impressed how good it was and just how it brought all the community together-the idea that this may no longer run quite literally can also be described as sad. These cuts have seriously made me think that maybe moving out to Midlothian might be a mistake as we will have less amenities than if we had of stayed in Edinburgh-after all the hard work of moving its horrible to think that this may have been for nothing or worse yet but our son in a worse predicament than if we stayed where we were. I understand that because of Westminster, cuts need to be made and know this is a hard decision however I suggest instead of closing libraries why not do reduced hours of opening-least then people will have access to books.

Also in relation to the Gala ask for a small donation such as £2 a person-same as the Dads group run by Sure Start. Instead of turfing over flowerbeds why not plant flowers that need less care such as wildflowers and so forth. I do support getting rid of Lollipop men and women as I think that really crossing roads should fall under the supervision of parents and see this is a good area where money can be saved. I really hope that the Midlothian people will be listened to and we can save the little bit of community that we have left.

25. Maybe it's time to hand over the complete responsibility for council affairs and budget control to the private sector once and for all, and sack all the high earning staff who have no idea on how to run a successful business. The local councillors should have their "salaries" withdrawn and paid on an attendance basis. The people of Midlothian have suffered greatly at the mismanagement of its assets and services. Many parts of the council's services have already been contracted out to the private sector who make a profit on the services they provide, which beggars the question how does Midlothian council fail to break even on the

very same services? All too often the lack of tighter staff and vehicle control leads to complacency by staff who abuse their situation and end up sitting in laybys waiting for the time to return to the depot. The use of heavy vehicles doubling up to collect recycleable waste is expensive and does nothing to ease pollution. Double the vehicles, double the pollution double the maintenance costs, surely a better resolve to this situation could be found. The bottom line is find the appropriate business people to lead and control the council budget and dump the hangers on.

26. Some of the ideas are workable to my mind! But there is an overemphasis on job creation at the top and much job loss for the workers who carry out really commendable work for little wages and who are obviously not recognised. Maybe we would not be in this situation if the council tax had been raised and if all the poll tax arrears had not been written off.
27. Remove car allowance and other freebies. Many do not get this anyway.
28. - Charge developers more - they cream off profit and then leave the region with difficulty supporting the new residents. Higher developer contributions over longer periods. Get them to pay for new bins and all bin collection for 2 - 5 years. Get Developers to sponsor flower beds or particular items for 5 years.
29. GRANTS - do we get everything we can ? SCOT GOV - can we get more money ?
30. Having read your documents and attending one of the Community engagement events in Dalkeith I would like to make the following points. I have considerable sympathy with the task you have in front of you and do hope that Scottish Government will help by increasing their grants to local Government. In deciding which cuts go ahead could you make it an overriding principal that you will try to minimise increasing inequality in our communities. People on middle incomes will muddle through and take in their stride deteriorating services, finding ways round. The people who must budget their own low incomes very carefully will struggle to cope with deteriorating services. Where services are to be cut or removed altogether would it be possible to give time for the voluntary sector to step up, e.g. the removing of flowers beds. In our villages and towns, we should be trying harder to make them attractive places to live and visit. Floral displays greatly add to the feel of a place. It may be that local groups would like to take over, but would need time to react to the suggestion. The libraries; one central library will just not work in such a widespread population, please find a way for communities to access libraries and all the services they offer, again could this be an area for volunteers to become involved.
31. Only Fund items that all people use or can take enjoyment from - Street lighting, Bin collections, Road repairs and maintenance. Education in Midlothian Schools only. Maintain Parks and road verges as they are at present. Libraries
32. Surely the council could have predicted the shortfall sooner. I feel sorry for the young and old in Midlothian as they appear to be the ones losing out. E.g. reducing community transport support, libraries closing which will be a big loss for many. I know I drive a mini bus taking the elderly out of their homes on the one and only trip out and they love it. Let's hope it doesn't snow, the elderly will be housebound for longer. CCTV reduced making it more dangerous, street lights not being repaired quickly enough. Grass pitches and Astro pitches reduced, mind you, Dalkeith Thistle CFC don't have a full size Astro pitch anyway. As for the roads

maintenance cuts I think I'll invest in a tractor. I put a complaint in weeks ago and never even got an answer. Now I know why. No flower beds, let's hope this applies to Bonnyrigg also. Just forget about Xmas lights in Dalkeith as they are pathetic compared to Bonnyrigg, why? this used to be the hub of the area but not now. I have lived in Dalkeith/Woodburn all my life and it is sad what is happening to my area.

33. Absolutely disgusted .Council tax, band F. Highest rate of council tax in all Lothian counties charged by Midlothian. Malpractice or poor administration or both is the reason for your cuts. In the past spend the council tax money and consider it a bottomless pot. Education and Social work have the biggest slice of the money. Why appoint seemingly endless staff to schools and the education system is not improving the standards of education for the young people. People are having to resort to tutors to raise standards. The Social Work Dept is not fit for the purpose. Personal experience from the dept. Surestart was the agency which provided vital help and much needed support. As a council taxpayer of a considerable amount paid for from my pension, I have a right to have my rubbish collected, roads maintained to a high standard and to see Midlothian kept to a high standard. What will be done when illicit dumping becomes even more of a problem, housing in Midlothian has increased dramatically without any improvement in the road infrastructure, bad enough at the moment with the volume of traffic, dread to think of winter and road conditions. Flower baskets in Roslin are a distant memory. Surely we have a right to have parks maintained and to live in a cared for and attractive environment Other councils seem to manage. East and West Lothian, Dundee, Aberdeen. Suggest a visit to see how they do it with a reduced charge from their council taxpayers. Midlothian should make every effort to collect payments due but not made. Musical instrument tuition could be paid for by the parents as is other forms of extra-curricular activities. Perhaps a curb on free handouts, free rent on social housing given to those in genuine need and help people to take self-responsibility as it used to be. I realise that "MY SAY" will have absolutely no influence on council decisions. I do not belong to a minority group so my opinion is of no consequence. No. I am just one of those who has worked all my life, faced up to and continue to deal with the trauma of life today, paid and continue to pay all my dues and taxes. Life is not easy for any of us.
34. Digital by default - Fine except for those without online access i.e. the poor and vulnerable. What alternatives will be available?
35. Some of the proposals are just disgraceful and do nothing but impact the genuinely vulnerable and children and put people at a higher risk of danger and injury. E.g. roads and winter maintenance; removing bus services.
36. There are some good sensible ideas which in the face of budget cuts would seem least likely to affect the most vulnerable in society. Review of executive pay within the council is welcome. Reduction in waste collections and charging for brown bin services also makes ecological and economic sense. For the same reasons reduction in grass cutting, flowerbeds etc. all seem fair - these are tasks easily taken over by the community and with regards to grass verges leaving them uncut should encourage wildlife. I also agree that street sweeping services could be reduced without significant impact on communities. Although not ideal charging for musical instrument lessons also seems acceptable - it is often the more well off children that are able to take up these lessons anyway particularly as many of them seem to involve travel to Lasswade which is not possible on public transport from Gorebridge.

37. Say no and ask the whole Midlothian Community to bridge the gap with local contributions. No withdrawal of music tuition, library and recycling facilities. There is an element of societal madness that is beyond politics. Wake up to the need to educate us all to pay for what we need with sensible taxes not the madness of this race to the bottom to compete with getting away to what self-centred greedy society will tolerate. The weakest suffer and no-one really cares. We need to care deeply and show it.
38. The council will lose a lot of credibility with the working, paying residents if these proposals are accepted in full.
39. Digital Services review - bringing work in-house allows for staff to be used for multiple tasks without having these having to be stipulated in contracts with private providers
40. Service improvement/ business processes/ service reduction. Why is this not happening already? Support staff should be embedded with their service where the nature/sophistication of their work requires it. They should be managed by the service they work for. There is a reasonable need for some coordinating oversight of things common to all services - e.g. purchasing, stationery, photocopying, corporate approaches to things.
41. Look for further efficiency savings across the board rather than cessation of services.
42. What are we paying our taxes for? Some of these proposals will cause welfare and health and safety issues not to mention burdens on other government services such as police! You can't be serious!!!!
43. A lot of the cuts being proposed are disgraceful, but perhaps no more than we should expect from a Labour/SNP controlled Council who are clearly only interested in political point-scoring. If you go ahead with many of these proposals, what exactly will we be getting for our Council Tax? Some of the proposals are just idiotic, such as closing the skip facility at Penicuik. Combine that with your proposal to extend bin collection to 3 weeks and what you will get is more fly tipping which you will then spend a fortune cleaning up. Do you actually think about the consequences of what you are proposing, or is it simply a case of throw these things out to the public and then blame everyone else for the cuts? It's a disgraceful way to run a Council.
44. The proposals are unfair reducing public services. The roads are already a mess and you are suggesting reducing maintenance? I think they are completely unrealistic. Shocking that public services are being reduced or stopped completely. What in earth is happening with my tax money? The part about road maintenance is laughable. This will cost people their jobs. Absolutely disgusting I am hugely disappointed in Midlothian council. Yet again there has been a failure to manage budget and the taxpayer pays the price.
45. I would strongly argue against: cuts to libraries, bus subsidies, school learning assistants and charging after school clubs additional rent. I also have grave reservations about cuts to road maintenance, for safety reasons. I do think that charging for the hire of venues such as Vogrie and charging for event support is a legitimate way to raise revenue
46. I understand that the budget cuts are severe however the cuts that are proposed seem to be hitting the poorest in the community the hardest. There must be more creative ways to budget for the local authority.....

47. Lack of clarity of how the savings have been calculated.
48. Cutting services isn't going to cut the cost. Pushing things away only serves to bump up costs due to inefficiency's.
49. I'm disgusted by the proposals, and by the fact that you were only hosting meetings in Dalkeith - the only place where you're not proposing to close a library.
50. I am absolutely shocked that two fundamental services are on the list to be removed in Penicuik, and yet there has not been a public meeting in Penicuik to discuss this. The public meetings were all held in Dalkeith where people will be less likely to fight for a Penicuik Service as this will not affect their direct community. I implore you to provide a meeting within Penicuik (the largest town in Midlothian) to discuss these plans.
51. Unfortunately many of these proposals are counter productive and will only address the short-term budget shortfall. They will in the end lead to more problems which will affect a future budget. Before making changes, council really have to think of the consequences of such actions rather than just removing a line of budget on an excel chart.
52. I think you need to look more at why there is this budget gap? If council tax is being increased by 3% every year, then this should be manageable. If we are getting lots of new people in that can't afford council tax (which of course I have nothing against), then surely we should hit out at Scottish Government for not compensating for this.
53. Greater publicity and promotion of the effects of central government cuts on local councils, encouraging public pressure against such measures.
54. I would suggest less impact measures in the residents and namely the children of the area.
55. Quite ill thought in the main part. I would suggest re negotiation of contracts is not an initiative but standard operating practice.
56. Challenge austerity policies approach by UK government.
57. Look at increasing revenue rather than cutting such vital services. It's outrageous.
58. Outrageous - all these services are vital.
59. I sympathise with you and hope Scottish Govt see sense and up the settlement.
60. I feel the real impact of any cuts is not properly explained and therefore cannot be realistically decided upon. Are we just moving costs about? Overlooking the prime function of the council?
61. Ask the Scottish parliament to give you more money.
62. I would support going digital by default. However I would question the level of saving it is likely to generate.
63. Continue to lobby Scottish government for additional funds to support a high growth area.
64. I would support the service improvement plan savings but I would question the level of savings it is likely to generate.

65. Shared services – I would support this proposal but question the level of saving it is likely to generate.
66. I do not envy the Council the task of identifying savings on its budget over the next few years. Whatever is done will generate opposition. However, as long as the Council has carried out a fair and full assessment of the various options and sought to minimise risk and harm, especially to vulnerable groups then we should be able to respect the difficult decisions that are taken.
67. Outraged that so many vital services are being earmarked for cuts, putting the safety of every member of our community at risk.
68. Campaign for additional funding from Scottish Government, merge IT, HR and Payroll services with other councils. Stop contracting our services to private companies
69. There is no mention of how the Council itself will be more efficient in its operation, providing transparency and accountability on Councillors pay and expenses for example.
70. You need to have wider consultation with the public to get their concerns. I stumbled upon this survey by accident.
71. I am disappointed at these cuts. Which will rip the heart out of many communities.
72. The list you have on savings is extremely worrying and would almost certainly be counter-productive. Not everyone is online and if they are not everyone reads the Midlothian Council site, you need to get out and about and speak to people where the footfall is greatest, events, shopping centres etc.
73. Midlothian is going to be in a total state of disgust and disrepair....shameful. It's bad enough as it is.
74. What are we getting for our council tax?
75. The savings proposals outlined are ridiculous. There is no explanation as to the impact these proposals will have on the majority of residents within the council area.
76. My goodness do you have any idea about living I gave actually given up reading this because I am so appalled at your thoughts and bet you are sitting with a big office and a bigger fat wage!!!
77. Each proposed saving should be subject of a risk assessment to try to gauge, firstly, the likelihood of the proposed action actually delivering the suggested saving, and, secondly, the level of harm that the proposed reduction or withdrawal of service will result in.
78. The list of proposed savings is in fact a mixture of savings in actual expenditure and potential increases in income. By my estimation £5.732 million of the suggested 'savings' is actually new income. This represents almost a quarter of the cumulative total. While it is right and proper that the Council should try and generate additional income where it can appropriately do so I would urge caution in relying on new income, especially from unproven sources such as selling services to others. It is not prudent to assume that individuals and other

organisations will want to pay more, or at all, to purchase services that the Council provides. An assessment of the likelihood of the income figures being achieved should be carried out.

79. The goal definition is already giving the wrong direction to take and subsequently setting the wrong mindset to approach the budget issues. It should include, explore ways to supplement budget shortage by creating income from alternative sources. Goal should be to bring more money back to Midlothian and any money spend in Midlothian should stay within Midlothian and not end up as dividend payments to investors outside Midlothian (Like Utility companies, Online shopping at big firms, Big UK grocery shops, etc., etc.). Create strategic plans to support and develop local businesses.
80. We need to put values on services on the scale of 'essential/functional to optional/cosmetic' and also consider who is affected on a scale of vulnerability/risk. Having said that, there should be some scope for art/culture/enjoyment. I would not support the grassing over of flowerbeds, for example.
81. Some of the changes look like they will make short term savings but have a long term cost for the folk living here- not impressed
82. I understand you would prefer to have people make suggestions for where to make savings as opposed to just criticising the proposed savings you have outlined, however unless you give the public full visibility of your cash flow or profit and loss report (which would most likely need to be further broken down), then we won't be able to identify where the cost savings could be made.
83. I have read, with increasing dismay, your "Savings Proposals". While I am aware of the need to increase revenue where possible, these proposals, if enacted, will **totally undermine the social fabric of Midlothian**. If you feel these proposals are justified, then I can only suggest that you disband Midlothian Council as I can see no further use for the administration of such deplete services. I do wonder what all those incomers paying half a million for a new house make of your proposals. There is nothing attractive about any of your proposals. No one is addressing the increased infrastructure necessary to cope with this influx either. 'Green sites' have been miraculously changed into 'brown ones' and loopholes allow house builders to renege on numbers of 'affordable housing' originally promised. If this document is meant as a political tool to force the Scottish Government in to providing more financial support, I doubt you will achieve this. It smacks of incompetence and a total lack of understanding of the political landscape. A balanced strategic plan might have gained some respect at Holyrood. Disgusted!
84. Overall the council should look to working in a commercial manner and abandon its no compulsory redundancies policy as clearly this is not affordable.
85. In this day and age no job is guaranteed in the private sector, there is no reason why the public sector should not be the same. If funding is not available then unfortunately measures need to be taken to make things more efficient including redundancies if necessary just as in the private sector.
86. I am writing to you to let you know that you can take your greediness and selfishness and shove it where the sun doesn't shine. We need the libraries and lollipop men/women etc. to keep our community safe and well taken care of, but the only thing the council care about is

your Mercedes and yourself. If we lose our community services we will lose our respect for Midlothian. If something isn't done about this then I personally will hold a debate about the subject. Please reconsider.

87. This seems to be a mean set of proposals which will affect the poor, the less well off the homeless disproportionately but also will impact on middle class Midlothian as well. It also seems disproportionately aimed at shafting rural Midlothian who pay just as much council tax as anyone else and basically already get very little in the way of council services. If you fail to maintain roads, strand us in winter etc. How are we supposed to get out to work, kids to school. Maybe this is part of your savings plan and just think if the roads are impassable you won't have to empty our bins either
88. I was trying to fundraise for a "projector" in Kings Park a few years ago. In short I could buy the item for £300 and the Council could buy it for £400, but after I brought this to the attention of the procurement department, their supplier said they could match my price straight away. I was only buying one without haggling, so how much money is the council losing by not getting "best value for money", think how much money could be saved. Why is this not done for every purchase? I went back to the supplier and they could go as low as £250 as it for education, so in this instance there is more money to be saved.
89. Continue to press for more flexibility in local council financial matters and do raise council tax. We need the services and must do more to pay for them.
90. I do understand that the Council is facing tough times, with revenue from central government at best stable and costs rising steadily. However, I would suggest that in addition to looking at means of reducing costs, including closure of really well used and highly valued facilities, the Council should look hard at means of increasing revenue from sources for which it has direct responsibility. I am referring here to Council Tax and income from housing rental. So far as Council Tax is concerned, the latest data do again show that the percentage collected in Midlothian is well below the Scottish average - 94.5% as compared to 95.8%. Midlothian is to the bottom end of the league table so far as Scottish local authorities are concerned. Simply achieving the average in Scotland would yield a substantial amount of money and hence reduce the need for damaging cuts in services. There seems no good reason why Midlothian should not at the least match the Scottish norm. The same logic applies to rent arrears on Council housing. The level of arrears at March 2017 was somewhat down on March 2016, but still markedly higher than most other local authorities - at nearly 9%. When local authorities like Moray and East Renfrewshire can achieve arrears as low as between 2 and 3% the scope for improvement in Midlothian is crystal clear. Again there is no valid excuse for this sharp degree of under-performance.
91. In sum Midlothian does have scope to raise distinctly more revenue from sources where it has the direct responsibility. This has to be the first step taken before closing Roslin Library, damaging other leisure services or generally reducing activity in areas which are so important to so many in Midlothian. Please ACT NOW!! This has to be in the best interests of all Council Tax payers.
92. I realise that under this government's austerity program which requires a reduction in local council spending savings have to be made to achieve this. However I have been concerned that in the past no one seems to take into consideration social costs. For example the

proposed closing of the libraries especially the mobile library which gives a service to elderly and infirm people whose only point of contact with others is this service, the closure of any library will deprive elderly people a local meeting place where they can make contact with others. As for only leaving one library open this is a ridiculous suggestion. Considering the distance between them, this would deprive a great number of ratepayers a service which others would have. I know it is possible to download books but a lot of elderly people cannot do this.

Regarding refuse collection and your proposals for garden waste, I feel that a yearly payment would be acceptable for some but would probably increase fly tipping by others. A cut back in road maintenance, Is there any road maintenance at present? It seems the only thing that happens on our roads is people digging them up, perhaps the length of time the contractors who dig them up and responsible for their reinstatement should have their liability period extended. There is no doubt these so called reinstatements are the biggest contributor to our bad roads. The cost to your bus fleet suspensions must be extortionate.

However when it comes to waste someone needs to look at the cost of lighting at Lasswade high school. I have used the gym facility there, three times a week since the school opened and during that period, I have never seen a light switched off during daylight hours. One example the corridor from the reception to the swimming pool has 91 lights, a total lighting load of one kilowatt per hour. This corridor has external glass wall from floor to ceiling running its full length and outside this there is small external canopy with lighting which is never off. This is only one area of this building.

93. I am writing to raise objection, in the strongest possible terms, to a number of proposed cuts contained in your 'Proposed Savings' Document. In doing so I wish it to be noted that many of the comments offered cut across areas which the document treats as separate. The use of boxes to block out convenient areas of expenditure is, frankly, an unhelpful and simplistic way of considering the services provided by a Local Authority, and the inevitable detrimental impacts said 'cuts' might impact.

From 1980-84 we lived, and I worked, in Newbattle Abbey College. In 1984 we moved to Easthouses, residing there until 1997. Redundancy from Newbattle in 1990 meant employment was then in Edinburgh. During all of that time we had no complaints about service provision. Bin collections were weekly, streets were regularly swept, grass verges cut, gritting was exemplary. Dalkeith Library was a regular feature of the week with two young children as were the Local Authority provided Leisure Centres and Newbattle pool. Gorebridge Leisure Centre was a Saturday morning Badminton venue, followed by the Library. There was little else in Gorebridge then, just as now!

Having lived in Edinburgh since 1997 we moved to Dewar Park in Gorebridge, a new build estate, still in progress. The new residents of this development, as others across Midlothian, warrant more services, not less, which is what the document proposes. Parks poorly tended, dog fouling unpoliced, litter accumulating, is hardly a good situation to enable children to play safely and understand the value of a tidy and healthy community space. One solution offered here is to communally 'privatise' facilities, removing them from Local Governance and oversight. Bad policy unless you can guarantee excellent governance and future funding.

We visited the new Library just opened in Loanhead, a D-I-Y service. An elderly woman visiting spoke to a Librarian and asked 'where are the books I liked to find in the old Library'. She was not reassured (nor was I) when she was referred to a computer to locate the Library Catalogue. I refused to use the facility to book out a book pointing out that Supermarkets do the same, in their case to increase profits. Having a Librarian, in situ, offers much, much more than a computer ever could. I have to ask why it is assumed that Libraries can disappear and everyone be expected to 'go online', what educational theory informs such a blatantly daft suggestion.

Maybe deferring the 'cuts' until 2060 would work but even then I doubt it. Councillors (and the Council Officers) who might see this as an easy hit clearly lack any understanding of Libraries functionality. As someone who worked in Education for 40 years using manual and digital systems together the latter is no substitute for the former. I would plead strongly that their value be recognised and protected. As a Gorebridge resident who has seen little additional provision in the area since 1997 I am flabbergasted at the idea of even less. The 'Community Hub' progresses even more slowly than the Tram Project did in Edinburgh, and has ground to a halt.

Your development plans say Build More, Get More people In, but your policy suggestions are unresponsive to community need in any respect whatsoever.

I note references to 'Consultancy' and other supposed revenue raising schemes. Since 1980 I suspect such proposals will have been made regularly, in my experience they rarely even pay their way and often become a further drain on resources.

94. I have listened carefully to the presentation of the financial crisis that Midlothian Council is facing in the next five years. I have also read the published papers, much of which I cannot comment on due to my lack of knowledge about each specific service area. However, I have to say that in a quickly growing and dynamic suburb of Edinburgh the opportunities must outweigh the threats to create a vibrant and socially secure future, the very opposite of the prognostications of Midlothian Council authors of the published papers.

1. Paper is very "micro-management" orientated. Many areas of very small savings that will be difficult to implement.

2. A considerable number of outsourcing activities that claim substantial savings to the Council budget. In reality, experience with large public body organisations demonstrates additional costs related to the Council having to retain employees to monitor external provision performance. Also external services provided on a "profit making" basis is rarely more cost effective in the long run.

3. Not many instances of improved productivity in Council Services. Most large public have areas of inefficiency that could boost their effectiveness without cuts in service provision.

4. Little thought about consolidation across Departments to economise on high cost Management and Executive staff.

5. Some thought given to creating income for the Council by commercialising Council Services. However, none seem sufficient enough to subsidise provision of services to the Community.

6. The Midlothian Local Development Plan forecasts substantial growth in the population of the Midlothian Council Area. No mention in the Paper about growth of Council Tax income from increased Council Tax revenues. Also, no mention of Midlothian getting more Scottish Government support on a per capita basis.

7. No delineation between Capital and Revenue spending. If large Capital Projects with the possibility of commercial exploitation were to be undertaken then jobs would be created in the build phase with self-sustaining income when up and running. The ambitious use of Council land and buildings to create large solar farms or any other green energy projects could well contribute to the wealth of the Midlothian Community.

Here are a few POSITIVE thoughts based on my previous experiences in industry and education.

When I joined Napier in 1987 100% of their revenue came from grants awarded by Edinburgh Town Council. The academics and administrators had a fixed budgeting approach on how to spend the cash they were allocated. Their approach at that time was very much like the Midlothian Change programme is today. "How to spend money" was their mantra. Over the time of my service when Napier achieved University status, I urged a change of philosophy from "spending" to "making". Today Napier's revenues from block grant only cover 45% of their expenditure and they manage to make a decent surplus every year. Their capital expenditure to modernise their assets both, tangible and intangible, has been adventurous to say the least. That's the kind of Change programme needed by Midlothian Council. Let's call it "Midlothian Going for Growth!"

95. For instance - 10,000 new houses adds up to £25 million extra revenue per annum. Granted that is not all surplus as there are significant costs involved in providing services for the 40,000 additional inhabitants. Nevertheless, incoming economic development provided by a GDP increase of around £800 million per annum from a population increase of more than 50,000, must create substantial opportunity. Where in the Change Plan does it demonstrate advantage from substantial growth? What about the income that can be derived from helping establish businesses and services to provide for all these new inhabitants?
96. The Carbon Footprint of Midlothian is also set to increase along with the population. There are opportunities such as, ensuring that houses built in Midlothian are built to the highest level of environmental standards. Also, what services would the, largely middle class, new population be prepared to pay for? Power, Heat and Light is a major expenditure for households - thus the generation of clean power is a no brainer. Waste disposal services could be revolutionised along the lines of that provided in Republic of Ireland. Peripheral support services in health and education might also increase revenues. All areas where Midlothian Council has valuable expertise.
97. We have several businesses in Midlothian that are a model of commercialisation growth such as Dobbies. Perhaps, the top management of 5 successful companies could be garnered into a "Think Tank" along with progressive Midlothian Councillors and Executives to map out a Growth Plan for the future rather than the perpetual downbeat and grind of cost cutting outlined in the "Shaping our Future" documents. What do you think?

98. Can we encourage more business investment in Midlothian? Also, why is the plan to put funds away into reserve? Could you consider reserves staying at the same level for the time being, reducing the scale of the cuts? It would require sticking carefully to the budget for the year.
99. Possibly the gloomiest reading since Brexit!! Cutting down on lifeguards, libraries and other vital services is NOT the answer. If councils didn't overspend in the first place, this would all be unnecessary. You should be checking up on benefit fraud and all the people who get something for nothing! No wonder people go to the Cayman Islands for a tax haven.
100. I hope that you think very carefully about the cuts that you are going to make. All things are very important. Schools, libraries, social services. Please think very carefully.
101. Savings could also be made by encouraging customers to do more online: I am concerned about the emphasis put on accessing services online. A surprising number of people have little or no IT skills or hardware e.g. printer (this I know through work) and to make matters worse, the Council is proposing local library branch closures, the one place where computers and some help is available.
102. I have read about the planned cuts to council services in Midlothian with great dismay. As our elected representative I implore you help protect services within Midlothian to maintain social cohesion and social mobility, safety, public health, maximise opportunities for young people and protect vulnerable members of Society.
103. While many of the cuts proposed in non-statutory services are undesirable, I think that a number will have a disproportionate effect, especially those relating to Education in its wider sense. Therefore I would wish the following to be protected:
- Early Intervention and Prevention Services
- Employment of Learning Assistants
- Instrumental tuition
- Retention of branch libraries
- The other area where I feel proposals are counter-productive are:
- Proposals to change bin collection arrangements
- Charging for garden waste
- Closing the Penicuik recycling centre
- As I live in a rural area I am also concerned about some of the transport proposals, in particular the reduction in any transport support which impacts on elderly rural inhabitants.
104. Please find a list of my suggestions below.
- Keep all lollipop men and ladies, a reduction in road safety is not acceptable and a single child injured is too many. There is no acceptable level of reduced child road safety. As child safety is an absolute priority pool lifeguard cover should also be maintained at its current level.

- Maintain local libraries and leisure centres to help maximise opportunities for young people, social mobility, social cohesion, engagement for mothers with children and older people. Leisure centres are imperative to help maintain and improve general health, failure to act on which will result in greater problems and costs in the future. The Roslin library is an important community hub and efforts should be made to increase community activities here, increase footfall and help to library to partly self- fund. Penicuik library and leisure centre form an excellent local facility which has received significant funding from the council to establish. It is imperative that this facility be maintained for the benefit of the people of Midlothian and also to justify previous spending on this facility.
- Football pitches and other exercise facilities should be maintained for similar reasons to those explained above.
- Community Pavilions must be maintained for the same reasons of increasing social cohesion, provision for activities, physical exercise and activities for children, mothers with small children and older people in particular.
- Keep school caretakers/ janitors at their current levels. Reducing in- house staff will ultimately result in greater costs through the use of contractors and decrease working life of buildings.
- Maintain teaching assistants and school budgets at their current levels to maximise opportunities for our young people. Reductions in this area will only lead to higher unemployment and social problems in future.
- Maintain instrument tuition and after school clubs. Maximising future opportunities for young people should be a key priority for the council as they are the key to future prosperity and social mobility in our county.
- Maintain current levels of early intervention and prevention for children and families. Cuts in this area will result in future social problems, damaging lives and communities and ultimately incurring much greater costs for council and community.
- Maintain B&B provision for homeless people and families. It is the absolute responsibility of society to look after its weakest members. The welfare rights service should be maintained at its current level for the same reason.
- Flower beds not to be grassed over but to be planted with native wildflowers and flowering shrubs that require minimal maintenance while being both attractive and engendering social pride in peoples dwelling places. Making the dwelling places of Midlothian bare and undecorated may result in an increase in vandalism and social depression.
- Continue fortnightly black bin collection, reducing collections may result in an increase in littering and fly tipping, which would incur costs and damage the environment. The Penicuik waste centre should be maintained for the same reason, though opening hours could be reduced to save costs.
- Secure an increased financial settlement for the county from government.
- Demand increased contributions from housing developers to fund community infrastructure and projects, including ongoing contributions.

- Turn off half of all street lights to save money and reduce light pollution.
- Devolve more responsibilities to some frontline workers, reducing middle management staff, or have management staff adopt more frontline responsibilities.
- Introduce a system of charging services companies per day for works causing disruption to roads.
- Increase efficiency of working practices by council employees
- Further savings within council offices.

Please help protect services for the people of Midlothian.

105. I am deeply concerned by the cuts you propose, and deeply disappointed that your assumption is that we can cut our way out of this problem. Where is your vision? Your creativity? What kind of place do you think Midlothian will be to live in 5 years' time? Will you want to live here? Your children and grandchildren? The cuts are hugely damaging to children and young people. I draw your attention to the response from Kings Park Parent Council and ask you to consider the overall punitive impact on children and young people. There are many alternatives to cuts. I draw your attention to the response from Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council and ask you to take the alternatives proposed seriously. There is widespread opposition to your short sighted and hugely damaging plan to close libraries. Over 1800 people have signed a petition against this <https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries> These is also widespread opposition to your plan to cut free instrumental tuition. Over 2400 people have signed a petition against this <https://www.change.org/p/janet-lay-douglas-midlothian-gov-uk-say-no-to-the-proposed-budget-cut-of-our-midlothian-schools-music-tuition-service> Your public engagement exercise was poor to say the least. You cannot engage the community by talking at them in the Council Chamber, and framing the discussion with "well, if you want to keep X, tell us what else to cut". You need to do a great deal better to engage local residents, third sector organisations, businesses and community councils in devising solutions together which create a vision for Midlothian that offers hope for the future.

106. *Same comments as above submitted by a second respondent.*

107. *Comments from third respondent in reply to 103 above.* I am very supportive of your initiatives, so it's with some reluctance that I must point out that, at this stage, the proposals are not being made by councillors. All of the proposals have been prepared by council officers, for Councillor review and decision. The councillors will try to avoid answering your very pertinent criticisms by pointing this out and stressing that these are not their proposals - and that that is why they embarked on the "consultation" process. They know that you are addressing the generic "Council", but will take any avenue to deflect from substance to presentation.

108. I share the same concerns and back the suggestions proposed by the Eskbank & Newbattle in their open letter. (see Group Responses)

109. I share the same concerns and back the suggestions proposed by the Eskbank & Newbattle in their open letter. (see Group Responses)

110. I recognise that local authorities are under severe financial pressure and that Midlothian faces difficult decisions. Some of the proposed savings in your consultation paper seem defensible, e.g. some are moving in the right direction with plans to redesign and transform services such as the plans for rebalancing social care; digital by default (but don't like the title) to do more on line; and expansion of shared services and PPP shared management. Increases in fees also seems justified provided those who can least afford them are protected. Further efficiencies in the way departments of the Council are operated.

I have concerns over plans to cut back on some essential services even if they are non-statutory, such as Cutting back on gritting of roads and pavements; cutting back on road maintenance - these are short term measures which may well increase costs elsewhere and over time - more falls/accidents on icing roads/pavements and a build-up of expensive backlog maintenance.

Closing all libraries except one. Libraries are important community facilities especially for mothers with young children and pensioners and this change would be a false economy resulting in increased social isolation and reductions in wellbeing.

Taking more services in house and stopping grants to third sector organisations and commissioning services instead. The Christie report demonstrated the importance of working in partnership not competition with the third sector and many of the proposals seem to want to pass on the pain on to voluntary and community groups and protect the council.

Overall the proposals are disappointing in suggesting a further round of salami slicing services which will not provide a long term and sustainable solution to the provision of services and building Midlothian into an area which encourages economic growth and delivers a good quality of life for its citizens.

I should like to see much more about redesigning and transforming services/using technology/working with other LAs together with a much greater focus on working in partnership with the voluntary and community sectors in a spirit of co-production.

111. I have read your proposal for future savings and have to say that I am surprised by the targeting of soft targets and facilities activities that people use, libraries, music, sports facilities, street cleaning, learning assistants etc. Did your research show that outside of saving money, the modification to this service would be of benefit to the community outside of the fiscal saving? Do you all live in the area? Do you have family or relations in the area that will not be detrimentally affected by this activity? Do you not want to develop Midlothian into an area that is not considered a commuter belt of Edinburgh city? From my own research and from talking to concerned parents in the area I think that these are detrimental proposals and I really do not see them as a shaping of our future nor a positive programme for change.

112. Midlothian Council Budget Cuts Response

The Economy is meant to ensure all have enough and live in a healthy environment.

The Economy is:

The State is Westminster, Holyrood, Midlothian Council

The Market is behaviour

The Commons is common ownership of local resources, including community organisations

The Household is individuals' choices themselves / within their immediate relationships

Responsibility seems to fall like this:

Westminster -

Make tax fair, land value tax, maybe transaction tax

Break the power of patrimonial capital

Legislate the markets to value the living world over corporate profit

Address poverty, social isolation, environmental damage

Ban 'planned obsolescence' in products and disincentivise 'perceived obsolescence'

Increase basic, sustainable human habitation infrastructure near agricultural areas

Invest in walking and cycling

Divest from fossil fuels in transportation

Pay for adverts that discourage over consumption & gratification seeking

Penalise companies breeding the nutrition out of fruit and vegetables and incentivise the production and sale of high-nutrition varieties of each food plant species

End industrialised farming of animals

Legislate to improve soil quality & penalise those damaging soil quality

Support vegetable-based diets

The world needs to cut 80 gigatons of CO2 avoided emissions by 2050 to meet the International Energy Agency's 2 degree temperature rise scenario - this MUST be taken seriously

Explore how to reduce the number of people (e.g. encourage fewer children and having them slightly later spaces out generation's lives more & other non-unkind methods)

Encourage living within 'Doughnut Economics' - Kate Raworth - where no one has too much, everyone has enough and we live within environmental limits Google "seven ways to think like a 21st century economist"

Properly enforce social justice

Get us out of Neoliberalism

Allow medical cannabis use and better scientific exploration of hemp uses and anything like this where big pharma has an interest in blocking people from their natural heritage

Holyrood -

Address poverty, social isolation, environmental damage

Increase basic habitation infrastructure near agricultural areas

Give people on benefits free choice of where to do work experience placements

Reforest Scotland

Finance Permaculture & encourage people into this work (paid or unpaid as long as they have sufficient needs met)

Invest in science that can help people 'tread lightly on the earth'

Invest in eco-innovation

Midlothian Council -

Ensure people have food, clothes, shelter

Use land for housing for 'shelter' not for profit-making

Housing areas to be 'public luxury, private sufficiency'

Partner with community organisations

Find how to genuinely support community organisations as they grow

Get insight into how to develop Intellectual Property of your staff in a way that benefits you both - many people have valuable IP but not the skills to do something with it

Encourage schools, colleges & unis to work on projects for defined and measurable social benefits (eg the High School 'Leadership' course should address real issues)

Swap care for escaping victims of domestic violence with other councils and have those seeking refuge help older people who need someone with them at home at night - to take the burden off social services for one and to provide shelter for the other

Find the special font suggested to the US Government which uses much less ink and so saves on all printing.

Lambeth borough of London did a study into 'thick participative culture' whereby when 10% of the community get involved in something suddenly everyone wants to and much social change is effected

Don't silo people for the delivery of services but empower communities (through making choices that enable enough food, clothes, shelter for people) to help those in their neighbourhoods - this don't not mean providing for this, but making sure it is prioritised

If any of these is not possible by the Council then maybe it is a role for Westminster or Holyrood.

Encourage locally stewarded local resources

Make unused land available for community growing and Permaculture

Places not things make people happy, so prioritise making places good

Grow net trade in skills and services - which are as unlimited as people's creativity - but especially whatever has a low environmental impact

The biggest untapped resource is people in our communities - support them and value them, end a culture where people (e.g. those on benefits) can be belittled

Seek genuine partnership where it would be useful to the work needing doing

Community Organisations -

Work towards tipping point of 10% local community involvement in community work

Ensure local resources are locally managed and the benefits distributed equitably

Encourage householders to reduce rubbish & other positive behaviours

Build micro-tourism for local towns through quirky local stories, so cycling & walking improve the local economy as people who travel slowly spend more

Crowd-source funds

Provide low-cost, sustainably sourced entertainment

Organise community food growing

Work to ensure that everyone is offered the opportunity to work on community projects, to feel valued

Create Alumni associations to help local schools with funding, mentoring, inspiration

Develop community social finance for local businesses and social enterprise

Lead simple outdoor affordable fitness for community members

Collaborate to save one another's discretionary income which can then be spent on needed things rather than superfluous things

Build networks for community libraries to exist

Find individuals who can help with adult social care in their residential areas

Try 'Big organising' (e.g. Bernie Sanders presidential campaign) and 'thick participative culture' (George Monbiot mentions this)

Check out how Rotterdam is run through community organising

Build community relationships so 'defacto grandparents' are created to help with childcare issues

Facilitate people to give and receive freely, to redistribute what they do not need

Community members to share skills for mutual skills development

Encourage University, college and schools students to focus their research on things that will benefit local and wider communities

Community-owned sustainable energy

Protect the local biosphere

Explore non-monetary forms of investment into people's lives

Provide low-cost fitness - e.g. weights, yoga, pilates

Support young-people led local games through low cost sports equipment and some adult direction / facilitation as needed

Collectively tell MPs/MSPs /MEPs to legislate as per items the state is responsible for

The Household -

Consume less

Reduce rubbish

Grow food where able (and this is a healthier life)

Use less energy

Everyone able to take up the opportunity to work (even if unpaid)

Be supportive community members

Explore how to need less and be fulfilled anyway

Avoid 'perceived obsolescence' things

Reduce, reuse, recycle

Share

Eat less but with better nutrition (and it is likely to be healthier)

Leave assets to democratic local community organisations if there are no preferred beneficiaries

Seek a lower standard of living (and it is likely to be healthier)

Tell MPs/MSPs /MEPs to legislate as per items the state is responsible for

Everyone... tell a better story... about what people, organisations and communities can be...

The way we manage resources should enable all to have enough and to live in an increasingly clean environment.

Only real things can suffer - people, animals, living things, living systems like river valleys and old-growth forests... these need protecting, over any social constructs.

On Midlothian's budget cuts specifically I think:

I think planning officer posts and general environmental health officer posts should not be cut because these respectively help the build environment to be attractive and positive for people and protect the natural environment from pollution and exploitation. Both of these are essential for long term community wellbeing - both affect the living world.

The Council's Role:

The Council can only be a local 'authority' on what it is resources to unilaterally provide. Beyond that, genuine partnership should be sought - with everything done to reduce any power imbalanced, real or perceived, that could distort the partnerships and limit their creative potential.

Real Needs:

Though it is not mentioned anywhere in the budget cuts document, averting or mitigating Climate Breakdown caused by over-consumption is one of the most pressing problems in the world today.

An even more serious need is to end the atrocious suffering of industrially farmed animals, experience throughout their entire lives. I am counting this a more serious, because it is purposeful, conscious and daily whereas climate breakdown has been 'not-on-purpose' and 'not-conscious' by human society over a long period. These are goals for Westminster and Holyrood to deal with, but I would have liked to see the Council make reference to our need in Midlothian to directly act to prioritise averting climate breakdown - as an 'authority' the Council should deal with what are important concerns. (I accept that cruelty to industrially farmed animals is not yet a mass-popularly-conscious priority to address).

113. I have consulted far and wide about the proposed changes/cuts and the causes driving their necessity. Your open meetings were excellent, but the general consultation - with a few summary documents in libraries, has not been good, maybe this stems from not wanting to devote too many resources to it? I am very sorry that you find yourselves in such a difficult financial position, the situation is desperate. I will campaign to give you as my local authority more money and more autonomy over for example planning decisions and how quickly our LA should grow. I am pleased that you propose to cut now the 'Switch' program and the council now needs to move to compulsory redundancies. I think you should consider shared services and consider merging with both East Lothian and West Lothian.

114. In general rural communities & families will be hit the hardest by the proposed cuts. I've commented on those I considered to be most relevant to me living in Edgehead.

Proposed saving Area	Change Programme page reference	Comment
Draconian reduction in library provision	51	This will adversely impact on library provision to the residents of Edgehead and other rural communities. In addition the reduction from 9 libraries to 1 Midlothian central library will increase the traffic around the 1 central library (not

Proposed saving Area	Change Programme page reference	Comment
		identified). The proposed removal of bus provision and introduction of car park charges will also discriminate against rural communities. It seems incredible that the scale of the proposed changes (8 branch closures and 30 FTE posts) only generates a proposed saving of £0.240M.
Bin charges	55	Effectively this is a (hopefully) one off charge for an essential service. What if the bin is damaged by the collectors?
Bin collection changes	56	Is there any evidence that a 3 week collection period would meet the needs of the average family i.e. would the service be fit for purpose? If not then charging for a second bin (see above) would discriminate against families.
Closure of Penicuik recycling centre	57	Predictably this will lead to an increase in fly tipping – already an issue in rural areas.
Charging for garden waste collection	58	Is this an annual charge? How and by whom would the charge be administered? How would the households that have paid be identified? Would the service then continue throughout the year i.e. not stop through the winter months?
Reduced winter maintenance budget	74	Again rural communities will be worst hit! What is meant by priority routes?
Stop support of galas and events	66	This would completely stop the smaller galas / village day events. Independent provision of marquees etc. is beyond the reach of all but the largest of organisations. Again this discriminates against the rural communities.
Stop supported bus grants and the “Ring and Go” Taxi	78 & 79	Another cut that directly discriminates against rural communities. It is understood that the bus that goes through Edgehead will be rerouted via the A68 directly impacting commuters. This along with the proposed reduction in the Taxi scheme would remove all public transport from Edgehead and other rural villages.

Proposed saving Area	Change Programme page reference	Comment
Increased sport and leisure fees	115	If the target is £50K why is the saving identified as £100K? As there is an Incremental saving identified does this mean an annual increase in the fees?

Where a loss of FTE posts are identified there is no cost shown.

The impact analysis is woefully inadequate.

The total saving identified for 2018/19 is £8.55 million and for 2021/22 is £23.258 million. How is the shortfall between the saving and £13.5 million and £45 million deficit met?

115. Thank you for the intimation about possible Council Cutbacks. As I said at the Meeting I attended I found the whole approach very negative and quite depressing and I am hoping that what was proposed was the 'worst case scenario'.

Briefly:

Staffing- I am assuming that all employed staff have been reduced as far as is practical and where contractors are employed that these are very closely monitored for quality of work and time involved.

Community workers already do a valuable amount of work and are essential in areas of deprivation and are usually augmented by volunteers and therefore it would be detrimental to the Communities they serve to cut their services any further.

If refuse collections are further reduced then there will be even more 'fly-tipping' leading to an increased need for pest control and Environmental Health support, so cutting these back would have a very detrimental effect on the whole community, including the built environment.

Reducing the Early Intervention and Prevention Services is indefensible and places many children at risk.

EDUCATION

Any reduction in ancillary services and educational provision will only reduce the quality of life for all members of the community, young and old alike and this would include the closure of essential library services. Libraries are not only a source of education and information but also a meeting point for help and advice for all ages and their facilities could be enlarged and even include a drop-in cafe, Citizens Advice and general help for the Homeless, Housing and Benefits under one roof.

I also made the point that Education Buildings and Grounds are under-used and could be more widely used by the whole community and using their facilities would enhance the lifestyle of Midlothian residents. For example- Art, Music, Theatre and Film are very low in priority compared with other Scottish Regions and to charge for any of these facilities in schools is to diminish the quality of life for children and adults alike.

Perhaps more volunteers could be used in these circumstances but any investment would obviously enrich the lives of all those who participated and give them greater opportunities for personal development.

RESOURCES

Any closure of recycling centres, reduction in the hours of opening and excessive charges for the acceptance of all forms of rubbish can only lead to a massive increase in tipping and litter which is already at a disgusting level throughout the County.

Innovative ideas for using all forms of rubbish should be encouraged and perhaps small businesses encouraged to come up with recycling ideas ; for example -converting old furniture into something of use to others, making proper compost to sell and providing allotments to grow and sell produce.

The reduction of floral displays and shrub beds is a very parsimonious idea and will reduce the simple pleasures of walking through the Parks and Gardens to admire them and be encouraged to go out for a walk!

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

I am convinced that all the recent house building in Midlothian must have made some impact on Revenue but were the Builders not asked to contribute more to their new communities by including a community hall, medical centre, shops for each thousand houses and if not, why not? These housing estates are reminiscent of the vast building programmes of the 1950's with no facilities for residents and therefore little incentive to build a community.

116. In relation to Midlothian Councils Budget Gap and proposed cuts, I am deeply disappointed especially of those services for our younger generation which we are in danger having another lost generation if such cuts were to be implemented. There appears to be a message within these proposed cuts that Dalkeith is the centre of Midlothian which the majority, if not all, services will be relocated to which is a disgrace.
117. The reason given for the cuts is placing blame firmly on central government. However, this may not be fair. The growth of Midlothian's population is not a surprise and the projected grant is not a surprise either. I feel that the council should have had better financial controls in place so that such deep cuts wouldn't be necessary. For instance: I find it difficult to understand how the council can afford new school buildings and hub spaces when funding is so restricted. Has the council's stewardship of its money been inappropriate? In light of this, does the council need to commission an independent review of its spending priorities in order to enable it to make the right decisions in future?
118. Your public engagement exercise was poor to say the least. You cannot engage the community by talking at them in the Council Chamber, and framing the discussion with "well, if you want to keep X, tell us what else to cut".
119. You need to do a great deal better to engage local residents, third sector organisations, businesses and community councils in devising solutions together which create a vision for Midlothian that offers hope for the future.

120. I ask you to explore the ideas that people have proposed to bring in revenue to Midlothian from the Scottish Government and the private sector as a matter of urgency, and also savings to be made within the management structure within the council.
121. I ask you to make the case to the Government that such deep, ongoing cuts to local authority funding is squeezing the life out of our community. Cutting education and young people's services is not a viable solution.
122. I have consulted far and wide about the proposed changes/cuts and the causes driving their necessity. Your open meetings were excellent, but the general consultation - with a few summary documents in libraries, has not been good, maybe this stems from not wanting to devote too many resources to it?
123. I am very sorry that you find yourselves in such a difficult financial position, the situation is desperate. I will campaign to give you as my local authority more money and more autonomy over for example planning decisions and how quickly our LA should grow.
124. It's with some reluctance that I must point out that, at this stage, the proposals are not being made by councillors. All of the proposals have been prepared by council officers, for Councillor review and decision. The councillors will try to avoid answering your very pertinent criticisms by pointing this out and stressing that these are not their proposals - and that that is why they embarked on the "consultation" process.
125. They know that you are addressing the generic "Council", but will take any avenue to deflect from substance to presentation.
126. Where a loss of FTE posts are identified there is no cost shown.
127. The impact analysis is woefully inadequate.
128. The total saving identified for 2018/19 is £8.55 million and for 2021/22 is £23.258 million. How is the shortfall between the saving and £13.5 million and £45 million deficit met?
129. I have read your proposal for future savings and have to say that I am surprised by the targeting of soft targets and facilities activities that people use, libraries, music, sports facilities, street cleaning, learning assistants etc.
130. Did your research show that outside of saving money, the modification to this service would be of benefit to the community outside of the fiscal saving? Do you all live in the area? Do you have family or relations in the area that will not be detrimentally affected by this activity? Do you not want to develop Midlothian into an area that is not considered a commuter belt of Edinburgh city? From my own research and from talking to concerned parents in the area I think that these are detrimental proposals and I really do not see them as a shaping of our future nor a positive programme for change
131. The cuts in funding to voluntary groups, increased costs for after-school care schemes, changes to school catering, and closure of libraries and overall erosion of community services will also impact especially hard on special needs children and families. I am unsure of exactly how these cuts will be made but it looks like there will also be a big impact on adult services which again are accessed by many of the pupils from Saltersgate following school.

132. The savings needing to be made by the council are enormous from what I understand. I can see that there are no easy decisions to be made and no easy solutions either. I hope that it is possible to avoid some of the cuts which are going to have the most impact on the most vulnerable in our community. I can see that increased revenue through council tax increases would be sensible to protect services if this option is possible.
133. The Council needs to completely re-imagine their services. It isn't enough to cut, they need to re-shape and change in order to meet the needs of the residents of Midlothian. This should fully include the third sector and all organisations and groups that support the people of Midlothian.
134. I feel that many of the savings proposals are short sighted as immediate savings will, in many cases, lead to future spend. We need to completely re-think what we are doing and how we are doing it. Time and money should be invested more wisely, in those services that are real value for money.
135. The people of Midlothian pay for the mismanagement of our national economies. The SNP and Conservative governments equally should be finding the means to soften the worst of these proposals in Midlothian (they could start by ensuring full and proper taxes are paid on the profit from customers in Midlothian by Amazon, Google, Starbucks et al, as well as the private individual leeches transferring profit to off-shore accounts. But that's not (just) a local issue).
136. Lacks vision and ambition. It's like your aiming to be a second rate downbeat suburb of Edinburgh. There is more capable people in Midlothian why not see them as the solution.
137. The figures you have offered in your proposals where you list the potential staffing implications of 240 front line staff in contrast to only 2 executive posts are staggeringly offensive to the general public and the 240 who face the loss of their livelihoods. A shocking case of sacrificing the many for the few. How can this be justified? Why is there no mention in your proposals of resistance? The option to put pressure on the Finance Minister Derek McKay and the SNP government to revisit their own budget cuts that are being handed to the councils to carry out? Do Midlothian Councillors feel able to justify the case for increased funding to Midlothian from COSLA? More should be done in these areas to show me that my council wants to fight back on this budget.
138. As a general comment on the readability and clarity of the 115 page document, we suggest that the use of acronyms and technical terms is excessive. For example, when describing devolved school management [DSM], how are we supposed to understand 'CCDW' and 'ASN'?
139. In my personal circumstances such increase, together with other proposed measures such as increased council tax, additional payment for garden waste, additional payment for music tuition and other, is impossible to accept. I am a single parent, raising my child on my own without any support whatsoever, trying to maintain our household with one reduced salary working 4 days a week. After paying all the bills and repaying interest on debts (I was left with debts after splitting with my husband and I do not receive regular child maintenance), there is simply not enough disposable income to absorb all these charges increased by the council, unless we do not eat or wash clothes! I am afraid that if all the measures go ahead, and the

rent increase is the biggest issue, I will be forced to quit my job (I am a chartered accountant), go on benefits and live off the state because I will not be able to afford the afterschool or holiday cover childcare. And it must be highlighted that the level of care and the environment offered to our children by LASC is not only fantastic - it is exceptional and I cannot fault it. My child is thriving there and it definitely helped him gain his confidence back after the breakup of our family. I am sure that there are plenty of other parents in a similar situation and trying to raise money for the council budget (which you could argue has been mismanaged by the council and the government) by ripping off hard working families is just appalling.

I, like many other residents, am genuinely worried that many of these proposals target middle-class working families and well-being and future prospects of our children will be compromised. I would like to ask for a personal and detailed response to issues I have raised in my letter. Blaming each other, the opposition party or the previous council/government is out of place. You are in the position now, so it is your time to make an appropriate decision in the best interest of the constituents you represent. It is unfair and unethical to demand from the public to pick up the pieces (i.e. pay up) left behind by the council resulted from mismanagement of our funds that we duly pay to the council (and the government) every month.

I can only suggest but a few examples of how to address budgetary issues:

- Work closer with the government to ensure that the set budget meet Midlothian current and future needs, based on current but also expected demographics – why is Midlothian underfunded? Why are we in this situation anyway?
- More efficiencies within the council, coming from top-down, work ethics and work environment similar to those in the corporate sector – it should not be a privilege anymore to work for the council, public sector employees should work even harder as they are using our public money
- Review planning permissions and housing developments – what do they bring back to the community? What is the benefit vs cost analysis? Long term contracts meaning the council ends up paying millions of pounds over the years post the development should be banned
- Merge council areas for shared services e.g. Midlothian with East Lothian
- Reduce available benefits on social security making it more attractive to go to work (however keep up the relevant and fair benefits such as single occupancy discount as using less services)
- Stop providing free bags for domestic food waste bins
- Introduce nominal charges for prescriptions £1-£2 for adults.

Street cleaning, waste collection and disposal

1. I thought they already found away when they came took my recycling away glass first then the blue bin all put in same part of the lorry!! Then they asked if my brown bin needed emptied right in beside the recycling? So your saving money taking our blue bins away I'll just put it all in the brown one

2. Charge for bins, reduce collections and charge for garden waste to be collected. So people who decide they cannot afford to pay for these services simply have a rapid build-up of waste which in turn creates a health hazard of its own with vermin and disease which will in the long run cost the council more money to rectify. Appalled.
3. Bins - Charging for replacement bins is not acceptable. Who actually owns the bins anyway? If it is the Council then it is surely its responsibility to provide replacements. What about insurance? If replacements were to be charged several issues arise, e.g. who caused the damage, can everyone afford new bin, etc. It is likely that some residents would not buy new bin which raises the issue of how refuse would be collected, given it is a Council responsibility to do so.

Charging for bins on new estates might work as the cost of supplying the required bins would be small compared to other building costs.

Collections - In general the unintended consequences on recycling and fly tipping of changing collection frequencies needs much better consideration

Reduction in frequency of 'residual' (grey) bin is probably acceptable but charging for garden waste is not acceptable. Many residents are unlikely to pay (50% assumed in proposal). Where will their garden waste go? In the 'residual' bin increasing tonnage going to landfill. Fly tipping is likely to increase, which was common here in Cornbank before the garden waste collection was introduced.

Penicuik Recycling Centre - Closure is not acceptable. I use this facility regularly and it would appear to be in non-stop use, particularly at weekends. What is going to happen to all the material that is presently disposed of there? Assuming that residents will take this to Gorebridge is completely nonsensical. It is about 10miles from Penicuik to Gorebridge so if everyone who uses the Penicuik Recycling facility goes to Gorebridge then the greenhouse gas emissions from the vehicles will be significant. Does Midlothian have a Climate Change Mitigation strategy? It would seem however that a major issue would be fly-tipping. The recent policy of Penicuik Recycling not accepting mattresses etc. saw an immediate increase in these being disposed of around Lowries Den Road in Sir John Clerk's estate. The already considered upgrading of the Penicuik Centre seems much preferable.

4. I think one of the knock on effects this charge will cause is more people burning their rubbish, folk will turn to burning their garden waste – Huge negative effects on the Health and wellbeing of our community. If you're hell bent on increasing the charges to collect our garden waste then implement a ban burning garden waste.
5. Can the council join forces with the Criminal Justice Service for example community work, which could pick up the deficit in say weekend street cleaning
6. Yes to increase garden removal charges. Also to new developments to pay for their bins
7. Grey bin only collected every 3 weeks - my bin is always full. If this goes ahead it would be awful (dirty streets like seen in Edinburgh sometimes).

8. Who should be paying for dog waste collection service - sure just dog owners. Not sure how charging could be arranged but I think the concept of a dog licence should be looked into. Number of dogs is reaching "epidemic proportions".
9. The cuts and reductions detailed under "Commercial Operations" are (again) going to impact on the elderly and rural communities.
10. I would urge you to reconsider closure of this site. It was bad enough reducing collections to every 2 weeks which is insufficient. Still we had an option to take our excess to the site.
11. Removal of this site [Penicuik Recycling Centre] would be a step too far, we pay a lot in council tax and from what I can see inefficient and poorly motivated council staff waste a lot of money. For example we had new windows fitted 2 of which were broken before fitting. It took 14 months to get these replaced despite windows being measured at least another 8 times by various council staff. I think this waste explains itself as council ended up paying twice for windows. Sort these problems of waste of money and keep Penicuik site.
DISGRACEFUL!!
12. Reducing bin collection (grey) will lead to dumping and more costs to MDC in the long run.
13. Please do not close the [Penicuik Recycling] site. It is a vital resource for the community to be able to look after properties and homes. Sadly any savings you might make are likely to be discounted by the costs of fly tipping and the decrease in community health.
14. I have just learned that one of the proposed savings by Midlothian Council is to close the recycling centre in Penicuik. As a great recycler I oppose the action by the council. I use this site regularly, not only for my own use but as I walk my dog I gather bits that are on route and if possible will use my own bins or take to the centre to dispose of. If the centre closes I will have to consider if to continue with my own little part if keeping Midlothian tidy, thus an extra cost to the council clearing Fly tipping that the council will need to spend. I hope you consider this subject and leave our centre alone.
15. I see that this [Penicuik Recycling Centre] is under review. At the moment residents of Penicuik have a max 2 miles to drop of rubbish. If the recycling centre is closed, we face a 20 mile round trip to Stobhill. Many people in the area will not consider this a good idea and we will have rubbish dumped all round the B roads in the area. At the moment we see some rubbish dumped on the Lowries den road and I can see a lot more rubbish there and elsewhere if you close Penicuik. Maybe the bin lorries could be moved elsewhere but please keep the skips in Penicuik.
16. As a user of the [Penicuik] recycling centre I have found it extremely useful over the years I have lived in Penicuik. I am disappointed to discover that rubble has been removed from the list of materials that can be processed there. In addition, any decision to reduce the availability of recycling services in the Penicuik area can only add to the potential to fly tip in the surrounding lanes. As someone who has lived in Penicuik for over 30 years I have witnessed the effects of fly tipping in Lowries Den, which someone, I suspect Midlothian Council, then has to tidy up. I would be concerned that people have to travel to Stobhill as this could easily lead to congestion in the Centre, especially at weekends when it is most likely to be used. It also adds to pollution as cars have to travel further, a point the Council should consider as part of its wider remit to look after the people of Midlothian. In addition,

there is significant house building activity ongoing in the Penicuik area. This can only increase the demand for a local recycling centre in the longer term. In summary, any decision to reduce this service in Penicuik can only have a detrimental effect on the area.

17. I think it would be a mistake to close the [Penicuik Recycling Centre] as it provides a very good service to the local community and is very central and has good access to all in the town and surrounding area. It also reduces the threat of fly tipping and provides employment when jobs are hard to come by.
18. The closing of Penicuik recycling centre will inevitably lead to an increase in fly tipping which is already an issue in the locale. The facility is heavily used and often it requires multiple trips which is fine when the facility is 5 minutes away but where each trip is nearly an hour it becomes ridiculous.
19. I was extremely concerned to read that as part of the cuts there are proposals to close the Penicuik Recycling Centre. This is an important amenity within Penicuik, and having used both Stobhill and Penicuik, and the distance travelled to visit Stobhill, I was shocked. I have elderly neighbours that rely on its service as they are unable to move their wheelie bin, and forcing them to travel to Stobhill when there is an excellent service on our doorstep that I use on a regular basis. Not to mention that Penicuik and surrounding area is growing, and we already have plenty of problems with fly tipping, I fear there is a substantial risk of overloading Stobhill (both sites are extremely busy each time I visit).
20. Your recycling centre is really important for locals. Please keep it open.
21. I'm concerned about your proposal to close the above centre as part of your budget cuts, as a resident in Penicuik I have found it to be essential for my recycling needs! At present I am able to check any of my domestic waste and sort it out so I can recycle as much as I can at the Centre which must help with the environment otherwise it would end up in general waste. I'm only one person but from experience there are lots of people doing the same. If the nearest Centre is Stobhill then I would have to take into consideration the additional cost (diesel) and time it would take me to carry out my recycling needs and there is always the additional pollution to the atmosphere. I'm sure that if the Centre in Penicuik was closed there would be an increase in 'fly tipping' as some people would just dispose of their waste in this manner and if the police cannot identify the culprits who pays for the removal! If it left then it would spoil the environment in Midlothian. I hope you can reconsider this proposal and come up with an alternative scheme to allow the residents of this Centre to recycle their waste in a responsible way and protect our environment.
22. It was with disappointment that I heard of the possibility/probability that the Recycling Centre was to be closed. Where in that event would we be expected to take our material/waste for disposal. I have to say that I have always found the staff at Bellman Rd to be both courteous and helpful. I trust they will continue to find employment with the Council.
23. Please be advised this will encourage the use of more fly tipping in the area and is a very poor idea who ever came up with this is crazy, the population of Penicuik must be getting close to 30,000 now and the idea of closing the council tip is asking for trouble in the future

24. Please do not shut down the [Penicuik Recycling Centre] and if possible please retain the same hours of business.
25. It appears that we are being asked to pay for services that the council provided as part of our council tax. Proposals to charge £35 per lift for brown bin emptying is nonsense. I think £35 onto the council tax per annum would be a more acceptable proposition. I don't think we need to copy Edinburgh given their population of about 500,000 and Midlothian 79,000. Other examples are obviously the proposals to cut out the provision of grass cutting, removal of baskets and floral displays in town centres and cutting back of road maintenance reduction of some bus services etc.

The closure of the Penicuik recycling centre will cause all sorts of problems, as people will just 'fly tip' (and that goes on just now)..It would then cost for such areas to be cleaned up. In addition, if you have no transport, how can you get waste to Stobhill, again people will just fly tip. The recycling sites have to be more flexible, restrictions on the use of small vans, trailers and light commercial vehicles are not realistic which is I believe why people fly tip. Another point is that we are using our own transport, our own fuel and time to do what we are paying as part of our council tax for the council to do, plus sorting it into skips, so how much is the council saving on that exercise? free transport, no fuel use and free labour. Should we send the council a bill for all this and then deduct that from our council tax!

I think it is likely there had been forward steps in the protection of the environment with recycling and reduction in the production of greenhouse gases such as methane due to landfill site management, but now with services removed rubbish will just be dumped in the country side in lay-bys, and this likely to include fridges washing machines, car batteries, mattresses, sofas, televisions, building/renovation materials and rubble, drums of oil and chemicals etc. a common site a few years ago. Do we really need to go back to this?. The present house building in Penicuik and surrounding areas means there will be an increase in demand for services, but this also means there will be an increase in revenue. I think the largest town in Midlothian, that has only a part time police service a part time fire service and paying the same council tax as in Edinburgh for the privilege is nothing short of disgraceful. We deserve better value for money. The recycling centre in Penicuik is a much used and a highly valued asset to the community and surrounding area. Even if the site was lightly manned with skips available, it would at least help to avoid or limit the amount of fly tipped rubbish.

26. Charging £35 for a brown bin collection: Edinburgh is considering £20? Also will this policy not encourage fly tipping on communal green space?
27. It is really sad that that street sweeping would be limited to weekdays. Perhaps the public needs to be educated about litter.
28. Please don't close the recycling centre in Penicuik. That would be short term folly as fly tipping would become rife. It is such a great wee centre and the staff are brilliant, always helpful and cheery, unlike in some Edinburgh recycling centres! The recycling and waste service lorries do a great job and the staff are wonderful.
29. This is a very necessary service for the largest town in Midlothian. If [Penicuik Recycling] site were to close, there would be very substantial costs in the continual clearing of waste

dumped all over the Penicuik areas as I'm sure it would only be a handful of conscientious members of the public that would make the journey all the way to Stobhill.

30. I have heard that you may be closing this establishment. Please don't. It is a vital part of keeping our community clean and I strongly believe if you close it fly tipping will increase and more money will need to be spent on clearing that up - people won't travel to Newtongrange.
31. I would like to express my concern over the proposed closure of Penicuik recycling centre. I live just outside of Penicuik and regularly use the nearby countryside to walk my dogs. I am regularly disgusted in the amount of illegal dumping that happens within the area. The closure of this centre will inevitably cause this to increase as people will dump rubbish in our nearby countryside rather than drive several miles to the nearest centre. The amount of increased traffic to the nearest recycling centre in Gorebridge will cause a significant increase in traffic on the already congested roads around Penicuik and CO2 emissions from all the added longer journeys. Please, please, please keep this centre open!
32. Having recently visited the Penicuik recycling site, I was informed by a member of staff of the proposed cuts and eventual closing of the site. From the off I strongly disagree with this proposal with the main reason being fly-tipping. This has been a problem throughout the rural areas for a number of years and I can only predict that by closing the service in Penicuik, we are going to see a significant rise in this issue. People are lazy! To some Stobhill might as well be on the other side of the country. What will happen with all this rubbish that won't fit in the household bins? It will be dropped at the roadside. I hope a solution can be found and the council can see the benefit of keeping Penicuik recycling centre open.
33. Your staff will need to be more careful with the bins and boxes if you are going to charge for replacements. There's food waste boxes with no lids already, and careful where you source the bins from, the blue ones are awful. They hold water and tip it into the bin after it's been raining, soggy wet paper!
34. Reducing brown bin collections an option, I don't know many people who put them out fortnightly. 4 weekly should be enough. If you charge for their collection the stuff will go in the grey one. There's still problems with what goes in the blue bin. More info required on what doesn't go in it. Less rejection = more savings.
35. Penicuik Recycling Centre - Just point us at the hedge you want us to dump our stuff under. You can pick it up later. You will leave people with no options if you shut the centre. It's very busy for its size, we aren't going to go to Gorebridge with our junk, it's too far. Seek another site if you need to.
36. Garden waste - it might not be a statutory duty, but it's got to go somewhere. If you charge for the service, it's going to go into the grey bin or over the nearest wall or hedge.
37. Charge for commercial waste - You'll be competing against Commercial firms, you'll never succeed, and commercial firms pay rates.
38. Advertise on refuse vehicles - Fine
39. Increase recycling - Good idea, so why charge for the brown bin collection.

40. Reduce street sweeping - Road sweepers need co-ordinating with the Bin uplifts, pavement sweepers could be a lot more efficient from what I see.
41. Please don't close the waste disposal centre in Penicuik. I am a 3rd generation Penicuik family (an OAP) who has watched Penicuik grow and develop and one of the best things in Penicuik is the well-used, well organised waste disposal centre. The staff there are very helpful and the place is immaculately tidy. To expect people like me to go all the way to Stobhill is a very big ask; what will happen is that many people will get rid of their waste by fly tipping in corners of the countryside around Penicuik, thus causing you even more problems. I beg you to reconsider your problem and help keep Penicuik clean and tidy.
42. Charge for bins and boxes – will create more rubbish dumped everywhere.
43. I have just heard that the council yard in Penicuik could be closing. I have been using that yard for a long time now I think it will be greatly missed and cause an increase of damage done to the environment due to the public resorting to fly tipping and disposing of hazardous waste i.e. engine oil being discarded down the public drains. The amount off new developments within Midlothian for new housing has increased dramatically in the past 5 years and very few people will be prepared to travel the distance from Penicuik to Stobhill Recycling Centre, especially if there is more than 1 trip involved, which will result in the increase off fly tipping I stated earlier in my email, meaning more council resources will be needed to tend to this problem, when the time and money could be put to better use within the community.
44. As Penicuik is the largest town in Midlothian, the proposal to close the council recycling depot is short-sighted.
1. To expect householders to drive to and from Stobhill, wait in queues - which is inevitable due to the volume of householders, is totally beyond comprehension.
 2. As more houses are being built at present in Penicuik, the volume of traffic will increase yet further.
 3. This results in more congestion and damage to the roads and countryside impacting on nature and wildlife.
 4. There will be an increase in fly-tipping in the local environment.
 4. This proposal will certainly not result in Midlothian being a 'Green' county.
- I am willing to pay the extra £35 to have my garden bins collected but what happens to those who don't. At present I have someone adding a black plastic bag to my bin at some point during the night. What happens to those who then try to leave their rubbish beside my garden bins in the hope it will be collected. Will the Refuse collectors then refuse to take mine? Or will they leave the extra rubbish at my gate?
45. Stop providing Poo Bags for dogs.
46. Any reduction in waste recycling or collection is going to result in increased dumping throughout the county or the emergence of unscrupulous people who will REMOVE the waste for a fee and then they dump it!

47. Pay for Garden collections and replacement bins (but not those ruined by emptying). Residua bins as now. Brown/ red three-weekly.
48. Keep Penicuik recycling centre open. It's well used. If closed people will not go to Stobhill – so fly tipping. Those without transport – take it on the bus??? Increase in fly tipping in Lowries Den – high cost of removing this. Willing to pay for garden collection. License Stobhill for commercial waste and charge for use. Advertise on refuse vehicles. Street cleaning – Rullion Road is lucky to see it.
49. Paying for brown bins - ok - but why not offer cheap or free compost bins to people too - team up with some business to offer this.
50. Offer residents a couple of bags of compost back in return for paying for green waste (this happens elsewhere - charge an extra £5 to cover the costs)
51. Recycling - can we make more money here?
52. Paying for replacement bins - if people don't we will end up with it in the street combined with cutting pest control sound like a disaster for health issues.
53. If £35 charge is to be introduced, 2-weekly seasonal collections of brown bins should be maintained.
54. Charging for bins and boxes will result in the numbers of people stealing them to increase. Currently, bins are already stolen by those too lazy to fill out your forms for replacements. If we have to pay to have bins, the numbers of people stealing them will increase dramatically, having a very negative impact on more honest people who are prepared to buy a bin. I would not resent paying a small fee for my bin, however I grudge paying for replacements which have been stolen or damaged due to bad weather, for example. A system would need to be in place to avoid this.
55. If garden waste collection is no longer a free service, people will simply dump waste as they do currently with larger items which are charged for. This will result in an increase in costs for uplifts of waste, and will also be unsightly.
56. New charges unfair to people in social housing. Council tax already reflects size of property including size of gardens. Anything that discourages people from disposing of refuse appropriately may increase littering, dumping and insanitary practices.
57. I object to the planned closure of Penicuik Recycling Centre for the following reasons. Stobhill is a busy site at the moment with questionable capacity for ALL Midlothian recycling. Long queuing on to the access road. Time taken to use the facility being more than doubled. Extending the domestic collection frequency and making a charge for garden waste makes having Penicuik operating essential. Greater travelling distance and fuel consumption for half the population of Midlothian increasing costs, pollution, carbon footprint and reducing air quality. Higher probability of illegal tipping because there is no recycling facility within reasonable reach and a charge being made for garden waste. While understanding the need for cost cutting this is ridiculously short-sighted and plain wrong. It will create more problems than you are trying to solve!

58. Reducing waste collection frequency & charging for garden waste collection will increase fly tipping. Council will incur cost clearing that up.
59. I think it's important to keep the Penicuik refuse site for the people of Penicuik. Every time I go, it is busy and the staff are very friendly. It would mean cutting jobs and having locals travel quite a distance to find the nearest site
60. I am not in support of closing the Penicuik recycling centre as I would need to visit the Stobhill centre which is much further away. The Penicuik one is close. Having to use one which is further away will lead to more fly tipping. A possibility for you to consider would be to reduce the opening hours or days of the site to save money, as it is open 6 days a week from 10am to 4pm. I also do not agree with reducing the bin emptying to every 3 weeks - for larger families this will mean that the grey waste bin will be overflowing.
61. Keep Penicuik Recycling Centre and charge a £1 for all drop offs.
62. A charge seems reasonable if the bin has been lost. However, a refuse bin has a finite life given the handling equipment on a bin wagon - which can take the lids off. I agree that private housing developers should be asked to pay for new bins for each property
63. Some families will need larger bins. Leaving garden waste in bins for longer between collections will reduce the weight of material collected.
64. Closing Penicuik recycling centre does not seem like a good idea. It will reduce recycling rates, increase fly tipping, increase road trips and overload the facilities at Newtongrange which are busy already - and will have to cope with material from new developments at Gorebridge and Shawfair (will the recycling plant at Shawfair feature a bring site of any sort?) pt4 Yes but also sell composting bins.
65. Commercial charges, Stobhill - Not a good idea - Stobhill doesn't have the infrastructure to cope with a load of white vans and trucks at the moment and there would be costs in setting up the support for the service.
66. Proposal to increase level of recycling - this contradicts the suggestion to close the Penicuik civic amenity.
67. Introduce litter control zones and have shopkeepers responsible for keeping their frontages clear of litter.
68. Leave our Council Yard in Penicuik alone, you are only going to encourage anti-social fly tipping and the increased cost of dealing with the problem. We are trying to encourage people to preserve the environment, this is sending the wrong message never mind traffic moving back forward over rural roads to recycle rubbish and adding to the greenhouse gases.
69. Reduce the refurbishment plans for the Penicuik Recycling Centre (500k cost). Closing the Penicuik Recycling Centre is completely unacceptable. This will simply drive widespread fly tipping. This is busy site and many people will not undertake the 18.6 mile round trip to Stobhill. A significant proportion of the waste collected at Penicuik will simply be dumped around the town and local countryside. This will not help Midlothian to meet recycling targets and the environmental damage and additional clean-up costs will greatly exceed the

100k total saving by 2020/21. Grassing over flower beds is also not acceptable. The relatively small sum of 130k savings by 2020/21 should be found through efficiency savings elsewhere. Neither of these two proposals are compatible with the Sustainable Environment pillar of the Single Midlothian Plan. To proceed with cessation of these environmental services would require an additional Midlothian rebranding cost as the leaf logo would not be appropriate.

70. A use of common sense and creative thinking is required and in this case of considering closing the waste site [Penicuik recycling centre] is totally unacceptable. Closing this facility would be madness, people of Penicuik appreciate this well run, efficient site and helpfulness of the staff, people would start dumping their rubbish all over the local countryside which would result in greater council costs in clearing it up which would also cause huge environmental issues. This would be a disastrous decision to close the facility. Maybe certain items need to be dumped at Stobhill but the community NEEDS this facility to remain open.
71. The closure of the Penicuik Recycling Centre is a low cost saving item which would have a significant effect on the recycling of waste in the western half of the council area. It is a very well used facility. The provision of one recycling centre in Stobhill will lead to a reduction in the recycling of waste and a movement away from the 'circular economy' proposed by Zero Waste Scotland.
72. Stopping the Penicuik tip is the most ridiculous cut going. People will fly tip & the council will then have to clean that up thus not saving anything!
73. Keep Penicuik recycling centre open to prevent the expected increase in "fly tipping" as this would increase expenditure in clearing up mess and add expenditure for prosecuting those responsible.
74. Charging using contactless card or other technology should be introduced at the recycling centre for people who want to use it on ad hoc occasions as I see an increase in fly tipping around this area which must cost much more to clear up than if people could just pay to use the tip even with a van.
75. What does the council do with items that are dropped at the recycling centre? Could some of this be used to furnish the homes of people who get everything for nothing? I'd they genuinely have nothing they would be grateful for anything offered to them to furnish a property and if they're not they need to get into the real world and find a job to pay for things they want.
76. I do understand organisations have to make cut backs, however what has been proposed is ridiculous. As a family our bins are full after 2 weeks, no idea how you would expect us to survive 3??!! if this was to be implemented, we would most definitely have to use to Penicuik recycling centre, oh wait...this is on the list to be closed!!! I have only mentioned 2 items on your saving proposals, please think of the residents!!
77. Reduction and charging for bin collection will result in more fly tipping which equates to an increase in cost to environmental services. Some of the savings seem so small, that this little budget cut doesn't equate to the large impact it would have on the communities/users.

78. A reduced service for brown bin and small compost bins would make sense. No need to provide us with the green plastic bags.
79. In your document you go on about encouraging more people to recycle household waste etc. yet you are considering closing the recycling centre in Penicuik. This facility is very busy and is well utilised by the residents of Penicuik. If you close this facility in my opinion it will not only lead to reduced recycling but fly tipping/dumping of waste. No one will be willing to travel all the way to Stobhill with their waste in view if petroleum/diesel costs being set to rise substantially!!! Why is there a proposed upgrading cost of £500000 in the budget? What needs upgrading? It is a recycling site for rubbish not a five star hotel???? Also in the same vein the suggestion to not empty the grey bins for three weeks suggests to me that when these bins overflow then there is the likelihood of vermin and rubbish being strewn about by the wind or indeed cats etc.
80. I have read Midlothian Councils Summary of proposed savings. I completely agree and understand that savings have to be made in council areas nationwide. However, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight my dissatisfaction of the proposal to shut Penicuik Recycling Centre. Having worked as a Police Officer in the Penicuik area and now residing in the area I think this is not a good proposal. My main issue is that the nearest recycling centre is Gorebridge which is exactly a 20 mile round trip. That would take about 45 minutes there and back and if I had many car runs to make which I sometimes do then this would be a nightmare. Emissions would increase significantly from residents of this side of Midlothian when the government is aiming to reduce. Penicuik is the biggest town in Midlothian with a large population. Not only that, residents of Roslin, Roswell, Bilston, Loanhead would have to travel further and again this would see increased emissions. Apart from emissions increasing, congestion on roads would also increase in surrounding areas. Another issue I would like to highlight my dissatisfaction about is the likelihood of increased fly tipping. I think this will be a huge problem for the council should the Penicuik site be closed. I think due to the increased travelling time which will cost people more money in fuel then this will encourage fly tipping in and around Penicuik. Especially on the back roads to Gorebridge from Penicuik. One recent example of this is last week when I was at the Penicuik recycling centre. A woman brought a mattress to dispose of. She was reminded by staff at the site that she would need to take it to Gorebridge as Penicuik doesn't take them. Her reply was "I'll just dump it on the back road"! I read the proposals about funding agreed for a refurbishment of the Penicuik site. I'm not saying that this money should be spent. I simply think that the site needs to stay open as it is at the very least. I would greatly appreciate if you have read this email and gave it some thought. I don't think I'll be the only person expressing the above thoughts.
81. I lived in Midlothian, in a rural area, for 44 years and therefore did not use many of the services more readily accessible to town residents and indeed felt that we were only able to function as a community using our own resources both in time and finance. I feel money could be saved, as proposed, if many other town dwellers acted in the same manner. It would be a mistake to reduce street sweeping and litter refuse collections as this would result in yet more rubbish littering our environment by those too lazy to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. The rural main roads are an eyesore with litter on the verges which is then chopped into smaller bits when the verges are cut. I feel that education and encouragement needs to be rolled out over this problem. It is important that vulnerable

people of all ages continue to be supported but more needs to be done to stop the feather bedding of those who do not want to work.

82. Looking at innovative ways of intercepting the many hundreds of serviceable goods headed to landfill each day and setting up systems for those to be resold.
83. I disagree with many of the proposed changes namely the proposed closure of the recycling plant in Penicuik. It is a very busy plant with cars queuing most of the time to recycle many different items. If this goes people will just find dumping grounds in Penicuik we don't have that problem at the moment because people use the plant. I also disagree with the proposal to grass over the planting areas in Penicuik which will be detrimental to the towns appearance. There are plans to regenerate the town and this goes against making its appearance more pleasant. I also disagree with the proposed charging for garden refuse bins. We already pay enough rates to cover this and again people will just dump this waste rather than pay it.
84. If waste collection is reduced, red boxes must retain current 2 weekly schedule to encourage glass recycling.
85. I'm appalled new housing developments don't pay for bins! This should be a no brainer, these developments are highly profitable and must be charged for bins! Residents replacements - unsure, some are stolen are damaged after being blown away/onto roads. Maybe a reduced rate for replacement?
86. The Penicuik Recycling Centre should not be closed, it should be refurbished as proposed. Your records will show that it is used by a huge number of people. Stobhill is virtually inaccessible from Penicuik. If you close Penicuik there will be a lot more fly tipping and rubbish dumping in the countryside which will ruin the environment and cost you a lot to clear up.
87. You set recycling targets etc. and in order to achieve them you need me to actively do this. If I have to pay for my bin then this would reduce my motivation to do so. If bins were to break then residents may continue with those broken bins which would be a Health and Safety issue for the bin men and may result in them refusing to empty those bins. This would lead to an increase in return visits – not cost effective.
88. A three weekly collection for the residual bin is far too few – this could be an environmental health concern for many households.
89. Closing Penicuik recycling centre is a poor decision and I think goes against your targets for recycling and waste reduction. If Penicuik were to close this would lead to an increase in journeys to Stobhill. This increase in car travel is not environmentally friendly. Also, not everyone from across the whole authority can easily access Stobhill. This would perhaps lead to an increase in special uplifts and many may try to squeeze this waste into their residual bins which would be even more problematic due to your proposed reducing in collection times. I also think the closure of Penicuik would lead to an increase in fly tipping which would be a safety, environmental and financial concern.

90. Don't close the recycling depot at Belmans in Penicuik. It's an incredibly valuable resource, used by a lot of people. Tbf, it could be run more efficiently, it always seems to have a fair few staff milling about.
91. We need more street cleaning, the drains along the main roads are blocked which causes huge problems. Reducing bin collections - awful idea. Look at Birmingham this summer. If you do that you will need to keep pest control!!
92. Do NOT close the Penicuik recycling centre. It is widely used by many people from a large catchment area. Upgrading could be delayed. Newtongrange is of no practical use to Penicuik area residents.
93. A modest annual charge towards brown bin collection is acceptable, though pensioners may be unable to afford such a payment. During the peak gardening season considerable waste from lawns etc. is inevitable. I personally fill my bin every fortnight, AND have to take any surplus to the Penicuik Refuse Centre. I could not take it to Newtongrange. I would be forced to incinerate it. I predict widespread 'dumping'. Even now, it is not uncommon to see mattresses etc. dumped in back lanes. Presumably the Council Refuse Personnel have to pick it up. Refuse disposal is a fundamental service for any Council and cannot be reduced without serious problems.
94. The proposed removal of the refuse and recycling centre for Penicuik with a population of 15,000 people (the biggest town in Midlothian). Has the council really thought this through?? Closing the depot will increase fly tipping which council will need to pay to clear. Fly - tipping will reduce respect for the neighbourhood - once people see that rubbish is being dumped, they will care less for their environment and they will vandalise/disrespect more. This has been seen in several cases # citation which the council will have to deal with. You will increase traffic going to Newtongrange (for those conscientious enough to go there). This will lead to road damage, which the council will have to pay for. Increasing the traffic will lead to environmental decline which we will all have to pay for. Households will have to spend weekend time driving several times to Newtongrange instead of with their family. This will lead to negative child behaviour, which will affect the council. What about those who can't get to Newtongrange during their opening hours due to work commitments? The frustration and lack of service will damage mental health, which the community will have to pay for. I had to get a new fridge freezer as ours had broken. It took 3 loads of rubbish to and from Penicuik depot to put the packaging and the old fridge shelves etc. to the recycling centre. Do you want me to drive from Penicuik to Newtongrange 3 times? I can't leave it in my own recycling as it is full enough. I couldn't leave it in the normal bin, especially if this is reduced. I couldn't afford to pay a council pick up for some large bits of polystyrene and cardboard!!! I am conscientious - do you expect someone with less morals (and who is furious with the council) to take those trips and not dump in the local park? It refers to negating the cost of the £500k refurbishment of the site. Just leave it as it is. It is fine.
95. I can see why reducing to a 3 weekly bin pick up is being considered. For this, you would need to provide an option of bigger bins as most families will easily fill their bin in two weeks. We are a family of four and super conscientious about recycling, but not everything can be recycled. The council certainly couldn't reduce the bin pick up in Penicuik and remove the depot! People would just dump their excess rubbish in the street!

96. [Penicuik] Recycling depot. Why pay £500,000 to refurbish???! It is fine!!!! As I mentioned in my introductory paragraph closing a recycling and refuse depot in a town with 15,000 people cannot be morally right and most likely legally questionable.
97. MOVE PARKS AND REFUSE COLLECTION TO STOBHILL AND USE PENICUIK ONEWAY RECYCLING. WITH PENICUIK REFUGE SITE CLOSING DUMPING WILL BECOME A MAJOR ISSUES IN THE AREA.
98. Do not close the Penicuik recycling centre that is idiotic. Fly tipping will be awful all round outskirts of Penicuik if you do that. Instead, postpone the renovation work.
99. With regards the proposed closure if the Penicuik tip I believe that this would not save money it would in fact cost you money. Penicuik tip is a very busy site used by many in Penicuik and surrounding areas. It is my belief that if Penicuik tip was closed that thus would vastly increase on fly tipping and people putting all sorts of un approved rubbish in their home bins. That in turn would increase the amount of refuse collectors and vehicles that you have to have on the road to clean up the mess created by those who are not willing to travel the extra distance to the next nearest tip. Also is it necessary to spend half a million in this site, are there no other options?
100. New housing developments - not only charge for the cost of the bins but charge the developer a fee as part of granting permission for the cost of uplift of the residual bins for the first 3/5 years to encourage recycling.
101. You would have to provide larger bins for 3 weeks collection especially black one or provide second one.
102. The issue of Extend collection frequencies. Consider introducing three weekly collections for the residual bin cannot be done for communal bins ours are fortnightly and these are already full after this time(recycling bins full as well). Extending the time will only increase vermin and this will increase cost to get rid of them.
103. Charging for a brown bin collection is a joke, fly tipping is already a problem and this is just going to increase the problem. I personally own a home which has huge trees next to it (not in my property. Myself and neighbours have complained to the council numerous times as the council do not look after them and they are higher than our houses now. We have to collect the branches and leaves that fall into our gardens....and then to be expected to pay £35 to have a brown bin to put waste that is not ours in is a joke. The branches will be getting dumped in the middle of the road if this is the case.
104. Closing a waste disposal centre and then charging for the use of the remaining waste disposal centre is obscene when put together with the reduction in household waste collections by one third. Despite our best attempts to recycle everything we can, we still require bin collection ever two weeks. And we are a model household in this respect. We couldn't do any more recycling without improved provision of recycling facilities by the council. For example facilities for recycling drinks cans. If the council wants more recycling, the council must provide citizens with proper opportunities to do so.
105. I also think the reductions in bin collections are reasonable and manageable for residents.

106. Are there ways to generate income from renewable energy? As mentioned above, first priority should be given to explore alternative sources for budget income. For instance 'leasing out operation of wind farms' instead of letting 3rd party companies take all the revenues. A clause that 50% of the wind farm revenues should be paid back to Midlothian. Ultimately the Midlothian council should plan to operate their own energy business (See Robin Hood energy as example).
107. Extend collection frequencies: red bins should stay as is to help increase recycling
108. Close Penicuik recycling centre: well used at the moment, high risk of increased dumping
109. Remove red box collection ensuring residents can recycle at local shops.
110. Litter wardens/littering fines (to offset effect of reduction in street sweeping).
111. Charging developers for bin provision and parking charges seem more reasonable to me and would not be so harsh on the vulnerable
112. The closure of Penicuik recycling centre lists initial savings as £0.1m - however the description says that there would be a saving of £0.5m by not refurbishing the site. This should be included in the initial savings.
113. Remove brown bin collection. No one will want to pay for it and this has been done in other areas without any consultation.
114. Taking away Penicuik waste disposal centre will cause an increase in fly tipping and waste dumping as not everyone is able to travel to a different place.
115. Charging for collection of garden waste will lead to fly tipping and illegal fire raising.
116. I have a real issue with the idea of residential waste bins being picked up every 3 weeks. When you have 2 young children both still in nappies it would be a nightmare. We use all the other bins and are good recyclers but still fill the black bin after 2 weeks largely due to nappies. Unless you were providing bigger bins then I don't think it would be possible.
117. Also don't agree with charging for garden bin uplift. We want our houses and gardens to look good and I think that would stop a lot of people from doing that.
118. I also think that getting rid of the tip would be a bad decision and would worry it would lead to an increase in fly tipping. My only thoughts would be that it could be just opened at weekends and shut during the week to save costs.
119. On black bins - if households with families could receive a bigger or additional bin then the 3 weekly could work. However I appreciate that the cost of these additional bins would have to be offset against any potential savings.
120. Give families option to purchase larger grey bin if collection reduced to 3 weekly. Provide households with grit and grit bins - let us take care of clearing paths/roads
121. The garden waste charges I feel are unfair. I didn't ask for a huge garden, it came with the house. And what about those with small easy maintenance gardens who're lucky if they fill their brown bin up once a year - should they be charged £35? Introducing a charge may

mean an increase of unsightly gardens in the area - council tenants can have their bum booted but what about the bought houses? Hardly fair is it?

122. 3-weekly collections are just never going to work and charging for garden waste collection? You'd cancel the savings with all the clean-up costs of fly tipping.
123. I don't necessarily mind the closing of Penicuik recycling centre, I'm from Penicuik! As I've not once used it and normally give things away on Gumtree for free, something like this could be promoted, people would be surprised what others want or can reuse.
124. Charging for new bins, not the public's fault if bins are stolen. Not good.
125. Thinking about reducing frequency of uplift and encouraging more recycling seems a sensible way to save money but bringing everyone along with this would be important (some monitoring, back up or special help if it is not working in some areas).
126. Not convinced £35 brown bin charge will bring in savings suggested...people will share, mix garden waste in grey bin. Should there not be an incentive to recycle of some sort, albeit financial will be a challenge...free gym class for a week say??
127. Also, I heard a disturbing idea that recycling would be charged for collection, even though refuse collection is already charged under council tax. I know many residents won't pay twice for it, so it would in fact cost you council tax revenue.
128. Reducing rubbish collections / charging for garden rubbish collection will increase fly tipping
129. Closure of Penicuik recycling depot will amount to more fly-tipping.
130. Proposals to charge for refuse bins at new sites is discriminatory against new Council Tax payers.
131. I am in favour for charges for bins and boxes although be cautious about income it would generate.
132. I am opposed to extending collection frequencies as they will likely lead to an increase in fly tipping and nuisance.
133. I am opposed to closing Penicuik recycling centre as this will lead to an increase in fly tipping and nuisance.
134. Charges for garden waste collection are unlikely to generate the amount of income suggested as much of the garden waste will be either dumped or diverted to landfill.
135. Cutting rubbish collections will only increase fly tipping and that is already really bad in the area.
136.how can roads etc. and bin collections be cut / changed the place is dirty as it is its going to be vile?
137. Refuse charge would encourage more fly tipping and hit the elderly and people struggling financially as everyone has waste. Garden waste should also be collected for free again this affects everyone. We should put food waste in with garden waste as they do in Fife this

would reduce costs considerably as less bins and one collection would cover both. Still weekly collections.

138. I agree with selling or a change of use for Bellman's Recycling depot it's no longer fit for purpose but replace it on a more suitable site on the other side of Penicuik. Stobhill is simply too far away.
139. We feel very strongly that Penicuik Recycling Centre should remain open.
140. Penicuik has a large population and it is unrealistic to expect that people will drive several miles to another centre. Inevitably, the result will be an increase in fly-tipping in the locality with all the attendant problems this will bring.
141. We are also concerned to hear your proposal to shut down the recycling centre. This is another area where we in Penicuik will be served badly because the alternative is to drive to Stobhill which is not easy to reach. This could result in grey bins being overfilled and result in fly-tipping being worse than ever! Where is pride of place, the old-fashioned idea that no matter how little money you have you should always be clean and tidy.
142. Collecting bins on a three-weekly basis will lead to fly tipping and then potentially pests (which you will not have pest control/environmental health staff to handle based on your proposed savings). There are only two of us in my household and both our bins are always full when it is time for them to be emptied. Perhaps an incentive scheme for people who do not need their bins collected as often would be a better idea to encourage less waste. I also think improvements are required to the food waste collection scheme to encourage more people to use it, i.e. better ways to store and dispose of this rather than the little bins and bags which do little to keep things sanitary.
143. People should not be expected to pay for replacement bins. They have a limited time in use and do wear out.
144. The recycling centre in Bellman's Road, Penicuik should be retained or moved to a more suitable local site. People living in Penicuik cannot be expected to go to Stobhill, Newtongrange to dispose of items which cannot be put in a bin. Surely this will encourage fly tipping which is already a problem in the Penicuik area.
145. Reducing grey and brown bins to three weekly pick ups and introducing a charge for brown bins will only encourage fly tipping.
146. I certainly think that bin collections could be less frequent and paying for garden waste might encourage people to compost their garden waste.
147. Closure of Penicuik recycling Centre – again this is essential for a large town such as ours and would be a false economy.
148. 3 weekly emptying is not an option for larger families like mine even with the recycling bins. I already compost all garden material and uncooked vegetable waste anyway. There are 5 in my family and you don't even provide food recycling to Gladhouse. Given you proposed cuts to environmental pest control. Expect a vermin explosion in your towns and villages. Fortunately the vermin won't be a problem at Gladhouse given the low number of properties.

149. Closing Penicuik Recycling will just drive fly tipping up even more. It has already increased significantly in the last 5 years. False economy at you will be picking it up. Another increased problem for those of us in rural Midlothian.
150. A more practical issue is closing Penicuik refuse depot. It is bad enough now seeing the rubbish that is dumped in the woods and on the streets but without the dump there will be no limits and will the council clean up or leave it lying? May be it will just be left, besmirching the name of Midlothian Council and the people of Penicuik when tourists pass through on their way to Edinburgh, not wanting to stop in such a dirty, ill-kempt place.
151. I suspect that the closure of Penicuik Recycling Centre will very rapidly lead to the dumping of rubbish in the Countryside with a significant effect on the local environment. I would have thought that it is essential to keep both the Penicuik and Newtongrange sites open - one at each end of the Council area. Bear in mind that Penicuik is the largest town in Midlothian and that not everyone has a car to be able to access the Newtongrange site. It is also a substantial journey for those that do possess a car.
152. Please do not close the Penicuik Recycling Centre altogether. This would be to undo all the good work you have done in raising awareness of the need for recycling and in facilitating it. Closing it would be bound to increase fly tipping which is bad enough as it is.
153. People on community service to clean up litter and waste in streets, dog fouling etc., local areas.
154. The most asinine of your suggestions is to close the recycling centre at Penicuik (population 16,000) but leave that of Gorebridge open (population 6.5 thousand). Does anyone really think that two bags of rubbish are going to be driven ten miles away from Penicuik to be emptied or will it not be easier to distribute it along the road and let the Council pick it up. With larger quantities of stones and wood, furniture and general rubbish that the recycling centre deals with enormous increases in fly tipping are inevitable to the detriment of every one and of course the Council picks up the tab. Electrical goods and metal; I don't see this suggestion as in any way having any degree of sense. As for gardening recycling I don't think the Council appreciates how much increase there would be. I already have two compost heaps full where else am I going to dispose of the rest. I SUSPECT THE PROPOSAL WAS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE LIVING IN GOREBRIDGE . Please use some sense. Penicuik is the biggest town in Midlothian and the material the Penicuik site gathers is all recyclable material as it should be.
155. In summer brown bins at two weeks is not sufficient now and inevitably people use the recycling centres to dispose of the rest. I personally don't see how any savings are made by this proposal, you still have to employ the collectors, the lorries and their replacement by deterioration after so many years.
156. Can't see this – the renewable energy initiative - as likely or doable. Unless it is properly explained then unlikely to lead to anything.
157. I also strongly disagree with the proposed closure of Penicuik recycling centre. I live off of the street where the centre is based. Whilst the queues to get into the centre annoy me to no end when trying to get in and out of my street on a nice weekend I think the closure of this facility will be detrimental to the local environment. You will be asking the people of

Penicuik to spend the best part of an hour driving to and from Newtongrange for the other recycling centre. The time and environmental impact of this is completely unacceptable. I also believe the fly-tipping etc. in Penicuik and the surrounding areas will significantly increase which will then end up costing the Council more money... Further, the proposal to reduce the grey bin collection to every three weeks is also likely to be unworkable unless you propose issuing new bins that have an increased capacity. We are a family of three but both our grey and blue bins and food waste close to full for every collection. If you reduce the grey bin collection without a larger bin, then we would need to look at doing the odd trip the recycling centre which would be very unappealing if you were looking at me travelling to Newtongrange for this...

158. Charge for bins and boxes - quite reasonable.
159. Collection frequencies. I could live with three-weekly collections of the grey and blue bins and the red box. But the brown bin easily fills up in a fortnight at certain times of year. And you stop it too soon. You might consider starting a bit later and finishing a bit later.
160. Close Penicuik recycling centre. This would be a major loss. Few people would (or should) drive over 10 miles to get to a recycling centre and more stuff would go in the grey bin (or be dumped). Considering the centre of population in Midlothian Stobhill is very badly sited. Stop thinking of Dalkeith as the only town that matters.
161. Charge for brown bin collection. I would not object to this, but I suspect a lot of people would, and I wonder what they would then do with their garden waste.
162. Charging for bins will encourage people to steal other peoples.
163. Closing Penicuik recycling centre will encourage fly tipping. Not everyone has access to transport to go to Stobhill. Is garden waste collection not already covered under Council tax payments?
164. Charging for taking away garden waste will only lead to more fly tipping. Those who pay the charge will just be subsidising the increased cost of removing grass cuttings being tipped illegally.
165. Waste collections. Extend collection frequencies. Consider introducing three weekly collections for the residual bin, brown bin and red box collections: no. 3-weekly collection would see overflowing bins, smell and a return to dumping. 3 weeks of soiled nappies in summer? And overflowing bins allow rubbish to get blown away by the wind, crow and gull access, vermin – at a time when there may be no pest control staff left!
166. 2-weekly collection of the brown bin is already a struggle. Though we do compost but still need the brown bin. So 3-weekly presents a problem.
167. Food waste would still be collected weekly, in line with a previous agreement with Zero Waste Scotland: this service has yet to be deployed to more rural areas. When?
168. Close Penicuik recycling centre. This facility was recently granted planning consent to refurbish the site. This will cost approximately £500,000. The proposal is therefore to close this site and negate the need to spend this sum and to concentrate all activity at the Stobhill

site in Newtongrange: and say hello to dumping and fly tipping all over Midlothian! Forgo spending on an upgrade. Keep it as it is. It works.

169. It has taken years to educate the public into using these absolutely excellent facilities. Concentrating all activity at Stobhill introduces countless unnecessary “rubbish miles”. For example my recent loft clearance took 4 trips to the Penicuik recycling centre. This saved 88 miles (22m round trip) and close on 3 hours driving to Stobhill and back.
170. Since the withdrawal of taking old mattresses there has been a sharp increase in fly tipping of mattresses in the area. The closure of this facility does not bode well for Midlothian countryside.
171. Suggest charging for all types of 2nd bin (p55)
172. Brown bin collection must stay at 2 week intervals (p56)
173. Keep no charge for Brown bin collection (p58)
174. With regards other services such as closing Penicuik Refuse Centre which covers the population of Penicuik and the surrounding areas, I would expect an increase in the volume of fly tipping which will likely bring increase disruption & cost to the council while also making the area unsightly. As such this will likely result in increased costs by the Council for the tidy-up which in due course will result in further increase in the Council Tax ... take the state of the roads as an example whereby these have not been properly maintained for many years resulting in pot hole repairs & insurance damage payouts.
175. Charge for replacement recycling bins and boxes – what kind of charge are you talking about? As an example, I have my food waste bin replaced yearly due to strong winds – why should I be charged for this? Make more appropriate for the Scottish weather, so it is not blown away. If the charge is too excessive, people will simply not bother recycling and put everything into general waste bin.
176. Similarly, a charge for garden waste collection – what kind of charge are you talking about? If the charge is too excessive, people will simply not bother recycling and put everything into general waste bin or start tipping the landscape.
177. Penicuik Recycling Depot is very busy and well used by local people. To consider closing it is an outrageous proposal. To suggest that locals should drive the 25 mile round trip to Gowkshill to recycle their rubbish is both economically unrealistic, and more importantly environmentally unfriendly. Put the refurbishment proposal on hold for now to make savings.
178. Do not extend the number of household waste collection service at present. The present system appears to be quite adequate as far as I note.
179. One of my other concerns is the proposed closure of the Recycling Centre at Penicuik. I feel this will definitely lead to increased fly tipping, which in the long run will cost the Council more to clear and could lead to vermin.
180. The Penicuik recycling centre, I am outraged that there are even thoughts to close the recycling centre. At your own admission planning has just been given for £500,000 of

improvements, this suggests there is a need for the centre. By closing the centre, you will encourage fly tipping, which will lead to environmental health concerns, yet you are making cuts in the environmental health service. If closed then the council workers on the small machines collecting debris will have to empty in Newtowngrange, resulting in a huge loss of productivity.

181. Street cleaning at weekends to be stopped. If anything it is weekends this is required the most. People go out drinking on a Friday and Saturday night and make a mess on their way home. If you need to make cuts in this service, keep weekend cleaning and cut three week days. Again if cut this will increase environmental health concerns.
182. Charging for brown bins. I personally don't mind paying for this, however how will it be policed, or will you outsource it? Have you priced this, as either option is likely to cost more than the current situation.
183. I recognise the council's great need to make substantial savings and while I applaud the proposal to increase the level of recycling, I deeply deplore the proposal to close Penicuik recycling centre. I believe this will be a false economy and encourage an increase in fly tipping. Could not this recycling centre continue in its present state, saving the £500,000 estimated for refurbishment of the site?
184. By all means charge for garden waste collection but publicise the necessity to compost more.
185. In regards to Penicuik recycling centre you could leave the centre as it is and still save the 500,000 without having to close it. Or spend a lot less to do a basic upgrade and provide all services in house rather than outsourcing such as glass collection.
186. Close Penicuik Recycling Centre. What is so wrong with the present centre that £500 000 is needed to fix it? Due in large part to the helpful and efficient staff, it appears to work very well as it is! It is a great encouragement to us to dispose of stuff which we cannot put into our bins in a responsible way. Without the centre, most people will not bother carrying this stuff to Stobhill. I AM ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that a lot of this unwanted material will be dumped in our lovely countryside. A lot of it will be foul, ugly and possibly dangerous. Illegal, but will the dumpers care?
187. Continue fortnightly black bin collection, reducing collections may result in an increase in littering and fly tipping, which would incur costs and damage the environment. The Penicuik waste centre should be maintained for the same reason, though opening hours could be reduced to save costs.
188. Street cleaning at weekends to be stopped. If anything it is weekends this is required the most. People go out drinking on a Friday and Saturday night and make a mess on their way home. If you need to make cuts in this service, keep weekend cleaning and cut three week days. Again if cut this will increase environmental health concerns.
189. Extend collection frequencies - bins cannot be left for as long as 3 weeks, particularly in better weather. At present, residents are often returning full bins (recycling and general waste) so increasing the frequency between collections will do nothing but increase pest and

environmental problem levels and increase fly-tipping and litter levels, particularly given the lack of public litter facilities available.

190. Close Penicuik recycling centre - this will have a real impact in terms of the levels of fly-tipping and hazardous items being abandoned/ set on fire. The additional costs associated with this clean-up are far greater than the proposed costs to maintain a small recycling site at Penicuik.
191. I am concerned that if brown bin collection incurs a separate fee, that so few people will take it up that there will not be enough to justify it, and it will also encourage 'fly tipping' of garden waste, it may be worth informally researching, e.g. a poll on your Facebook page.
192. I worry that the closure of a recycling centre will increase fly tipping which will cost more to clear up.
193. On waste collection, once every three weeks is inadequate - it will lead to fly tipping. Residents of towns might not need this service but those with gardens do. We pay for streetlights that we do not get. No cuts to waste collections.
194. No closure of Penicuik recycling either - that will lead to an increase in fly tipping which is already a problem that Midlothian council ignores and which is increasing. So keep this site open.
195. I am disgusted at the proposals to close the Recycling Centre in Penicuik. You don't need to refurbish it but if you close it there is bound to be an increase in fly tipping in the area. To expect people to go to Gorebridge with waste is unrealistic. Penicuik is at the edge of Midlothian & already feels marginalised by the removal of other council provisions previously. Also I am not in favour of reducing the bin collections to 3 weekly. Yes we can try to increase recycling but unless manufacturers reduce their packaging it will not have much impact. The closure of the recycling centre will result in lots of additional mileage across Midlothian by those who care, and large amounts of fly tipping by those who don't!
196. Also closing the refuse centre in Penicuik would be awful. We need to have things like this close by. I dread to think of all the dumping of rubbish that may happen if this closes.
197. Brown bin collection reduction would be crazy. Collection every two weeks is just not enough. To extend this to three weeks would be disastrous, especially if the Penicuik recycling centre is closed....fly tipping will be the order of the day! Are people really going to travel to Stobhill to get rid of Garden waste, this needs to be thought through again.
198. Closing the recycling centre in Penicuik is a negative step. People will not travel from Penicuik to Stobhill to recycle. The likelihood is that once again there will be a lot of illegal dumping. How can you encourage people to be responsible and recycle when you take away a really important service.
199. If refuse collections are further reduced then there will be even more 'fly-tipping' leading to an increased need for pest control and Environmental Health support, so cutting these back would have a very detrimental effect on the whole community, including the built environment.

200. Any closure of recycling centres, reduction in the hours of opening and excessive charges for the acceptance of all forms of rubbish can only lead to a massive increase in tipping and litter which is already at a disgusting level throughout the County.
201. Innovative ideas for using all forms of rubbish should be encouraged and perhaps small businesses encouraged to come up with recycling ideas ; for example -converting old furniture into something of use to others, making proper compost to sell and providing allotments to grow and sell produce.
202. Waste collections. Extend collection frequencies.
203. Consider introducing three weekly collections for the residual bin, brown bin and red box collections: no. 3-weekly collection would see overflowing bins, smell and a return to dumping. 3 weeks of soiled nappies in summer? And overflowing bins allow rubbish to get blown away by the wind, crow and gull access, vermin – at a time when there may be no pest control staff left!
204. 2-weekly collection of the brown bin is already a struggle. Though we do compost but still need the brown bin. So 3-weekly presents a problem.
205. Food waste would still be collected weekly, in line with a previous agreement with Zero Waste Scotland: this service has yet to be deployed to more rural areas. When?
206. Close Penicuik recycling centre. This facility was recently granted planning consent to refurbish the site. This will cost approximately £500,000. The proposal is therefore to close this site and negate the need to spend this sum and to concentrate all activity at the Stobhill site in Newtongrange: and say hello to dumping and fly tipping all over Midlothian! Forgo spending on an upgrade. Keep it as it is. It works.
207. It has taken years to educate the public into using these absolutely excellent facilities. Concentrating all activity at Stobhill introduces countless unnecessary “rubbish miles”. For example my recent loft clearance took 4 trips to the Penicuik recycling centre. This saved 88 miles (22m round trip) and close on 3 hours driving to Stobhill and back.
208. Since the withdrawal of taking old mattresses there has been a sharp increase in fly tipping of mattresses in the area. The closure of this facility does not bode well for Midlothian countryside.
209. Penicuik recycling centre should have reduced hours - open only at weekends maybe or Friday and Saturday?
210. item 1 Suggest charging for all types of 2nd bin (p55)
211. item 2 Brown bin collection must stay at 2 week intervals (p56)
212. item 4 Keep no charge for Brown bin collection (p58)
213. With regards other services such as closing Penicuik Refuse Centre which covers the population of Penicuik and the surrounding areas, I would expect an increase in the volume of fly-tipping which will likely bring increase disruption & cost to the council while also making the area unsightly. As such this will likely result in increased costs by the Council for

the tidy-up which in due course will result in further increase in the Council Tax ... take the state of the roads as an example whereby these have not been properly maintained for many years resulting in pot hole repairs & insurance damage payout.

214. Charge for replacement recycling bins and boxes – what kind of charge are you talking about? As an example, I have my food waste bin replaced yearly due to strong winds – why should I be charged for this? Make more appropriate for the Scottish weather, so it is not blown away. If the charge is too excessive, people will simply not bother recycling and put everything into general waste bin. Similarly, a charge for garden waste collection – what kind of charge are you talking about? If the charge is too excessive, people will simply not bother recycling and put everything into general waste bin or start tipping the landscape.
215. Closure of the Penicuik recycling centre which will see Midlothian residents have to travel to Newtongrange - is this not increasing road miles and pollution and also risking an increase in fly tipping?
216. **Brown Bin** - charge may be difficult for some people. This might result in fly tipping. A charge for recycling boxes may also have financial implications for people on low budgets. Sometimes, the boxes get broken by recycling staff throwing the boxes down. Should the client then have to pay for a replacement?
217. You also talk of closing the Penicuik Re-cycling Centre. Who is going to travel to Newtongrange from this side of the county with their rubbish? Fly tipping in this area is bad enough just now and it will only get worse with this proposal. You will have to send out teams to clear up the mess in the countryside - something brought about by your own doing. Could you not reduce the hours during which the Penicuik site is open to the public thereby cutting the costs? This site is kept very tidy by the staff, who are very helpful when I visit. The same thing will happen if you charge for garden waste. Those of us who are responsible enough to pay and dispose of our refuse correctly will probably find any spare room in our bins used up by those who will not pay!!! Or again it will be dumped in the countryside.
218. Closing our local recycling centre will only encourage fly-tipping which I suspect costs more to clean up.
219. Close Penicuik recycling: Very few people in Penicuik would take items to Stobhill, big increase in fly tipping, big reduction in recycling, more waste going to landfill via grey bins and the costs of dealing with fly tipping and both those. It's a 40-45 minute round trip from my house in Valleyfield. Also, why does £500k need to be spent on Penicuik recycling centre?
220. Charging for garden waste. Many people will not take this up, they will fly-tip and/or use the grey bins. If peni recycling stays open, taking garden waste there is an option for residents who don't pay to get their brown bin emptied. Saving is very small in relative terms.
221. Bin charges: Effectively this is a (hopefully) one off charge for an essential service. What if the bin is damaged by the collectors?

222. Bin collection changes: Is there any evidence that a 3 week collection period would meet the needs of the average family i.e. would the service be fit for purpose? If not then charging for a second bin (see above) would discriminate against families.
223. Closing Penicuik recycling centre: Predictably this will lead to an increase in fly tipping – already an issue in rural areas.
224. Charges for brown bin collection: Is this an annual charge? How and by whom would the charge be administered? How would the households that have paid be identified? Would the service then continue throughout the year i.e. not stop through the winter months?
225. Penicuik Recycling Depot is very busy and well used by local people. To consider closing it is an outrageous proposal. To suggest that locals should drive the 25 mile round trip to Gowkshill to recycle their rubbish is both economically unrealistic, and more importantly environmentally unfriendly. Put the refurbishment proposal on hold for now to make savings.
226. Do not extend the number of household waste collection service at present. The present system appears to be quite adequate as far as I note.
227. One of my other concerns is the proposed closure of the Recycling Centre at Penicuik. I feel this will definitely lead to increased fly tipping, which in the long run will cost the Council more to clear and could lead to vermin. I hope the views of the employees and the residents of Midlothian will be taken into consideration.
228. The Penicuik recycling centre, I am outraged that there are even thoughts to close the recycling centre. At your own admission planning has just been given for £500,000 of improvements, this suggests there is a need for the centre. By closing the centre, you will encourage fly tipping, which will lead to environmental health concerns, yet you are making cuts in the environmental health service. If closed then the council workers on the small machines collecting debris will have to empty in Newtongrange, resulting in a huge loss of productivity.
229. Charging for brown bins. I personally don't mind paying for this, however how will it be policed, or will you outsource it? Have you priced this, as either option is likely to cost more than the current situation.
230. I recognise the council's great need to make substantial savings and while I applaud the proposal to increase the level of recycling, I deeply deplore the proposal to close Penicuik recycling centre.
231. I believe this will be a false economy and encourage an increase in fly tipping.
232. Could not this recycling centre continue in it's present state, saving the £500,000 estimated for refurbishment of the site?
233. By all means charge for garden waste collection but publicise the necessity to compost more.
234. Continue fortnightly black bin collection, reducing collections may result in an increase in littering and fly tipping, which would incur costs and damage the environment. The Penicuik

waste centre should be maintained for the same reason, though opening hours could be reduced to save costs.

235. I meant to say that in regards to point 2 below re Penicuik Recycling Centre, you could leave the centre as it is and still save the 500,000 without having to close it. Or spend a lot less to do a basic upgrade and provide all services in house rather than outsourcing such as glass collection.

236. The other area where I feel proposals are counter-productive are:

- Proposals to change bin collection arrangements
- Charging for garden waste
- Closing the Penicuik recycling centre

237. Reduce hours but don't shut Penicuik recycling centre.

238. Charge more for services, including bins.

239. I'm happy to have bins collected every 3 weeks.

240. Charges should be imposed in new housing developments for waste bins/boxes.

241. Charges should not be imposed for replacement bins/boxes.

242. Agree that a small annual charge for collection of garden waste should be considered but there should be no change to collection frequency.

243. Reduction in street sweeping should be avoided.

244. I realise the dump site at Penicuik is an obvious potential for closing - but I'm sure will only result in a huge increase in fly tipping. This is a busy recycling site!

245. Penicuik recycling facility always seems busy and it's closure would surely lead to more fly tipping which would cost the council more?

246. I'm concerned to read that there are several cuts and reduction in service around commercial operations, in addition the proposed closure of the Penicuik recycling centre i believe will lead to an increase in fly tipping which is already an issue in the areas surrounding the town.

247. I feel passionately that the Penicuik recycling centre should remain open. Without it, we would see an increase in the fly tipping which already occurs in places like Lowries Den, because Stobhill is too far away. Folk who have a small vehicle can make several trips to Penicuik, but Stobhill is too far away for this. Folk should be being encouraged to recycle and to dispose of waste responsibly, but this is not possible for us if the Penicuik Centre is closed. We do not need a big, fancy, redevelopment, so long as the staff have the facilities already there and vehicles can drive and park safely, as is currently the case.

A further consideration is that lorry drivers who are supposed to empty bins at our homes appear to have carte blanche to skip properties. Despite phoning weekly for months, at least one truck has failed to stop at our home each week. In many instances a separate truck has had to make a separate trip to empty the relevant bin. Some of the "customer service" folk you have to deal with when making these calls are very difficult to deal with and do not

appear to have been trained in the art of customer relations. One promised that a truck would be sent to empty our brown bin that had not been emptied and approximately two months later, the bin is still standing, waiting to be collected! This really is not acceptable, especially if you then want to close the Penicuik recycling centre as well. Why should I have to make special provisions to get my load all the way across to Stobhill purely because someone isn't doing their job properly. In teaching and other professions, if you routinely neglect an aspect of your job and do not amend your ways after it has been brought to folk's attention umpteen times, then you probably wouldn't have a job anymore. I am definitely NOT advocating that the driver (s) lose their job. Jobs are hard to come by and, just like the men who man the Penicuik Recycling Centre, there will be dependants who will be sorely affected by the loss of an income if these people lose their jobs! It feels like I am being kicked from every direction by this scenario!

If you decide to close the Penicuik Recycling Centre, then the waste department should be held accountable when bins are not collected on the appointed days. The public shouldn't have to deal with this.

Why don't you think of other ways to make the centre more financially viable? For example:

*forget about a massive, expensive refurbishment and let it continue as it is.

* If there are aspects of the current setup which are horrendous for those working there to live with, then what about setting up a volunteer group to help, or asking local tradesmen and companies to assist with sponsorship, making the changes, or allowing them to drop off X amount of waste from their companies per month, free in exchange for what they have to offer, e.g. landscaping companies.

* how about a return to common sense and if a member of the public sees something that has been discarded, then they can take it home for a small fee. The item has, after all, been thrown away by someone who no longer wants it! I remember being able to select a fridge, or knock off a cooker, etcetera. If you purchase something in this way, then the purchaser has to realise that it is their own risk and there can be no comeback. That is just common sense.

* The whole country has become totally strangled by rules to protect organisations. Let's return to a scenario where folk can use their initiative and individuals shoulder responsibility for their own actions! Let the recycling centre have skips that can be rented out, or trailers that people can use to get loads to the centre (you could subcontract ownership, maintenance and responsibility to a company that specialises in such things.

*Sell advertising space.

*Have a shop where sellable items like plastic crates, etc. can be sold on. Everyone will be reminded (signage) that items are sold as seen, have not been tested, and there is no recourse to complaints if faults are discovered. In this way, folk who are feeling the pinch in particular, can buy items at a vastly reduced price. It is rubbish, after all and someone has thrown it away.

I sincerely hope that the Penicuik Recycling Centre remains open and that leaflets mentioning public surveys include a date in future. And, if anyone has any influence over bin collection truck drivers who can't be bothered to do their job, week after week, then I sincerely hope that something is done to remedy the situation!

Roads maintenance and street lighting

1. One of the main things that Midlothian should be addressing is calming measures through The Loan in Loanhead and also The Main Street in Roslin . It is appalling how fast people are driving through these areas. It will just take someone to get knocked down for the issue to be raised

2. Reduce street lighting budget – So let's just make the community less safe, and more intimidating particularly for the most vulnerable i.e. children, and the elderly. Less working street lights practically promotes an increase in anti-social behaviour and crime, particularly violent and sexual offences. Appalled.
3. Reduce spending on road maintenance: does this include looking at increasing collaboration between utility companies who need to dig up roads so that the road is only dug up once rather than multiple times thereby reducing the need for the council to repair the potholes which appear shortly afterwards? Perhaps that is worth looking at
4. Reduced maintenance on "Roads and related services" will again impact on rural communities who are already having to contend with poorly maintained roads and footways.
5. The reduction of road maintenance is fraught with danger of claims and this is short sighted by the author.
6. Roads, if you do not keep verges clear as happens in many rural roads now, the drains block this causes flooding and then leads to landslides. Another short sighted decision.
7. Please do not remove funding from road repairs, lighting and culvert and bridge maintenance. These reductions would only increase problems in the long term. Midlothian is a delight to cycle in, as there are so many small roads in lovely countryside. But potholes and rough surfaces are very dangerous. It is awful having to move out to avoid a hole right by the verge.
8. Roads - Another case for a management change, the current staff seem to have little pride in what they do, and they aren't very efficient at doing it. This team might be a good one to outsource.
9. Structures - Better management required, but it's not work you can avoid.
10. Street lighting -Fine, but you need to make reporting dark lights simpler, it's a bit of a trial at the moment, advertise it more too.
11. Transform lighting operations - Fine.
12. Reduce winter maintenance. One bad accident and your savings are an illusion, you might think you've saved a few bob, but you've cost others, Individuals, Police, NHS, Insurance Co's etc. a fortune. Pick any areas for savings carefully.
13. Reducing roads maintenance – MADNESS.
14. Yes you can make savings but is it cost effective to have street lighting on all day everyday Loanhead Dryden Dulum Paradykes and more. This happens a lot and the second time in three months I've emailed just wondering.
15. [Reduce structures maintenance budget] Again potential for deterioration in upkeep to result in the inevitable claims for damage or danger.
16. Reduce roads maintenance? Can it be reduced further?

17. Footway routes in snow are essential for safe access, particularly for young children and the elderly, disabled people. My mum would be completely house bound in bad weather if footway routes were more limited.
18. Reduce spending on road maintenance/ structures maintenance/ winter maintenance budget - impossible, given climate and inevitable increased spend on pothole and other repairs as well as potential impact on safety. There should be no reduction in pavement access as this would impact on vulnerable older or disabled users and those with young children.
19. Look at potential savings on capital projects such as building new roads.
20. Reduce spending on road maintenance? Then we really will be the pothole capital of the UK!
21. Road Maintenance: It is unbelievable that cuts are being considered in this vital area. Roads will not mend themselves and will eventually become dangerous.
22. Winter Maintenance Budget: In view of the fairly mild recent winters there should be at present a healthy stockpile of grit etc. Reducing the number of footpaths and roads being treated will result in a rise in the number of accidents resulting in more pressure on A&E plus lost days at work.
23. Reduce spending on roads - don't agree - the roads are getting hammered as the council allows more and more houses to be built. Increasing private claims for vehicle damage from potholes etc. will deprive the council of even more money.
24. Only gritting A roads would mean a lot of residents cut off from services and could be dangerous leading to accidents in winter.
25. Reducing road maintenance will be counterproductive as deterioration of roads will lead to higher costs in future.
26. Road maintenance is a fundamental role of any local authority. Poor road maintenance might lead to compensation claims for vehicle damage, which might be self-defeating.
27. PROVIDE GRIT BOXES AT ROAD SIDES SO PUBLIC CAN ACCESS WHEN WEATHER IS BAD.
28. Charge private companies (i.e. Nwh or McSence) for repairs to roads/pavements caused by their vehicles.
29. Charge builders and utilities for road closures. Not only is that a source of revenue, it will also reduce the massive inconvenience to road users. There would need to be inspection of how they seal the road afterwards, or a bond for additional repairs required, but that can all be built into the charges.
30. Change streetlights in quiet residential streets to motion sensors?
31. Roads and lighting to be left neglected with budget cuts?
32. To cut road salting in the winter is dangerous this will also cause accidents!!
33. Reduced spending on road maintenance ... they are the worst in Europe by miles!!

34. Bridges, culverts and retaining walls ... again someone is going to die did you not learn anything from Oxfords?????
35. I would oppose cutting spending on road maintenance. This is a false saving in the longer term.
36. Not maintaining the streets and parks is a short-term gain with longer-term costs.
37. I would oppose cutting the structures maintenance budget as this is a false saving in the longer term.
38. Reduce spending on road maintenance: already under-resourced, not at all realistic
39. Reduce the winter maintenance budget: big reliance on this work to allow people to get to their jobs during the winter, not realistic.
40. If you live on in Penicuik you will now have to travel to use vital services on what will be poorer road surfaces due to a cut in spending the week in that area too.
41. Another area of concern is the reduction in the upkeep of the roads. Never mind the roads, what about the pavements?! In recent weeks there have been a lot of people having accidents due to the state of the pavements. You can't walk anywhere in Penicuik these days due to the bad condition of the pavements. Surely fixing these should be priority.
42. Street sweeping, road and structure maintenance are all inadequate at present. The budget for these should be increased not reduced. The roads are already in a dreadful state with numerous potholes and broken surfaces. Similarly, Winter maintenance budget needs to be maintained not reduced otherwise there will be far more accidents and therefore more pressure on the NHS.
43. Surely street lighting maintenance should be a priority from a safety angle as well as helping to prevent crime.
44. Virgin Media have be digging up roads and pavements all over Midlothian and not always repairing the surface satisfactorily. This will lead to the surfaces breaking up in time. I think the council should be stricter with firms that dig up the roads and insist that they repair the surfaces properly so that ratepayers don't have to pick up the bill at a later date.
45. Against cuts in road and pavement gritting in Winter. We live at the top of a hill like many residents in Penicuik and slippery pavements and roads are a real danger for us.
46. Reductions to the winter maintenance budget. Well I am already seeing this with a failure to grit any roads near me and despite lower temperatures and ice at our high rural altitude of 1000ft. I have already witnessed 4 accidents in the last 6 days within 2 miles of my house. That is not a normal rate of accidents for this area. Maintenance of our roads is already poor year round. The deteriorating road surfaces combined with ice and snow will lead to more accidents and car damage. Given I complained about this issue and received no response from the council I can only assume it will take a fatality with on unsafe road surfaces to get you to bother responding. As I understand it the police have complained to the council about the matter in on a number of occasions in the last 6 days. The road safety issues are

paramount for me. I don't think it is an understatement to say they are going to lead to more road user deaths.

47. Do away with most of the traffic lights in Dalkeith. We have two by passes.
48. It appears that the council has already reduced spending on road maintenance. The state of the roads is appalling. As a driver I have incurred increased costs in suspension repairs to my car which the garage says is an increasing situation. Not that they will be complaining, increase in business and money for them
49. If all of these savings proposals are implemented, there are much greater risks to safety of people and children. Expect as a consequence greater risk of legal action and inevitable payout as a result WHICH WILL PROBABLY NEGATE ANY SAVING
50. Reducing road maintenance is surely false economy - bigger bills further down the line & increased claims for damage to cars.
51. Make street lighting come on when the light falls below a certain threshold - sometimes lights are on in broad daylight - and turn most of them off after midnight. Save money and energy.
52. Roads need upgrading in Mayfield.
53. Reduce the structures maintenance budgets. This includes reduced spending on bridges, culverts and retaining walls: is this safe? Ultimately would this not result in increased spending to put right? A stitch in time...
54. Reduce the winter maintenance budget: not if this impacts on safety rather than inconvenience.
55. Maintain spending on road maintenance (p70).
56. Retain Winter maintenance budget (p74).
57. Reduce spending on road maintenance – we already have poor infrastructure and clearly this will only cause our roads to deteriorate further, damaging our cars, resulting in more legal actions against the council, costing more money in the end. It will also compromise public safety. How do you intend to address this issue?
58. Do not reduce the road maintenance budget. Our roads are already poorly maintained, any further reduction is unacceptable and could lead to the council being sued by road users due to damage to vehicles. This risks greater costs should suits favour the pursuer.
59. Reduce the winter maintenance budget. If I have understood this correctly, does this mean reduce the gritting of footpaths and roads. If so there will be more falls and accidents, again putting more pressure on the health service.
60. I regret the proposal to reduce spending on road maintenance as I feel that anything below that which exists at present is likely to lead to more damage and accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

61. Reduce structures maintenance budgets. False economy! I believe that routine maintenance is much less expensive and much more predictable than sudden emergency repairs or replacement.
62. Reduce the winter maintenance budget. Does this mean less de-icing of roads AND pavements? People crash on icy roads often leading to injuries and deaths. People are injured by falls on icy pavements. Apart from personal tragedies, what are the chances of the council losing a compensation claim and having to pay HUGE damages?
63. Do not reduce the road maintenance budget. Our roads are already poorly maintained, any further reduction is unacceptable and could lead to the council being sued by road users due to damage to vehicles. This risks greater costs should suits favour the pursuer.
64. Reduced spending on road maintenance and other infrastructure will have a detrimental effect on attracting investment into the county. There are too many proposed cuts to comment on. I also do not think the road sweeping should be cut. Litter is a blight & problem in Penicuik.
65. Cutting road maintenance: This will increase costs for residents/businesses and potentially claims against the council as everyone's vehicles suffer more on substandard road surfaces.
66. Review spending on road maintenance - costs for roads maintenance MUST be found. We have roads that are not fit for purpose and an infrastructure that simply cannot cope, the primary reason being that private developers are throwing up properties which mean a huge strain on Midlothian roads. There is a complete lack of accountability and lack of financial liability by developers for the detrimental impact they have.
67. I do not want to see road maintenance reduced. The roads are full of holes as it is and downright dangerous in places. Do not reduce winter maintenance budget. The cost to social care & the NHS of people falling & breaking limbs would outweigh any "savings" here.
68. Maintenance of retaining walls etc. Is surely a vital part of safety for all. I speak from very bitter experience!
69. The state of our roads is already appalling and rarely fixed to an acceptable level. To reduce this even further would be catastrophic, not only for communities but for drivers whose vehicles are damaged through poor maintenance.
70. Some of the minor but essential roads in the area I live are already in disrepair and this situation will only worsen.
71. Main route gritting/ snow ploughing is fine in extreme conditions. However, those of us who reside in hilly streets/ the foot of a hill, have for a long long time had to dig ourselves out or constantly ask for a grittier to come. Grit bins in our street are never filled, have been reduced and quite frankly leave our road in dangerous condition. There are a lot of elderly people in our street and we cannot do what we used to do independently. I would strongly suggest that this needs to remain. Cutting man power will not improve a situation like this anywhere in Midlothian.
72. Cutting back on road maintenance together with a reduction in the winter maintenance budget will lead to more accidents to pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists and damage to

motor vehicles. This will in turn lead to claims for compensation which will cost more in the long run.

73. Increase provision of cycle ways and reduce speed limits. Close roads to cars at peak times in order to reduce wear on roads.
74. I am also amused that you intend to reduce spending on road maintenance. If the pot-holes in Roslin are a judge this has been reduced a long time ago. Instead of asking the public to pay for parking in shopping areas which are already free could the shops not be asked to help towards this and upkeep of parking areas. They are the ones who benefit after all. It always seems to be the motorist who has to bear the cost. Increases or new charges will deter people from visiting shopping areas which then means that shops have lower revenue and will be unable to meet their financial commitments - i.e. Business Rates!!! I hope you give my thoughts due consideration. I realise you have a difficult task ahead but by re-thinking some of your proposals you could come up with a much better plan than that already published.
75. Reduce the structures maintenance budgets. This includes reduced spending on bridges, culverts and retaining walls: is this safe? Ultimately would this not result in increased spending to put right? A stitch in time...
76. Reduce the winter maintenance budget: not if this impacts on safety rather than inconvenience. This in addition to the other reduced services / frequency of roads, pavements & verges maintenance to name but a few over the past x years has left Penicuik in a sorry state especially given the value of Council tax that residents are expected to pay ... I can only see this getting worse if your proposed cuts are implemented.
77. **Reduce the winter maintenance budget** – this might be dangerous in bad weather. Some areas could get shut off. Some people may get stuck at home. Disabled people find it hard to get out and about when it is snowy and icy.
78. **Reduce street lighting maintenance** – This has already been a problem for some people. If repairs are not carried out timeously, reduced lighting may result in people not going out. People may be worried about not being able to see or at risk of attack because it is dark.
79. item 16 Maintain spending on road maintenance (p70)
80. item 20 Retain Winter maintenance budget (p74)
81. Reduce spending on road maintenance – we already have poor infrastructure and clearly this will only cause our roads to deteriorate further, damaging our cars, resulting in more legal actions against the council, costing more money in the end. It will also compromise public safety. How do you intend to address this issue?
82. Reduce spending on roads - really? have you seen the state roads are in? Why not increase spending on cycle ways / reduce speed limits on roads to encourage cycling not driving. This would reduce wear on roads and health bills.
83. Don't cut street lighting.
84. Reduce winter maintenance budget: Again rural communities will be worst hit! What is meant by priority routes?

85. Reduce the winter maintenance budget. If I have understood this correctly, does this mean reduce the gritting of footpaths and roads. If so there will be more falls and accidents, again putting more pressure on the health service.
86. I regret the proposal to reduce spending on road maintenance as I feel that anything below that which exists at present is likely to lead to more damage and accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
87. Strongly disagree that there should be any review or reduction of roads, winter maintenance.
88. Also concerned about the reduced spending on road maintenance especially with the increase in traffic in and around Penicuik with the increased number of new house builds. The impact of this increased traffic will only put more pressure on the road and to reduce the maintenance is a concern.

Communities and economic development

1. The "transfer of the welfare rights function to external agencies", although not statutory and the CAB already do great support work in this area, it is essential that the Council assist with funding and provide an overview of how this service is functioning.
2. Welfare Rights, working in an area that Universal Credit has been rolled out to, I know that Welfare Rights is a very important service to retain before the UK roll out. The poor, disabled, elderly and mentally impaired people who are to receive these benefits are the ones who will need a lot of help and advice to actually be able to use this. It is a computer based system that they can access in libraries, oh wait a minute you want to close them too. So I know that having local libraries and someone to help them navigate the system are a must.
3. I am shocked and appalled at the proposals in general, but especially the cuts to welfare rights services and to grants to community and voluntary groups. How can the council claim to be empowering communities whilst doing this, or to be prioritising reducing inequality when Universal Credit and DLA changes are making poverty worse and foodbanks are growing.
4. **(Comments 3 – 28)** As a resident of Midlothian I would request that Midlothian council in their final budget consultation for 2018/19 should include funding for Gullane Home in their final proposals to be presented to the council. **(The same comments received from 26 other residents using a proforma response form)**
30. If you're transferring the WR function to the CAB make sure that some of the savings follow the transfer of responsibilities.
31. Community transfers should take place wherever possible, there must be some reporting system in place so that the Council can be assured that the management organisations are fulfilling their functions.

32. Small grants can sometimes be of greater worth than their cost, others are certainly a waste of money. Better filters are required, also, see 1. I'm not sure stopping charging rents etc. saves money?
33. There are so many things in the proposals that will severely compromise the wellbeing of our populace. However, I would like to point out the one that would impact most on our mental health service users would be if we were no longer to have the council's team of dedicated, welfare rights workers. Even if you gave the CAB the same amount of money that is currently spent on the WRT - our clients would not receive an adequate service. It is more difficult to communicate with and to share information with the CAB, which would make the process less streamlined and less cost effective. The WRT provides essential front line support to service users. Please remember that money is the most essential thing for all of us and the lack of it (or difficulty with it) causes more stress than any other aspect of our lives. Assisting people with financial issues is considered level one trauma treatment, and most of our clients have experienced or are experiencing significant trauma.
34. I think scrapping the Welfare Rights service within Midlothian Council could be catastrophic for many of our service users (social work, mental health etc.) especially with Universal Credit continuing to make people suffer unnecessary financial hardship and this will only continue.
35. I feel it is completely unacceptable that the communities see the cuts before the executive and senior management feel the pinch from within the council.
36. There should be far greater emphasis on income generation and economic development in the area. There are huge opportunities which should be explored and exploited in the region including the many council green spaces, the Borders railway, the massive amount of private residential building development and the proximity to Edinburgh.
37. We need a paradigm shift in providing major local employment and boosting corporation tax revenue.
38. Removing nugatory funding for galas etc., also erodes community spirit.
39. Introduce a tourist tax.
40. Any transfer of responsibilities to Third Sector, local voluntary groups and charities must be accompanied by a fair transfer of financial resource, whether on a commission or grant basis.
41. I think encouraging community buy up of land might help.
42. Is there any funding coming from the city deal?
43. Your contempt for your own residents is palpable. If this is merely a political game in an attempt to gain an increase in budget from the Scottish Government then you are playing with your own people's (residents and workers) futures and lives.
44. Proposals to shut libraries, community centres and sports facilities in favour of 'hubs' strike at the heart of our communities and following removal of post offices and banks will destroy

community life, leaving ghost dormitory villages and more reliance on transport / travel congestion. Services should be provided locally.

45. I am disgusted that the most vulnerable in the Midlothian communities will be the ones hit the most. Closing libraries that have just been opened and are a community hub. Reducing bin collections! Charging for new bins, not the public's fault if bins are stolen. Stopping bus transport for vulnerable people. Reducing learning assistants in schools when actually more are required to assist the teachers who are already overstretched. Reducing the amount of janitors in schools, they actually save the schools money therefore the council due to being around and preventing issues.
46. Can't believe that the most in need are the ones most likely to be effected. The savings from these cuts are not actually all that great.
47. Think it's shocking that the cuts proposed are going to affect children, OAP's and the most vulnerable people in Midlothian.
48. Transfer of community assets sounds good in principle.
49. Massive cut in Grants budget will surely impact significantly on local groups.
50. Allow private sector/ charity organisations to run some community centres.
51. Large Discretionary rate reductions are provided to 3 golf courses in Midlothian of the 6 courses operating. This has produced distortion in the golf market. For example Kings Acre pays about £90k in business rates while Broomieknowe pays £35k because the Council provides a discretionary discount. Both provide the same service to the community. An unlevel playing field has been created by Midlothian Council. Discretionary Grants for the Newbattle, Broomieknowe and Glencourse Golf Courses should be withdrawn. This will create fair play. These funds of about £120k can then be used to plug the gap in more essential services such as schools or social services. Stop Discretionary reductions on Local Business rates for private member golf courses. This will help plug the gap in savings.
52. Ending help for gala days is the final kick in the teeth to the small voluntary groups who already work extremely hard organise such events and on shoe string budgets generated from the hard work, sweat, tears and often the personal financial contributions made by an extremely small portion of the community. Yet on each gala day a far greater amount of people come out to enjoy what is laid on. Midlothian Council cannot walk away from supported these events and must support these organisations. Many of which have already had to accommodate existing cuts and services previously facilitated by the council and police. Many volunteers will walk away and proud traditions right across Midlothian will be endanger of dying out.
53. I always seek to find positives in every scenario and hope the council can come to a more moderate solution to its funding issues.
54. Create a Midlothian B&B web portal, again keeping revenue within Midlothian instead of ending up in non-UK business profits.

55. Community events: Again, people chose to live in Midlothian as it's a place that's much smaller than Edinburgh and offers a sense of community. These events are what cement these notions of community.
56. In my capacity as a charity trustee, I have two matters I would like to raise. These are my concerns that where you wish volunteers to take over paid roles, then reduce grant payments and potentially causing the charities who recruit, train and manage the volunteers to shut, it is not clear how these volunteers will be supported. Volunteering does not happen in a vacuum. The other matter to remember is that volunteering often provides around £6.50 of benefits for every pound paid out in grants. I do welcome Midlothian Council's intent to discuss how best to move forward with local charities. I am concerned about the impact on community groups and community-led activity. E.g. increased fees, transfer of buildings (that are costly to run) and decreased grants. I understand that you have to save money but reading the document makes Midlothian sound like it will be a terrible place to live, no floral displays, no libraries, streets less clean, it's going to be bleak.
57. According to my information, the Council budget allows for somewhere in the region of £80,000 for Christmas lights. I well understand the need to draw in the purse strings, in many instances through no direct fault of the Council, but it is a bitter pill to swallow that that amount of money can be spent on a 4 week period yet some £16,000 can be swept away to ensure a year round, vital service to the community. If businesses in the likes of Dalkeith are benefiting from the Christmas lights and attracting more customers then given their increased profits why are they not sponsoring the tree and lights?
58. As the council is forced to rely on voluntary groups more, it makes sense not to simultaneously cut the grants to those groups. keep your grants to the voluntary sector - these groups will help you time and again during this transition time.
59. Please try and consult during the implementation of cuts - local people can help pick up some of these issues, but that process of hand-over needs to start now.
60. Grants Budget – perhaps it would not harm to review this process however any cuts should be given a very careful consideration. Stopping completely projects like Sure Start or Empowering Families Project (both of which I personally used) will change prevention into treatment – while these services look at the outset of the problems and give the users tools to deal with the problems when they arise, stopping them will mean that many families and individuals turn to use social services, doctor surgeries and medication a lot more, which in the longer term will cost the council/government more.
61. Grants Budget – perhaps it would not harm to review this process however any cuts should be given a very careful consideration. Stopping completely projects like Sure Start or Empowering Families Project (both of which I personally used) will change prevention into treatment – while these services look at the outset of the problems and give the users tools to deal with the problems when they arise, stopping them will mean that many families and individuals turn to use social services, doctor surgeries and medication a lot more, which in the longer term will cost the council/government more.
62. I have reviewed the proposals for the budget cuts and wish it noted that I was surprised to see the welfare Rights Team was highlighted as a service that could be cut with a saving of

£143,00 to the council. The rationale for this is that this service is not statutory and could be transferred to the CABs.

63. I am a Welfare Rights Officer employed by the Council and I am writing in response to the suggestion that the Welfare Rights Team be abolished (as noted in the budgets cuts proposal) and that the other local advice agencies would provide the work we currently undertake instead. I feel very strongly that the service a Welfare Rights Team provides is essential to any local authority and in particular Midlothian Council, working to support their residents with benefit related issues and the related positive impact of increased financial gains for both vulnerable individuals and the Councils' finances.

I would like you to consider the following: -

- Last financial year the Welfare Rights Team gained £2.8 million in social security benefits for the people we helped.
- The money gained is likely spent within the county and results in increased payments to the council in respect of social work packages of care, rent and council tax liability.
- An independent review of Midlothian wide advice services was carried out last year and a detailed report was produced in December 2016. Statistical information provided within the report confirmed that the internal Welfare Rights Team was best value for money i.e. for every pound spent on employing the team, we generated £15.50 in benefit gains (this has since increased) in comparison to other local advice agencies.
- Expertise and knowledge of Social Security legislation is essential in providing robust and accurate advice to not just vulnerable residents of Midlothian, but also to internal and external customers including the CAB. The danger of misinformation can impact a persons' finances and this can in turn be related to increased health problems. I am able to provide this advice and assistance due to my own knowledge gained over 33 years of working in the benefits field and my commitment to excellent customer service.
- I carried out a specific exercise to benefit check all of the clients who are supported by St Joseph's Services (a Council commissioned service) and this generated £391,000 in benefit gains for those clients. This would have a direct impact on the individuals' lifestyle and also a significant impact on increases of charges for their packages of care. Without my expertise and ability to use and record information held on Council records (Mosaic) for those clients, the financial gain for the individuals, St Joseph's Service and Social Work Finance may have been much less.
- The independent report recommended that similar work should be considered with other Council commissioned services to ensure other residents of Midlothian's benefits are maximised and the positive impact this has on the related finances of the Council.
- On a daily basis I provide advice to my Social Work colleagues to assist their clients with benefit related issues. As well as providing oral advice, I accept formal referrals to allow me to help in a direct manner with the clients.
- Social Work colleagues working with children and adults include Community Care Assistants, Occupational Therapists and specialist social workers such as Substance Misuse, Mental Health Officers, and Criminal Justice Social Workers etc. I also provide frequent advice to my SW admin colleagues who are responsible for clients for whom the Council holds Corporate Appointeeship. The numbers for this are increasing year on year. I also provide advice to other SW Finance colleagues who have responsibility for calculating the charges for packages of care. Our team also often provide personal benefit advice and assistance to members of staff of the Council.
- There would be no replacement available for appeals representation in the Dalkeith and Gorebridge area in the absence of our service. Dalkeith CAB and other organisations such as

VOCAL and Melville Housing Association refer people who require representation at Social Security appeal tribunals to our team as they do not have the experience or expertise to provide this service.

- The Social Work clients I assist often have significant and multiple health issues which can include progressive conditions such as MS, others may have a learning disability, significant mental health problems, substance misuse issues etc. The families I assist very often have complicated social circumstances and complex family dynamics and needs too. With the trust gained by their Social Worker or OT etc., I am able to participate in “joined-up” working with those professionals which provides the person with excellent customer focused attention and the results can improve their life significantly, especially with regards to their household finances. The ability to share information for these mutual clients, and this can sometimes include very sensitive content, enables us to record our work and to provide the client with a person-centred approach. This assistance could not be provided by other organisations who do not hold the authority to view the Councils’ records and have professional relationships with our current internal customers.
- Midlothian became a full service area for the new Universal Credit benefit in March of this year and this has been fraught with problems from the outset. These difficulties have been raised in Parliament putting Universal Credit in the media spotlight. As a Council I believe that with proactive joined-up close working between the Welfare Rights Officers and Housing, Revenues etc. will help support our residents who are caught up in the complexities of this new benefit and especially those who are risk of losing their tenancies due to increasing rent arrears. The number of people claiming this benefit are increasing daily and this has a direct impact on the Council especially in relation to rent payments. In the longer-term people currently receiving specific benefits will also transfer to UC.
- Poverty and social exclusion statistics for all age groups are sadly increasing including children living in poverty. The most recent statistics note that Midlothian child poverty is approximately 18% which is slightly higher than the Scottish average. Poverty we would all agree, needs to be prevented. I believe that abolishing a team which has a direct positive impact in tackling this and helping some of the most vulnerable in society, would be hard to justify.

I hope that you will give my response serious consideration when discussing the Councils’ budget savings and that you will reconsider the suggestion of abolishing Midlothian Councils’ Welfare Rights Service.

Welfare Rights function transfer - I would welcome the service being transferred to the CAB service, although it must be adequately funded to support the increasing number of residents adversely impacted by welfare benefits changes and the introduction of UC.

64. Welfare Rights transfer. This action in my opinion would be:

1. Short sighted in light of the continued welfare reform changes and the recent inclusion of Midlothian in March 2017 to the full service universal Credit(UC) area .Any transfer to an external funder will be to a cost and there is no mention of the recent review of the Advice Services in Midlothian which included the internal councils service and the cost of the external advice services.
2. The report by Alan Cunningham which was commissioned to review the Advice Service provision in Midlothian is attached [document available on request due to large size] . The council has invested money to review the Advice Services in Midlothian from an external consultant. This review was carried out in 2016 and the report’s findings and recommendations confirmed that the council’s internal welfare rights team provided £15.50

for £1.00 spent to the client. The external providers: Midlothian Temporary Accommodation Project only returns about £4.75 per £1 spent. The CABx return about £10 per £1 spent.

3. The report highlighted the proactive activities of the team such as:

The work with tenants of St Joseph’s services

The programme of welfare reforms has had significant impacts on the benefits entitlement of individuals such as those supported through St Josephs. Approximately 90 people have had their benefits affected and many have lost money. This work is ongoing among the group. Of the 13 where work has been completed, only two had correct entitlement to benefit. The other 11 have so far shared extra benefit of £79,000

The work done with people whose lives are affected by cancer

The council is in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, jointly funding one member of staff who helps people affected by cancer to maximise their income. In 2015 – 16 people affected by cancer increased their incomes by £1.4M pa

The work done with adults with mental health issues, potentially affected by the welfare reform programme.

This programme has been running since 2013, initially funded through the Lottery. Because of its success, the Council continues to fund the work after lottery funding stopped in 2015. Funding is in place until March 2018

The post was embedded within the Joint Mental Health Team (JMHT) and the officer works alongside the health professionals and social workers and has developed a seamless referral system which assists this vulnerable group to access benefit entitlement which they would not be able to do due to their mental health problems.

This post has provided income maximisation of benefit income of £351K in the financial year 2015/16. The co-productive working has seen a positive outcome to the health and wellbeing of their patients and clients with positive feedback from practitioners and from clients. Clients report that their money, debt and welfare issues have improved and practitioners see that their patients are more resilient to the effects of welfare reform.

4. I have attached the welfare Rights 2016/17 Annual Report [document available on request due to large size] and the customer survey which again confirms the positive feedback this service received from its customers and confirms the benefit gains to the residents in Midlothian .

REFERRALS RECEIVED FOR THE WELFARE RIGHTS TEAM

Total Referrals 2016/17	1015
Total benefit Gained 2016/17	£2,874,343.08

5. The welfare rights team have implemented some of the recommendations of the review report and the monthly recording of the teams key objectives and indicators have shown an increase in their returns from £15.50 to £17.50 per £1.00 spent. The team is aware it can

improve its service and they continue to source external funding for their current team compliment.

6. The welfare rights team has 4 welfare rights officers (WROs) and 1 senior WRO. The team has a wealth of knowledge of social security benefits and experience of complex social law. This experience and depth of knowledge would be lost to the wider advice services in Midlothian were the service to be cut. The team work at level 3 of the Scottish Advice Service Standards for benefit advice and representation. The majority of SS appeals in Midlothian are represented by the internal team. The team lead in providing training to internal departments and external advice services on benefit changes. The senior WRO chairs the bi-monthly welfare rights forum for advice workers locally and is an active member of MFIN.
7. Having worked for Midlothian Council for 15 years as a WRO and been through many transformations and reviews of this service. I understand and appreciate the councils current financial circumstance and that hard choices have to be made however to think that cutting this service to outsource it to the CAB is going to save money is extremely short sighted. The proposal has no substance to the information you have paid for from an external report and as such should be scrutinised to provide the actual cost of commissioning this service and the loss of the internal knowledge and co-working within council departments which would not be available through a commissioned service with an external provider.
8. The advantages of having an internal welfare rights service within a local authority have recently been highlighted by the improvement services and the Scottish Government as the LA is likely to be the setting for the devolved Scottish Social Security Benefit system.

I hope my comments will be noted regarding the proposal to cut the Welfare Rights Team.

Welfare Rights Officer

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I hope that you will give my response serious consideration when discussing the Councils' budget savings and that you will reconsider the suggestion of abolishing Midlothian Councils' Welfare Rights Service.

66. Galas and event support - Do you charge for this? If not can this be something that can be done, instead of pulling support for everything?
67. Relying on communities to volunteer to maintain areas is not a very reasonable expectation and unlikely to happen.
68. I agree that grants to galas need to be stopped.
69. Attract more businesses to town centres (rather than charity shops) thus attracting more revenue.
70. Lastly as the council is forced to rely on voluntary groups more, it makes sense not to simultaneously cut the grants to those groups. Keep your grants to the voluntary sector - these groups will help you time and again during this transition time.
71. Please try and consult during the implementation of cuts - local people can help pick up some of these issues, but that process of hand-over needs to start now.
72. Grants Budget – perhaps it would not harm to review this process however any cuts should be given a very careful consideration. Stopping completely projects like Sure Start or Empowering Families Project (both of which I personally used) will change prevention into treatment – while these services look at the outset of the problems and give the users tools to deal with the problems when they arise, stopping them will mean that many families and individuals turn to use social services, doctor surgeries and medication a lot more, which in the longer term will cost the council/government more.

73. As a charity and subject to funding, People First members are worried about the proposed cuts to the third sector. The third sector provides value for money and any cuts to this sector will result in a loss of services for vulnerable service users. In times of austerity, the third sector takes on more and more work and funding to carry out the work is essential. If some charities and third sector agencies close due to lack of funding, their loss will be felt by service users and once they have gone, re-establishing these services in the future will prove extremely difficult.
74. If Midlothian Council is reducing services and expecting the third sector to step in, without adequate funding, this will not be possible.
75. Our members spoke about how it is important for the Council to look at innovative ways to bring in money.
76. Have you done an Equality Impact Assessment? You have mentioned the savings of removing these resources but have you considered the wider reaching social cost/impact of their removal on all the service users and communities within Midlothian? Are these results available and where?
77. This would completely stop the smaller galas / village day events. Independent provision of marquees etc. is beyond the reach of all but the largest of organisations. Again this discriminates against the rural communities.
78. Retain your support for galas and events as these are integral to community identity and should be retained.
79. Whilst there may be efficiency savings to be made in the provision of statutory services, the cuts will have to fall on the non-statutory services that are currently provided by MC. We believe that some of the proposed cuts seem to offer very little savings while causing great inconvenience to the local residents. Prime examples are: closure of local libraries [£0.24M], closure of the Penicuik Re-cycling Centre [£0.1M], removing support for fun days and gala days [£0.075M], transfer of all halls and pavilions to community groups including the ongoing caretaking, utility bills, maintenance etc. [£0.1M]. These proposed savings are, in our opinion, relatively minor, short sighted and fall unevenly on the smaller elements of the community. We suggest that increasing charges by several hundred percent or handed facilities wholesale to a community that has had no experience in managing or funding such facilities is unreasonable. If costs are to rise, or responsibility shifted to local communities, then this should be planned over a reasonable period to allow changes to be made.
80. A tailored and informed approach to Reduction in the Large and Small Grants budgets - the decision to move to a commissioned model is understandable, although this cannot be put in place for the new financial year. Continuation funding for the next year MUST be offered and MLC should work with partner organisations who are already delivering services to ensure a model is developed that is for purpose, not simply one that MLC feel would be good to use.

Sport and leisure

1. Reduction in lifeguard cover. Gee Health and Safety a priority?
2. These cuts need to be taking account of the health of the people living here, if you close the pool in Newtongrange this will affect the health of the community, having a pool in the Mayfield area does not help the Newtongrange community. We should be looking what we can do to give people more healthy options not taking them away. They are informing us about child obesity, how can you justify these cuts.
3. Walking is better exercise than swimming. I have been in Nitten pool when I was the only person using the pool for an hour

... how much did they pay out in staff wages in that hour. Use it or lose it
4. Reduce the number of Grass football and Astro pitches - Why on earth would the council for one second think that reducing grass and astro pitches is on the best interests of the health, and wellbeing of the local communities which use them?? Child obesity is on the increase as is obesity across the general population. Reducing the access to such vital resources will simply increase the demand and cost of other services i.e. NHS as the health and wellbeing of the nation plummets. Children need fresh air, exercise and social activities in order to give them the best opportunities to be successful in the future. I am appalled.
5. I have just read through some of your budget cuts and I was disgusted to see that the council is considering cutting the number of football pitches it maintains. Both my daughters play football it is a fantastic way for children to get exercise, grow in confidence and meet friends. Maybe some of the management from Midlothian council should come and visit some of the five a side games that are played in various locations around Midlothian on a Saturday, there is easily about 50 - 60 children eating having a game of football. Is Midlothian council going to take all the green space away so children can't even get together to have a simple game of football. Most countries are investing in their young people no wonder the Scotland football team does not do well when local authorities can even provide a space for the younger generation to learn the game.

I believe that there will be a huge up roar if you do try to implement reducing the number of pitches.

Should Midlothian council not be trying to encourage the younger generation instead of taking everything away from them.
6. Yes to opening Vogrie for Weddings or events
7. I recently contacted Midlothian council asking to commercially hire an area in any of their pools and was told no, no explanation, and a rude reply. They don't hire out to anyone for services they provide themselves as they are too busy. OK, I could accept that but, I then visited the newly refurbished Loanhead pool 3 times in the space of 10 days for a 60-minute swim with and didn't encounter one other user.... surely hiring an area of the pool could only increase that revenue? Council swimming lessons have big classes, long waiting lists and slow results because of this.

There are many external swim schools looking for pool time to run lessons, increasing activity for kids, reducing obesity, encouraging a healthy lifestyle, and saving lives! Yet the Council would rather go bankrupt than let anyone else use the facility that at the end of the day MY taxes pay for.

8. The football grounds are used by only one type of person interested in one sport, and not for the wider age community. The ground should be sold in entirety.
9. Charging more for sports will simply push people to better private facilities as maintaining high standards with the out of date equipment is not achievable. It is expensive for a shared facility already
10. Astropitches: I believe you should keep astro pitches open. Children need a place to play football and sport in a well lit place.
11. Maintain astro pitches but reduce further grass pitches, and encourage clubs to maintain their own pitches.
12. Removing and limiting public play spaces seems such a retrograde step. Children need exercise as much as adults do. Cutting obesity levels should be borne in mind. Penicuik has lost several pitches already over the years.
13. I write to give my opinion of the proposed increase in charges for classes at Midlothian Leisure Centres. I hold the Ageing Well Active Golden Years membership for over 60's. As a Senior Citizen I would find the proposed increase a difficulty off my State Pension. I am also a Stroke survivor and it is my understanding that the Ageing Well scheme was set up to encourage the older generation to keep active and therefore stay healthy. I personally have benefitted from my various classes and they have enabled me to get back to a reasonable fitness after my Stroke. If this increase goes ahead many elderly people, including myself, will be unable to afford the classes. I would urge you to please reconsider the proposed increases and therefore help the elderly people in our community to lead a healthy, active life. I thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.
14. Cessation of sports grants - Fine, not really your business, unless they're members of staff.
15. Reduce lifeguard cover from 2 to 1 - And what happens when they need a break!
16. Concessionary charging policy How about changing 'over 60's to Over 65's?
17. Community run pure gym – unworkable.
18. Concessionary charge increases – if dramatic reduction of numbers, no savings.
19. Increase sport and leisure fees - £50,000 – is that likely.
20. Do the football pitches equate to green space? Will they be left for somewhere for children to play or will they be sold and built on?
21. Point 18 [Community run Pure Gym] Is unclear what would happen to all the current classes and what a waste of staff if they are no longer needed given their level of expertise and encouragement.

22. Keep football pitches – exercise for all ages – keep healthier.
23. 2 lifeguards are essential – to be in pool saving someone and to watch those in the pool.
24. Sport and Leisure trust model - Again, get on with it.
25. Fees and charges – do not increase by as much as some can't afford it. Fewer users could mean even less income.
26. Reducing the number of lifeguards - Safe?
27. Reduction in lifeguard provision is tricky...there are significant health and safety implications - it would be fine until something went wrong and then the council could potentially be liable for not providing sufficient cover? Perhaps a series of specific swim times when known not to be busy and outwith school holidays could be advertised as a reduced lifeguard service on an 'at your own risk' basis?
28. Reduce Lifeguard cover - big safety and insurance risk. Have you calculated the appropriate staffing ratios in accordance with national guidance?
29. The proposed taking away the age concession for the gym membership will stop pensioners using this facility. It is well used by this age group and I myself have this concession and would not be able to pay the full membership. In an age when the emphasis is on elderly people keeping fit and healthy this does not seem a fitting thing to do. It is sometimes the only activity that can be afforded to keep fit.
30. Midlothian is already very expensive for sport and leisure facilities. A platinum tonezone membership in Midlothian costs. £48.30/month. The same level of membership in Edinburgh is £49.90/month but this is for a much superior level of service and wider variety of facilities. In East Lothian the same membership level is £31.50 per month – this is much more reasonable. Indeed, I cancelled my tonezone membership because I felt that it was too expensive and I was not getting value for money.
31. Reduction of astro and grass pitches should not be fully handed over to clubs. There has to be some support and overview by the council. If they go to clubs, then only club members can use. If it is council, the public can use, this keeps teenagers off the streets and away from anti-social behaviour.
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33. Making the over 60-bracket pay bronze level will stop many of them coming. This will in turn runs the risk of making the elderly less fit, more isolated, more risk of mental and physical health issues. It also means the rich elderly are the only ones who will go. Could this be means tested in some way? This would go against government policy of tackling obesity.
34. If the leisure prices increase, the council will price itself out of the market. I have been a regular leisure user and have given up recently due to the costs. Many will be put off by an

increase. Families won't be able to afford a family swim, again letting children down and going against government policy of tackling obesity.

35. Also keep leisure centres keeping people fit will long term help with 1/3 of the country being obese!
36. Cutting lifeguard cover is stupid if they are reduced someone will drown I'm sure this one will bite you!!!
37. Increase concessionary charges for leisure & transportation.
38. I'm fully in favour of charging for services - as long as the option exists for people to go elsewhere.
39. Sporting facilities being cut - the health of the nation is awful and this is going to make matters worse, Tonezone is already expensive. Cutting lifeguards...how can that be safe! Shameful...
40. Do not increase leisure centre prices as these in turn reduce the cost invested into the health care.
41. Outsource Leisure to Midlothian Leisure similar to Edinburgh Leisure.
42. Outsourcing of non-essential services such as sport and leisure.
43. Stop free swimming during the holidays.
44. Fees and Charges. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges + Concessionary Charging Policy (Age): well documented evidence that obesity & lack of sport is a huge factor in rising NHS costs & other associated local costs, need to increase uptake not the opposite.
45. Reduced funding for sports facilities, lifeguards etc., will encourage poor health regimes and anti-social behaviour.
46. I am not sure increasing sport and leisure charges would generate as much income as suggested as some users may simply give up going to the gym, which would not be consistent with policies about encouraging activity and well-being. However, in the interests of inter-generational fairness I would support this proposal, even though I would be one of those directly affected.
47. Among the many proposals in this section, Midlothian Snowsports Centre plans are the most ambitious. Clearly, I have not seen the report or the business plan concerned. However, it seems very imprudent to base a significant part of forward financial planning on unproven additional income of Hillend.
48. Would there be a way of reducing leisure centre opening hours at quiet times. I used to work at Fife Sports and Leisure Centre and this was something we looked at - including closing centres for some times during the day, or closing the pools at quiet times as the cost of having to have 2 leisure attendants on poolside can be very high when there is no one in the pool.

49. Increasing charges at leisure centres - you must ensure value for money if that's the case and not be cutting classes or regularly cancelling classes. Always told "you can go to another centre". I don't want to, what's the point of having a leisure centre if you can't use it because they cancel or stop classes.
50. Lifeguard Cover. Reducing the number of lifeguards, from two to one, at the poolside at the following locations. • Newbattle Pool • Lasswade Centre • Loanhead Centre • Penicuik Centre: how safe is this proposal? Should the lifeguard be distracted by the demands of a customer – it happens – a second pair of eyes watching the pool has to be a good thing. It only takes a moment for a pool tragedy.
51. Concessionary Charging Policy (Age) – Leisure. This proposal charges over 60s customers the bronze rate for Tonezone and access to leisure facilities. This equates to 642 members at £15 difference per month x 12 month - £115,560: the NHS and government campaign for older people to improve health through exercise. Many GPs prescribe exercise for various health conditions, for example diabetes type B. Living on a state pension is tough and any spending increase to this group is going to be a disincentive. If there has to be an increase, it should be lower. £5.00 max.
52. Increased sport and leisure fees – there is already a periodic increase in prices in place and increasing them even further will mean that many families will not be able to afford extra classes or swimming which in turn will result in more unequal society and rich-poor gap widening.
53. Reduced lifeguard cover – how will you make sure that pool users safety is not compromised?
54. I also disagree with the proposal to reduce the lifeguard cover at the pool from two to one, this doesn't seem a safe proposal for the number of people using Lasswade pool.
55. Grass football pitches. Even if some of them are used for organised football less than they used to be, they are still important for casual use: family groups, impromptu kick bouts, kites, frisbies, dog walking (responsibly, we hope!) etc. Every locality benefits from having a nearby informal leisure space. What will be otherwise done with these areas? Sold to developers for building? I hope not, we really need these little open spaces. Anyway, each one can be sold only once and then it's gone for ever.
56. Lifeguard Cover We MUST have more than one lifeguard on duty all the time: if something really bad happens will YOU be able to tell the coroner that you made things as safe as possible?
57. Sport and Leisure Fees "Scotland has a child obesity crisis" Is it economically sound to make exercise activities more expensive?
58. As child safety is an absolute priority pool lifeguard cover should also be maintained at its current level.
59. Football pitches and other exercise facilities should be maintained.

60. Some appear to me to be short-sighted and also verging on involving health and safety issues. For example reducing lifeguards on duty at pools from 2 to 1 is a definite H&S issue. The council would leave itself open to litigation perhaps?
61. Reduce football pitches. With the increase in child and adult obesity we need more sports participation across age groups not less. Increase the fees for non-school use outdoor pitches.
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63. Concessionary Charging Policy (Age) – Leisure. This proposal charges over 60s customers the bronze rate for Tonezone and access to leisure facilities. This equates to 642 members at £15 difference per month x 12 month - £115,560: the NHS and government campaign for older people to improve health through exercise. Many GPs prescribe exercise for various health conditions, for example diabetes type B. Living on a state pension is tough and any spending increase to this group is going to be a disincentive. If there has to be an increase, it should be lower. £5.00 max.
64. Increased sport and leisure fees – there is already a periodic increase in prices in place and increasing them even further will mean that many families will not be able to afford extra classes or swimming which in turn will result in more unequal society and rich-poor gap widening.
65. Reduced lifeguard cover – how will you make sure that pool users safety is not compromised?
66. I am also told our Pavilion is at risk of closure. What happens to the Breakfast Club, After School Club, Boys' Brigade, Heritage Group etc.? Where are they supposed to meet? A small village needs a central meeting place and with hundreds of new houses earmarked to be built this will be even more necessary - **as will the library.** _Cala has already started building an estate of 79 houses, some of which have already been sold.
67. I think you should start charging pensioners for using leisure services. It is well known that the majority of them receive higher incomes nowadays than a lot of workers
68. Continuing on the theme of safety, CPR is best performed by two persons and I don't believe one lifeguard per pool is safe.
69. If the target is £50K why is the saving identified as £100K? As there is an Incremental saving identified does this mean an annual increase in the fees?
70. I also disagree with the proposal to reduce the lifeguard cover at the pool from two to one, this doesn't seem a safe proposal for the number of people using Lasswade pool.
71. As child safety is an absolute priority pool lifeguard cover should also be maintained at its current level.

72. Football pitches and other exercise facilities should be maintained for similar reasons to those explained above.
73. Community Pavilions must be maintained for the same reasons of increasing social cohesion, provision for activities, physical exercise and activities for children, mothers with small children and older people in particular.
74. Life Guard Cover - the risks to public safety here are too great, in the event of staff sickness/ illness, you run the risk of services being unable to operate.
75. Destination Hillend - support this proposal. Hillend has the potential to be a great facility with the correct investment, there could be some real money poured back into Midlothian if this is done well.
76. There are certain things that could be explored - reducing the cost of gym membership therefore making it more attractive and affordable and therefore increase the membership!
77. I totally agree with the cut to lifeguards. At our local pool there is always two and I think this is unnecessary.
78. Look to outsource the leisure centres to Edinburgh leisure, they need to be run much more like a business.
79. I was also concerned about the reduction in football and astro pitches at a time when we're trying to encourage young people to get fit and have a healthy lifestyle which also contributes to wellbeing and positive mental health
80. 1 lifeguard is a risk and putting a lot of responsibility on one person and 1 cannot deal with an incident as good as 2.
81. I have read with interest the various suggestions in the budget cut paper. As a regular user of leisure services I noted that £1.8m of the budget was spent on Sport and Leisure. Is there a breakdown of these costs, are the majority staffing or maintenance? And surely leisure is an area that should be generating income? From a recent FOI platinum memberships have reduced by 110 in the last year, for a local authority experiencing some of the highest levels of growth in Scotland this is very worrying. And in addition a huge level of investment has been made with the opening of the Lasswade and Loanhead Centres but this is not reflected in membership uptake. This loss of platinum memberships is even more concerning when only last week I picked up a copy of the Midlothian Council Sport and Leisure Guide 2017/18, which, from the title you would imagine had details of the "Midlothian Council Sport and Leisure", but the guide falls open to the centre fold which contains detailed information on the exercise class timetable for The Fitness Education Academy in Penicuik, a private competitor. How this was even allowed to go to print I have no idea? What was the purpose of this guide? Clearly money has been made from advertising but there is little in the guide that would encourage me to go to my local leisure centre and the fact you are giving a competitor a prime advertising slot is beyond me.

There has been a significant decline in the quality of the leisure provision. The Penicuik Centre is just one example; the disabled upstairs toilet has been out of service for months, the Jacuzzi has been out of service for well over 6 months, the spin bikes are rusty and some

of the seats are split. Moving the leisure services over to a trust would not solve the problem as the same lackadaisical attitude would follow, there is never any consultation with customers and at times we are treated as an inconvenience. What about an approach to Edinburgh Leisure, who are already established, to take over the running? They are established, market themselves well, keep up with customer demand, continually review programmes and the classes they're offering in line with what's hot in the industry.

Travel, transport, parking, school crossings

1. Reduction in support for public transport routes: is this really sensible? IN a time when everyone is trying to reduce the amount of traffic on the roads and encourage the use of public transport, in a rural county the bus service is crucial. Midlothian is increasingly becoming "commutersville" as the number of new houses increases dramatically without a commensurate increase in local employment opportunities. More and more people are commuting into Edinburgh, making the bus service even more critical.

2. Have read the document and I have several concerns about some of the proposed cuts but there is one I feel particularly concerned about.

The cutting of all lollipop men is going to put primary school age children in danger in my area. My son attends Kings Park primary in Dalkeith and to walk there we have to negotiate multiple crossings at Eskbank Toll. There is no other way to get to school. In the consultation document it states it is parental responsibility to get their children to school safely. I appreciate that and I am not considering my son walking himself to school at any time soon. However as an adult crossing these roads with my P1 age son, potentially on bike or scooter, and a buggy for my younger children during peak school pick up and drop off times is quite frankly dangerous and I really rely on the lollipop men to ensure we are safe. The speed of cars, makes crossing very difficult particularly on Newbattle Rd and Dalhousie Rd.

As parents we are encouraged to use green travel to get to school but if these proposals go ahead this really isn't possible. It is disappointing that children are potentially going to be put at risk simply walking to their local catchment school.

3. Budget for a few traffic wardens. I'm sure it'll pay for itself soon enough. The amount of people that park on pavements would be enough to help the council make profit eventually, never mind those illegally parking elsewhere.
4. Reducing school crossings gee Health and Safety a priority?
5. School Crossing Patrols, with all the new houses going up throughout Midlothian, should we not be including within the building permits that the builders are also having to sponsor for at least 5 years a local school patrol person.
6. School crossing patrols, half the janitors and half the lifeguards - I hope this is fully researched as there is surely a risk to our children with these proposed cuts. There could be serious consequences directly resulting from these.
7. Removal of non-statutory school crossing service" - Although not a service provided within our local community; we can understand the serious concerns about the proposed cuts to this service.

8. Increases in parking charges, although reasonable if applied fairly; within towns this could act against the recent moves to increase footfall within our local towns and thus contributing to the life of these towns.
9. Local Transport Schemes - such cuts would impact mostly on rural communities and the vulnerable within these communities
10. School crossings - One bad accident and your savings are an illusion, you might think you've saved a few bob, but you've cost others, Individuals, Police, NHS, Insurance Co's etc. a fortune. Pick any areas for savings carefully.
11. Stop supported bus grants - Struth, how much use is the 111 to Midlothian Residents? The 39 appears to have been cut back to a Woodburn – Hospital service, and duplicates the 40 for much of the route. Quiz LRT on use before any decision to stop support. 51/52 & 101/102 go where nothing else does, including past Mauricewood Mill estate, 440 new houses that you gave Planning Permission to. That estate has no other service within 5 minutes walking distance.
12. Reduce ring and go/ stop taxi card. So people who cannot access a bus or have no bus service to access are to be significantly disadvantaged. It appears from your website that you are already discriminating against those recently finding themselves unable to get on a bus for some reason. I would have thought that to be illegal discrimination.
13. Parking charges. Any chance that the DPE staff will be able to fine drivers for parking on (and destroying) pavements? obstruction of pavements being a statutory offence. Loads of money to be had there!
14. Buses – Danger for villages that 51/52 goes down Dalkeith by-pass
15. If a parking warden could patrol our streets more frequently revenue could be raise by fines. introducing costs for on street parking will only result in more flagrant breaches of parking. Sometimes double parking on Dalkeith High Street.
16. Issue pensioners free bus passes only when old enough to get state pension. Some get this free service to go to work and earn a good salary!!
17. Lollypop ladies/men are a safety feature for children. This MUST continue, indeed, should be increased. Already, my daughter has to cross roads which are unmanned. This is not acceptable. An increase in numbers is required to save lives.
18. Stop supported bus grants and reduce community transport support - Outrageous. Any reduction in bus service may make it impossible for workers to commute, with loss of income and potential debt or homelessness, increase in isolation and difficulty accessing services by the vulnerable. Unacceptable and likely to increase social costs to the council.
19. Additional charging for car parking will decrease the number of persons using shopping areas and leisure facilities e.g. health improvement exercise. Are you just trying to pass the cost to the NHS?
20. Issue parking fines especially to those who park illegally on yellow lines.

21. Remove school crossings - this will be unpopular.
22. Introduce and increase parking charges - agree - but there should also be some effort to increase car parks and promote non car use.
23. Start enforcing the decriminalised parking offence charges asap. You could make a small fortune in Gorebridge Main Street alone and could employ someone full time from 7am TIL about 9pm 7 days a week to hand out on the spot fines. Again there is technology available to achieve this and if they can't pay confiscate the vehicle and charge more for the privilege. This will also have a positive impact on those affected by inconsiderate parking all over Midlothian.
24. Fully support parking charges, our town centres are choked with cars which are used on short journeys. Many people in Bonnyrigg won't walk the length of themselves! With bus provision and compact nature of our towns, there's no need for many people to drive. Additional double yellow/double red line provision and enhanced enforcement will reduce congestion and bring additional revenue. Park legally or pay consequences. Midlothian drivers are dreadful for illegal parking because there is no enforcement. There's a long list of potential yellow line locations I'm waiting 4/5 years at the moment for a location deemed "highly likely". Double red lines around schools and some main routes would reduce congestion, ensure charged parking is used and fines would provide revenue stream.
25. I think one thing that really needs maintained are the bus services. Without a reliable, frequent bus service the economy of the area will suffer. Any cutbacks in this area would be a false economy.
26. School Crossing patrols are essential in keeping our children safe in an ever increasingly busy road network.
27. Be careful if you remove the non - statutory school crossing service. It only takes one accident to remind the council how important these are.
28. Start charging for parking/resident permits for on street parking.
29. Concerned about cuts to bus services.
30. Parking charges for illegal parked cars in town centres.
31. Good idea about car parking charges.
32. Stop wasting money on fleet cars!
33. Stop wasting money on crossing patrols where there is actually a crossing.
34. Stopping bus transport for vulnerable people – not good.
35. I would oppose removing the non-statutory school crossing service as potentially having a high risk to children.
36. The council could raise additional funds by actually issuing fines for parking infractions. On several occasions whilst walking around in Dalkeith town centre, I have seen at least a dozen, sometimes two dozen cars parked on double yellow lines along Dalkeith High Street

between Buccleuch Street and Eskbank Toll, and on Buccleuch Street itself. At £30 a fine, a parking officer would easily pay for himself, even after salary. This would also have the added benefit of making town centres more pleasant for pedestrians, particularly the young and old.

37. Please do not cut road crossing patrols, the safety of our primary school children is paramount.
38. Simultaneously cutting both provision for subsidisation of local bus services and the taxi card scheme will severely limit the mobility of elderly citizens. In particular, the route 39 which is relied upon by many in my local community. Indeed, reducing any transport subsidies is a poor choice.
39. Bar on non-essential travel.
40. Proposals for removing school crossing patrols goes against the current focus on road safety (20 m.p.h. zones).
41. I think you should save money by scrapping I'll thought out schemes like the school streets pilots.
42. Improve enforcement of illegal parking and use the funds to help support other areas of the council
43. I also have concerns about reductions in school crossing patrols.
44. Parking is bad enough at present good idea I Dalkeith to give 1 hour free same could be introduced in Bonnyrigg, Newtongrange etc.
45. Utilising technology to fine more drivers parking in areas they should not.
46. I am emailing to express my concern for the proposal to reduce the school crossing patrol service. It is my understanding that the lolly pop man at Westhouses road in Mayfield is due to be lost. It's with great concern from all of the parents that I send this email. The crossing patrol at Westhouses road keeps our children safe whilst walking to and from school. The road in question is a main bus route and an extremely busy road at school drop off and pick up times. If the lolly pop man is taken away from this area children will be expected to cross a main road with various junctions off it at the busiest period of the day. As a parent and childminder I've tried to work out what the safest way for children to walk to and from school would be without this service, and there is no safe route without crossing a main road for the children that live in Westhouses or the Miller scheme. Without the crossing patrol, it's only a matter of time before a child is not by a car or bus. I would also like to take this opportunity to say that the lolly pop man at Westhouses road is a wonderful trustee of all of the children. It's lovely to see him of a morning speaking to the children and educating them on road safety. He regularly waits past his finishing time to wait for his regular late kiddies. It's lovely in this day in age to have someone who genuinely cares about his job and the safety of others.
47. I am so disappointed to hear that the Council is even contemplating getting rid of the Perrymans bus service. I live in Edgehead and it is absolutely essential to us for work. We also use it as a family regularly for social trips. It is a fantastic service and is nearly always

full. Good transport links is one of the reasons we moved to the village. I understand that cuts need to be made - but it's surely better to save money elsewhere. I am sure that most of the villagers would prefer the grass being mown, or the bins being collected, less frequently rather than losing the bus, which is for many literally a lifeline.

48. I am writing to you regarding the proposed cuts to Midlothian council in the near future and in particular the lollipop service in Mayfield. I am a parent of young child who attends Mayfield Primary school and twice a day we cross the busy main road using the lollipop man. I understand this is a small part of the busy day but I feel this is vital service that Midlothian provide to the many children and families who go to school on a daily basis. The very friendly gentlemen is the kindest and most patient man and is fantastic with all the children, including making sure they all cross the road safely, he teaches them about road safety and is often there well after his time is finished to catch the few stragglers who are running late. As you know Mayfield is a deprived area of Midlothian and due to the concerns about the welfare of families it is important that families and children feel safe when going to and from school, especially for older children whose parents no longer walk with their child to school. I feel if you take the lollipop service away this will encourage parents to take the car to the school which already is a health and safety issue. As well as this the school is always promoting health and encourages children to walk to school which will now be a concern for parents as their child's safety is now possibly a concern. Please can you take into account all the families that will now struggle sending their children to school knowing they will get there safely. I have searched for a safer route but all routes to school from the Mayfield loop unfortunately have to cross the main road which is always busy especially at peak times.
49. If the council put up more of an objection and stopped letting private companies do whatever they wanted they wouldn't have to step in to help. By this I mean companies such as Lothian Buses cutting off routes and abandoning places in Midlothian resulting in the council subsidising routes and having to fund the ring and go service.
50. This may be included in the proposed cuts already but there are a number of lollipop men and ladies stationed around Midlothian literally at traffic lights. I don't believe that this is necessary as any children not old enough to understand traffic lights at pedestrian crossings should not be walking to school unattended.
51. Has there been a review of the money collected from parking fines and tickets in Midlothian against the cost of employing the parking attendant in this area?
52. My suggestion is to increase the qualifying age for a 'free bus pass' from 60 years to a bus pass at the age of 65 years, introducing a payment by the cardholder of 50 pence towards the present single of £1.60 with the option to pay £1 towards a day pass presently £4. The day pass cancelling the cost of additional fares if required to complete a journey and of course the journey home. Costing the Council less to subsidise the pensioners' concessionary bus pass.
53. I strongly object to reduce the ring and go taxi scheme and to stop the taxi card scheme. Isolating users with no bus service. Those in need of this service are being deprived of their independence also denying them their Statutory Right of Care.

54. You could charge a fee for providing free bus passes to those of us over 60: like the rail card. We'd still be saving a lot on bus fares but it would help with the admin of the service.
55. Parking charges are long overdue in towns. Many people use the road as a garage on the assumption that the roads provide free garaging services. The roads are owned by the Council, rental should be charged.
56. I cannot drive, so am reliant on public transport to get to my workplace in central Edinburgh. If funding is cut for the 51/52 bus service, such that Borders buses will no longer provide the service to/from Pathhead, I will be unable to travel to work and will almost certainly lose my job. As a single income household the negative consequences of this for myself and my family would be significant. Hence the proposals are a source of great anxiety.
57. Loss of the bus service would similarly affect other commuters, but also elderly and young people in the village, many of whom would lose their only means of travelling out of Pathhead e.g. to attend college, or to buy groceries. It would also prevent carers and relatives from travelling to visit Pathhead residents, potentially increasing the social isolation of vulnerable individuals. Furthermore, with no option to use public transport, car use would increase, with attendant negative environmental consequences.
58. Parking charges. These would encourage people to go to retail parks, further damaging town centres.
59. Concern over the possible loss of bus services 51/52 linking communities served by the A68.
60. A bus from Mayfield to Loanhead though Tesco's, Bonnyrigg , because of 1600 new houses between Mayfield and Loanhead.
61. Charging for parking will just make people park elsewhere or shop elsewhere. Mind you in Penicuik there is nowhere decent to shop so you have to go elsewhere.
62. The proposed cuts to the 51/52 bus subsidy affect people beyond Midlothian, on what is a vital link to rural areas. The funding cut for this should be reconsidered and discussed with sbc, and the consultation more prominently advertised to those outside of Midlothian.
63. I am concerned for myself and fellow passengers of the borders bus service 51/52. I travel between Lauder and Edinburgh every day for my work as a swim teacher at the royal commonwealth pool. I feel the Council should strongly reconsider their proposal to cut funding to this service. I fear I may have to look for another job and I'm sure other people who use the service may think the same as I know they travel further than me. I would not want to use the borders railway as it is far too expensive and further away from my home village which is Greenlaw.
64. Midlothian Council (Annual spend >£200m) plan to cut its £18k subsidy for the number 51 Bus through Pathhead/ Edgehead. This will cut off the elderly and vulnerable in the community from vital services. Please RT and help #saveourbus
65. Taxi ring and go - By all means cease this service BUT please urge the two bus companies in the Penicuik area (Lothian Buses and Border Buses) to resume the service to the village of AUCHENDINNY. Many elderly people live in Auchendinny plus there is new housing at Dalmore - the old mill site - and no bus service at all except the Borders Bus 'Peebles

Express' to Edinburgh at 8.05 in the morning and back at 6.00 in the evening. There are two bus stops in Auchendinny and only one in Milton Bridge where all the buses now go through. There are fewer houses in Milton Bridge than in Auchendinny/Dalmore, and presumably therefore fewer potential passengers in Milton Bridge. The old people in Auchendinny are feeling very isolated and forgotten and this can lead to depression!

66. I have been reading the budget proposals for Midlothian in 2018/19. I have to say that I find these proposals dismal to say the least. In particular the cuts to the bus services 51/52. I currently reside in the village of Pathhead with my husband and two young children who both attend Tynewater primary school. I have to say I was utterly shocked and disgusted at the news that there has been proposals to cut the bus service to and from our village. We rely heavily on the bus service 51/52 so that we can commute to our work daily. Without this bus we simply could not get to work or connect with any other part of Midlothian or Edinburgh. Not only will this be a major issue for us if the bus service is stopped in terms of practicalities, but also it means that Pathhead will be completely cut off from anywhere. This is obviously terrible news for everyone who lives here but also for the more vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled who also rely very much on the bus to get them out for shopping, appointments etc. In the long term I can see this becoming a major issue. The council may be saving money by cutting the bus service but have they thought about the implications of people feeling that they are trapped and isolated and how this in turn could lead to depression, mental health issues, the list goes on and of course the pressure then put on NHS services to cope with these problems?
67. I have heard some rumours that there will be some new housing soon in Pathhead. If this is the case then how on earth are these people meant to get to and from work etc.? I know a lot of people in the village who do not own a car. In short I fear this would be disastrous for all residents in Pathhead. We as a family are very concerned and if these plans go ahead to cut the bus service we will have no choice but to look for housing elsewhere as we simply cannot live without this bus service. This is a sad thought for us, our children are happy at the local school and are doing well, we enjoy and respect our beautiful surroundings in Pathhead, but without a bus service we will be completely isolated. Thanks for taking the time to read this.
68. Dear Councillor Milligan. I object to the threatened withdrawal of Midlothian Council's subsidy to the 51/52 service, a move which may lead to the withdrawal of bus services from Ford to Dalkeith. Buses are a clear winner over cars when it comes to tackling congestion and toxic air pollution and buses are a life-line for people in rural areas. The closure of so many railway lines in the sixties in the UK has left a permanent legacy of overcrowded roads and pollution. Is Dr Beeching's mistake going to be compounded by removal of bus services as well?
69. I am writing to protest at the proposed withdrawal of subsidy from the 51/52 bus service, which will make it more difficult for local people to travel to Dalkeith and will impact on the Edinburgh Pathhead service. In these days of trying to cut down car journeys with the attendant easing of carbon pollution it seems a perverse move to make cuts yet again to our local bus service.
70. Proposed Removal of 51/52 Bus Services. Trendy trams in Edinburgh, a train to the borders and no rural bus service. The Council, where we have heard salaries can exceed £150,000 for

some, is making cuts, as from the budget available it cannot afford the £18,000 required for our bus subsidy. This could lead to the withdrawal of bus services from Ford to Dalkeith and a reduction in the operating hours of the remaining service between Edinburgh and Pathhead. This seems to us to be a bad precedent to set and not how we expected to see Midlothian run in the 21st century.

71. I have recently heard the news of suggested cuts to the annual subsidy of £18,000 which funds the 51/52 bus service. This is shocking news for us who live out near Fala/Humbie and rely on the bus to take us to Edinburgh (and home again) for either work or leisure when lifts or cars are not available. People who come to record music with us regularly take the bus out from Edinburgh in order to reach us. This is a very valuable service for us all out in the sticks and I can't imagine what will happen for the OAPs who travel to and from Pathhead to Dalkeith regularly on these buses. It is the ONLY way to get to our neck of the woods with public transport. Surely this is too valuable a community as well as an environmental service? We do not need more cars on the road. Please please reconsider.
72. It all smacks of a type of management that we prefer not to have making decisions on our behalf. We are apparently not even talking about our 51/52 service being reduced from the present one per hour but what is being considered is no buses at all in our area. This is very bad news for many and we hope the Council will rethink what would be a decision with unwelcome repercussions for many.
73. It would be appreciated if you could help save our very important 51/52 bus service.
74. Safety of our children is non-negotiable, therefore no school crossing points should be scrapped !
75. School Crossing – Members do not agree with reducing the crossing patrols. Many of our members find it hard to cross at crossings as they don't always give people the required time to cross. Having support with this ensures the safety of disabled people.
76. I have lived in Midlothian for 17 years in the village of Pathhead and have used the bus service over the years to get both to Dalkeith (which allowed me more access to other busses) and also just to get straight in the city of Edinburgh. Without a bus I would be stuck for access to my services when I could not use the one family car I share with my husband. Now as our children have grown, they too use the bus for all sorts of reasons. Without it this community would suffer tremendous isolation if unable to drive due to health reasons or age.
77. PLEASE KEEP OUT BUS SERVICE!!!
78. Keep all lollipop men and ladies, a reduction in road safety is not acceptable and a single child injured is too many. There is no acceptable level of reduced child road safety.
79. I am writing today to highlight my support for efforts to save the 51/52 bus service, operated by Borders Buses with support from Midlothian Council, and linking those from as far afield as Jedburgh and Kelso with Edinburgh and the many towns and villages in between. I have serious concerns about the impact that Midlothian Council's proposal to withdraw support for this essential service would have on the many people who rely upon it.

People use this bus to shop, visit friends and use other essential local services. Removing this option will impact on journeys to and from school and medical facilities. It will increase isolation amongst those who can't access private transport. It will affect the local economy. This kind of short term thinking drives people into cars and is at odds with national and local policies.

As you will be aware, the three Key Strategic Outcomes set out in the current National Transport Strategy are intended to be used as the guiding principles at national, regional and local level when developing strategy and prioritising resources.

The three Key Strategic Outcomes are: Improved journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and lack of integration and connections in transport; Reduced emissions, to tackle climate change, air quality, health improvement; and Improved quality, accessibility and affordability, to give choice of public transport, better quality services and value for money or alternative to car.

The document, Change Programme: Addressing Midlothian Council's Financial Challenge to 2021/22, states that "Withdrawal of bus grant would lead to these services stopping thereby removing perhaps the only means of people getting around for work, shopping and leisure. In addition to this impacting the low paid, elderly and the disabled a reduction in support to the community transport providers would particularly hit vulnerable groups. The single Midlothian Plan places a focus on promoting sustainable travel, particularly by reducing the adverse impacts of car travel. A reduction in bus services could lead to increased car use."

According to Midlothian Council's Transport Policy, Midlothian Council's Travel Plan for 2017 to 2021 "will make our operational travel and transport greener and fairer", with targets including "a 10% drop in the number of people who drive to work".

Given how clearly the withdrawal of support for this service would run counter to the stated aims of both national and local government highlighted above, I would urge the Scottish Government, Midlothian Council, and Borders Buses to halt any plans to withdraw support for this service, and to work together with affected communities to ensure that they are satisfied there will be no reduction of the public transport options available to them.

I firmly believe that we should be doing all we can to ensure our cities, towns and villages have a sustainable future, not making them unattractive for those who rely on public transport.

I am grateful for your consideration of the points made above, and I look forward to your response.

80. I object to the threatened withdrawal of Midlothian Council's subsidy to the 51/52 service. I am told that the loss of this subsidy may lead to the withdrawal of bus services from Ford to Dalkeith. The existing service running via Ford, Edgehead and Dalkeith is of critical importance to our communities. I am told that the level of Midlothian's subsidy for this service along the A68 corridor is about £18,000 per year and is a fraction of the millions of subsidy available to public transport services on the A7/ Border Railway corridor. The loss of our service into Dalkeith will cause many problems for the community including safe and environmentally responsible access to:

- Shops and banks,
- Employment,
- Education,
- Healthcare, including mental health and maternity services,
- Benefits and social services,
- Libraries and internet access,
- Social and leisure activities.

The loss of this service will have an undue effect upon the disadvantaged, the young, the elderly and the infirm. The provision of this service is so fundamental to the well-being of the community that its withdrawal may cause serious social disruption. I urge you and your Council to resist this damaging proposal.

81. I am writing to support Tynewater Community Council in their opposition to the cuts in subsidy for our Borders Bus Service No 51/52. This service is our lifeline. Living in a rural community we are disadvantaged in many ways, none more so than in Public Transport. In the Scottish Government Publication on Areas of Deprivation in Scotland Pathhead is in the top 10% of deprived areas for transport. That's BEFORE the bus service is cut. This is a poor indictment for our Council who aim to represent all but neglect those whose lives will be blighted by their foolhardy decisions. I am sure previous and future letters will outline the importance of our bus continuing however there are salient points relating to the small community in which I live, Edgehead. In case the councillors are unsure of Midlothian geography Edgehead lies 1.5 miles North of Pathhead. We are a community of approximately 80 houses with NO access to any shop, post office or doctors' surgery without either a car or public transport. We have a number of elderly residents who do not drive and have no access to a car. Where will they shop? How will they reach the Pathhead Medical Practice? Isolation of the elderly is considered a major problem yet Midlothian Council intends to remove their only means of transport. Perhaps the Councillors can review their budget and look at more appropriate items to cut, always remembering they are elected to SERVE the community.
82. Retain school crossing service (p75).
83. I am a resident of Pathhead and I am writing to say how horrified I am that you are considering removing the subsidies for the Border bus service which will prevent people being able to get to Dalkeith a mere 4.5 miles away. We have many elderly and vulnerable residents in the village who rely totally on the bus to get to Dalkeith to do shopping, to get to a bank, hospital appointments etc. Their isolation will be complete when they cannot use the bus. Many people use the bus for getting to work too who will also be completely stuck. I understand the council has to reduce its spending, but to even consider removing the only public transport we have and isolating a whole community is frankly totally unacceptable. We all pay our council tax and the council has done very little over the years for the local community. Can the council please cut unnecessary frills such as Christmas lights before isolating its residents. Christmas lights in Midlothian cost a substantial amount of money

which could be put to better use such as continuing the subsidies for the Border bus! The majority of elderly people use the bus to go to Dalkeith and not to go to Edinburgh. This cannot be allowed to go ahead.

84. I understand there is also a proposal to remove “Lollipop Crossing” Attendants. If “Lollipop Crossing” Attendants were removed from sites where there are no pelican crossings e.g. Mauricewood Road, this could potentially put lives at risk. Is this correct and are Midlothian Council willing to sacrifice safety over cost cutting in this area? This in addition to the other reduced services / frequency of roads, pavements & verges maintenance to name but a few over the past x years has left Penicuik in a sorry state especially given the value of Council tax that residents are expected to pay ... I can only see this getting worse if your proposed cuts are implemented. If there were guarantees to secure such services as above, a small increase per household would seem more practical while Midlothian Council continues to look at other ways of reducing costs while maintaining / improving services.
85. Please note that the current 51/52 bus service is an essential service for those in the Pathhead Ford and Edgehead communities. The proposed alteration of route and reduction in frequency missing out these places and also missing out Dalkeith would cause many problems for our community including safe and environmentally responsible access to SHOPS & BANKS, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE (including mental health and maternity services), BENEFITS & SOCIAL SERVICES, LIBRARIES & INTERNET ACCESS, SOCIAL & LEISURE ACTIVITIES especially for the disadvantaged, the young, the elderly and the infirm. The proposals also assume that there is universal car ownership in these places when there are in fact many people without cars and among people in Edgehead for example, there are those who have had to give up cars through old age and illness. There are also staff and customers in the nursery adjacent to my house who rely on the bus. I share a car with my wife but use the bus three/four times a week to get to work and to link with rail travel. The provision of this Pathhead-Ford-Edgehead-Dalkeith means of public transport can only be defined as basic essential infrastructure.
86. I live across the road from the central bus stop in Pathhead & am shocked & horrified at planned cuts to this vital service. There are people waiting for EVERY SINGLE BUS throughout the day - commuters, people with kids, the elderly- ESPECIALLY the elderly, who totally rely on the sole bus service for our village, they ALL do. In an age when use of public transport is being encouraged, it makes ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE to cut such a vital service, where no alternatives exist. Please please PLEASE think again!
87. On street parking charges, will you provide parking permits for people who live on the streets you put parking charges on?
88. I am writing to inform you that as a young person myself, and on behalf of many young people with many future generations to come, living in Pathhead and the Borders, the service 51/52 is a vital bus service. I rely on this bus service to travel to and from to my job, visiting friends, shopping etc. Not to mention, the effect this will have on elderly who are unable to drive. The rate of loneliness and elderly is increasing dramatically and this enforcement will only make the issue worse.
89. I urge you to continue subsidising the 51/52 bus route to support Pathhead and Edgehead residents, as well as other smaller Midlothian communities, being able to travel easily to

Dalkeith and Edinburgh. Without this service these communities are likely to attract fewer families to live there, and elderly residents in particular will be disadvantaged. No Lothian bus route covers this area.

90. I am deeply concerned at proposals to reduce the bus service to Pathhead. It is important to the life of the village that regular transport be maintained, it is also important to all of us that the number of cars on the road increases as little as possible
91. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to the bus timetable and route. The service provides a vital lifeline for our community. To take this away from us will have a detrimental effect. We need to be able to reach Dalkeith, some of our community have meetings at the job centre in Dalkeith for Universal Credit. Limiting the communities access to Dalkeith will cause people to receive sanctions and push people into poverty. Many other areas of Midlothian have several buses an hour. To deprive our community of our service which connects us with our district headquarters is shameful.
92. Retain school crossing service (p75).
93. I understand there is also a proposal to remove "Lollipop Crossing" Attendants. If "Lollipop Crossing" Attendants were removed from sites where there are no pelican crossings e.g. Mauricewood Road, this could potentially put lives at risk. Is this correct and are Midlothian Council willing to sacrifice safety over cost cutting in this area?
94. Safety of our children is non-negotiable, therefore no school crossing points should be scrapped.
95. I think withdrawing bus services especially the 39 simply cannot be done. This is used by a lot of elderly and this is probably they only way for them to get to the town centre and interact with others. I think if this was removed it would leave a lot of the elderly who use it feeling cut off from society.
96. I am concerned about the proposal to remove school crossing patrols - it might not be statutory, but if children are to be encouraged to walk to school, they need to be able to cross roads safely. Thinking of Eskbank roundabout, in fact even adults need assistance crossing during morning rush hour. The savings are pretty minimal, I would urge reconsideration of this suggestion.
97. Stopping bus support - There is often a push to make us look at alternatives to taking the car but if you are cutting bus routes you leave people with no choice but to take their cars.
98. Review parking charges in car parks.
99. Do NOT introduce parking charges in Penicuik. The town centre has recently shown welcome signs of a revival in fortunes. Do not crush this by making it difficult to use the town centre!!
100. I strongly object to the withdrawal of bus grants. As a bus user in the Edgehead area this hourly bus service allows my son to access his college, me to get to Dalkeith to shop and to Edinburgh for social events. Borders buses wish to take the faster route and avoid our villages but I fail to see how going across Sheriffhall roundabout on the bypass route will speed the service. The new houses in our area have increased the number of commuters using the early and late services. I thought the use of public transport for environmental

reasons was to be encouraged? I would happily pay more for a ticket. This would remove the means for non-drivers to access their medical centre, post office in Pathhead and the shops in Dalkeith. I thought the council were trying to support commerce in Dalkeith. I urge the council to maintain this bus service or introduce another route incorporating the new houses being built at the back of Gorebridge, Newlandrigg, Dewarton, Edgehead, and Whitehill.

101. The proposal to withdraw funding for the Borders bus service (51/52) between Kelso/Jedburgh and Edinburgh, is an idea which I see as not only ridiculous but impractical. Not only do those living in Whitehill, Edgehead and Ford use the bus to commute to work, and in my case to college, but the elderly population of these areas rely upon the service in order to survive. Most of them are either too old to drive, or cannot afford to run a car, so need to get the bus into Dalkeith in order to use the local shops, to buy groceries. Bypassing these areas by removing the service 51/52 bus would cut many elderly people off from not only the one reliable and affordable way they can get into Dalkeith via, but would also have an impact on mental health, as the bus can be the social highlight of many of these older people's week. Removing the bus could lead to depression, loneliness and an overwhelming feeling of isolation for such people, especially for those who have no close family in the immediate area. I hope that the council, in which myself and many of the residents, young and old, of the Tynewater area, have placed our trust will make what in my opinion is not only the correct decision, but what is, for many, the only decision. Thank you for your time.
102. Please note that the current 51/52 bus service is an essential service for those in the Pathhead Ford and Edgehead communities.
103. The proposed alteration of route and reduction in frequency missing out these places and also missing out Dalkeith would cause many problems for our community including safe and environmentally responsible access to SHOPS & BANKS, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE (including mental health and maternity services), BENEFITS & SOCIAL SERVICES, LIBRARIES & INTERNET ACCESS, SOCIAL & LEISURE ACTIVITIES especially for the disadvantaged, the young, the elderly and the infirm. The proposals also assume that there is universal car ownership in these places when there are in fact many people without cars and among people in Edgehead for example, there are those who have had to give up cars through old age and illness. There are also staff and customers in the nursery adjacent to my house who rely on the bus. I share a car with my wife but use the bus three/four times a week to get to work and to link with rail travel.
104. The provision of this Pathhead-Ford-Edgehead-Dalkeith means of public transport can only be defined as basic essential infrastructure.
105. Reduced buses - see above. Increase spending to encourage people to use buses
106. **Stop supported bus grants** – This may result in hardship for some people or they may choose not to go to a day service/social event and may result in isolation. Community Hospital to Woodburn/ Gorebridge (39) is essential. This will affect people attending the community hospital, resulting in the loss of a vital service.

Stop the taxi card scheme – Many of our members are against this as they rely on using taxis to get out and about. Buses are not an option for everyone.

107. The proposals to consider removing the subsidies for the Borders bus service 51/52 will sever the links to Dalkeith and Edinburgh for those who are unable to get out to do essential tasks such as shopping and attending hospital appointments. As the village (Pathhead) has a high proportion of ageing residents, many of whom do not drive nor have access to family assistance, they are heading for isolation.
108. I am writing to protest at the proposed withdrawal of subsidy from the 51/52 bus service, which will make it more difficult for local people to travel to Dalkeith and will impact on the Edinburgh Pathhead service. In these days of trying to cut down car journeys with the attendant easing of carbon pollution it seems a perverse move to make cuts yet again to our local bus service.
109. Trendy trams in Edinburgh, a train to the borders and no rural bus service. The Council, where we have heard salaries can exceed £150,000 for some, is making cuts, as from the budget available it cannot afford the £18,000 required for our bus subsidy. This could lead to the withdrawal of bus services from Ford to Dalkeith and a reduction in the operating hours of the remaining service between Edinburgh and Pathhead. This seems to us to be a bad precedent to set and not how we expected to see Midlothian run in the 21st century.
110. It all smacks of a type of management that we prefer not to have making decisions on our behalf. We are apparently not even talking about our 51/52 service being reduced from the present one per hour but what is being considered is no buses at all in our area. This is very bad news for many and we hope the Council will rethink what would be a decision with unwelcome repercussions for many.
111. It would be appreciated if you could help save our very important 51/52 bus service.
112. I have recently heard the news of suggested cuts to the annual subsidy of £18,000 which funds the 51/52 bus service. This is shocking news for us who live out near Fala/Humbie and rely on the bus to take us to Edinburgh (and home again) for either work or leisure when lifts or cars are not available. People who come to record music with us regularly take the bus out from Edinburgh in order to reach us. This is a very valuable service for us all out in the sticks and I can't imagine what will happen for the OAPs who travel to and from Pathhead to Dalkeith regularly on these buses. It is the ONLY way to get to our neck of the woods with public transport. Surely this is too valuable a community as well as an environmental service? We do not need more cars on the road.
113. I object to the threatened withdrawal of Midlothian Council's subsidy to the 51/52 service. I am told that the loss of this subsidy may lead to the withdrawal of bus services from Ford to Dalkeith. The existing service running via Ford, Edgehead and Dalkeith is of critical importance to our communities.
114. I am told that the level of Midlothian's subsidy for this service along the A68 corridor is about £18,000 per years and is a fraction of the millions of subsidy available to public transport services on the A7/ Border Railway corridor.
115. The loss of our service into Dalkeith will cause many problems for the community including safe and environmentally responsible access to: Shops and banks, Employment, Education, Healthcare, including mental health and maternity services, Benefits and social services, Libraries and internet access, Social and leisure activities. The loss of this service will have an

undue effect upon the disadvantaged, the young, the elderly and the infirm. The provision of this service is so fundamental to the well-being of the community that its withdrawal may cause serious social disruption. I urge you and your Council to resist this damaging proposal.

116. I am a resident of Pathhead and I am writing to say how horrified I am that you are considering removing the subsidies for the Border bus service which will prevent people being able to get to Dalkeith a mere 4.5 miles away. We have many elderly and vulnerable residents in the village who rely totally on the bus to get to Dalkeith to do shopping, to get to a bank, hospital appointments etc. Their isolation will be complete when they cannot use the bus. Many people use the bus for getting to work too who will also be completely stuck. I understand the council has to reduce its spending, but to even consider removing the only public transport we have and isolating a whole community is frankly totally unacceptable. We all pay our council tax and the council has done very little over the years for the local community.
117. Can the council please cut unnecessary frills such as Christmas lights before isolating its residents. Christmas lights in Midlothian cost a substantial amount of money which could be put to better use such as continuing the subsidies for the Border bus!
118. The majority of elderly people use the bus to go to Dalkeith and not to go to Edinburgh. This cannot be allowed to go ahead.
119. Another cut that directly discriminates against rural communities. It is understood that the bus that goes through Edgehead will be rerouted via the A68 directly impacting commuters. This along with the proposed reduction in the Taxi scheme would remove all public transport from Edgehead and other rural villages.
120. The threat to withdraw the Midlothian Council subsidy to the 51/52 bus service through Ford to Dalkeith has just been brought to my attention, and as a resident of Ford I e-mail to object to this foolish and short-sighted proposal.

I am told that the level of subsidy is about £18000 per year, which when broken down works out as pennies per day for each resident of Ford, Edgehead and Whitehill.

The loss of the service will cause many problems for many in the community, including safe and environmentally responsible access to:

- Shops and Banks
- Employment
- Education
- Healthcare
- Benefits and social service
- Libraries and internet access
- Social and leisure activities
- Links to other transport services

The withdrawal of the service would have a disproportionate effect on the young, students, disadvantaged, elderly and infirm. Public transport is so important to the wellbeing of the local community that its withdrawal will cause a upset to many and make living in the area unsustainable for some. I would therefore strongly urge you to fight this retrograde and damaging proposal.

121. I live across the road from the central bus stop in Pathhead & am shocked & horrified at planned cuts to this vital service. There are people waiting for EVERY SINGLE BUS throughout the day - commuters, people with kids, the elderly- ESPECIALLY the elderly, who totally rely on the sole bus service for our village, they ALL do. In an age when use of public transport is being encouraged, it makes ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE to cut such a vital service, where no alternatives exist. Please please PLEASE think again!
122. On street parking charges, will you provide parking permits for people who live on the streets you put parking charges on?
123. I have read about the planned cuts to council services in Midlothian with great dismay. As our elected representative I implore you help protect services within Midlothian to maintain social cohesion and social mobility, safety, public health, maximise opportunities for young people and protect vulnerable members of Society.
124. Keep all lollipop men and ladies, a reduction in road safety is not acceptable and a single child injured is too many. There is no acceptable level of reduced child road safety.
125. I am writing to inform you that as a young person myself, and on behalf of many young people with many future generations to come, living in Pathhead and the Borders, the service 51/52 is a vital bus service. I rely on this bus service to travel to and from to my job, visiting friends, shopping etc. Not to mention, the effect this will have on elderly who are unable to drive. The rate of loneliness and elderly is increasing dramatically and this enforcement will only make the issue worse.
126. I urge you to continue subsidising the 51/52 bus route to support Pathhead and Edgehead residents, as well as other smaller Midlothian communities, being able to travel easily to Dalkeith and Edinburgh. Without this service these communities are likely to attract fewer families to live there, and elderly residents in particular will be disadvantaged. No Lothian bus route covers this area.
127. As I live in a rural area I am also concerned about some of the transport proposals, in particular the reduction in any transport support which impacts on elderly rural inhabitants.
128. I have lived in Midlothian for 17 years in the village of Pathhead and have used the bus service over the years to get both to Dalkeith (which allowed me more access to other busses) and also just to get straight in the city of Edinburgh. Without a bus I would be stuck for access to my services when I could not use the one family car I share with my husband. Now as our children have grown, they too use the bus for all sorts of reasons. Without it this community would suffer tremendous isolation if unable to drive due to health reasons or age.
129. PLEASE KEEP OUT BUS SERVICE!!!
130. I am deeply concerned at proposals to reduce the bus service to Pathhead. It is important to the life of the village that regular transport be maintained, it is also important to all of us that the number of cars on the road increases as little as possible.

131. I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to the bus timetable and route. The service provides a vital lifeline for our community. To take this away from us will have a detrimental effect. We need to be able to reach Dalkeith, some of our community have meetings at the job centre in Dalkeith for Universal Credit. Limiting the communities access to Dalkeith will cause people to receive sanctions and push people into poverty. Many other areas of Midlothian have several buses an hour. To deprive our community of our service which connects us with our district headquarters is shameful.
132. Midlothian council are proposing to remove all road crossing patrols - how does this support the policy to encourage children to walk to school and reduce childhood obesity?
133. Although I am saddened to see the consideration of so many cuts that will directly affect the fabric of rural communities in the area I am particularly concerned with the proposed cuts to the Borders Buses 51/52 service. As a resident of Edgehead I regularly use the bus along with many others in the village as a vital commuting link to Edinburgh. The bus service is well run and never less than full during working days. Cutting the service will cause great disruption to many working families and elderly residents in the area who do not have alternative forms of transportation. The impact of this cut does not match the relatively small contribution to reducing your deficit. The use of public transportation should be promoted and not hindered by short sighted savings.
134. The removal of support for public transport will increase the use of private cars and will cut communities off from towns and cities reducing their wellbeing and making less able people very reliant on local food shops which tend to be more expensive and have limited 'healthy choices'.
135. Although I believe we do still need school crossing people, in my town there are a few stationed at traffic lights which seems to me a waste of resources.
136. Withdrawal of supported bus grants and reduction of community transport support. We write to express our views on the proposal to withdraw Council support for Midlothian's supported bus services, with particular reference to the Borders Bus service 51/52 which provides a lifeline public transport link for the villages of Pathhead, Ford, Dewartown, Edgehead and Whitehill. It is fully appreciated that the Council is facing unprecedented pressures on its budget. However, the likely consequences of the proposed loss of this vital service need to be properly evaluated before a decision is taken on 'Shaping our Future' which will, in fact, undermine the short- and long-term sustainability of our village communities. The following points summarise the key issues that need full and honest consideration.

The service 51/52 provides residents of Midlothian's A68 villages with access to essential services and facilities in Dalkeith and beyond. This is all the more important as community services (banks, mobile library and shops) are lost and become concentrated in Dalkeith. Our village, Edgehead, has no shop, the village school has already been closed, the mobile library has gone and there is no meeting place since the Church of Scotland sold off the church hall. Our nearest bank is in Dalkeith (but for how long?) and the GP surgery and pharmacy is at the far end of Pathhead, a walk of around 2 km with a steep valley between. There is a very poor mobile phone signal.

The bus service is an important element in supporting a working population in the villages as the location of employment opportunities inevitably means commuting to Dalkeith and Edinburgh. For those without access to a car, the service 51/52 is their only means of getting to work each day, including those who use it to get access to Lothian bus services for onward transit to key employment centres such as The Gyle and Ocean Terminal. Many lower paid workers are totally dependent on this service. Many rely on access to Dalkeith Library to gain access to online services.

For the non-working population, many are without access to a car, meaning that the bus service is their only means of leaving their homes (the community dial-a-bus service is also under threat). The demographic profile of the villages means that there is a high proportion of retired people. Increasing social isolation is likely to have a detrimental effect on demands for health and social work services. In offering this budget cut, the Council's Commercial Operations team identified that the worst affected groups will be the low paid, elderly and disabled, the most vulnerable groups in society. This runs contrary to any Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment and may incur costs greater than any savings from the withdrawal of support for the bus.

Recent expansion of housing in these villages has been on the basis of a regular bus service. The Council's decision to grant permission for the current development of 19 houses in Edgehead (committed development site h71 in the Single Midlothian Plan) was largely justified on the basis of a sustainable public transport service. Policy TRAN2 of the Plan gives a commitment to supporting bus services in connection with the delivery of its development strategy, including in terms of its strategy for economic growth. The Single Midlothian Plan was only adopted on 7th November 2017. The potential impact on service outcomes, identified by the Commercial Operations team, acknowledges that this budget cut could result in increased car use and admits that it is contrary to the Single Midlothian Plan which places a focus on sustainable travel, particularly by reducing the adverse impacts of car travel. Policy RD1 regarding development in the countryside (both housing and businesses) only allows new development if it is accessible by public transport and services, either within 1600m of a settlement or bus route with at least one bus per hour.

The majority of the new houses in Edgehead are not yet occupied but families moving into these houses will simply add to Midlothian's growing problems of traffic congestion, greatly exacerbated by its rapid expansion to satisfy the Edinburgh housing market. Those living in Midlothian's towns have a choice of frequent bus services, even penetrating into the vast areas of new housing. By contrast, the A68 villages have been content with the near hourly service 51/52, allowing residents to include public transport as a viable alternative when planning their travel requirements.

Public transport is a preferred mode of travel when considering emissions, and by inference mitigating climate change and pollution - policies that Midlothian Council has promoted through its Single Midlothian Plan and in signing up to the Climate Change Charter.

The savings achieved by removing the subsidies to the rural bus services are minimal (estimated to be £18,000 per annum) and totally out of proportion to the scale of their impact on the individuals and communities affected. Expenditure on the Council's Education and Social Work services, particularly the latter, seems to be growing out of control, swallowing up the future provision of a whole range of basic services that underpin a decent

standard of living for Midlothian's residents as a whole. More stringent curbs on this growth, even if only moderate, would allow the Council to maintain a more balanced, rational and sustainable approach to serving its communities fairly. This is what the Midlothian electorate expects of a Labour-controlled council.

Finally, it is hoped and expected that the Council will seek the cooperation of Scottish Borders Council in maintaining the routing of the service 51/52 (and similar services) through Midlothian's villages as a quid pro quo for the substantial input of resources by Midlothian Council in securing the reopening of the Borders Rail service. This would never have been achieved without Midlothian's unwavering cooperation and financial support.

137. The threat to withdraw the Midlothian Council subsidy to the 51/52 bus service through Ford to Dalkeith has just been brought to my attention, and as a resident of Ford I e-mail to object to this foolish and short-sighted proposal.

I am told that the level of subsidy is about £18000 per year, which when broken down works out as pennies per day for each resident of Ford, Edgehead and Whitehill.

The loss of the service will cause many problems for many in the community, including safe and environmentally responsible access to:

Shops and Banks

Employment

Education

Healthcare

Benefits and social service

Libraries and internet access

Social and leisure activities

Links to other transport services

The withdrawal of the service would have a disproportionate effect on the young, students, disadvantaged, elderly and infirm.

Public transport is so important to the wellbeing of the local community that its withdrawal will cause an upset to many and make living in the area unsustainable for some. I would therefore strongly urge you to fight this retrograde and damaging proposal. Good luck!

138. Perryman's 51 / 52 bus service through Ford, Edgehead and Whitehill. We strongly request that the current service that stops in Ford and passes through Edgehead and Dalkeith from Jedburgh/Kelso and returning from Edinburgh should be continued. This is a service used by residents of all ages, especially the elderly and students. There is no other public bus service. Losing this service would:

- Deprive the increasing population from Ford, Dewarton, Edgehead and Whitehill of using public transport to get to Pathhead for the only local shops including the Post Office, Pharmacy and Surgery.

- Deprive the increasing population from Ford, Dewarton, Edgehead, and Whitehill of using public transport to get to Edinburgh –including the Royal Infirmary - or South towards Jedburgh and Kelso.
- Deprive travellers by public transport from being able to alight in the villages, whether north from the Borders, or south from Edinburgh.
- Lead to increased use of private cars and taxis with consequent additional pollution and energy use, contrary to the Council’s ambitions to improve well-being and the environment.

Should the service be maintained but re-routed on the A68 after Pathhead, given the frequent west-bound queues on the Edinburgh by-pass approaching the Sheriffhall roundabout, it seems unlikely that any time or fuel would be saved, or the scheduled timetable maintained. It would also put potential users from the villages at risk since:

- there are no safe places for a bus to stop to collect or drop passengers on the A68 North of Pathhead, a stretch of road notorious for speeding, risky overtaking and accidents.
- there is no safe footpath on the Dewarton road East from the cross-roads North of Ford village towards the A68, an unlit road currently on a 60mph limit.
- Re-routing the buses along the Dalkeith by-pass and Edinburgh by-pass would require all buses to provide and enforce the wearing of seat belts on what are dangerous high-speed main roads.

If Midlothian Council ceases to subsidise the Perryman’s buses on the 51 /52 route in Midlothian then the buses may not stop either in Pathhead or in Dalkeith. However if they do stop in these two places, why should the four intermediate villages be deprived unnecessarily? We hope that the Council will take account of these views and ensure that this fundamental public service is maintained.

139. I am writing to express my concerns with the proposal within the current budgetary consultation to remove funding for subsidised bus services within Midlothian. Although I understand the pressure on the Council’s budget means that some services must be lost, I feel that cutting bus services is a poor choice, likely to result in increased costs to the Council, not decreased costs once all impacts are considered. Currently, Midlothian Council subsidies support lifeline services to significant areas of the Authority not served by any other public transport links. These services are relied upon by residents of all ages and levels of income and cutting these would be extremely costly and disruptive. For example, currently the 51/52 route provides the only public transport connections for the communities of Fala, Pathhead, Ford and Edgehead to Dalkeith and Edinburgh. For those elderly residents less able to undertake the journey by other means, removal of this service will result in significant increases in isolation and decreased social engagement. Coupled with other proposed cuts, such as removal of mobile library services, this is likely to increase the requirements for one-to-one social care and support, which I believe the Council will find to be distinctly more expensive than a bus subsidy.

Additionally, these services are also used by young people commuting to work, who do not have the additional income available to run a private car. Without these lifeline services to

Edinburgh, these people will be forced to choose between leaving Midlothian – resulting in an undesirable reduction in the working age population – or seeking less well paid work within walking distance, which may not be available. The resultant increased poverty and isolation will put an additional strain on the Council’s social services budget. Lastly, better off working age adults (a group I fall into), will be forced to either move – again resulting in a loss of working age population and decreasing the Council’s tax base – or undertake to commute by private car.

As well as being environmentally unsustainable – something I’m sure would be against the Council’s sustainability policies – and personally expensive, this would result in an increased level of road usage and a knock on increase in required road maintenance. (At a rough estimate, cutting the two pre-9am buses on the 51/52 route would be likely to result in at least an additional 40 private cars on the road each day at peak times. Given the Council’s stated desire to reduce road maintenance budgets, simultaneous decreases in the provision of public transport would be foolish.

It is easy to imagine that Midlothian is well served by public transport, when seen from the eyes of Dalkeith – where both the Borders rail and Lothian buses stop – but to cut rural services is short sighted socially, economically and environmentally and portrays a vision of a Council that serves only urban residents in select locations. I hope you will reconsider.

140. I am a relatively new resident of Pathhead, having moved here two and a half years ago. I will be 77 years old in 19 days’ time and I am physically disabled although not registered as such. Having attended a public meeting in Pathhead’s Community Hall last evening (30th November) I am now aware that your Council is proposing to cancel the £18,000 annual subsidy it makes to the Borders bus service 51/52. This saving would be just one of many that, as leader of the Midlothian Council, you feel obliged to make in order to manage your own budget restrictions. I wonder whether you realise what the loss of this service into Dalkeith in particular would mean for the community. Pathhead and the surrounding villages of Ford, Dewarton, Edgehead, and Whitehill, have numerous elderly residents, many of them too old or disabled to drive a car. Many younger residents have young families and not all have a car, let alone two; there is also quite a lot of social housing where the occupiers have no access to a private vehicle. All the above mentioned groups would be affected by a lack of access to

- shops and banks
- employment
- education
- healthcare
- benefits and social services
- libraries and internet access
- social and leisure activities

The loss of the 51/52 bus service will be catastrophic for the disadvantaged, the young, the elderly and the infirm residents who at present make use of it because they have no other

options surely the provision of public transport is fundamental to the wellbeing of our community and its withdrawal would result in serious disruption. I urge you and Council to resist this flawed proposal and reject it outright.

Parks and open spaces

1. Get rid of the grass verges round Waverley crescent and terrace, they are covered with dog dirt...save on grass cutting
2. Maintenance of flower beds etc. How about getting sponsorship from local business in exchange for sign/advert at location. e.g. Flower bed at Junction of Bog Road and Carlops Road Penicuik:- Cragiefield Hotel or Navaar House Hotel? Tubs along Edinburgh Road Penicuik:- Alex F. Noble or Tesco. Roundabouts at Straiton Retail: Peel Estates, Sainsbury, IKEA, Costco, KFC, Burger King
3. The impact on Cemeteries is one which will create much concern and stress within our communities.
4. Verge cutting should be maintained.
5. Stopping Floral displays: Midlothian becomes a less attractive place to live and do business. People may move to more attractive places. Also do we not want to encourage people to get out to parks and exercise...who would want to exercise in a place field without plants? I fear it would turn out like Deanburn which had all its play parks concreted over and is now has pockets of desolate land with dead trees.
6. It is really sad that removing planting in public parks and hanging baskets is being considered.
7. Management needs changing. You plant bulbs between the trees on Mauricewood Road, then mow them down with your first cut of the year, you seed 'meadow areas' on the amenity ground round the school, then don't maintain them. You put Golden Hogg in round the trees on John Street, it's supposed to free drain and you put it inside the raised edges of the beds. I could go on. Stop wasting money, I don't care who's money it is. Grass cutting large amenity areas needs expensive equipment, how are volunteer groups supposed to deal with that. See 11.
8. If the grass pitches are used you must keep them, if not they're part of the park. They'll still be there if needed at a later date. The Astroturf pitches should be kept intact since they are a totally different, expensively built, proposition. If you can get local clubs to do the day to day stuff on them, that would be a saving.
9. Floral displays and hanging baskets, 1 display per town, all similar sized, then either the rest all go over to community groups or you just get rid of them, no half measures. There'll still be significant shrubbed areas and hedges you'll need to deal with.
10. Galas and festivals - Put the bunting up and leave them to it. Do fencing etc. on a drop off and pick up only basis where possible.

11. Increase charges for events - Eh? This just shows why a Council should not involve itself in commercial matters. Charges should already be what the market will pay. If they are not that has been costing the Council money.
12. Increase lair provision Dalkeith Cemetery - Fine
13. Close Pilton Bowling Club -This place needs leasing out to someone, or some organisation, who can kick some life into it. If that does not work it should go.
14. Stopping floral displays – will make beautiful places ugly.
15. Reducing the grass cutting standards one assumes there would be a reduction in staff there too!
16. [Stop providing floral displays] Just reads as spiteful? There is some civic pride in our community that the Council seems intent on erasing. One assumes more job losses would occur from this. Where are these Community groups and Volunteers expected to get the funds to maintain large spaces. The flower beds could be replaced by low maintenance shrubs.
17. [Stop support to galas and events] Could result in an identity loss for our communities.
18. Reduce support for galas, etc.
19. Increase [events, park hire] charges
20. Grassed areas in housing schemes which provide the only play areas for children requires regular cutting to prevent the unsightly and dangerous build-up of excess cuttings.
21. Verges on some of the narrow landward roads need to be cut to assist visibility at bends/junctions and to expose ditches and other obstacles where vehicles need to pass on a restricted width.
22. The astro pitch (MUGA) in the grounds of the old Paradykes Primary School, Loanhead is well used and should be retained in its proposed relocated site.
23. Some support for towns Gala Days should be retained as these galas are a tradition which helps to bind communities and without support will almost certainly cease to exist.
24. I appreciate that the floral displays are an optional extra, however they are very much appreciated by myself and many others. They boost the feel of the area and encourage others to be more respectful of the environment. By grassing over such areas and allowing them to grow wild in areas where voluntary groups cannot be found, it would encourage the already abundant use of such areas for fly tipping, general littering and dog mess.
25. Gala events are an important part of the social calendar. Who would clear the areas, etc. if not the council? Clearly, this would lead to an increase in rubbish. The litter left around after Galas is already significant. It needs to be removed.
26. Stop provision of all floral displays and shrub beds - obviously an “extra” but attractive civic areas can increase community morale, motivation to care for the environment and

encourage use of outside spaces for health-giving activity. Cemeteries should not be bleak soulless places- upsetting for those visiting.

27. Reduce grass cutting. OK but make sure sight lines at junctions and roundabouts are not obstructed by vegetation.
28. Stop floral displays. This seems like a large expense but it would be a shame to lose all of the gardening done. Hanging baskets have extra maintenance involved so they could go.
29. Stop support to galas and festivals - agree
30. Increase event hire charges- agree - are you suggesting we don't make charges clear to people in advance?
31. Close Polton Bowling Club - must be worth £1million to an expensive house builder.
32. Why not think about local sponsorship from community groups or business to pay for floral displays and use this as an opportunity to get some pride back in or communities.
33. Assistance for Gala/fun days cannot be sustained if unaffordable, events must pay their own way. Taxpayers shouldn't subsidise events. Full charges for events on council property (Vogrie etc. are a must)
34. Maintenance of green spaces - if pitches are barely used then they should be reduced or handed to local groups. Other areas will look scruffy and unkempt. Long-term aim to create more shrub/tree beds to reduce overall grass area to be maintained? Road verges - long grass can affect sight lines and non-maintenance will lead to trees growing at kerbside, the verge edges must be maintained even if wider verge is left to go wild.
35. I note the proposal to reduce the care of green spaces with flower beds being turfed over etc. Although I agree that savings can be made in this area if flowerbeds are planned to be removed from areas like Kings Park I feel support should be given to the community to help set up on going community projects that would retain and look after these green spaces.
36. Rather than grass over all flower beds why not plant low maintenance shrubs?
37. A reduction in grass verge cutting and grassing over flower beds in parks indicates the aesthetic importance of Midlothian has little value to councillors. Relying on community groups appears very arbitrary to me.
38. Close Vogrie Golf Course as it is loss making.
39. Fully agree with cutting back on plants etc.
40. GRASS CUTTING COULD BE REDUCED AS OFTEN GRASS IS BEING CUT WHEN WEATHER IS NOT SUITABLE CAUSING DAMAGE TO GRASS AREAS. USE COMMON SENSE CUT FEWER TIMES AS SUGGESTED.
41. Skipping grass cutting is an excellent idea - allowing areas to 'grow wild' and increase in biodiversity is to be encouraged.
42. Give community chances to purchase open spaces such as football pitches.

43. Pride in the community grass cutting and floral displays really boost morale and pride in the area, might seem 'extras' but not.
44. Costs such as bedding plants and support for events should be cut.
45. Playing field / football pitches deduction are you trying to make the country even more obese and unfit???
46. Retain flower beds in parks but reduce replanting frequency, i.e. more perennials and low-maintenance shrubs.
47. I am in favour of reducing grass cutting.
48. I am in favour of stopping floral displays.
49. I would oppose stopping support to galas and events. The relatively small saving to the Council represents a large impact on local volunteers who organise galas and events. It is likely that some galas and events will cease to function if this action is taken, with a consequent loss of community cohesion and social integration.
50. The loss of park gardens will damage the mental health of many people who are cheered by the sight of these flower beds.
51. Stop provision of all floral displays and shrub beds: negative impact on tourism, wellbeing.
52. Stop subsidising Vogrie Golf Course. It has created market distortion.
53. Some reductions in planting schemes would be an improvement as some are very outdated.
54. Floral displays – it would be very unfortunate if we were to lose these. Our parks will be very dull without them.
55. Reduction in grass cutting outwith town centres. Again lets reduce services to the rural communities and increase the road traffic accident rate by failing to cut the verges
56. It is not clear to me that the council does anything about out of town verges already so there is nothing to cut. I cycle around a lot and see that it doesn't. The pavements outside the town centres are being grown over NOW and will eventually disappear. I object on the grounds of ignorance of the person who suggested it and foolishness of suggestion.
57. Penicuik is the largest town in Midlothian and continually increasing in size. On that basis it is being hard done by only having one astropitch. If football pitches are rarely if ever in use then close them down. BUT BEAR IN MIND THE POTENTIAL FOR GREATER ANTISOCIAL ACTIVITY BY TEENAGERS.
58. Dalkeith/Mayfield is already an eyesore. Not cutting grass or keeping streets clean will only make this even worse.
59. Stop provision of floral displays, etc. You could, but only at the expense of the county looking run down and unattractive.
60. Football pitches, Polton Bowling Club, etc. I don't have a useful view on this, but if you do close something, or pass it to the community to run, for goodness' sake don't sell or give

away the land or let it be used for housing. (The NHS has done this and then either can't expand a facility or create a new one when the need arises.) The same consideration applies to buildings (e.g. item 3 on p 3; item 23 on p 10).

61. Dispose of Vogrie. Since many of its roles have been taken by the revitalised Dalkeith country park, what purposes does it serve that cannot be carried on elsewhere nearby?
62. What soul will be left in parks if shrub beds and flower borders are grassed over?
63. Reduce grass cutting standards: please keep the parks and public areas neat. Road verges, so long as long grass does not impede sightlines at junctions, can be left alone.
64. Stop provision of all floral displays and shrub beds: these are a joy – Midlothian flower beds in the parks and the town hanging baskets are wonderful. They show a community with some pride left in itself. They cheer me up all spring and summer long. It is hard to prioritise spending cuts but I would be sorry to see this sacrificed. Just imagine our parks, towns and villages without flowers and only scruffy grass! Let's not deprive our children and grandparents of a free place to feel good in.
65. Our community could adopt and maintain the flower beds and grass verges. With regard to mowing of grass verges, flower beds and weeds generally, it would be helpful to move towards a less labour intensive approach. Longer grass and one or twice yearly cuts will be beneficial to the ecosystems. Perennial plants might be a better idea than continual annual planting. I think we should cut out the spraying of weedkiller and do it in response mode - do it where a big problem arises. The regular weed killing spray on my street I feel is unnecessary and time consuming, it looks ugly afterwards - with yellow grass receding from the curb and bare soil exposed that then erodes. I think the era of keeping green space 'tidy' is over, it's cheaper and more beneficial to wildlife to cut less and leave things in a more natural state - we will adapt to this in a few years.
66. Retain floral display provision (p65).
67. The proposal to stop all floral displays in parks and grass the areas over is an absurd idea and unworthy of a council who wish to extend and expand the tourism/ leisure industry! Midlothian has been justifiably proud of its parks and floral displays to date which do enhance the visitor experience. Imagine the dismay of future visitors gazing at our grassed over flower beds and recounting this phenomenon to the friends back home! Use the skills of your present horticultural staff to increase the supply of plants and sell them on in an increased commercial basis to generate more income instead.
68. Retain your support for galas and events as these are integral to community identity and should be retained.
69. I will be sad to see the cessation of all floral displays and shrub beds as I believe these provide a much needed subliminal morally uplifting effect in difficult times.
70. Flower beds not to be grassed over but to be planted with native wildflowers and flowering shrubs that require minimal maintenance while being both attractive and engendering social pride in people's dwelling places. Making the dwelling places of Midlothian bare and undecorated may result in an increase in vandalism and social depression.

71. If you are not going to cut grass put proper wild flowers seed onto these areas so they look better & support wildlife. I do not want to see flower beds & containers removed if possible.
72. Reduction in grass cutting should be avoided.
73. Disagree with increased charges for burials.
74. The reduction of floral displays and shrub beds is a very parsimonious idea and will reduce the simple pleasures of walking through the Parks and Gardens to admire them and be encouraged to go out for a walk!
75. Reduce grass cutting standards: please keep the parks and public areas neat. Road verges, so long as long grass does not impede sightlines at junctions, can be left alone.
76. Stop provision of all floral displays and shrub beds: these are a joy – Midlothian flower beds in the parks and the town hanging baskets are wonderful. They show a community with some pride left in itself. They cheer me up all spring and summer long. It is hard to prioritise spending cuts but I would be sorry to see this sacrificed. Just imagine our parks, towns and villages without flowers and only scruffy grass! Let's not deprive our children and grandparents of a free place to feel good in.
77. Over the years Pathhead has become less and less important to Midlothian Council. The annual Christmas tree stopped (on pretty spurious grounds). When the Transport Scotland scheme replaced the street lights the arrangement was that all the replacement columns would have like for like sockets to accommodate the Christmas decorations. In the event, many were not fitted with the requisite sockets and complaints to both Midlothian Council and Transport Scotland were ignored. The decorations, as they are now, are pitiful. Hanging baskets, a much admired feature over the years, were taken away.
78. According to my information, the Council budget allows for somewhere in the region of £80,000 for Christmas lights. I well understand the need to draw in the purse strings, in many instances through no direct fault of the Council, but it is a bitter pill to swallow that that amount of money can be spent on a 4 week period yet some £16,000 can be swept away to ensure a year round, vital service to the community. If businesses in the likes of Dalkeith are benefiting from the Christmas lights and attracting more customers then given their increased profits why are they not sponsoring the tree and lights?
79. Cuts that could be made I think with less impact include the community pavilion, loved though it is, its costs more to run for less overall benefit.
80. Our community could adopt and maintain the flower beds and grass verges.
81. With regard to mowing of grass verges, flower beds and weeds generally, it would be helpful to move towards a less labour intensive approach.
82. Longer grass and one or twice yearly cuts will be beneficial to the ecosystems. Perennial plants might be a better idea than continual annual planting. I think we should cut out the spraying of weed killer and do it in response mode - do it where a big problem arises. The regular weed killing spray on my street I feel is unnecessary and time consuming, it look ugly afterwards - with yellow grass receding from the curb and bare soil exposed that then erodes. I think the era of keeping green space 'tidy' is over, it's cheaper and more beneficial

to wildlife to cut less and leave things in a more natural state - we will adapt to this in a few years.

83. item 11 Retain floral display provision (p65).
84. Your proposal on grass cutting is ill informed. Any degree of intelligence will tell you that not cutting grass on verges will result in encroachment onto pavements (blocking access) and development of woody vegetation on verges, which would encroach onto roads. This would appear to typify the lack of thought that has gone into these proposals.
85. I agree grass cutting needs to be reduced.
86. You could also consider areas such as - do we need Christmas lighting?
87. Midlothian is trying to be a holiday destination and I have noticed an upsurge in tourists around Outlander filming sites in Roslin. However, will tourists want to linger in Midlothian if the grass verges are uncut, roads aren't maintained, etc? The idea of grassing over every flower bed is over the top - even wildflower seeds could be cheaply obtained and planted on flower beds instead. Encouraging tourists should be upmost in our county's ambition.
88. Reducing the grass cutting services is not ideal but think offering it to a volunteer group is a great idea.
89. The proposal to stop all floral displays in parks and grass the areas over is an absurd idea and unworthy of a council who wish to extend and expand the tourism/ leisure industry! Midlothian has been justifiably proud of its parks and floral displays to date which do enhance the visitor experience. Imagine the dismay of future visitors gazing at our grassed over flower beds and recounting this phenomenon to the friends back home!
90. Use the skills of your present horticultural staff to increase the supply of plants and sell them on in an increased commercial basis to generate more income instead.
91. I will be sad to see the cessation of all floral displays and shrub beds as I believe these provide a much needed subliminal morally uplifting effect in difficult times.
92. Flower beds not to be grassed over but to be planted with native wildflowers and flowering shrubs that require minimal maintenance while being both attractive and engendering social pride in peoples dwelling places. Making the dwelling places of Midlothian bare and undecorated may result in an increase in vandalism and social depression.
93. Encourage strongly commercial sponsorship of appropriate public good elements. An obvious target here would be Item 11 in Commercial Operations (Stop provision of Floral displays etc.). The physical appearance of Midlothian should be uplifting especially in hard times. Floral displays etc. have a big impact on quality of life. Many councils elsewhere in the UK have been successful in getting local firms to sponsor displays at roundabouts, hanging baskets etc (with due acknowledgement). Midlothian is a lovely place and the current Council work to brighten it even more with floral displays is admirable. Loss of this, especially in the towns, would make our environment much more grim. Surely the businesses of Midlothian could help here.

94. There is no mention of encouraging commercial sponsorship of public goods such as floral displays (see comment in Box 4 above.)
95. Get communities to take on the maintenance of smaller green areas, and encourage a less work approach with less cutting and more perennial plants not annuals. Reduce or stop spraying weedkiller.
96. Stop the provision of all floral displays and shrub beds - I am greatly concerned about the greater impact this will have on Midlothian, particularly in regards to the loss of green flag status and the levels of visitor appeal. A drop in visitor numbers will have a drastic impact on Midlothian, and we cannot afford to lose the income generated by tourists.
97. Grassy areas around my home are cut when not needed (ie too often).

Environmental health and trading standards

1. Reductions in Pest Control Services and noise control enforcement will no doubt have a very detrimental affect on Midlothian residents and result in much reduced environmental health within the county.
2. Reducing environmental health officers (where it appears to be limited re: fly tipping issues in Midlothian... if you need an example, just drive up to the A702 from Carlops Road) supporting environmental (social, health and wellbeing let's not forget) issues such as air pollution (which is a popular topic at the moment) and overall decrease in social and environmental support of the council in terms of landscaping - something that has been known to improve wellbeing, residential health and appeal of the area - it seems extremely short sighted to shut down measures that would either maintain (waste management facilities) or improve (environmental health, landscaping) the area for tax payers in the area.
3. Cut pest control - No, bugs and vermin can cause severe environmental and medical problems. You need to make sure the health aspect is secure, and charge appropriately for control procedures.
4. Environmental Health – Noise. Deleting that post will just increase community stress/violence and transfer the problems to the police force. It's not really a saving, it's dodging responsibility.
5. Environmental Health Officer post reduction - If you can still meet your statutory duties ALL the time, otherwise no.
6. Environmental Health deletion of post – Noise – Will there be any safeguard
7. No.7 & 8 - Noise control and enforcement is an important part of the council's work. Those responsible for noise pollution are often abusive, rude or violent when asked to respect those around them. They can be intimidating, particularly to older people. Both myself and my mother have had to report issues with noisy neighbours, and both of us have experienced negative consequences from our neighbours as a result of this. Without the support of EH, I do not see how such problems could be addressed. We have a right to leave in peace and without fear of neighbours. Without the enforcement of environmental laws, etc., who will stop them? The police certainly cannot deal with such issues, given they are so

under resourced already. These people will be allowed to encroach on the lives of others without anyone to stop them. We will be at their mercy.

8. I note the potential to stop the pest control service. Is this not a money generating service that probably covers its costs anyway? A little more marketing of its service could make it cost neutral.
9. On the spot fines for littering and dog fouling and taking a hard line straight away and making an example of these offenders. There's too much pussy footing around these days.
10. Midlothian is growing quickly and clearly from your budget cuts too quickly, so saving on environmental officers when the environment is so impacted by new developments and new routes from the airport is clearly not wise.
11. Noise control. / Enforcement. I do not think that we can leave people without anyone to turn to if there is unsuitable noise. Police I guess? Have you agreed a plan with the police to take this over?
12. Stop giving out dog poo bags.
13. The pest control service should not be stopped. It should be integrated into a community post where it can still be accessed by the public if needed. Is it not possible to combine Environmental Health and Pest control?
14. Stopping pest control: danger to public health (rats, cockroaches, mice, insect infestations)
15. Reduction in the Environmental Health Service: no. Environmental health is too important to reduce. It impacts on everyone's health and wellbeing.
16. I request that the following services be Retained: Education, Communities and Economy. Item 6 Pest control (p35) and item 7 Noise control (p36) item 8 Environmental health reduce by 1 post? (p37).
17. I request that the following services be Retained: item 6 Pest control (p35) and item 7 Noise control (p36) item 8 Environmental health reduce by 1 post? (p37)
18. Stopping pest control: danger to public health (rats, cockroaches, mice, insect infestations)
19. Reduction in the Environmental Health Service: no. Environmental health is too important to reduce. It impacts on everyone's health and wellbeing.
20. I don't think you should get rid of the noise control support officer. This is a blight for many decent tenants & they should be supported fighting this.
21. The document proposes drastic cuts which are not appropriate. You are targeting services relied on by those who cannot speak up, or that are valued by small parts of the community but which benefit all. Your cuts on the environmental side of the council are not acceptable. Midlothian council already pays scant regard to the environment and biodiversity.
22. Similarly, keep all environmental health staff / funding. Midlothian should indeed expand here and re-employ a biodiversity officer.

23. Midlothian council has a bad track record on environmental issues - the environment counts. Please INCREASE spending here.
24. Reducing Environmental Health staffing and services at a time when numbers are already very low (locally and nationally) leaves the Council open to criticism and the potential of legal action in the future - these staff reduce the likelihood of incidents of food poisoning and accidents at work. The removal of a pest control service, even the existing basic one, will inevitably lead to an increase in rat infestation and the potential for the spread of disease and damage to property.
25. Reduction in planning service, pest control, environmental health should be avoided.
26. Review of the Pest Control Service within Environmental Health - this post must not be deleted, particularly given the impact this would have on dog control measures (an area which is already not properly resourced by MLC).

Town centres/ town and village impact

1. Extremely concerned that the heart will be ripped out of the village of Newtongrange. This area is very different from Bonnyrigg and the Lasswade centre. We are all individual areas. The only thing that will be left in Nitten is a train!! Not good enough. Seems decided without any consultation. Thought feelings were understood after last closures were discussed last time. So much for the so called regeneration of our town centre! What a waste of money. Scandalous, you should be ashamed
2. Never mind cuts.....when are you planning to upgrade Dalkeith town centre.....like something out the 70's.....oh hang on...it IS out the 70's
3. Sounds like Midlothian could become a place I would not wish to continue residing in.
4. I think that some of the savings proposals will leave our communities empty and bare and without any heart e.g. Eliminating library staff, stopping landscaping of communal areas and town centres.
5. Not spending money on for non-essential environmental improvements, e.g. proposals for Penicuik Town Centre. Reduce professional services within the council to a minimum, allow local professionals to undertake the work at a reduced cost to the council.
6. I think these proposals are monstrous and would leave Penicuik with no services but extra costs. These are the worst suggestions I have ever read. We deserves the same services as everyone else in Midlothian. You propose to take them ALL away and then charge more? ludicrous.
7. Be careful about alienating rural communities, and the effect this has on those of school age and less and those at the other end of the age and mobility spectrum.
8. Many of the proposals penalise Penicuik, which is larger than Dalkeith. We are treated as the poor relations in terms of facilities, so attempts to close library facilities etc. is not on, especially since there is more building going on. These proposals especially affect the older and disabled people in the community. There is no direct bus service to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Closure of the Belman's Road facility will encourage fly tipping. There appears to

be very little road cleaning already. Potholes are causing damage to cars and passengers with spinal problems suffer as a result.

9. It's seems unfair that potentially we will end up paying council tax for no services in our town of Penicuik if we end up with no library, no refuse centre and paying for brown bin pick up. What exactly are we paying for?!
10. Stop unnecessary consultancy provision & let LDA Architects come up with the regeneration plan to improve provisions in Newtongrange village centre before closing all the facilities especially the library (heart of the community). The saving proposals in the whole seem well thought out. Although the removal of services would rip the heart out of Newtongrange village. We need our library, proposed GP surgery & a community hall.
11. Current proposals are to strip Newtongrange of basically everything - the gym, swimming pool, library. Meanwhile there are hundreds of new houses in the area, and you are taking away any and all amenities to serve the new and current residents. Then you'll be surprised when crime goes up because kids have nothing to do.
12. Penicuik is once more forgotten at the expense of Dalkeith and Bonnyrigg which are already very well catered for with shiny new high schools, libraries and sports centres, they didn't have to fight for decades to be delivered.
13. The council are planning to build more houses in Roslin thus More Council Tax. Remove the local facilities and leave the village with no library or community hall. Roslin is a small village and we don't have many facilities but the library and community hall are very important to all who use them.

The Chapel is a big attraction in Roslin for visitors but for the local people there is Nothing.

14. The proposals to consider removing the subsidies for the Borders bus service 51/52 will sever the links to Dalkeith and Edinburgh for those who are unable to get out to do essential tasks such as shopping and attending hospital appointments. As the village has a high proportion of ageing residents, many of whom do not drive nor have access to family assistance, they are heading for isolation. Over the years Pathhead has become less and less important to Midlothian Council. The annual Christmas tree stopped (on pretty spurious grounds). When the Transport Scotland scheme replaced the street lights the arrangement was that all the replacement columns would have like for like sockets to accommodate the Christmas decorations. In the event, many were not fitted with the requisite sockets and complaints to both Midlothian Council and Transport Scotland were ignored. The decorations, as they are now, are pitiful. Hanging baskets, a much admired feature over the years, were taken away.
15. Having lived in Penicuik since 1970 we are shocked and saddened to read the proposed Savings for addressing Midlothian's financial shortfall. In 1970 the rates paid in Penicuik Burgh were then the lowest in Scotland. Now in 2017 our council tax is probably one of the highest in Scotland and yet in this time the amenities have failed to keep up with the house building explosion. In spite of high council tax, residents have very few amenities in this town. Now the proposals want to take away some of the few that we have. Closing our local recycling centre will only encourage fly-tipping which I suspect costs more to clean up. Closing our library discriminates against the less well off in this town who need to be

encouraged to read and who can't always afford to go out and buy books. Cutting back on road maintenance together with a reduction in the winter maintenance budget will lead to more accidents to pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists and damage to motor vehicles. This will in turn lead to claims for compensation which will cost more in the long run. Cutting janitorial services so drastically could well put children in our primary schools at risk. The loss of one member of the senior management team will probably not be noticed, yet many of the other measures penalise the most vulnerable in society who are currently just managing because of wage freezes. If better stewardship of resources is not possible then surely a fairer way would be to increase council tax charges so that the burden is shared. The current proposals might save money but at the risk of ruining the town and making it no more than a housing scheme on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

16. The impact on Roslin: We are writing in response to the proposed cuts in services which have been published by Midlothian Council. We accept that the Council is in a difficult financial situation; however we are deeply concerned about the way in which this consultation is being carried out. We find it surprising, given the economic situation that has prevailed for at least the past ten years, the council is offering such an unstructured and potentially drastic set of proposals. Whilst we welcome the opportunity to comment, we think the way in which it has been done is divisive and lacks coherence.
17. Having lived in Penicuik since 1970 we are shocked and saddened to read the proposed Savings for addressing Midlothian's financial shortfall. In 1970 the rates paid in Penicuik Burgh were then the lowest in Scotland. Now in 2017 our council tax is probably one of the highest in Scotland and yet in this time the amenities have failed to keep up with the house building explosion. In spite of high council tax, residents have very few amenities in this town. Now the proposals want to take away some of the few that we have.
18. My concerns about Roslin:
 1. The council are planning to build more houses in Roslin thus More Council Tax
 2. Remove the local facilities and leave the village with no library or community hall

Roslin is a small village and we don't have many facilities but the library and community hall are very important to all who use them. The Chapel is a big attraction in Roslin for visitors but for the local people there is Nothing.

19. Well in Rosewell you are planning to build a hub at considerable cost the money would be better spent on the two halls we already have Rosewell church and St Matthews school have perfectly could halls and serve the community well the village like the church and school halls we have had school fairs nativity plays rainbows brownies and we have had very good response to these things we do not want a purpose built building that's not in keeping with the village its always been traditional to use the schools and churches in the village and for very little money these buildings would serve the village well and it would save the council a lot of money the village would prefer a lollypop person outside St Matthews school. Well the money spent on building a hub must be considerable more than giving the church and school halls a lick of paint.
20. Roslin resident: The county population is increasing rapidly, and presumably this will be eventually reflected in the council income. We see little point in authorising land development for housing in Roslin, whilst at the same time abandoning local resources. It seems illogical, that although the village has had a primary school replaced after less than 30 years life, little or no other civic facilities have been erected in the village apart from a single

badminton court in the same period. We would ask that, as a small and historically under resourced village, the council realises that the effects of the proposed cuts will affect us proportionally more than some of the larger communities which have benefitted from recent improvements.

21. As a Roslin resident I wish to protest against the proposed cuts to Midlothian Council's services. While I appreciate that you may have to re-think your strategy, some of them - to me - seem very short sighted and poorly thought out. To reduce the number of libraries in the county to one is ludicrous in the extreme. Do you not realise how important a library is to its local community? In Roslin, where I visit at least twice a month to borrow books, there is always someone using the computer. I also get my hearing aid batteries there - this was a great idea as it saved a trip to Penicuik Medical Centre. The Book Group is also well attended each month. Where do you propose having this "central library"? Wherever, it has to have adjacent parking facilities and bus stop for the less mobile. It is not long since we fought to keep Roslin Library open and now it seems we have another fight on our hands. We are always told it is the busiest in Midlothian - per capita - and yet you propose to close it. This doesn't make sense to me. I am also told our Pavilion is at risk of closure. What happens to the Breakfast Club, After School Club, Boys' Brigade, Heritage Group etc.? Where are they supposed to meet? A small village needs a central meeting place and with hundreds of new houses earmarked to be built this will be even more necessary - as will the library. Cala has already started building an estate of 79 houses, some of which have already been sold.

You also talk of closing the Penicuik Re-cycling Centre. Who is going to travel to Newtongrange from this side of the county with their rubbish? Fly tipping in this area is bad enough just now and it will only get worse with this proposal. You will have to send out teams to clear up the mess in the countryside - something brought about by your own doing. Could you not reduce the hours during which the Penicuik site is open to the public thereby cutting the costs? This site is kept very tidy by the staff, who are very helpful when I visit. The same thing will happen if you charge for garden waste. Those of us who are responsible enough to pay and dispose of our refuse correctly will probably find any spare room in our bins used up by those who will not pay!!! Or again it will be dumped in the countryside.

I am also amused that you intend to reduce spending on road maintenance. If the pot-holes in Roslin are a judge this has been reduced a long time ago. Instead of asking the public to pay for parking in shopping areas which are already free could the shops not be asked to help towards this and upkeep of parking areas. They are the ones who benefit after all. It always seems to be the motorist who has to bear the cost. Increases or new charges will deter people from visiting shopping areas which then means that shops have lower revenue and will be unable to meet their financial commitments - ie Business Rates!!!

I hope you give my thoughts due consideration. I realise you have a difficult task ahead but by re-thinking some of your proposals you could come up with a much better plan than that already published.

22. I am very concerned with regards to proposals to reduce funding for core community services. My main concern as a Gorebridge resident is the suggestion that the library and leisure centre might be closed. Gorebridge is a growing community with very few services for young and vulnerable people. The library serves as the main information hub for the

community and provides a vital service for the schools and the children of the village. The weekly book bug sessions are one of only two facilities available for toddlers in the village. My kids (9 and 6) visit the library most weeks and take genuine pleasure from having the freedom to select their own books and look up topics they are interested in. If we had to travel by public transport or car to do this we would not have time or get the same pleasure and this would be a real disadvantage to their education. Short-term savings could have the potential for long-term consequences on the education and wellbeing of our young people.

23. I have particular concern with regards to Gorebridge and would be interested given our growing population on how much money per head is spent on services across the population centres in the county. Out of school sporting activities and holiday activities seem always to be concentrated in a couple of areas (Lasswade, Penicuik) with very little for the rest of the county. My fear is that removing the leisure centre and library would leave us as a purely residential commuter village leaving many vulnerable families isolated. I note the intention to potentially sign over buildings to community ownership however this could undermine much very good quality community work within the village. At present there are many people willing to help and do what they can to improve community public space and services, however there is not the expertise or will to be managing several properties. People have jobs, family etc. and only so much time to spare.
24. I have read the proposal and as far as I can see the proposed cuts to services are frankly appalling. I live in Newtongrange and in summary it looks as if

- The library will close.
- The swimming pool and leisure centre will be put out to some kind of community trust, if that doesn't work then I assume they will close. Is there any evidence or example to instil any confidence that these can successfully survive - what will become of the buildings if they don't manage as a community trust?
- Potentially football pitches may close.
- Reduction / removal of funding to support local initiatives e.g. Christmas lights and gala days.
- Removal or charge for refuse/ garden waste collections.

In addition to the above there are also number of other cuts will affect us as they will be applied across Midlothian.

Simply if the above comes to pass you will rip the heart out of the village as Newtongrange Main Street will become a shell, and there will be no local amenities provided in the village. Also we were promised by the council that there would be no closures as a result of the new school being built, do promises mean nothing to you? The library is used as a community hub for loads of community events such as book bug, mother and baby groups, knitting groups, internet access for older people and people on low incomes who have no access to internet at home. Newtongrange primary also take children to visit the library to encourage literacy.

The cuts will also result in additional costs in the long term, if our children don't have places to go the risk of delinquent behaviour increases, increasing costs for the police. Lack of exercise will lead to increased health issues for all age groups, lack of facilities will increase social isolation within the community, again causing health issues. Reduced rubbish collections will increase fly tipping which is bad environmentally, bad for tourists and Midlothian council will need to pick up the cost for cleaning it up.

In terms of what you do instead is difficult as there is nothing in the document I can see that shows where the major costs are, and the numbers you are quoting are extremely high, demanding drastic action. You have chosen that the main group to suffer will be local residents rather than any other groups.

Planning and building standards

1. Reductions in the "Planning Service" will inevitably result in a non-efficient service and result in more problems than already exist. We also believe a withdrawal from the Strategic Planning Authority and contribution to the SE Scotland Strategic Development Plan are short-sighted and will result in the needs and views of Midlothian being ignored.
2. Your planning service needs a thorough review, it's not up to scratch, and doesn't work for the benefit of the counties residents. This should happen before you delete any posts.
3. Reduce contribution to strategic planning authority. Fine.
4. Ensure builders pay more contributions to the council when they get apply for planning
5. We refer to the current consultation being undertaken by the Council on the proposals to address the shortfall in the budget. In a recent email to staff the Council's Chief Executive has invited comments and feedback from Council employees on the proposals being presented to the elected members at the full Council meeting on 13 February 2018. Having examined the report which was referred to the full Council on 10 October 2017 it is apparent that one of the many proposals to assist in reducing the Council's budget shortfall is to reduce staff numbers within the Planning Service.

While we are very aware of the Council's current budget difficulties, and the difficult choices that must be faced, we would request that our representation in respects to the proposal to cut planning staff be given serious consideration prior to these proposals being approved. While the Planning Service is sometimes not perceived as being a frontline service it has a key role to play in the successful delivery of the 3 priorities and 5 themes outlined in the Single Midlothian Plan.

We work in the Local Development section of the Planning team. It is our duty to perform the statutory functions of the Council in terms of dealing with planning applications for local scale developments. Whilst we are obviously concerned regarding the impact that reducing planning staff would have on our personal futures; we are equally concerned that the Council's ability to carry out its statutory duty to determine planning applications within nationally set timetables will be significantly affected. We also have more general concerns about the delivery of a planning service which is fit for purpose and able to facilitate economic growth, both locally and nationally, and to deliver the necessary new homes across the Council area, all at a time when the Planning Service will be expected to

implement the requirements of the new Planning Bill, which is expected to receive royal ascent in 2018.

Only recently, the elected members of Midlothian Council adopted the Midlothian Local Development Plan. This plan sets out the development strategy for Midlothian. Its proper implementation is expected to deliver growth for the next six years. Members will be aware that in terms of housing, Midlothian is one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland. With the efficient handling of planning applications and a fully functioning Planning Service come numerous benefits (most of which are aligned to the Single Midlothian Plan) to the people of Midlothian, including:

- Addressing housing need and demand by increasing the supply of private homes;
- Addressing homelessness by increasing the supply of affordable/social housing;
- Maximising the socio-economic benefits of the Borders Railway;
- Ensuring the viability and vitality of Midlothian's town centres;
- Supporting economic growth by delivering a larger potential workforce;
- Supporting the Council's financial position by ensuring increased Council tax revenue from more homes and commercial activity;
- Boosting local business and trades by supporting and facilitating good developments;
- Supporting infrastructure improvements through securing developer contributions from developers;
- Ensuring the happiness and wellbeing of Midlothian residents by ensuring that their amenity and standards of environment are protected;
- Ensuring the quality and attractiveness of Midlothian's best landscapes are protected for future generations; and
- Supporting tourism by ensuring Midlothian's most important historic and natural heritage assets are protected.

However, in order to deliver the Council's development strategy and the key benefits outlined above the Planning Service must be adequately resourced and not further depleted. The Planning Service is well placed to deal with the pressures of facilitating a fast growing economy. We have long experience of inter-disciplinary and inter-organisational working; this is a vital skills resource for the Council at a time when financial pressures are forcing the Council to consider new methods and approaches for addressing key priorities. At present we have a team of experienced and committed professional staff with excellent knowledge of the local area. We are actively delivering the Council's strategy for development, engaging in schemes to assist in the delivery of more affordable and social housing, negotiating and achieving good quality development on the ground and resolving disputes. We have pride in providing an efficient and professional service and have serious fears that the current proposals, in

relation to the Planning Service, will severely impact on the quality of this service and in turn the quality of development, levels of investment and economic growth.

Without adequate staffing levels it is unlikely that services currently offered will be continued; as a result performance levels will reduce and the character and appearance of Midlothian will be harmed by unsuitable development. Developers expect a professional and well-resourced planning service that is able to deal quickly and efficiently with pre-application enquiries, planning applications and discharging of conditions; without an adequately resourced planning service developers may choose to develop elsewhere. Midlothian will become a less attractive place to live, work and invest in.

We appreciate that the main operating costs of the Planning Service are related to staff and, therefore, there are difficulties in reducing the cost of the service without losing staff. However, instead of considering the saving that can be made in staff costs by cutting jobs in the Planning Service elected members should consider the loss of income, to the Council and local economy, and reduction in local investment should there be a reduction in staff numbers in the Planning team.

We do not feel that we are in a position to comment on what cost reductions could be achieved in other areas of the Council but have a general view that there may be opportunities for the Council to invest in projects to achieve financial benefits, which would not harm the staff and residents in Midlothian. In addition, we are convinced that there are a range of measures which could be employed by the Council to reduce costs without losing staff. Within the Planning Service, short term measures, such as reducing the training budget, charging for the pre-application advice service and reducing the reliance on consultants will address some of the cost issues.

We consider that the current Planning service offers value for money and makes a positive contribution to the delivery of the Single Midlothian Plan. Any short term financial benefits gained from a reduction in staff within the Planning Team will result in long term losses to the physical environment of Midlothian, its quality of place and its investment potential.

In summary we have the following concerns regarding the current proposals:

- The reduction in planning staff will impact on the Council's ability to determine planning applications in satisfactory timescales, thereby resulting in the Council's fall down the national performance league tables;
- The proposals leave Midlothian ill-equipped to deal with future levels of development, which jeopardises investment in the local economy;
- The proposals will result in difficulties in delivering additional housing, both social and private, thereby losing out on the economic and social benefits that a growing population creates; and,
- The proposals will result in the loss of professional officers with specific area-based knowledge, an understanding of the local context and concern for the area they work in.

We would urge the elected members to consider the points we have made in this email and choose a long term strategy to support growth and economic development ahead of a short-term exercise in deleting posts. Hopefully we have demonstrated that there are greater financial benefits in retaining a fully functioning Planning Service rather than the relative small monetary reimbursement that will result from removing staff.

Signed by 7 members of staff in the Council's planning team.

Council Tax

1. How about collecting all the due Council tax or rent from tenants. If they can't or won't pay, take action. I realise this sounds easier to do than it is but it should be possible.
2. How about you show us the amount of unpaid council tax in Midlothian? Am guessing that money could come in handy at this time.
3. Given the huge increase in the number of households in the area is there an option of looking at a charge to maintain some of the services?
4. If council tax had not been frozen for the past ten years we would not be in this situation. Please consider raising taxation at national and local level and funding community facilities properly will benefit everyone in the longer term.
5. If there is an increase to council tax ALL HOUSEHOLDS THAT PAY COUNCIL TAX TO BE INCREASED NOT JUST CERTAIN BANDS.
6. The only real solution would be to increase taxes (including council tax) and for the government to end free personal care (and return to means tested care).
7. Ultimately, it seems that allowing a rise in council tax would help, though this must be done with care to minimise the impact on families and individuals who are of a lower income level. I would encourage Midlothian council to lobby the government to allow more freedom in this area.
8. The decision to freeze council tax was a short-term political one that has had severe implications in the long term. Many people I have spoken to would be willing to pay more council tax to see a standard of service maintenance. I also assume that the many new residents in the village will be making a high contribution to the council tax pot and should receive a certain level of service. I realise these are not easy decisions to make but please do not make short term cost saving decisions that could have far reaching long term negative impacts on our communities and vulnerable people.
9. Raise council tax across all bands.
10. Collect all due Council taxes. Where Council employees have not paid their Council tax they should pay up in full or be sacked.
11. Increase council tax - although I appreciate its centrally controlled.
12. Increase Council Tax.
13. Increase council tax.

14. Increase council tax.
15. While I understand the need for a working budget I think the proposed plans will leave us with very little. I would rather see a small increase on council tax so that we can keep and develop our services.
16. Introduce a local Income Tax to replace Council Tax, which does not represent ability to pay and excludes larger households with individuals in receipt of income who probably use more of the facilities.
17. Increasing council tax for higher earners.
18. Increase council tax.
19. Increasing council tax by the full 3% would also negate the need for many of these proposed cuts.
20. The sudden huge increase in council tax weighs a heavy burden in many families. Please be cautious about future rises. Too many people are seriously just getting by and increases in council tax when services are being cut seems unjustified to me. I would pay more if I was getting more but to pay more when you are getting less is unreasonable and pushing more families into poverty.
21. Increase council tax.
22. Increase council tax.
23. Increase council tax more it has been frozen too long.
24. Increase community charge
25. Make a small increase to the council tax, a small increase by every household every year would make a huge difference, there has been too many years where no increase was made and this in the long run has a negative impact on services being provided.
26. Council tax has been hiked up considerably so I don't feel it right that some of the basic services should be cut.
27. Council Tax should be raised not capped- should have been raised years ago.
28. Why not introduce more bands with an increase in the higher payments. I am in the higher half of the scale.
29. How much money from the council tax levy on second homes is being generated?
30. Scottish Government have forced Councils into freezing Rates for about 8 years now - is it not time they gave councils more money and curtailed their own projects? Is it not possible for Councils to implement their own plans and not implement the Scottish Government's cuts?
31. You should have the autonomy to put up our council tax across all bands up to 10 or 15% per year. The council tax freeze is a disaster for your funding.

32. An obvious solution to these problems is an increase in Council Tax. While no one likes - or probably - wants to pay more, a few pence in the £1 from everyone could go a long way to alleviating the pain we all face with these proposals. You should also make sure that everyone with outstanding debts on their Council Tax is chased and made to pay in full. Can everyone not be made to pay by Direct Debit to avoid non-payment?
33. The proposals suggested are staggering, both in terms of the scale of the reduction in services across the board and also that the Council is considering a further rise in Council Tax. The mechanism agreed by the Scottish Parliament is absurd and inequitable. A 3% rise in Council Tax would be acceptable if that were to be applied in each Council Tax band. However, the Council Tax band on my property increased by 20% at the start of this financial year. A further 20% would leave me with serious financial problems - my income has not increased by 20% and the combined salary my household is less than the basic salary of an MSP, yet we face unsustainable annual increases of 20% because of a flawed and highly questionable piece of legislation. It is odd that the banding of my property, and ultimately the amount of Council Tax I pay, is tied to the value of the property over 25 years ago.
34. I would find the proposed cuts more palatable if my Council Tax bill was frozen. Cuts to Council services cannot be justified if Council Tax bills increase. Why should we pay more for a reduced service?
35. Increase Council Tax, re-evaluate property within existing bands. Hold the Scottish SNP government their promise of replacing Council Tax with a fit-for-purpose local taxation system; campaign against Tory austerity, and support the campaign to end tax loopholes.
36. The cuts proposed are shortsighted and will lead to Midlothian becoming a much less prosperous and pleasant place in which to live and work. Reduced services will have an impact on the health, well-being and education of the population.
37. Clearly the mechanism to increase Council Tax is flawed and inequitable. Any increase in Council Tax should apply equally across all Council Tax bands. My response to question 5 (below) explains more on this point. Given this serious misgiving, councils across Scotland should lobby Holyrood to change the system. One simple solution would be to scrap Council Tax and replace it with a local form of Income Tax which would be a much fairer system.
38. Put up council tax / business rates to provide decent services. Businesses are often those who cause many problems in the community - fine them where they transgress (e.g. planning regulations / conditions).
39. I do understand that the Council is facing tough times, with revenue from central government at best stable and costs rising steadily. However, I would suggest that in addition to looking at means of reducing costs, including closure of really well used and highly valued facilities, the Council should look hard at means of increasing revenue from sources for which it has direct responsibility. I am referring here to Council Tax and income from housing rental. So far as Council Tax is concerned, the latest data do again show that the percentage collected in Midlothian is well below the Scottish average - 94.5% as compared to 95.8%. Midlothian is to the bottom end of the league table so far as Scottish local authorities are concerned. Simply achieving the average in Scotland would yield a substantial amount of money and hence reduce the need for damaging cuts in services.

There seems no good reason why Midlothian should not at the least match the Scottish norm.

40. The same logic applies to rent arrears on Council housing. The level of arrears at March 2017 was somewhat down on March 2016, but still markedly higher than most other local authorities - at nearly 9%. When local authorities like Moray and East Renfrewshire can achieve arrears as low as between 2 and 3% the scope for improvement in Midlothian is crystal clear. Again there is no valid excuse for this sharp degree of under-performance.
41. In sum, Midlothian does have scope to raise distinctly more revenue from sources where it has the direct responsibility. This has to be the first step taken before closing Roslin Library, damaging other leisure services or generally reducing activity in areas which are so important to so many in Midlothian.
42. Please ACT NOW!! This has to be in the best interests of all Council Tax payers.
43. Midlothian Council Savings Proposals worry me... a lot. Despite low income, I would rather pay a bit more council tax than cut out so much out of the hard-earned progress made over the last decades. In general, I worry that the vulnerable, poorer, older, and the less educated people will bear a disproportionate share of the cuts. That many of them will be cut adrift.
44. You should have the autonomy to put up our council tax across all bands up to 10 or 15% per year. The council tax freeze is a disaster for your funding.
45. If there were guarantees to secure such services as above, a small increase per household would seem more practical while Midlothian Council continues to look at other ways of reducing costs while maintaining / improving services.
46. Having attended the recent open session at Midlothian Council to discuss the proposed council cuts I wish to write to express my concern over a number of the decisions that have been made in recent years, primarily around the council tax freeze. The effect of the enforced council tax freeze in recent years has now led Midlothian council to make the following proposed cuts which seem at odds with a number of Nationwide initiatives:
47. This is also very disappointing for Midlothian as one of the fastest growing councils in Scotland where you continue to allow house building to take place at a huge rate and will take the economic benefit that brings by will not help local councils fund the increase in facilities that are required to support this growth.
48. An obvious solution to these problems is an increase in Council Tax. While no-one likes - or probably - wants to pay more, a few pence in the £1 from everyone could go a long way to alleviating the pain we all face with these proposals. You should also make sure that everyone with outstanding debts on their Council Tax is chased and made to pay in full. Can everyone not be made to pay by Direct Debit to avoid non-payment?
49. If better stewardship of resources is not possible then surely a fairer way would be to increase council tax charges so that the burden is shared.
50. I am prepared to pay a rise in council tax however I need to be convinced that the council is taking its need to operate efficiently and diversify in a changing economic climate as seriously as the private sector.

51. Make people pay more council tax
52. There is a massive amount of new houses being built does council tax for these new homes not make up for some of the deficit of the budget?
53. Increase council tax specifically to fund retention of community services such as libraries which are essential to support the development of literacy and as local community hubs.
54. You need to be able to raise council tax.
55. Restrict council tax rise to 3%
56. Having attended the recent open session at Midlothian Council to discuss the proposed council cuts I wish to write to express my concern over a number of the decisions that have been made in recent years, primarily around the council tax freeze. The effect of the enforced council tax freeze in recent years has now led Midlothian council to make the following proposed cuts which seem at odds with a number of Nationwide initiatives:
 1. Midlothian council are proposing to remove all road crossing patrols - how does his support the policy to encourage children to walk to school and reduce childhood obesity?
 2. Midlothian council are proposing to increase rent by 1100 percent to afterschool clubs who meet in school premises - this cost will have to directly passed on to parents and careers and based on our school (Newtongrange Primary) this will be a large monthly increase for each child. How does this support the policy of getting parents in to work and providing quality affordable childcare? And in turn paying taxes to help pay for these services?
 3. Reduce the number of Learning Assistants by 10 percent - how does this support the ethos of getting it right for each child and also about getting as many children with additional support needs in to mainstream schooling? Midlothian have safeguarded teacher numbers (under your directive) however a cut in learning support staff will have a direct impact on teachers and schools who are already under great pressure due to their currently been a great shortage in supply staff resulting in deputy and headteachers regularly having to teach classes or remove challenging children from classes to be taught on a one to one basis.
 4. Closure of the Penicuik recycling centre which will see Midlothian residents have to travel to Newtongrange - is this not increasing road miles and pollution and also risking an increase in fly tipping?
 5. Closure of library buildings - the computer suites in libraries are often used by low income residents to apply for jobs etc. - how will this affect their ability to look for

This is also very disappointing for Midlothian as one of the fastest growing councils in Scotland where you continue to allow house building to take place at a huge rate and will take the economic benefit that brings by will not help local councils fund the increase in facilities that are required to support this growth.

Community Safety/ CCTV

1. Stop all open-space CCTV activity. Once again let's just promote an increase in anti-social behaviour, vandalism, youth offending, violent and sexual crimes and make the already vulnerable members of our communities feel even less safe and afraid to leave their homes. Appalled.
2. CCTV is still a must for all town centres other areas not so much. Also for Schools during the Summer holidays to reduce damage risk
3. "Community Safety, Housing, Homelessness and Revenues and Benefits" all vital services to the health, safety and well-being of any community and thus areas which can and do contribute to these aims – therefore not areas that can afford to be reduced drastically or even at all!
4. Stopping open cctv maintenance activity" - Unclear as to the benefits (or otherwise) of this service – but would think these would have an impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviours.
5. If there is the slightest possibility of one serious injury or death per year from service withdrawal, then all savings will be negated. There'd be less risk if the service was properly embedded into the other two services.
6. Stop CCTV maintenance - after which the cost of repairs due to vandalism will increase exponentially.
7. Community Safety team review – How can you even propose such an unworkable scheme
8. Provide households info on home CCTV and encourage the use and fitting of this (make it compulsory in council housing?) therefore majority of places should be covered and can possibly detect crime?
9. Why are you getting rid of the Community Safety Team who do a lot of good work in the community regarding antisocial behaviour?
10. Not using CCTV seems counter intuitive.
11. It's always the weak and vulnerable that suffers the most and these proposed cuts hit them hard. Youth crime is high in Midlothian and this is an area which you are cutting hard.
12. Switching off CCTV to save £30k after spending millions to install and then upgrade to fibre?
13. ! The council cannot seriously be considering be considering removing CCTV given the large amount of crime in Midlothian.
14. I feel that cost cutting proposals which have an impact on public safety should be ruled out
15. It is ridiculous that the Council are willing to provide funding for Police CAT teams yet are proposing that the Community safety team is axed. It is completely inappropriate to fund something that the Police should be doing anyway and funding themselves and instead axing the team that does all the preventative work and helps stop antisocial behaviour problems from escalating.

16. I support the community safety review.
17. Recover costs of vandalism - parents, carers or perpetrators to pay.
18. I am horrified that Police Scotland MCAT teams are being funded at the expense of council workers posts. Why should we fund police to do a job that they are already being paid to do. Totally disgusted.
19. Asking for community groups to maintain public areas is unreliable at best.
20. Those sentenced to community pay back orders should be engaged in more effective work.
21. I am a law and order professional and have yet to see anyone sentenced to such an order carrying out any meaning full work other than hidden in a workshop painting benches or clearing far flung areas of woodland, which is of no real benefit to the community which they have offended against.
22. Surely this resource could be better utilised to plug a shortfall in person power.
23. Why are you scrapping council team in place of police officers when there is no savings?
24. Disgusting getting rid of council team in place of a police team when savings have already been made by a reduction in staff.
25. A lot of the cuts are worrying given the safety aspects i.e. cutting lifeguard positions at pools and spending less on CCTV and street lighting. I am partially sighted and struggle to get around even where there is street lighting so dread to think what life will be like if you cut spending on this. At the moment I would be deemed to be "too independent" to be eligible for PIP so do not get any sort of support and don't know what I would do if these cuts go ahead.
26. I am concerned about the future approach to Health and Safety of all age groups. The school crossing service should be retained as well as a janitor in each school and 2 lifeguards on duty at all times in swimming pools. Please think of the consequences of the proposals if there was an accident. Risk assessments / health and safety have not been considered.
27. Why if the budget is about saving money are you employing the police in place of the community safety team with no money savings?
28. Are the CCTVs in use in Penicuik or just for show?
29. Retain CCTV maintenance (p76).
30. Stop all open space CCTV maintenance activity – again, how do you intend to address the issue of compromised public safety due to failed equipment?
31. Open space CCTV. This must reduce antisocial behaviour to some degree and should be kept. (And even improved!)
32. Retain CCTV maintenance.
33. Stop all open space CCTV maintenance activity – again, how do you intend to address the issue of compromised public safety due to failed equipment?

34. CCTV – Reducing this may result in more crime. Less resolution of crimes. More shop break-ins may occur.
35. Some appear to me to be short-sighted and also verging on involving health and safety issues.
36. For example reducing lifeguards on duty at pools from 2 to 1 is a definite H&S issue. The council would leave itself open to litigation perhaps? Reducing CCTV is similar.
37. Don't cut CCTV
38. Why are the council paying you to reinstate the CAT teams, surely Police Scotland should fund this?

Housing and homelessness

1. If users don't want the accommodation the Council offers then they should find their own. Private sector B&B should not be offered while there is space elsewhere. External contracts need careful evaluation against the cost of in house staffing.
2. Shared Service options with other councils should have been examined long ago. Get on with it. The services needed to build houses under any City Deal financing should be bought in as required. 'Arm's length' Companies are not a good idea.
3. 1. STOP BUILDING NEW HOUSES - the infrastructure cannot support the services for the existing and new entrants without further income (council tax just doesn't cover it) just puts further strain.
4. Early intervention services have been recommended by various gov policies and have been proven to provide the most effective support in reductions of long-term problems with children and families. As you know, we must get to them early, as it were, to prevent future problems. This will lead to an INCREASE in spending longer term.
5. The proposal is to withdraw all B&B provision in place of the reuse of suitable council buildings instead. Support as long as suitable housing provided.
6. Housing. Potential Shared Service option to be explored to integrate Housing Services. Offer more online services - many vulnerable people have no access to on line services
7. Raise council rents
8. Charge economic rents for council (social) housing
9. Collect overdue rents
10. Where are these suitable council buildings to use instead of B&B accommodation? I thought the council had sold off most of these sorts of public assets.
11. Bring back the right to buy? I would jump at the chance to buy my house and I'm sure others would too.

12. Stop unnecessary housing upgrades (my windows are fine and I have no need for new ones yet) offer tenants home improvement loans for the likes of new kitchens and bathrooms - charge interest dependant on income/affordability. Give households who work and are able to pay more than 80% rent priority when being re-housed. Convert old Newbottle HS to homelessness accommodation for single people as opposed to using B&B's.
13. Withdrawal of B&B is good to make more use of existing housing stock.
14. I would support the proposal to withdraw B&B provision.
15. I would discount the potential for shared services to integrate housing services.
16. More and stricter a night obligations from developers.
17. Review spending on council house refurbishments. Many council house tenants get a new fitted bathroom and/or kitchen, and new double-glazing windows when there is nothing wrong with the existing ones. People who rent or own their own homes could not afford to do this so it does not make sense. Also consider the fact that there are people in Council homes that they were granted several years ago who could afford private rent/mortgage payments. They may still be entitled to keep their house as you wouldn't want to take this away from them, however you should assess whether the council should be funding such refurbishments or whether they are in a position to fund this themselves. This could even be revenue generating as you could ask them to pay the council for some/all of the work.
18. Perhaps more radical answers are required. For instance selling the councils housing stock to housing associations whilst retaining the factoring rights. Whilst this would reduce income it would also reduce the maintenance bill. It would however provide some much needed capital, with housing associations then maintaining the properties. The Council building division could be reduced as their workload would be reduced or they may be able to tender for work from these housing associations and other private contracts and produce more profits.
19. Given the number of housing development proposals that have been approved at Mauricewood Penicuik which will create ~500+ new homes, how can the council with one hand approve these and with the other reduce the level of services but equally expect citizens to pay the same / increased level of Council Tax ... the councils approach makes no sense, can you please explain?!
20. Maintain B&B provision for homeless people and families. It is the absolute responsibility of society to look after its weakest members. The welfare rights service should be maintained at its current level for the same reason.
21. I am convinced that all the recent house building in Midlothian must have made some impact on Revenue but were the Builders not asked to contribute more to their new communities by including a community hall, medical centre, shops for each thousand houses and if not, why not? These housing estates are reminiscent of the vast building programmes of the 1950's with no facilities for residents and therefore little incentive to build a community.

22. Given the number of housing development proposals that have been approved at Mauricewood Penicuik which will create ~500+ new homes, how can the council with one hand approve these and with the other reduce the level of services but equally expect citizens to pay the same / increased level of Council Tax ... the councils approach makes no sense, can you please explain?!
23. Does the homelessness proposal involve offering homeless people accommodation in council premises rather than b and bs? If so that seems reasonable & a good way to save money.
24. Get rid of the housing voids standards. Tenants should leave their property in a high standard & be fined for the costs if they don't (they do this on the continent so why not here?) Individuals must take responsibility for this. The rest of the proposals seem sensible.
25. Stop paying the rent for people living in private lets
26. The proposal to stop the use of B&B's for homeless people and replace with the use of council buildings should have been done a long time ago, why pay to house people in B&B's when there are empty buildings that could be used instead. This seems a suitable solution to this.
27. Maintain B&B provision for homeless people and families. It is the absolute responsibility of society to look after its weakest members. The welfare rights service should be maintained at its current level for the same reason.
28. Reduction in Housing Voids Standard - support this proposal. Greater responsibility should be placed on tenants in terms of maintenance, such as would be the case with a private rental tenancy.

Revenues and benefits

1. Shared service - If it could be integrated with ELC, or anyone else, why isn't it? You don't have to wait for the benefit changes.....there will always be changes.
2. I know this isn't a council specific problem but the number of people living in so called poverty who can't afford to pay rent council tax or buy food yet have enough money to have their food delivered from Tesco and have the most up to date phones needs to be dealt with and teach these people how to prioritise. If you can't afford to provide for one child why are they having more without getting jobs to pay for this and why can't they prioritise to pay for food rather than phones? Something needs to be done to get these people back to work and paying for accommodation. In connection with this I grew up in a council house and my mum was a stay at home parent until she was widowed when I was 12. She got no benefits and had to cut her own grass and decorate and carpet her council tax from what money she did have yet nowadays they seem to get this done and paid for by the council. The attitude of entitlement and getting everything for nothing needs to stop. Start charging for this work being done.
3. Collect unpaid council tax/rent.

4. I would support the plan to share services to integrate Revenues Services if the savings could definitely be made.
5. Recover housing debt to reduce the amount owed.
6. Recover Council Tax debt to reduce the amount owed.
7. Stop subsidiaries to low income families.
8. I am not sure whether Midlothian Council funds any element of costs for MPs in our area but if so this should cease. The MPs can do so little for the residents of Midlothian as they are restricted by their parliamentary duties so they should not be funded by our council.
9. Revenues and Benefits – many of our members find online services difficult, for example benefits such as ESA on line can result in sanctions when timescales are not met due to a lack of understanding in using online services.

Libraries

1. Midlothian council plan to close all libraries and have one central library please have your say
2. Closing the libraries would be a terrible decision. Petition against - if you have commented here please sign and share. <http://chn.ge/2xM7V8U>
3. Cutting library services to 1 for the whole council will have a terrible impact on the education and well-being of children and adults.
4. Library services: it is unbelievable in this climate of improving literacy, sharing resources, improving attainment, community cohesion, community support, up-skilling and re-skilling that Midlothian Council is suggesting that ONE library is sufficient provision to cover such a large county. The mobile library is invaluable in so many ways: reaching isolated communities and isolated people who have difficulty in travelling anywhere, never mind to the library; supporting schools in rural areas, encouraging children to read, enabling children to get to a library when parents are unable to find time or means to travel to either Dalkeith or another branch library (some children would just never go to a library outside school), performing the most important function of a library in being a distributor of information (it isn't just about story books). For my part, my children love the Library Bus. There is no way I would be able to get them to a library on a regular basis, and I am a parent who already sees the benefit and would make the effort at least once in a while. What would those children of less motivated parents do?
5. I fear the only way I will know the outcome of these proposals, is when the Library Bus fails to show up. That would be extremely sad, disappointing and, in my view, shameful.
6. Whilst understanding the financial predicament of the council, thanks to the Government's refusal to allow rates increases over the last few years, we were concerned to read of the proposal to close almost all our libraries. Given the state of the education system and increasing illiteracy, it seems a folly. I'm sure you are aware of the rapid decrease in E reading and increase in reading the printed word.

My wife and I, being pensioners, find the mobile library a wonderful asset particularly now we have our excellent new Driver/librarian who is both knowledgeable and helpful in getting requested books for us. We have previously used Penicuik Library which is superb with ever helpful staff giving advice on a variety of council associated matters, it also acts as an educational hub for both adults and children.

The Penicuik centre's sports and fitness areas combine well with the calmer library when a quiet ponder among the books is a fine "wind down "after an oldies swim or gym session!

As Dalkeith library would be an awkward journey we would be unlikely to use it and therefore ask that you reconsider the library closures.

7. Hi, I'm very unhappy with the proposals. Particularly the idea of cutting library services to 1 library. Midlothian is a large and growing area. My daughter loves bookbug and has recently started borrowing books. I plan to take her to her local library consistently throughout her childhood to increase her education and well-being.

8. Closure of 9 branch libraries not acceptable

This proposal conflicts with Council's moves to use more digital delivery of services. Contrary to what officials might think there are many in Midlothian without the access or knowledge to use digital services. Libraries are becoming the key to providing equipment, training and support for digital service delivery. It is therefore retrograde to shut all branch libraries

Libraries are also moving towards being the integrated source of delivery across different services. Blanket closure would halt this sensible move.

As far as I know there is an ongoing programme of closures and new openings. I assume these are based on a detailed review of where library provision is most needed. This seems a better way forward rather than a blanket closure

As far as cost savings go it would be better to look at rationalisation of opening hours, e.g. no weekend opening, less evening opening, and the use of self-service where possible. Use of volunteers for evening/weekend opening might be considered if there was a strong need in particular locations.

9. I just cannot believe that the council is planning to close Penicuik Library. It is really unthinkable when there is more than ever an increased need for social inclusion.

The library is in the forefront of providing many programs for all ages which are well used by the local community.

10. I use the Lasswade library regularly and would not visit any other. I can understand some cuts such as staff cuts or shorter opening times but feel this is an important service to all sorts of people.

11. "Library Services" may not figure as a priority in many people's minds – but for a large element within Midlothian these services provide a life-line. Library services are not all about lending books, but act as a hub for many i.e. a meeting place, access to many books and periodicals, access to on-line services. Closing branch libraries and only having one central library within the whole of Midlothian is not only ludicrous, but short-sighted. In

addition; the removal of “Mobile Library Services” will impact on the elderly, disabled and rural communities and should not be seen as an “easy option for cuts”!

12. The sign of the Philistine. Why not make a big bonfire of the books as well and keep the plebs amused!
13. I am writing to express my concern about the proposed closure of all library branches in Midlothian, withdrawing of the mobile library and providing only 1 central library as well as cuts to library staff, stock and facilities (as outlined in Shaping our Future: a programme for change).

Public library services are an incredibly important part of civilised society, offering vital access to information, culture and learning. In addition to the valuable service libraries offer in terms of book provision, they provide access to PCs and the internet, Rhymetime/ bookbug sessions for young children, homework support, a means of engaging with local democracy, job seeking services and other support that is not available anywhere else. Libraries are worth far more than the sum of their parts and are vital community resources in Midlothian. They provide advice, information, internet services, a community focus, services and venues for families and children.

Research demonstrates that investment in library services result in increased library use, improved levels of literacy in children and adults, improved well-being and community cohesion. Research also shows that in times of economic difficulty, libraries are an increasingly important resource and more people make use of them. It is a false economy to cut library provision; they cost the council relatively very little, and save the council and the government much more than they cost, through helping people find work, helping them to succeed in education and enabling them to be informed and engaged in society.

Many of the branches that the council is proposing the close are in areas that need them the most; areas where educational attainment is low and poverty levels and unemployment are high. Many are in areas that do not have alternative provision nearby. People who rely on public transport or cannot afford buses will not be able to access a library easily at all. It will be more difficult for people to access library services, which means that library use will fall. This does not mean that people no longer need libraries, but that the council is failing to provide a service that people are able to or want to use.

14. As a committed user of the library Service, my suggestions to save monies within the Library Service are as follows;
 - Close Roslin Library.
 - Service the communities of Roslin with the mobile library.
 - Close all libraries on Sundays.
 - Have one late night opening per branch each week, staggered across Midlothian. For example - Dalkeith & Mayfield late night Monday. Penicuik & Lasswade late night Tuesday - Loanhead & Danderhall late night Wednesday etc.
 - Cancel the purchase of newspapers across the whole library service.

- Increase the cost of black & white printing to 15 pence per sheet.
 - Increase the cost of colour printing to 75 pence per sheet.
 - Charge children for late returns over one week.
 - Charge £1.00 for dog litter bags.
15. Why are you proposing library closures? I strongly disagree. Of course those who have money for transport could drive to the one library you propose to keep open(how can that help the environment?) Those who are less well off probably don't own a car and the cost of bus fares would be cost prohibitive. As usual the less well-off would suffer.
16. The library's closer: Who can possibly think that cutting library provision in Penicuik (population 15,926 (2011) and growing) is a good idea? This is a place that encourages the community of all ages to read and learn. It also offers several groups that have been a lifeline for myself and others with young children that can be the only social interaction with other adults for an entire day!
17. Please reconsider closing all branch libraries. I know that the Penicuik Library, combined with the Tone Zone and Swimming Pool is a great community asset. The mobile library service is invaluable for the community. Used by anyone who is tied to their home whether by lack of public transport - as on the B7026 where I live - or through physical limitations or who are looking after preschool children, the library is brilliant - currently very ably manned by Mark, who really cares about his work within the community. If for example there had to be a reduction in branch library numbers, the mobile service would be all the more important.
18. It has come to our notice that in the near future we may lose our mobile library. I hope this has been well thought out as this is a life line for my neighbour and myself who are 86 and 89 years old who love a good read. Also children and grown-ups use the service. It is an important part of the community
19. I am dismayed to hear the terrible news that the elected members of Midlothian Council plan to rob us of our mobile library service. Do the council not realise it is a welcome and valued service to our community especially to the areas where they have already been considerable council cuts. Surely we are not being asked to suffer another cut, not only that, there is the loss of another council job. I believe there is also a proposal to close several local libraries (with more council job losses) and have the one central hub. Remember, not all of us have access to a computer or will; be able to commute easily by public transport to the new hub. I urge the council to please reconsider the decision to cut the mobile library service. Surely many people young and old will rely even more on the mobile library service once Midlothian Council have made these further cuts and closed the libraries. For many small communities, this will be the only service left so please let us keep it.
20. This is ridiculous. It might well be another case for full integration with ELC. Change to volunteer staff for small units? Bear in mind that this service is used by people without their own IT, jobless etc., as well as many others. The mobile library gets to places with poor bus services and is essential for people with limited mobility. (It could be better advertised, and there's space on the vehicle for some advertising).

21. Could the paltry saving for the libraries be picked up by developers and local businesses? Macdonalds promotes literacy charities and reading and might still be interested in improving their corporate image. It would be devastating to communities to lose their libraries. There's very few safe free spaces accessible to all. Everyone feels welcome in the library and once they're gone that's it, I'd hate to have to explain this to my one year old when he's older. Many families may not see reading as a priority so don't/can't afford to buy books. Bookbug is amazing for those of us on unpaid maternity leave or trying to meet the extra cost of childcare when returning to work. It gets parents out of the house and prevents isolation so you feel part of your community. Children need a quiet space to think/study when homes are small and overcrowded. Please approach private companies before closing branches. It is such a small saving for a dreadful thing to happen.
22. Daft – Libraries essential for communities.
23. After taking my daughter to my local library this morning to our weekly bookbug session, I was disgusted to hear that Midlothian Council are proposing to close the library and only keep Dalkeith library open. For one, Penicuik is the largest town in Midlothian...why shouldn't we get to keep this facility? I am a regular visitor to this library and it is always well used, surely we need to encourage our children to read and to make sure that books are still used in their childhoods. What about families in the community who are in more unfortunate circumstances and can't afford to buy books....this library offers free books/dvds/ bookbug sessions/reading groups. What is the plan when Penicuik has no library....do the usual and offer these families more benefits to buy books or pay for bus fares/taxi fares to Dalkeith, just seems ridiculous a plan. I do hope that this plan is re-thought, the library is important to the community of Penicuik.
24. I am a concerned Penicuik resident with a young child at the cusp of learning to read. We visit the Penicuik Library regularly to select books and have done since Isla attended the Bookbug sessions as a baby. The staff there have always been warm, welcoming and friendly and gone to the effort of learning my daughter's name and spending time interacting with her. Their encouragement and recommendations have helped shape her into the book loving 4 year old she now is. Not only that but the access to these books has meant that her language and communication skills are very high for her age. She also has an incredible imagination and has begun to tell her own stories. The Penicuik Library is a short walk for us and we can easily pop in for a visit around nursery and other classes. I don't drive and therefore if this library were to close, we would struggle to access all the wonderful services and opportunities this library offers. The Penicuik Library is an invaluable resource. I implore you to think about the effect on this community if this library were to close and reconsider its closure.
25. As a retired teacher, I am appalled that you are considering closing the libraries and expecting everyone to travel to Dalkeith. It is a known fact that literacy levels have dropped dramatically in Scotland and Midlothian in the past 12 years. Parents with young children and the elderly cannot be expected to use buses to travel from the largest town in Midlothian to exchange their books. Disabled adults cannot always access buses and need to use taxis etc. which will cost them. Surely it is the council's duty to encourage the future generation to become more literate and achieve greater success. Assuming there will be transport for people to travel to the libraries?? The Council may not see itself as having

responsibility for people's wellbeing but the loss of local facilities is going to impact on the vulnerable who use them as support. The libraries provide so much to the local community. Children have a safe place to read, use the computers and take up on the activities. If the libraries are not local the age old problem of travelling outside one's area and back into a school having just left there arises and most will probably not travel. The same goes for the swimming pool closure.

26. What is the Artist in residence all about?? Who paid for all the little plaques five minute wonder and now forgotten? When our own artistic community has to relocate away from The Arts Centre because the Council made it unaffordable?
27. I refer to the Midlothian Council proposal to close all libraries in the authority area other than "1 Midlothian central library". It is not explained where this "central library" might be. Midlothian is an authority composed of a number of local communities. There is no obvious or convenient location for a "central library" to which people resident in local communities might travel. In addition, if a mobile library service is to be withdrawn at the same time as local libraries are closed the majority of residents would have to travel considerable distances to visit a "central library". From newspaper reports there has been a suggestion that, as an alternative to the current proposal, local library services might be based on "hubs" where these exist and which incorporate a number of different Council services. While I support the idea of bringing services together in local communities to facilitate and promote access and use, in a number of local communities there is no "hub" and this alternative would, presumably, result in the removal of library services there and unfairness in the provision of this important service. Midlothian Council has a statutory responsibility to provide an adequate public library service. If the Council chooses to close all local libraries apart from one it will exclude access to learning, literacy and information resources to many in our communities, especially children, older people and those who rely on public transport. It will have failed to exercise its statutory responsibilities and will expose itself not only to widespread public opposition but to legal challenge. It is shocking that a Labour administration is considering the destruction of a service which is critical to the well-being of ordinary people.
28. Very concerned about the loss of libraries. This is very short sighted as this much needed resource supports many aspects of community life from hosting events, providing resources for all and gives a point of communication for all in the community.
29. I agree that given the financial situation, some cuts may be required but it is very disappointing to see the wide range of valuable services affected. I am particularly concerned at the library cuts. The libraries provide a valuable community facility – particularly for the young, for families and the elderly. I don't consider it a forward-thinking move to be closing any of the Midlothian libraries.
30. If it is true that Penicuik library will close and we will have to travel to Dalkeith I'm against it. Penicuik have exceptionally nice staff who are helpful. I'm 80 and trying to work the computer. The staff have been very helpful. I use the books, DVDs. I've also started going to the cinema. It's been great to meet other people there. I can drive at the moment but that could change suddenly. I wouldn't be able to go to Dalkeith. I'm not sure if the number 40 bus passes the library. I feel this will cause a great deal of problems – tourist info, bus

passes, etc. Please rethink this. I think the other changes mentioned re. changing bins/ recycling centre, grass cutting, etc. will cause problems to lots of people.

31. I refer to the Midlothian Council proposal to close all libraries in the authority area other than "1 Midlothian central library". It is not explained where this "central library" might be. Midlothian is an authority composed of a number of local communities. There is no obvious or convenient location for a "central library" to which people resident in local communities might travel. In addition, if a mobile library service is to be withdrawn at the same time as local libraries are closed the majority of residents would have to travel considerable distances to visit a "central library". From newspaper reports there has been a suggestion that, as an alternative to the current proposal, local library services might be based on "hubs" where these exist and which incorporate a number of different Council services. While I support the idea of bringing services together in local communities to facilitate and promote access and use, in a number of local communities there is no "hub" and this alternative would, presumably, result in the removal of library services there and unfairness in the provision of this important service. Midlothian Council has a statutory responsibility to provide an adequate public library service. If the Council chooses to close all local libraries apart from one it will exclude access to learning, literacy and information resources to many in our communities, especially children, older people and those who rely on public transport. It will have failed to exercise its statutory responsibilities and will expose itself not only to widespread public opposition but to legal challenge. It is shocking that a Labour administration is considering the destruction of a service which is critical to the well-being of ordinary people.
32. One library!!!!!! really!!!!
33. I wonder if I could give some feedback regarding the planned closure of Roslin Library? I understand there is a massive national debt and council funding is drastically reduced to try to address this issue. I do believe this is important for the government to do, and understand that without an alternative source of funding, the government and council would need to make cuts in many areas. Roslin library, and the community centre have been key places used by my family since we moved to Roslin 2 years ago. The library has been enjoyed and used regularly by my children, who have been able to access books easily for reading and school projects. I see many people using the computer and printing facilities regularly. Having somewhere local I can access the latest bus timetable has also been very useful.
34. Please save our libraries. From Children, adults and pensioners we all need them so much and are very grateful for them.
35. I would hope that Midlothian Council will give very serious thought to keeping, our library services in the Midlothian area especially the library van without which myself and many older people who depend very much on this service would have no reading material. Young people too, some of whom have learning difficulties, can always find something on the van to help with their education. And what would we do without our doggy bags to keep the environment free of dog poo. The choice of books on the van is excellent and if we request a book from ???? he will do his utmost to obtain it. Another requirement of the van in the outer areas is the fact that the older folks who have no transport – for them ???? may be the only person they meet and see in a fortnight. Please save our library van.

36. One library for the entire county??!!! This is incredibly short sighted! My daughter walks to our local library after school and attends various clubs on offer there. She enjoys the sense of freedom this gives her as she does not need me to take her there. Children need to have a LOCAL library with staff who know the local area, etc. My library is used for lots of local classes and offers a wide range of resources. We couldn't possibly buy every book my daughter wants to read. She is currently able to spend an hour or 2 herself at the library browsing as many books as she likes. She thoroughly enjoys this experience, supported by staff and is able to take her time. Without the ability to reach her library on foot, she couldn't not do this. Going to the library would need to be reduced to a 'once in a while' event rather than the more regular 5-6 times a week occurrence we currently enjoy. Encouraging early literacy is ESSENTIAL to academic success, and by restricting access to children, you will reduce the life chances of thousands of under-privileged children and families whose parents do not value reading as much as they need to, and who do not have books at home. There are thousands of families in this situation in Midlothian.
37. A significant loss for those who rely on libraries for books etc., access to IT and, social interactions and information. Where else do those without web access make applications, send job applications, find out information etc.?
38. I understand the financial pressures exerted on the Midlothian Council in the coming year or years and the need to carefully consider where savings can be made. The proposal to profoundly reduce library facilities in Midlothian I feel is most worrying and potentially very damaging to our communities in Midlothian. The Scottish Government has, I believe, special funding to improve library facilities, highlighting their commitment to the service. As well as traditional services like book lending, libraries are also places where people can access free Wi-Fi, use a computer and socialise. I now quote Pamela Tulloch. "Libraries can empower communities, helping tackle inequality, reduce isolation and boost the local economy. Pamela Tulloch, chief executive of Scottish Library and Information Council, said: "One of the fundamental defining characteristics of public libraries is that they are open to everyone." You will be aware that many elderly and under advantaged families will not have access to computers in their own homes. Additionally public transport links across Midlothian are not direct from east to west. Thus the most disadvantaged and isolated people in our communities would become more so. I sincerely hope that any plans to reduce Library access in Midlothian are curtailed for the benefit of all, but especially for the young, the old, the isolated and the disadvantaged in our communities.
39. Before I ask about cuts to Libraries and to Deliveries of books to people who are house bound like me - I would like to make a few points. This a view of an outsider. When I first came to live here in 2009 there were teenage boys behaving in an appalling manner in the centre of Penicuik and I did not feel safe - particularly as I do not have a local accent. When I moved here from Edinburgh - one of my first impressions were that nobody smiled when you passed them in the street. I will be filling in the MLC Consultation Form about the necessary cuts that have to be made next year. A deprived dormitory area requires more input from the Council and not cuts. Midlothian is not like East Lothian where the majority of the population have had more luck in their lives with regard to local education and jobs. Is this a fact? Is Midlothian per person less well educated and less advantaged? When I moved here from Edinburgh - one of my first impressions were that nobody smiled when you passed them in the street. What is the level of child, teenage and adult depression in

Midlothian? How does the Midlothian Crime Rate compare - before the cuts to the MLC - with similarly aged people in East Lothian? A deprived dormitory area requires more input from the Council and not cuts. Losing a Library will affect Midlothian more than a Library in East Lothian so why not share these amenities. Sharing Council cost cutting while we have this dreadful situation of austerity which hits the poorest and this means the unemployed of any age. How many people have cars in the parts of Penicuik in the Council Estates? Has the Council tried to find out? It is something they should do before amenities are cut for either youngsters or the elderly. I am Elderly and handicapped so house bound and dependent on Deliveries of Books.

40. Closing local libraries takes the heart from the local communities. Libraries serve many functions apart from a lending service and many council functions (bus passes etc.) are carried out by local libraries, some of which could not be done by volunteers. Removing libraries affects the most disadvantaged yet again in our local communities.
41. If you shut libraries or otherwise centralise services cost of transport & pollution will increase.
42. Libraries are core to the health of our communities, let's find ways to invest in them rather than cut them. Research shows that there is an up to £8 annual return on investment per user for every £1 spent per head of population. Libraries save us money.
<http://www.cilips.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/fact-sheet-no-bleed.pdf> I appreciate you need to balance your budget but cutting a service so core to community health and wellbeing doesn't save money in the long term, it just creates more problems.
43. An A4 sheet giving guidance on how to order books online should be handed to all visitors. No libraries should be shut but opening times could be amended to say two-week days plus some hours at weekend.
44. Our Scout Group has utilised the local library as a resource in many different contexts and we would find aspects of our programme impossible to complete without this facility being available. We would hope that we would be consulted and involved if closures were going to happen or services to stop to see if there was a way that we, as a Scout Group, could assist this.
45. The proposals to close libraries is a disgrace. How on earth do you expect people to access these valuable services if there are none in their town? A lot of these proposed cuts seem to be targeting the vulnerable people in our society and this is so wrong. I think these proposals need to be reviewed and thought about carefully as currently these proposals are a joke and are going to leave Midlothian a place with a severe lack of facilities and services.
46. I am astounded that library closure proposals are being considered. I regularly used the Dalkeith library and it is the most excellent of services used by all ages. It is so important for children to engage with books and usually this can lead to a lifetime of reading. I now use the Mobile Library as I live in Pencaitland and the service is excellent. It is enjoyed by many of the older residents as it is convenient for them and it would be sorely missed. It is just a pity that most of the van schedules do not coincide with primary school children being able to use it. The new librarian is so helpful and cheerful and all of us who use the service would really miss it.

47. The library is another thing that should not be closed. There has always been a library in Penicuik and is used by the young and old. I do not have a car to drive to another library. The cuts are taking away all the facilities of Penicuik and it seems it is taking a step back in time taking them away from the community.
48. The idea that Midlothian council is considering shutting Midlothian libraries is abhorrent, regressive and short sighted. - What ignorance on the part of a council who are supposed to be elected for the people by the people. Such a move would be re-election madness.
49. Closing the libraries will be extremely unfair - it will have the biggest impact on the poorest people, people who are unable to buy their own books or travel to a remote "central" library.
50. Penicuik library is an essential community hub. My children are regular users of this service. With only 1 central library, how are children from the whole authority supposed to travel to this single library provision? How about those who don't have access to the internet and PC's at home? This is an essential service for today's lifestyle. As a council you are encouraging residents to pay for council services using the internet. I attended an information evening on Parent Pay last week where the parents were told they could access this service from the local library computers – not if there's no local library they can't. Also, your own change programme suggests Digital by default – again something you can't push if you severely limit access to the required technology in this way.
51. Close all libraries, they're a relic from a bygone age and fulfilled a useful function many many moons ago, but simply aren't required any more (just like public telephones).
52. Midlothian Council has a statutory responsibility to provide an adequate public library service. If the Council chooses to close all local libraries apart from one it will exclude access to learning, literacy and information resources to many in our communities, especially children, older people and those who rely on public transport. It will have failed to exercise its statutory responsibilities and will expose itself not only to widespread public opposition but to legal challenge.
53. I speak on behalf of Penicuik library here, but the principal is the same for all branch libraries. Closing the library would tear out the heart of the community. It would effectively mean that reading and education is only for the wealthy which speaks exactly against government policy of equality. It is a vital resource for children and is an essential part of Getting it Right for Every Child. The services have been invaluable to my child who is on the autism spectrum. Through the library activities she has increased her literacy, confidence and social skills. Closing the library would be saying that Midlothian Council doesn't care about literacy or education. It is not only vital for the reading and education side, it is also the point of information for buses, council services, computer help, healthy living, citizens advice, the list is endless. On the Penicuik front, it would be absolutely shameful for the council to close this library which was seen as the showcase library of Midlothian and cost the council millions of pounds to build, just a few years ago!! Why would Dalkeith have the only library when Penicuik is the largest town? Do Penicuikers have to travel to Dalkeith (increasing road traffic etc. as I mentioned above with the recycling depot) to borrow a book and get advice? I am sure the council would be tempted to let this be run by volunteers. A

library requires professionals. The council would not expect volunteers to run their office, the same applies to the libraries.

54. Short sighted with regard to closing all libraries except one and mobile library. Why would a council do that? Having just returned from Amersfoort in the Netherlands, with their fantastic new library building. It was so smart, my children could not stay away. Surely, this is what local government would like their children to do? I believe social studies will prove that libraries are essential for communities wealth.
55. CLOSING LIBRARIES WILL BE A HUGE MISS TO THOSE WHO USE THEM.
56. I feel strongly against many of the proposed cuts. I disagree most strongly with the closure of local libraries. The library is a community hub and such a vital source of support to many families. When my children were young I can honestly say it was invaluable, providing a safe, warm, comfortable space for us to go to escape being in the house all day. With no family living near by the library staff became a source of support, interacting with my children and helping my mental health. They provide book bug sessions which are amazing for young families and craft sessions when the children get a little older. Now my children are a little older I encourage them to go and ask for books themselves building their confidence when speaking to adults. My daughter is a great reader and if it was not for the local library I would not be able to afford to give her books as she reads them so quickly. It is not feasible to travel to a central library people just don't have time. Please don't close local libraries, they and the staff are amazing.
57. Closing libraries breaches your own guidance on education.
58. Must keep Newtongrange library by starting charging for library group services such as expert local studies enquiries, bookbug sessions & charge larger hire rates for buildings. Increase library charges across the service. Reduce inter- library transfers.
59. Closing libraries seems counter intuitive.
60. Libraries are highlighted and rather than savage cuts propose less evening hours.
61. Library proposals for one library in Midlothian...the fastest growing county in Scotland are too radical and need to be reconsidered.
62. Keep the mobile library service it is a vital service to the outer villages who probably pay in more than others.
63. Closing libraries will hit children the most.
64. Closing libraries is detrimental to young and elderly alike as the service is relied upon for education and socialization.
65. Children are the future of Midlothian. I feel that children and young people are losing out in these proposals. For example the loss of library services. Danderhall library caters for many youngsters who do not have access to the internet or computers at home and this local facility will be lost. Moreover increasing the cost of after school care, along with the loss of free music tuition, decreased number of learning assistants and reducing initiatives such as Sure Start will have an especial impact on disadvantaged low income families.

66. As a Midlothian resident, an employee and a parent of a Primary School child I am disgusted by the proposal to have only one library for the whole county.
67. Libraries provide a service from the cradle to the grave. If Midlothian is truly serious about positive destinations then it will abandon these proposals. Many senior citizens simply cannot travel across the county to access services.
68. Short sighted proposal for closing libraries.
69. Closing libraries that have just been opened and are a community hub will hit the most vulnerable.
70. As an 80+ lady, living alone and in poor health with very restricted mobility I wish to record my serious concerns with regard to CUSTOMER AND HOUSING SERVICES Item 4 "Library Services". The current mobile library service is a vital lifeline for myself and many others (of all ages) in my "rural community". The option of travelling to a central library (indeed any library) and using on-line services is impossible. I understand the Council has many calls on its limited resources; but would urge that the removal of mobile library services will have a very serious impact on the elderly, infirm and those living in rural communities
71. Don't close libraries that is where people learn!! also could get jobs, there are computers there and where would they go?
72. All of the proposals are difficult. However, the proposal to create one central library for Midlothian and close the others is so breathtakingly dangerous, short-sighted and wasteful, it is hard to believe it has been made at all. Where will this be? Which of your brand new libraries will you close-- wasting all of the resources that have been put into them in recent years? What happens to vulnerable people who rely upon computer suites in libraries to apply for benefits, etc.-- where do they go if those facilities are no longer available? Who helps them? What happens to all of the older people who rely upon libraries for their social interaction, and all the children who need them for school work or a safe place to go after school? What happens to literacy, to attainment levels, to ambition, to creativity, to all of the benefits and all of the cost savings that libraries offer? You know very well that, given the practical impossibility of travelling across Midlothian on public transport, how this will cut people off from what is-- for many-- a lifeline service. This would represent a major failure in the council's duty to consider and support the social wellbeing of its residents.
73. I would urge you not to cut the library service which provides invaluable facilities for all Midlothian residents. The service is unparalleled and much needed.
74. The proposals to close Penicuik library are an outrage. How can you centralise such a well-used and valuable service. Then to make matters worse also withdraw the library van which could service outlying areas and those unable to travel.
75. Concerned most about library closures.
76. Closing libraries is not great.
77. Really concerned at library closure proposals and mobile library removal counter to recognition of importance of these services to the community, literacy, health social isolation and attainment.

78. Opening up more school libraries to the public if other libraries are to be closed.
79. Please don't reduce facilities such as libraries and playing fields these are important for quality of life. Digitising services is a good idea and support from libraries would help those without skills.
80. While accepting that there is an obvious need to reduce the budget shortfall, it seems to me that the proposal to close branch libraries and mobile services and have only one central library is utterly short-sighted and would be counter-productive. Easy access to libraries for people of all age groups is even more of a necessity during times of austerity and this council has systematically eroded what was a highly respected local library service with excellent, well-trained staff. At a time when educational standards are falling, why on earth would Midlothian Council choose to adopt these cuts? Of course the emergence of new technologies changes the way we do things but libraries have been adept at adjusting and broadening the scope of their activities. I sincerely hope that this proposal is dropped. If it were to go ahead I must say that I would be ashamed of our council and very concerned for the future.
81. We have gone over the Summary of Proposed Savings in great detail and find the closure of the library is the most devastating of all the proposals. For us as a couple it will make our everyday lives narrower than they are at the moment. As a keen reader myself I will miss this service really badly. My husband and myself are both in our mid-eighties. My husband is housebound because of health problems and is only partially sighted with one eye completely blind and the other one with very little sight. So the fact that the library also carries audio books is invaluable to him. The library also holds various forms and timetables where people can access them easily, now there will be nowhere to access them. Over 80 years ago Penicuik had its own town council and even then we had a library. So why close it now? The building which houses the library is in three parts with the swimming pool and gym as well as the library. These apparently will not be axed so why close the library and penalise the readers? Are they not as entitled to the same consideration after all as those who are into swimming and keep fit! We all pay our community charge. The lack of readers which is the reason given for the shutdown of the library is because of where it is situated, i.e. at one side of Penicuik. This was raised when it was first planned. It left the other side of Penicuik with a mobile library which is now being taken off the road. The lack of people visiting the library could also be down to the fact that no buses stop outside or near it. In fact, if you live at the other side of Penicuik there is no way to get there by bus, especially for the elderly or infirm, as there is no direct route.
82. Mobile Library - How important this service is to local people of all ages in so many different ways-improving literacy, promoting a love of reading, providing people with access to a wide range of high quality reading materials for free, socially also-particularly where people are on their own or geographically isolated-that fortnightly service can mean the world.
83. Local libraries and the mobile library should not be closed. Older people in particular will have no access to the service if this should happen. The people who live in Penicuik do not have a bus service to Dalkeith if this is to be the situation so the service will become unavailable. The service provided in Penicuik library at the moment is excellent, the staff are very helpful and it would be a big loss if this facility is lost.

84. Closing libraries is not acceptable, it is the only source of reading for some people especially the elderly. To create only one central library means it would be more difficult for the elderly to access and would be costly for the less well off as families would then to find the funds for bus fares for themselves and their children. This when children are being encouraged to read and use libraries. They are also the only source for some people to access computers. At a time when there should be more amenities provided to match the vast amount of new housing being built in Midlothian the suggestion to reduce amenities is very wrong.
85. I'm getting in touch regarding the Council's proposed cuts to Midlothian Library Services. As the mother of a young child, I cannot overstress the importance of local library programmes like Book Bugs to our child's socialisation and development. As for the adults who use library services, it is a vital community hub at a time when face-to-face interaction with neighbours is rare. You cannot replace trained, knowledgeable staff with a books return machine. You cannot make it that much more difficult for single mothers to bundle up tiny babies and get them across town to one 'centralised hub'. This proposal misunderstands the true value of a library. It assumes that voters simply want a faster, easier way to access free books. Our local library is not an antiquated book-dispensing machine in need of a money-saving reboot. Instead it is one of the very last public, free places where people from different socioeconomic backgrounds can share interests, sing songs, ask questions and get answers. I very much hope you will consider making your cuts elsewhere. We need our libraries.
86. Closure of Penicuik library – this would be a great loss to our expanding community. More and more homes are being built here so have less facilities. Would be such a shame for local families. I personally use the library on a regular basis, my children love book bugs, It builds confidence and socialises not just them but me. We borrow books here too, it has great facilities for all families of all ages. To lose this would cause great sadness to me and my children. Please keep Penicuik Library running.
87. I am very unhappy that you are proposing to end mobile library run to Macmerry. As East Lothian Council is contributing quite a substantial amount to try and keep this service it seems very unfair. I use this service every fortnight as do others and they have no transport and are not in best of health. When people are lonely, elderly and poor health at least they knew they could get some enjoyment through reading their books. I hope this service does not stop. All the librarians we have had on this run have been very knowledgeable helpful and kind.
88. I am very unhappy about the proposed withdrawal of the library service (mobile) to Macmerry. I believe that it is done in conjunction with East Lothian Council. It angers me that you want to do away with this service which provides a lifeline to older people who are unable to go into Haddington or Tranent libraries for as variety of reasons. The staff on your mobile libraries past and present are very good and passionate about their job, and very helpful to the customers. As usual nowadays, I seems the older and most vulnerable people are shoved to the side by councils more interested in looking after themselves in their cosy positions and salaries.
89. Please do not close Penicuik Library. A warm, friendly place with knowledgeable staff help anyone from my background to find books and use computers. This helps maximise education for everyone which in turn helps people into employment. Many people can't afford computers, books and Wi-Fi. The library provides all three. It is also a social place for

people who are lonely. Loneliness leads to poor health outcomes. The library also gives great pleasure and happiness to people. Our daughters used the library for countless school projects and developed a love of reading which continues today.

90. Closure of Penicuik library would have a drastic effect on us personally, (since we are the largest town in Midlothian with hundreds of extra houses being built in the area) and the smaller branches too. These are the jewels in the crown of the council and closures should be a priority for all adults and children.
91. I strongly disagree with the proposal of closing all the library services except for the one in Dalkeith. The library provides an essential service for residents. I myself have made a lot of use of Penicuik Library. Having recently moved into the area, I don't have any family close by and I have just had my first baby. Going to the bookbug sessions with her has given me the opportunity to interact socially and make new friends. In my opinion, libraries should be given more funding instead of being cut out. They are an important learning environment for our children and need our support. The very thought of closing any is disgraceful.
92. The proposal to have a single library in Midlothian is terrifying. Raise late return fees. Charge moderate fees to groups using library space. Whatever you need to do. Just don't remove the regional libraries. These places ensure that our communities have local access to support, education, civility. Placing it all in one place effectively removes these factors for those not within spitting distance. It seems like a saving but at the cost of putting Midlothian's residents into isolating dark boxes. It seems like many, many steps backwards. Why not try to add more to these sites – combine services at these centres? Post related services within the local libraries? Increase access! Don't regress!
93. Library proposals are downright offensive. There is no way 1 centralised library is suitable for Midlothian even with a mobile service. I take out 2-4 books a fortnight from Bonnyrigg or Penicuik library and I am not travelling to Dalkeith to get a book out. Unfair to anyone without space. Libraries are not just about books they enable people to access computers, internet etc. etc.
94. First let me quote "Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries". In these times of austerity people need something that is uplifting, sociable, free and open to absolutely everyone. We are in desperate need of libraries and can't afford to lose them. At the very least we need access to computers to manage universal credit, but as well as practical reasons we need to raise spirits. Libraries are the only council provision open to all and cost nothing to enter. The community cannot lose them. What does it say about the council that would close them? They don't care about their community, about literacy in their children or about the spirit of their electorate. Another quote, "Cutting libraries during a recession is like cutting hospitals during a plague." Cut the hours perhaps, no late evenings or Sundays but keep basic hours. Certainly cut down on the heating in Penicuik Leisure Centre because they have to open the front doors to let the excess heat out!
95. Libraries are in some ways the centre of the Community. The closing of all but one of the libraries will have a significant effect on communities. Libraries not only loan books but also offer internet access for people who do not have access to the internet at home and, often, require help in using it. They are also a hub for community events. In particular, I gather that

Penicuik library has been earmarked for closure. This facility was a flagship library for Midlothian when it was built not so long ago! It does not seem sensible to close this library. Access to a Local library is particularly of value to the poor, the disabled, the infirm and the elderly; who may find it more difficult, or impossible, to access a remote library branch. The lack of a Local library will diminish many of these people's lives by leaving them without any satisfactory access to a Public Library. These sections of the community often seem to suffer disproportionately by any cuts in services.

96. For children and young people the lack of a Local library would also have a very significant and detrimental effect; including an effect on their development.
97. Roslin Library is a very important part of the life of the community serving many purposes. It has a vital role in the general wellbeing of the village.
98. Strongly object to any closure or further reduction in library services. One of the educational resources open to all that everyone can access.
99. Has any Impact Assessments been carried out on the proposed savings for staff and public?
100. Do not close library!
101. As a fantastic resource for topic books to use in my classroom I will miss this library and have a great number of kids who will miss out!
102. The duty of a local council is to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service" and it is a legal obligation under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. The Act also prohibits charging for book loans. Are OAPs going to travel long distances to use a central library in Loanhead? In trying to save money bear in mind that the greatest use by the greatest number are what you should be considering to protect. Penicuik library provides computer facilities for those that cannot afford one. Closure is hardly the way to get people becoming digital savvy. Some Councils are indeed suggesting that library services can be run by volunteers. This takes no account of the professional and ethical standards to which professional librarians must adhere, including data protection.
103. I would be very disappointed if any of the local libraries were shut. In particular I use Penicuik library on a regular basis. It is in a building which I would assume you don't plan to close given that the leisure centre is situated there. The provision is fairly new, clearly money has gone into it that could be wasted if it shuts. The library is a hub for local groups to meet including a women's craft group. Local people who are unable to afford broadband use the computers as a rare free internet resource (I know this as I was told by one of them). Libraries remain a place where people who cannot afford to buy books, CDs or DVDs can access them cheaply and act as a free learning resource and a place where the elderly can go for some interaction. The vast majority of these benefits and aims cannot be achieved without libraries being local. Not everyone can afford bus travel or has the time to use this to access hub libraries in other towns.
104. I also don't particularly agree with full closures of libraries. I know that Penicuik library can be quiet but it provides a brilliant facility for the young children with bookbug sessions that are very busy. I would suggest that instead of a full closure, a reduced service is looked at,

particularly when the Council has just spent a fortune on the new Loanhead facility, which includes a library.

105. The savings plans seem to be reasonable given the circumstances - EXCEPT the closing of all but one Library!
106. Library Services. The proposal is tantamount to abandoning library provision altogether. You don't say where a single central library might be, but I understand that Dalkeith is proposed. Penicuik people are not going to travel to Dalkeith to get to the library. And why Dalkeith? It's not the largest town, and it's towards the edge of the group of libraries in Midlothian. Even if most of the withdrawals are of fiction, libraries have an important educational role in getting children to read at all, and continue to do so.
107. It would seem only logical that if, as proposed, the number of libraries is drastically reduced, the mobile library service should be INCREASED. You are depriving the aged and infirm of this service totally.
108. The library in the new Paradykes centre is an extremely valuable resource for the community as well as the primary school and nursery. As a member of staff in Paradykes Nursery, we take children twice a week to the library where they get songs and a story. They are also able to have time looking at books and exploring the environment. This is a very valuable resource which is beneficial with developing the children's literacy and social skills. This would have a massive impact on our children if the library was to close.
109. I oppose the closing of branch libraries. Libraries provide local educational resources within the community. A central library would not be practical for most library users.
110. Please don't close the libraries. LS, aged 6.
111. Save our libraries. RS, aged 7.
112. I wish to have the Penicuik Library kept open as I am a regular user. Have been for 73 years. The present facility is excellent with very helpful staff at all times.
113. I object to cutting down to one Midlothian library. As a mother of 3, I use bookbugs twice a week and it's a local place (Penicuik) that my children can enjoy the space and borrow books. Staff are excellent. I wouldn't be able to get to Dalkeith Library.
114. Please do not close Penicuik Library. It is a valuable resource to the community, both children and adults.
115. As a pensioner and a widow and living alone, I really enjoy coming in to the Dalkeith Library for a book or two and a wee heat on a cold or rainy day or a wee chat sometimes, could you possibly, perhaps instead of closing the library altogether, keep it open 2 or 3 days a week. UI will really miss it. Pensioner aged 85years.
116. I think it would be a terrible shame to close any libraries as they are a hub in any community. Apart from lending books people know to go there for information, doggy bags, batteries for hearing aids, forms for nearly everything, etc. If you are looking for extra revenue start fining tenants for untidy gardens, their bins which overflow, and they leave

them out on main streets causing hazards to pedestrians. Maybe then the streets would start to look cleaner, reducing the need for many extra street cleaners and extra bin uplifts.

117. I just find it difficult to imagine life without libraries. They are even more important today for children and adults to be able to access computers and books. The whole system of cuts being proposed is frightening.
118. Library staff are not there all the time – perhaps better coordination of shifts.
119. Closing the facility [Dalkeith Library] is a disgrace for a council! It provides a range of opportunities for adults as well as children, allowing poor children and their parents or guardians a place to learn and be advised, which their home environment may not or cannot afford to provide. It's a disgrace for any party to cut this chance, when they continually preach to be saints (which their actions demonstrate they are not), yet deprive the youth outwith schools this important facility.
120. I think it would be a great mistake to close the branch libraries which provide a most necessary service to both young and all. It would also be a pity to stop the mobile library when it is just getting going again and is a boon to many elderly people who are unable to get to their local library – if there is one – and to mothers with young children. So important that they learn to appreciate books at an early age.
121. Having read the council's savings proposals my concern is the mobile library. The service is mainly for the elderly and if withdrawn we leave a real miss in their life as many would be unable to travel to Haddington or Tranent never mind carrying a bag of books back on the bus. We lost ELC van, let's keep Midlothian, which we share. Plus we have an excellent Driver librarian.
122. Libraries provide vital educational, social and research facilities. Children particularly need easy access to libraries if they are going to grow up as confident readers. Parents from more educated backgrounds may be motivated to buy books and to cross the county with their children to visit a distant library. The children most at risk of poor literacy skills are often those from homes where there is poor access to books and little motivation from busy parents to travel long distances by complicated bus journeys. A single library in this scattered region is just not a viable option, especially in the absence of a mobile service. Penicuik Library offers great and essential children's sessions, a thriving book group for adults and supports several other local book groups. These bring together people in the community in a way that few other leisure activities do. Other activities, particularly for older people, may be important for physical health, e.g. swimming, gym, football but they do not necessarily promote social interaction or mental stimulation. Reading is an excellent way to maintain cognitive functioning. PLEASE RETAIN OUR BRANCH LIBRARIES.
123. Library Services. These savings are based on providing only 1 Midlothian central library withdrawing the mobile library (a shared service with ELC) and closing the branch libraries: I value my library and all the services it provides in the form of information, education, IT facilities and leisure. As well as providing books, talking books, large print material etc., for young and old, increasingly the library has grown into a hub for social information, for employment and benefit information, bus pass applications, distribution of hearing aid battery, dog bags, even condoms. It is a hub for community classes and activities for young

and old. The staff at my branch are knowledgeable, helpful and pleasant. Among other things, the library is an outpost for literacy and culture in the community. (See also under next heading below.) Midlothian is not a town, it is spread out, much of it rural. Where would a central library be located? Penicuik? Dalkeith? Elsewhere? In addition cuts are proposed to rural bus services (a double whammy for non-car users whose local library has closed). Withdrawal of the alternative of a mobile library service would but compound matters.

124. I help run a community group called Save Roslin Library, and our biggest concern is the loss of libraries, both ours and the one in Penicuik. Our library is small, relatively cheap to run, we are happy to help run it as volunteers supported by a librarian (this last is important). The library is of huge importance to our community now and for the future. It's a place that helps to fight inequalities in our society, a place for the unemployed to look for jobs on the computer or apply for benefits, a place that helps fight loneliness and isolation and our communities main meeting place. In our village of Roslin with around 2000 residents, over 300 actively support the library group and over 800 regularly use the library.
125. Must retain branch libraries.
126. The proposals to close Penicuik Library in addition to the other services e.g. "Book Bugs for Mothers & Toddlers" is a disgrace and means that individuals of all ages will no longer have easy access to books in support of their development, education and interest. Given basic development & education which are key skills for all children & young adults, by removing the library and similar services makes this more difficult, therefore once again the proposed cuts are a contradiction to the basic principles & articles that Midlothian Council promotes. Midlothian Council also needs to be mindful that not all households can afford to buy books or have easy access to travel between Dalkeith also given increase costs for local transport, therefore the proposed cuts make such services like the library, Book Bugs etc. even less accessible.
127. Library Services – leaving only one library and closing down all other branches in Midlothian is unreasonable and simply does not make sense at all. For example Loanhead library has just been opened in the brand new purpose built premises. Libraries are not only for borrowing books but also play a vital role as community centres. They host a range of classes, meetings and events. E.g. bookbug sessions for toddlers, kids' Lego club, Midlothian science festival, public consultations and even replies to this consultation are encouraged to be submitted via our local library – paradox? Libraries also make the internet accessible for people who do not have the internet at home (poor or elderly) – increasingly public services are only available online, so those who need to access the services, will not have the means to do it, e.g. jobseekers – paradox? What about the very recent project of free public Wi-Fi available to all – initiated by the Council, after the initial investment in 2017, the project and the benefits will be wiped out once the libraries closed. There is known evidence that closing libraries damages the community – see Scottish Book Trust for one example. If all the libraries are closed, what will happen to all the services they provide? Will they disappear making our communities even more deprived? Will they be moved elsewhere – in that case the real savings are much lower? Where is the balance? Where will the Midlothian Science Festival and other events be hosted?

128. I do not know which library would be the central library for Midlothian but I am assuming that it would be based in Dalkeith. It seems to me that it would be detrimental to the population of West Midlothian if the Penicuik library was closed & they were forced to travel to Dalkeith. This, for a lot of people, would be onerous & time consuming as there is only one bus (Lothian Bus service Route 40) which runs approximately every 30 minutes. It also takes nearly 45 minutes to get to the centre of Dalkeith. Other towns in Midlothian have numerous bus services to get them to Dalkeith. Penicuik is a large town and keeping the library open would service the needs of residents in Roslin & Loanhead & perhaps even Lasswade. As Midlothian has a fairly significant rural area to service I also think that to cease the mobile libraries would be detrimental to those smaller communities in the county.
129. The proposed cuts to libraries is a shortsighted move which will damage communities. More than 1800 people have signed a petition against closing the libraries.
<https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries> We urge you to reconsider, and to think about the long term, damaging impact of this move.
130. I wanted to write in support of the libraries and the services that they provide. Fewer libraries across the local authority will disproportionately affect those who rely on them for a greater access to the internet, careers services, and those who are restricted by costs or unable to travel. They also form part of a community hub for mothers of babies and young children, who may also be restricted by time and travel. The library has always been important to me as a resource of free educational material as well as enabling to read for pleasure, and I would not like to see children (especially those from less financially well-off backgrounds) lose that. Ideally, none of the libraries would have to close, but if it comes to pass I would like to ask you to consider both which services could be salvaged or relocated, and also how distributional pattern of any closures might minimize disadvantage.
131. Under no circumstances should libraries be closed. They provide a valuable service for the communities they serve and are a fundamental right to residents of all ages. One central library for the whole of Midlothian is a facial idea : how are people to get there from outlying areas please ??
132. I would like to address some of the proposed savings by Midlothian Council. As an employee of Midlothian Council based for 19 years at Penicuik Library my main concern is the proposed cuts to the Library Service. The plan to have one Library to serve the whole of Midlothian is quite frankly ludicrous. As somebody who also resides in Midlothian I have great concern that the Council is not aware of how many elderly and vulnerable people live within all the outlying communities that make up Midlothian and are unable, for many reasons to travel out with their own area. At Penicuik Library we provide services for all areas of our community from Bookbug sessions for new mums and babies to a Dementia group for sufferers and their carers. We have regular visits and story time sessions for local nurseries and schools, a coding club, Lego club and Chatterbooks group. We give help to the ever increasing number of people on benefits who need help to access the computer for job searches and actually get their payments, many have zero computer knowledge. More importantly we know our community and our customers, we know the people who are lonely or have various health and mental health concerns, and we are able to provide them with help they need, sometimes just a friendly face. Last of all and just as important our

readers, regular and new who would be lost without their local library and our young readers some of whom would have no access to books if it was not for the Library.

133. I am writing to give my views on the Midlothian council finding proposals. I understand that difficult decisions need to be taken, but I strongly object to the closing of libraries, particularly our local library at Lasswade High School. This has been an excellent facility to have in our area and my family are always using it regularly and taking part in activities organised there. For the younger generations it is such a valuable asset to encourage them to read from an early age. I really hope that you would reconsider closing any of the libraries in Midlothian as this should be a service that is invested in for the future for all of the people in Midlothian. Not everyone can afford to buy books, so having a library means that everyone is able to access reading materials and for some people it is also a vital place for social contact for young and old people. Please reconsider this proposal.
134. Closing every library but one, this will destroy communities and have a negative impact on supporting literacy. It would be interesting to know why you have decided Dalkeith library will be the only one left open? Is it because the council offices are opposite it and you use it for meeting rooms? Penicuik library is heavily used by the community. As a mother of two young children the library offers them a range of opportunities and activities. The bookbug sessions are well attended and I believe this is not only for the benefit of the children but for the mums too. For mums with newborns life can be tough and post-natal depression a reality, having a support network is vital and bookbug gives a network to mums. Without this service there is a risk to the deterioration of mental health and therefore an additional pressure put on the health service.
135. I am absolutely stunned by the preposterous proposal to cut the library provision in Midlothian to one central library. This act of cultural vandalism renders me almost speechless. The library provision within the county not only supplies reading material but vital information, social interaction and community facilities for many of the most vulnerable & potentially isolated citizens within Midlothian. Not to mention the statutory obligation to supply an adequate library provision.
136. Library Services. Every community must have its own library. One central library is just not enough; reaching it would be, for those not living nearby, expensive in time and money. During the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, communities fought to have their own libraries, we must not throw them away, it would be a betrayal! Over the years, libraries have changed greatly in what they provide, but they are still essential. I will try to list some of the good and beneficial things that libraries provide. History research. Group meetings. Computer learning classes and use, including printer and scanner, for job applications, tax returns, communication with utility companies, internet searching, etc. Adult book clubs. Children's activities, e.g. story sessions for pre-schoolers, Lego, chess, coding clubs.
137. Maintain local libraries and leisure centres to help maximise opportunities for young people, social mobility, social cohesion, engagement for mothers with children and older people. Leisure centres are imperative to help maintain and improve general health, failure to act on which will result in greater problems and costs in the future. The Roslin library is an important community hub and efforts should be made to increase community activities here, increase footfall and help to library to partly self-fund. Penicuik library and leisure

centre form an excellent local facility which has received significant funding from the council to establish. It is imperative that this facility be maintained for the benefit of the people of Midlothian and also to justify previous spending on this facility.

138. Libraries are a vital focal point within communities and provide far more than just books!
139. The idea of having one library in Midlothian is ludicrous, especially when the Scottish Govt spend so much encouraging people to read (especially to children). Our local library is a fantastic resource for children and adults alike. My children and I use it at least twice a week.
140. I wanted to write in support of the libraries and the services that they provide. Fewer libraries across the local authority will disproportionately affect those who rely on them for a greater access to the internet, careers services, and those who are restricted by costs or unable to travel. They also form part of a community hub for mothers of babies and young children, who may also be restricted by time and travel.
141. The library has always been important to me as a resource of free educational material as well as enabling to read for pleasure, and I would not like to see children (especially those from less financially well-off backgrounds) lose that.
142. Ideally, none of the libraries would have to close, but if it comes to pass I would like to ask you to consider both which services could be salvaged or relocated, and also how distributional pattern of any closures might minimize disadvantage.
143. This will adversely impact on library provision to the residents of Edgehead and other rural communities. In addition the reduction from 9 libraries to 1 Midlothian central library will increase the traffic around the 1 central library (not identified). The proposed removal of bus provision and introduction of car park charges will also discriminate against rural communities. It seems incredible that the scale of the proposed changes (8 branch closures and 30 FTE posts) only generates a proposed saving of £0.240M.
144. The proposals make for very painful and upsetting reading.
145. One aspect of the deep cuts that we are particularly concerned with is the closure of most libraries. We have found the library service to be extremely valuable, particularly as we have a young child. We believe that libraries are focal points of communities and provide so many services that their closure would be a huge loss. The relatively small amount of money saved by this closure is not proportional to the loss that each community would face. We would urge the council to re-think this.
146. Any reduction in ancillary services and educational provision will only reduce the quality of life for all members of the community, young and old alike and this would include the closure of essential library services. Libraries are not only a source of education and information but also a meeting point for help and advice for all ages and their facilities could be enlarged and even include a drop-in cafe, Citizens Advice and general help for the Homeless, Housing and Benefits under one roof.

147. I think it would be a shame to close the libraries, they are a useful resource to the public ranging from Rhyme Time sessions to computer use for the public. It would be a shame to see them taken away.
148. Library cuts - Libraries are a lifeline to new mums and old people alike, people who don't have technology in their homes and are unable to apply for jobs etc anywhere else other than their local library. I have found it a great place to meet other mums in my local area and it has been great at getting my daughter into reading all types of different books. The library isn't just somewhere to get books, I believe it is a lifeline for many, a hub of the community. Only having one in such a large area will leave many without support from peers and access to job applications.
149. I am upset about the proposal to have only one library in Midlothian. Libraries are at the heart of communities, a place for people to meet and enjoy reading. Encouraging literacy and IT skills is so important. Children visit the libraries and borrow books. If libraries are closed, families that can't afford to buy books will be denied them and I honestly feel that access to a library should be a human right. If there is only one branch for the whole of Midlothian, visiting the library won't be an everyday occurrence, it will be an expensive bus trip for a family, this makes me so sad. There are beautiful libraries in Midlothian, the new one in Loanhead being a prime example, the idea of closing libraries and disposing of hundreds of books would mean losing a valuable resource that could never be replaced.
150. Libraries. When, as a country, we are trying to reduce attainment gap and improve literacy; how does closing ALL, bar 1, library help? The Library service should be expanded, not contracted.
151. I think that the two biggest aims should be to retain as many of the branch libraries (and mobile library services) as possible, and keep the Penicuik recycling centre open. The effect of closure of library services is difficult to measure but the effect on elderly and infirm inhabitants will be devastating.
152. The reduction of library services is yet another blow for communities, especially older generations who do not use computers or are unable to travel to a proposed one remaining central library. Those in the community who cannot afford a computer rely on the use of these in their local library. These need to be manned at all times.
153. I understand that savings have to be made however there is still massive deprivation in Midlothian and cuts to educational support and libraries is unacceptable, these are key to develop and progress. It can't be all negative, there is huge potential in the Area, look at opportunity not just cuts.
154. Closing our library discriminates against the less well off in this town who need to be encouraged to read and who can't always afford to go out and buy books.
155. Libraries provide vital educational, social and research facilities. Children particularly need easy access to libraries if they are going to grow up as confident readers. Parents from more educated backgrounds may be motivated to buy books and to cross the county with their children to visit a distant library. The children most at risk of poor literacy skills are often those from homes where there is poor access to books and little motivation from busy

parents to travel long distances by complicated bus journeys. A single library in this scattered region is just not a viable option, especially in the absence of a mobile service.

156. Penicuik Library offers great and essential children's sessions, a thriving book group for adults and supports several other local book groups. These bring together people in the community in a way that few other leisure activities do. Other activities, particularly for older people, may be important for physical health, e.g. swimming, gym, football but they do not necessarily promote social interaction or mental stimulation. Reading is an excellent way to maintain cognitive functioning.
157. There is widespread opposition to your short sighted and hugely damaging plan to close libraries. Over 1800 people have signed a petition against this <https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries>
158. I help run a community group called Save Roslin Library, and our biggest concern is the loss of libraries, both ours and the one in Penicuik. Our library is small, relatively cheap to run, we are happy to help run it as volunteers supported by a librarian (this last is important). The library is of huge importance to our community now and for the future.
159. It's a place that helps to fight inequalities in our society, a place for the unemployed to look for jobs on the computer or apply for benefits, a place that helps fight loneliness and isolation and our communities main meeting place. In our village of Roslin with around 2000 residents, over 300 actively support the library group and over 800 regularly use the library.
160. Library Services. Must retain branch libraries (p51).
161. Library Services – leaving only one library and closing down all other branches in Midlothian is unreasonable and simply does not make sense at all. For example Loanhead library has just been opened in the brand new purpose built premises. Libraries are not only for borrowing books but also play a vital role as community centres. They host a range of classes, meetings and events. E.g. bookbug sessions for toddlers, kids' Lego club, Midlothian science festival, public consultations and even replies to this consultation are encouraged to be submitted via our local library – paradox? Libraries also make the internet accessible for people who do not have the internet at home (poor or elderly) – increasingly public services are only available online, so those who need to access the services, will not have the means to do it, e.g. jobseekers – paradox? What about the very recent project of free public wi-fi available to all – initiated by the Council, after the initial investment in 2017, the project and the benefits will be wiped out once the libraries closed. There is known evidence that closing libraries damages the community – see Scottish Book Trust for one example. If all the libraries are closed, what will happen to all the services they provide? Will they disappear making our communities even more deprived? Will they be moved elsewhere – in that case the real savings are much lower? Where is the balance? Where will the Midlothian Science Festival and other events be hosted?
162. I agree that the libraries especially the mobile library service need to be drastically reduced
163. PLEASE RETAIN OUR BRANCH LIBRARIES
164. Library Services. These savings are based on providing only 1 Midlothian central library withdrawing the mobile library (a shared service with ELC) and closing the branch libraries: I

value my library and all the services it provides in the form of information, education, IT facilities and leisure. As well as providing books, talking books, large print material etc for young and old, increasingly the library has grown into a hub for social information, for employment and benefit information, bus pass applications, distribution of hearing aid battery, dog bags, even condoms. It is a hub for community classes and activities for young and old. The staff at my branch are knowledgeable, helpful and pleasant. Among other things, the library is an outpost for literacy and culture in the community. (See also under next heading below.)

165. Midlothian is not a town, it is spread out, much of it rural. Where would a central library be located? Penicuik? Dalkeith? Elsewhere? In addition cuts are proposed to rural bus services (a double whammy for non-car users whose local library has closed). Withdrawal of the alternative of a mobile library service would but compound matters.
166. Savings could also be made by encouraging customers to do more online: I am concerned about the emphasis put on accessing services online. A surprising number of people have little or no IT skills or hardware e.g. printer (this I know through work) and to make matters worse, the Council is proposing local library branch closures, the one place where computers and some help is available.
167. The proposals to close Penicuik Library in addition to the other services e.g. "Book Bugs for Mothers & Toddlers" is a disgrace and means that individuals of all ages will no longer have easy access to books in support of their development, education and interest.
168. Given basic development & education which are key skills for all children & young adults, by removing the library and similar services makes this more difficult, therefore once again the proposed cuts are a contradiction to the basic principles & articles that Midlothian Council promotes.
169. Midlothian Council also needs to be mindful that not all households can afford to buy books or have easy access to travel between Dalkeith also given increase costs for local transport, therefore the proposed cuts make such services like the library, Book Bugs etc. even less accessible.
170. I do not know which library would be the central library for Midlothian but I am assuming that it would be based in Dalkeith. It seems to me that it would be detrimental to the population of West Midlothian if the Penicuik library was closed & they were forced to travel to Dalkeith. This, for a lot of people, would be onerous & time consuming as there is only one bus (Lothian Bus service Route 40) which runs approximately every 30 minutes. It also takes nearly 45 minutes to get to the centre of Dalkeith. Other towns in Midlothian have numerous bus services to get them to Dalkeith.
171. Penicuik is a large town and keeping the library open would service the needs of residents in Roslin & Loanhead & perhaps even Lasswade.
172. AS Midlothian has a fairly significant rural area to service I also think that to cease the mobile libraries would be detrimental to those smaller communities in the county.
173. Closure of library buildings - the computer suites in libraries are often used by low income residents to apply for jobs etc. - how will this affect their ability to look for jobs.

174. The proposed cuts to libraries is a shortsighted move which will damage communities.
175. More than 1800 people have signed a petition against closing the libraries.
<https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries> We urge you to reconsider, and to think about the long term, damaging impact of this move.
176. As a Roslin resident I wish to protest against the proposed cuts to Midlothian Council's services. While I appreciate that you may have to re-think your strategy, some of them - to me - seem very short sighted and poorly thought out. To reduce the number of libraries in the county to one is ludicrous in the extreme. Do you not realise how important a library is to its local community? In Roslin, where I visit at least twice a month to borrow books, there is always someone using the computer. I also get my hearing aid batteries there - this was a great idea as it saved a trip to Penicuik Medical Centre. The Book Group is also well attended each month. Where do you propose having this "central library"? Wherever, it has to have adjacent parking facilities and bus stop for the less mobile. It is not long since we fought to keep Roslin Library open and now it seems we have another fight on our hands. We are always told it is the busiest in Midlothian - per capita - and yet you propose to close it. This doesn't make sense to me.
177. Please do not close Penicuik library - this is so important for so many people. I don't drive as do many other people so would be hard for me to go to another library. My father in law has Parkinson's and one of the few places he feels able to go to is the library. So many people use this for the computer facilities. It is a really new facility and would be such a waste to close it after all the money that was spent on it.
178. I am disgusted at the proposals to close Penicuik Library.
179. Under no circumstances should libraries be closed. They provide a valuable service for the communities they serve and are a fundamental right to residents of all ages. One central library for the whole of Midlothian is a facial idea: how are people to get there from outlying areas please??
180. I would like to address some of the proposed savings by Midlothian Council. As an employee of Midlothian Council based for 19 years at Penicuik Library my main concern is the proposed cuts to the Library Service. The plan to have one Library to serve the whole of Midlothian is quite frankly ludicrous. As somebody who also resides in Midlothian I have great concern that the Council is not aware of how many elderly and vulnerable people live within all the outlying communities that make up Midlothian and are unable, for many reasons to travel out with their own area. At Penicuik Library we provide services for all areas of our community from Bookbug sessions for new mums and babies to a Dementia group for sufferers and their carers. We have regular visits and story time sessions for local nurseries and schools, a coding club, Lego club and Chatterbooks group. We give help to the ever increasing number of people on benefits who need help to access the computer for job searches and actually get their payments, many have zero computer knowledge. More importantly, we know our community and our customers, we know the people who are lonely or have various health and mental health concerns, and we are able to provide them with help they need, sometimes just a friendly face. Last of all and just as important our readers, regular and new who would be lost without their local library and our young readers some of whom would have no access to books if it was not for the Library.

181. I am writing to give my views on the Midlothian council finding proposals. I understand that difficult decisions need to be taken, but I strongly object to the closing of libraries, particularly our local library at Lasswade High School. This has been an excellent facility to have in our area and my family are always using it regularly and taking part in activities organised there. For the younger generations it is such a valuable asset to encourage them to read from an early age. I really hope that you would reconsider closing any of the libraries in Midlothian as this should be a service that is invested in for the future for all of the people in Midlothian. Not everyone can afford to buy books, so having a library means that everyone is able to access reading materials and for some people it is also a vital place for social contact for young and old people. Please reconsider this proposal.
182. Keeping the libraries open but introducing more self service facilities.
183. Closing every library but one, this will destroy communities and have a negative impact on supporting literacy. It would be interesting to know why you have decided Dalkeith library will be the only one left open? Is it because the council offices are opposite it and you use it for meeting rooms? Penicuik library is heavily used by the community. As a mother of two young children the library offers them a range of opportunities and activities. The bookbug sessions are well attended and I believe this is not only for the benefit of the children but for the mums too. For mums with newborns life can be tough and post-natal depression a reality, having a support network is vital and bookbug gives a network to mums. Without this service there is a risk to the deterioration of mental health and therefore an additional pressure put on the health service.
184. I am absolutely stunned by the preposterous proposal to cut the library provision in Midlothian to one central library. This act of cultural vandalism renders me almost speechless. The library provision within the county not only supplies reading material but vital information, social interaction and community facilities for many of the most vulnerable & potentially isolated citizens within Midlothian. Not to mention the statutory obligation to supply an adequate library provision.
185. Maintain local libraries and leisure centres to help maximise opportunities for young people, social mobility, social cohesion, engagement for mothers with children and older people. Leisure centres are imperative to help maintain and improve general health, failure to act on which will result in greater problems and costs in the future. The Roslin library is an important community hub and efforts should be made to increase community activities here, increase footfall and help the library to partly self-fund. Penicuik library and leisure centre form an excellent local facility which has received significant funding from the council to establish. It is imperative that this facility be maintained for the benefit of the people of Midlothian and also to justify previous spending on this facility.
186. Closing libraries is very wrong, at a time when they needed the most you'll take them away. Plenty of local groups use the libraries and removing them will result in the end of the groups.
187. Far too harsh and needs a total rethink on how to provide services. Only 1 library is totally silly, cut to learning support is playing with money as assuming the extra money given to schools will be used to cover the cut.

188. I am alarmed at the potential loss of the branch libraries (Item 4, Customer and Housing Services). Reading is such an important part of life-long learning from the earliest stages. I doubt that many people who currently use the branch libraries will travel to Dalkeith (assuming that that is where the Central Library will be) for this service and so a significant enriching stream of learning will be lost to many. I agree that budgets have to be balanced, but closing libraries is a short term fix that will have long term detrimental impacts across all ages in our communities. Maybe funding could be contributed to by developers who are building extensively in communities where the cuts are proposed, or corporate sponsorship?
189. Please retain your libraries, including Roslin library. Let us help you run it if that saves costs.
190. Our library is vital to our local community and is one area where all those with no access to computers and the internet can access those free and with staff support. Can you get money from the 'City deal' to make Libraries in digital Innovation centres that tackle digital and social inequalities. I would help you with that.
191. Some positive steps are outlined in the search for efficiency, but education is key to providing a worthwhile future for the children in the area. Informal learning via libraries is a large part.
192. Rather than close local libraries outright (page 51 of 115), maintain the library provision in all cases with further savings by rotating opening hours around each one, as well as the other positive steps to maintain a library service outlined in the proposal. More should be done to promote library usage to ensure its place as a core community resource is secured.
193. Library service - absolutely opposed to the threat. The proposed cuts will have a devastating impact on a disproportionately large number of people and are not an effective solution to the budget constraints the council are facing. The lack of a joined up transport system around Midlothian means that thousands of people will lose an essential facility that is so much more than somewhere to take out books. Libraries are one of the only spaces that are left where those who are 'digital by default' can access services, maintain and improve levels of health and well-being and allow communities to thrive. MLC have a duty of care to all residents to ensure such effective, yet cheap, services are left alone to continue providing such a vast array of benefits. Staffing levels and site numbers must be maintained. LEAVE OUR LIBRARIES ALONE!
194. I am extremely disappointed to read that there will only be one central library in Midlothian. Often these libraries are viewed as a community hub and are used not only for book lending but also for those who don't have a PC in their home.

Income generation/ money saving

1. Why don't we have real businessmen looking at these financial implications instead of officers that protect their own jobs and salaries. Get rid of them that'll save a few bob.
2. That's right young ones go to uni come out with a degree then they say we need cuts here and there what was wrong with old system get rid of their salary and save money, also the money councillors get for doing what no wonder this country is a mess, also cut the benefits of the lazy one's who don't want to work I defo know a couple

3. What people seem to be forgetting here is why are the council needing to do this??? This is our Government for u, cut money to councils, NHS & our Armed forces but can find billions to give to other countries for varies reasons!!!!!!
4. It good they are getting the public involved and I guess not their faults. Shouldn't be having to make cuts in the first place as things in communities strained enough! Bother with youths (yeh I sound old) bad access to health care etc. Really don't know where they can afford to make cuts?!
5. Shame that this has to happen. I don't know how they expect our communities to thrive be safe some where we want to be and our kids to do well in school. If they are going to do cuts like this. Something needs to be done other than what is proposed. Sad days.
6. If anyone agrees to cuts it absolves our public servants of blame and construed as popular opinion. Not one of our national or local politicians mentioned our economic system during our recent elections and its collapse in 2008 and continued downward ...See more
7. Unachievable, aggressive.
8. Sick of hearing about cuts, just out walking this morning and buckets so full nowhere to put poo bags. You want it pick up empty the bins, all left on the ground round the bin. Weeds growing through pavements, banks being closed, amenities being closed but you left allowing the building of more homes. JOKE !!!!!
9. This appears to be the tip of a very big iceberg and I really fear for the future of our communities if this is the short sighted view of local councils in a bid to save money.
10. The proposal to "Increase Sales Force Income" gives much to be concerned about i.e. surely if the council has the resources for such a service to others – why is not being spent on actual council services to the benefit of Midlothian residents at the point of need.
11. Sales force spend to generate. How much is that 'small team' going to cost?
12. INCREASE INCOME - parking charges - ok - more advertising/sponsorship - look for other opportunities...e.g. companies sponsor a lollipop lady/man - sports companies sponsor a lifeguard place - advertising - bill boards
13. Look at potential mergers with other local authorities to reduce management costs.
14. The council needs to make more money not strip back beyond minimum requirements to save money. Too many people receive free services from the council and abuse these. Introduce more charging to raise money.
15. Developers need to pay more above their current contributions so getting them to buy bins should be looked at just as a start.
16. More online council services requiring less staff to answer telephones etc.
17. Allowing the hire of other council buildings not currently available for this.
18. Exploring ways to allow community groups to take over flowerbeds, marquee erection, leaflet drop etc.

19. Researching the ability to source more than capital spend for developers contributions. Other capital spend could be health facilities which are not purely for doctor and nurse services. We have a huge number of people in Midlothian who have mental health problems and support services for cancer patients are all in Edinburgh. A facility which developers contribute that's rented by all the service providers would generate income for the council. There is very much an attitude from the council that 'it's always been like that' and this doesn't wash in this day. There is very little passion demonstrated from council officials or workers that I've met that tell me that this is something you're willing to work at to achieve cost savings in innovative ways rather than cutting valuable services which will impact the most vulnerable or increase costs to those who already cut their cloth to suit their purse. One example of this is the winter pathway maintenance. How many people will need to be injured before this is reconsidered? This will not just affect elderly and vulnerable. If people can't get to work due to no public transport or clear roads not all employers are sympathetic to or aware of the conditions outside of Edinburgh city centre and this could put people's jobs at risk.
20. Looking at innovative ways of intercepting the many hundreds of serviceable goods headed to landfill each day and setting up systems for those to be resold.
21. I would suggest that a charge be made for those using the internet in the libraries. I also think that moving more contact online is not helpful to the older generation, many of whom do not have the access or understanding. Please remember that large numbers of council taxpayers are subsidising services that they never use so it is only right that sensible charges are made on facilities.
22. A lot of the proposals make sense, I am sure we could live without hanging baskets but losing the flower beds would be a real shame. There are a lot of tweaks such as less support for school and hall rentals etc.
23. Sponsoring of Roundabouts as West Lothian council have done for a number of years. A7/A772 and A701 would be prime routes.
24. I think street lighting outside of Dalkeith Centre could be looked at. Potentially turning this off at a certain time of night or at least turning every second or third light off.
25. I know that recently the closure of the Dalkeith Public Toilet was cancelled. However, I do believe that this could be converted to a pay toilet with a little modification to at least reduce the running costs of the facility.
26. Stop giving Grants to anyone, there's no such thing as a free lunch. I'm not sure why we have brown bins at all. We never used to have years ago. When the council cut the grass on playing fields etc., they don't collect the grass and take it to the recycling do they? No, nature recycles grass cuttings naturally. People can either collect the grass cuttings etc. and take them to recycling depot themselves or just leave nature to take its course. Stop the final salary pension scheme for all council employees(new entrants) No one can afford these gold plated pensions any more, will save a lot of money in long run. Change the council tax to a % of the house value (say 1% e.g.) then people with big massive houses would pay a fairer amount.

27. Stop sending letters out. Use emails and internet. You should also stop spending so much money on refurbishing & building schools. I haven't got any children so I'm subsidising those who do (a lot of money). Maybe council tax should be calculated by the number of people in the house AND the value of the house.
28. Focus on retaining front line services in local communities and identify savings/cuts options accordingly.
29. Stop wasting on forms in other languages other than English/Gaelic. This should be charged for. Other countries in the EU do this.
30. Look at sharing staff and services across neighbouring authorities like Scottish borders and east Lothian.
31. Proceeds of crime could generate income.
32. All the measures listed are about stopping or reducing services. However, there is no mention of increasing efficiency of working practices. I spent nearly 40 years with BT from when it was a public service company (P.O.) to being a very efficient Private Company. Many changes have had to be made to increase efficiency and thus save on staff numbers. I have unfortunately witnessed so much time wasting by council employees but I am not blaming them, I blame the councils working practices. Why has there been no consideration in improving the efficiency of the council?
33. Cutting staffing at schools, closing libraries and limiting help to the most vulnerable are desperate choices- how much could be cut instead by limiting admin costs of local government????
34. Forbid council phones for personal use. Many council employees make personal calls during officer hours.
35. What about pooling resources with neighbouring councils? The biggest savings here must be on things like running the payroll or other admin/hygiene factors, but waste collection and even some infrastructure maintenance would be possible.
36. Anything about marketing council expertise, should be explored anyway, but not built into planned cost savings as they are uncertain. I am not sure who would pay much for these...
37. Stop having so many consultations.
38. More advertising being sold for sponsor uniforms, Vehicles, buildings.
39. HR could be outsourced also or merged/shared with East Lothian or Borders. Borders Railway has seen much partnership work and with the areas highlighted within Enterprising Council there must be more scope to work collaboratively with for example a beefed up Enterprise Division.
40. Interest rates at an all-time low...great time to borrow against the Council assets?
41. Scrap free prescriptions/free full time nursery scheme/winter allowance for those who can afford to pay for these.

42. Savings should be achieved by sharing back office services with other local authorities as far as possible-- for example, HR, payroll, finance, etc. Streamline or share your performance management functions with another council-- as this seems to be a very top heavy, inefficient and expensive area of work which does not appear to perform as well as it should. Contract out commercial services such as waste/recycling, street cleansing, etc. Investigate viable options for privatising some facilities such as gyms-- the pure gym model may work in some areas. Work more creatively, dynamically and collaboratively with partner organisations to co-design better, more efficient models for service delivery or attract funding from external sources.
43. Close offices and get staff to work from home or hot desk.
44. Cheaper IT e.g. alternative tablets rather than iPads.
45. Scrap car leasing for staff. Majority have their own cars anyway. Just pay mileage costs - staff responsible for maintenance and insurance.
46. I believe that the advertising opportunities would be a good source of revenue generation if done correctly. I think the focus here should be on small businesses as opposed to Tesco and such like.
47. I am not sure whether Midlothian Council funds any element of costs for MPs in our area but if so this should cease. The MPs can do so little for the residents of Midlothian as they are restricted by their parliamentary duties so they should not be funded by our council.
48. Borrow the money and be done with it. If Edinburgh could borrow one billion to pay for trams, then Midlothian could borrow £44million. That is if the projection of five years or so hence is accurate which I seriously doubt; all this before the Scottish government announces what support is going to be.
49. Stop funding Christmas trees/lights throughout Midlothian. (Could be community funded).
50. Commercial activities. I would be very careful. I don't question the expertise of your staff, but they are service providers, and that's why they, in many cases, work for a council rather than a profit-oriented enterprise. If you try to make them, in effect, sales people they may not be very good at it and their commitment to service is bound to suffer. And it may end up costing more.
51. Build a theatre in Midlothian, big enough for west end shows. Run by a trust , if it made a profit money could get put from the theatre into the local village like Dalkeith, Newtongrange, Bonnyrigg , Loanhead , Penicuik (where there was a cinema). The local community could run the theatres. If Midlothian council could get money to build them, the local theatre groups could put shows on.
52. New college in Loanhead next to film studios.
53. Film park like Universal on the outskirts of Dalkeith near Sheriffhall would bring in tourists.
54. A wax museum in Dalkeith would bring in tourists.
55. A ghost tour in Midlothian that would bring in tourists

56. Still waiting for the old Dalkeith high school site to be used as a theatre, recording studio, dance studio, TV station etc. since that was planned for the site.
57. New film studios in Loanhead, new cinema in Loanhead.
58. Secure an increased financial settlement for the county from government.
59. Demand increased contributions from housing developers to fund community infrastructure and projects, including ongoing contributions.
60. Turn off half of all street lights to save money and reduce light pollution.
61. Introduce a system of charging services companies per day for works causing disruption to roads.
62. Increase efficiency of working practices by council employees
63. Further savings within council offices.
64. Organise a procurement review for every organisation / company that Midlothian does business with - with the view of reducing the spend. For example - could the cost of being a membership of COSLA be reduced by 40%? The cost reduction should be borne by all suppliers to the council - not just the council itself.
65. The council could hire out space to let - for example in schools and community buildings at the weekends. This should be advertised to increase uptake.
66. Organise special events in the leisure centres/libraries and snow sports centre throughout the year to increase footfall. i.e. could the libraries hold Santa's Grotto or children's parties where an admission is charged. The council should be seeking a sustainable growth in services rather than just cutting them.
67. Stop construction of new council buildings - i.e. Newtongrange Hub where good facilities already exist in the town.
68. Development to Vogrie and Roslin Glen in a similar manner to Dalkeith Country Park. Holding events like a farmers market, Christmas market, or even holding an event like The Enchanted Forest (Pitlochry) in Vogrie or Roslin Glen could be a fantastic source of revenue. There are 500,000 people who live in the vicinity and quality events could be very lucrative.
69. Community engagement with the council is unfortunately very negative at the minute and we feel that there are more constructive/entrepreneurial methods to address the budget challenge rather than decimating public services in a rapidly growing county with a lot of potential.
70. Renewable Sources of Energy. By investing in renewable sources of energy a targeted saving of 10% of the current expenditure (£2.8m) should be achievable: yes!
71. I agree with some of the cost saving proposals and appreciate that bridging the deficit will not be easy.
72. More emphasis needs to be given on making councils more commercially minded and agile. This will likely involve some quite radical change and culture shifts.

73. You need to look more at how to save money other than cutting services from the most vulnerable and charging fees to those who can't afford them
74. What revenue streams can be identified instead of cutting costs? How can the council commercialise what they do. Not being part of a council myself i have limited understanding of the mechanics and potential tax implications but examples include; Such as instrument tuition, after school sports clubs. (mentioned)
75. Professional services such as property management, landscaping, Financial consultancies - assisting start up SMEs charge lower than market rate fees (link to SE)
76. Offer equity stakes in commercial ventures - do the council engage with investment companies such as archangels? Do you innovate?.....
77. Not an specialist here but....Review VAT arrangements/company structures, ring fencing specific revenue generating parts of the business may yield greater VAT recovery - this can yield substantial savings in some cases.
78. Has an internal procurement review been undertaken - is the council sure of best value in all cases?.....
79. How top heavy is the council management structure.....workforce planning is mentioned and would be welcomed.
80. How are things like council tax arrears being managed, Does this need to be more aggressive?
81. Instead of just looking at cuts, look at making money..e.g looking at council buildings and using/selling as we'd do g venues? On the spot fines for fouling/tipping/traffic offences. What about looking at driving more companies to come here...lots of empty buildings (reduce rate to bring businesses in, better than being empty). Offer people more rubbish pick up at a cost. Have token donation at the recycling depots? Are CEO taking a cut? Not suggesting a lot but something. Expenses need to be tightened. Have Volunteer drive to help with key services. Area is expanding, plenty of opportunity to drive business here.
82. Spending all reserves
83. Increasing higher rates of Council tax
84. Producing a fully costed needs budget
85. Councillors were not elected to pass the choice of cuts on to their electorate.
86. No - very difficult decisions ahead for the council but I have not heard any mention of releasing council reserve funds into the equation.
87. Petition Westminster to provide more funding, not less.
88. Stop doing non statutory things for example economic development. There is duplication between Councils & Scottish Enterprise in this field. Also CUT the ridiculously high rates of Executive pay for those in senior management positions. Including pensions and "golden goodbyes".

89. Income generation: A speed camera on Bridge St, Penicuik. Vote a labour government into Holyrood. Efficiency savings across the education and social care sectors (the two largest expenditure areas). Save in "peripheral" events such as Xmas lighting, Dalkeith show, street lighting - reduced hours, attract businesses to Town centres to increase revenue
90. Make a request to Lothian Joint Valuation Board for Midlothian council tax bands to be reviewed - many homes have been extended since the last assessment and residents could be paying higher band rates.
91. Campaign to the Scottish Government that income tax be raised by a penny to help fund local authorities and maintain vital services.
92. Crowdfunding- set up crowdfunding pages for certain services. A lot of people would like to pay more council tax to support local services, but a blanket rise is unfair as not everyone can afford it. Therefore set up crowdfunding for those who can afford and do want to add extra money for certain services - e.g. "Fund an extra classroom assistant for school xyz" or "Fund a crossing patrol person".
93. Appeal to local businesses to provide funding for the council. e.g. ask the Buccleuch Estate to support sporting grants. Ask science businesses at the Bush Estate to help fund school and library services.
94. Charging more for council tax, charging a small fee for book bug and such like, looking for sponsorship from bigger businesses who are looking to show they are socially responsible, advertising, a donation box in libraries, hire libraries for events.
95. Perhaps removal of all non-statutory activities is the only way to go.
96. Another obvious source of income is from development. Midlothian is experiencing a housing boom. Almost all of the county's towns and villages have recently been, or are being, expanded. Clearly the Council should require developers to make more significant financial contributions to local communities as a condition of planning permission. It is in the Council's gift to seek more. 79 three to five bedroom houses are currently being built in Roslin. The current selling price is £370k-£515k (all presumably within band G). Once complete, in 2018, that modest development will yield £193k additional Council Tax revenue based on current levels.
97. The current proposals might save money but at the risk of ruining the town and making it no more than a housing scheme on the outskirts of Edinburgh.
98. I appreciate running a large public body is a pretty tough challenge and cost cutting is never welcomed. However, more emphasis needs to be given to growing potential incomes not just cutting costs - focus on cost reduction can be a slippery slope when taken too far. As mentioned key services such as education and elderly/vulnerable care needs to be protected. As a semi-rural council cut backs on transport and road/winter maintenance could have serious implications on many levels, public transport links are not good enough to support this.
99. My money ideas below:
 - Secure an increased financial settlement for the county from government.
 - Demand increased contributions from housing developers to fund community infrastructure and projects, including ongoing contributions.

Turn off half of all streetlights to save money and reduce light pollution.

Devolve more responsibilities to some frontline workers, reducing middle management staff, or have management staff adopt more frontline responsibilities.

Introduce a system of charging services companies per day for works causing disruption to roads.

Increase efficiency of working practices by council employees

Further savings within council offices.

Stop outsourcing and keep contracts in house. Reduce information leaflets and pamphlets to householders.

Sell advertising on roundabouts.

Contact local clubs about the availability of pitches, I know a club I'm involved struggles to get facilities when required.

Don't award any council pay rises or bonuses for chief executives.

To review and identify how to share services. Either with other councils or at a Scottish level.

Why do each council have to be so different, it is the same legislation

100. Several line items in the Savings proposal Summary identify reduction in the number of staff/posts yet the saving in 2018/19 is the same as the amount shown in the column headed 'Total saving by 2021/22'. Examples are items 2, 7 and 8 in the Communities and Economy section. How can this be? If loss of a post in year 1 (i.e. 2018/9) saves, e.g. £106k then the cumulative saving to 2021/22 for that saved post will be 4x£106k up to and including 2021/22. The same logic applies to several items where savings other than through post losses are to be made. Are you sure that you have calculated the cumulative savings correctly?
101. A number of items suggest that Council capabilities could be used to provide expanded commercial services (these are Customer and Housing Services Item 3; Commercial Operations Items 5, 27, 28; Property and Facilities Management Items 1, 3, 4, 9, 13 and 26. Some of these seem to assume providing services to other authorities. This could only be done by agreement. Are you sure that other authorities are not looking to do the same i.e. creation of competitive situations where savings will not be made? Others appear to be entering competition with the private sector where prediction of likely net income is likely to be unreliable. This might apply particularly to Property and Facilities Management Item 1 'Building Services Company'. My concern here is the unreliability of the savings projections and the need for a strong business case for anything that is competitive (either don't do it or do it well).
102. You need more financial support from central government particularly for schools.
103. Consider merging with other Lothian councils. Get funds to support this process.
104. Maximum contribution from private housing developers should be sought.
105. The council should continue to make best use of its assets, including buildings, and rationalising where possible.

106. Given the volume of private housing investment coming into Midlothian at such a rapid rate, it is disappointing that the Council appear to have paid little attention to the levels of income that should have been generated through payments from developers. Stipends that are paid to the council by the likes of Cala and Barratt are utterly tokenistic and instead, should reflect the massive strain that the additional levels of people place on public and third sector services.
107. Pressure should also be maintained by MLC on the Scottish Government in terms of settlement levels and the ability to adjust council tax levels.
108. Shared Service - support this proposal
109. Having worked for Midlothian council in the recent past, I have seen a lot of wasted resources and time. Unnecessary paperwork, unnecessary printing, still a lot done by hand.

Staffing/ management/ councillors

1. You don't need councillors run it private
2. Pay cuts for councillors and people within the council sitting in corner offices doing less work than others. Put a stop to people claiming expenses. I could go on and on. But really what would be the point. You are going to cut services that are needed all over Midlothian then at the end of it your still going to give out big pay rises and still have a shortfall in the budget.
3. There has been no big pay rises in the council for years! 1% is the most for the last 5 years. There are also whole teams threatened with losing their jobs in place if the police who already have secure jobs! People did not vote for these councillors for that to happen. People need to get their facts right!!
4. I wanted to add, I have always found the council staff, friendly and helpful and approachable. This is so important because they are working to capacity most days.
5. I am so pleased and comforted by the commitment of MDC staff. Their commitment and obvious care and genuine interest in the people that they support from their heart is wonderful. If they avoid the council funding their pension for only three years paying into their gold status pension then we are fine. Well done to all and so simple. They must be so humble at this little sacrifice when most don't have anything close to their massive lump sum tax free payment and what is often seen as their entitlement to income and increment in their retirement. Thanks
6. Could the council and DWP work together to help unemployed people by allowing them to work within team on the ground. Rather than paying for say three people in a van the council would pay one supervising the other two

This is an example, but I have put this information to both Scottish and UK Government

7. I have just read through the summary pages of the proposed budget cuts and failed to find any mention of cutting the costs the council pay for the use of car parking facilities for council employees. Is this still a service the council pay for? (Reply provided, advising 2 spaces currently leased for staff/ visitors but this is under review as part of savings proposals)

8. I do realise that due to major errors that there is a funding shortfall for Midlothian but Services have to be maintained. Restructuring of Management and hot desking are ways to cut down.
9. Early retirement for those who have medical issues may be another way to cut costs and trim up the workforce.
10. I would like to express my concerns regarding the proposed removal of the Regular Car Allowance. As a member of the Social Work team I visit client's at their home as part of my everyday work routine, the vast majority of these clients are unable to come to the Council buildings and as we have a legal duty of care we are required to visit them. I am not in a position to purchase a vehicle therefore the leasing scheme is my only transport option. I fully understand that savings are required to be made but feel if this was purely a cost saving exercise then the Retention Car Allowance would also be under threat of removal, which I understand it is not. I would be unable to fulfil my job role without transport.

I do however feel there are savings which could be made within the current Regular Car Allowance scheme. The current scheme is "User chooser" type which I feel does not give the best impression to our local residents. I have often heard people commenting on "Council funds" being used to buy BMWs and Audis. Obviously they are not aware that staff make their own contribution towards these cars but still I feel it gives off the wrong impression within this current financial strain. I feel a scheme where there were perhaps on two cars to choose from – i.e. if you are not required to transport equipment in your car then a small compact car (Fiesta, Punto etc.) would be allocated to you; if you are required to transport equipment then an estate car would be allocated to you. So the car allocated to you would depend on your job role in the Council. This would surely save vast amounts by only contracting with one company for one or two car models. I personally do not claim mileage as I feel the Council already give me a bonus by accepting me into the Car Allowance scheme but wonder if there could perhaps be a change in this level – to save funds could a lesser amount be given?

11. I would like to express my concerns regarding the proposed removal of the Regular Car Allowance. I currently work in the Social Work team where I visit client's at their homes as part of my everyday work routine (an average week can be anything from 15 visits upwards ranging from Dalkeith to Silverburn), these clients are unable to come to see myself in my workplace and as we have a legal duty of care we are required to visit them. I am not in a position to purchase a vehicle therefore the leasing scheme is my only transport option. I appreciate that savings need to be made but surely if this was a cost saving exercise then the Retention Users would also be under threat of removal?
12. I do feel there are savings which could be made within the current scheme. Including removing the user chooser option or the council making a smaller contribution to the cars. I do not claim mileage and haven't done so since I got my lease car as I feel the Council already give me the benefit of a lease car; I wonder if this is something that could be rolled out to lease car users – that if we chose to have a lease car then no mileage could be claimed, surely this would save money rather than taking the lease cars away altogether?

Having a lease car allows me to do my job and without it I would be unable to fulfil my job role, it allows me to visit more clients in Midlothian covering the whole area, if I did not have

access to a lease car I could not afford to purchase a car, and if we were to solely rely on public transport to get to our visits this would be an absurd waste of time especially if we are looking to go to Penicuik/ Silverburn.

13. Reducing senior management from 8 to 7 - How about 6.
14. Car allowances - Close the scheme, and make sure car mileage is kept to a minimum, car users tend to be inefficient at routing to minimise total driving time and mileage. Every vehicle on Council business should be tracked.
15. Have the Senior management and Councillor Allowances been fully explored??
16. Not sure if you provide a final salary pension scheme for your employees but if you do this should be one of the first things to go. All staff should be put over to GPP. Hardly any employers run this scheme now as it is too expensive. Not even big pension companies provide this any more, so if you are still providing this it needs to be stopped.
17. Take away more senior managers 8 to 4 - taking away higher costs means less impact on services lower down.
18. Reduce councillors to 2 per ward not 3 - some work extremely hard and others appear to do little. Smaller groups also work more efficiently.
19. I would like to make reference to the lease car scheme. I have not chosen to benefit from this scheme, but I am absolutely horrified that the proposal is to remove this from "regular" car users, whilst keeping it for "retention" car users – this is an abomination.
20. Reduce number of council wards to reduce councillor costs and examine how much the council spend on hospitality and councillor expenses, perhaps capping these costs
21. Cut out all hospitality and other similar costs.
22. Review all staff benefits e.g. pensions, health care, leave provision and bring into line with the public sector.
23. I don't really see any significant savings in staff and overhead costs but then we expect the Council to look after itself!
24. Senior management level needs reviewed. Too many cuts, including the dissolving of whole departments. Too many cuts from vital services such as children and families and welfare advice services.
25. Stop catering for training events. Attendees are more than capable of providing a packed lunch. As long as you can provide tea and coffee.
26. Replace the lease car scheme with a car loan scheme
27. I suggest a top down approach is more appropriate and significant savings need to be made leaving us with the people who provide the services and pruning the managers who cost significantly more.
28. I would be interested in seeing a breakdown of management to frontline staff and wage bill comparison, transparency.

29. Over inflated pensions need to be seriously looked at and preferably stopped altogether. Midlothian council has for years shirked their financial responsibility, so the state of the council's finances should be of no surprise to anyone. I feel that by making school children, the elderly, and vulnerable take the brunt of these cuts is outrageous! The council should start by slashing their own vast pension provision, they should cut their workforce much more than is proposed and they should be ensuring that the remaining workforce work far harder than they currently do. The cuts should start at the top and not the bottom!
30. What does the council do in terms of improving efficiency in operational process as in the private sector this is the main way that cost cuts are found. Would all the councillors consider a pay cut? The majority of people in the private sector haven't had a pay rise in years yet we are expected to budget in our households for increased costs. From what I understand there is also a huge cost associated with sickness absence in the council and I'd like to understand how this will be tackled to reduce costs.
31. Why do so many council workers have vans that they take home when they all live in the same street? Surely they should get to the depot to collect a vehicle like everyone else has to get to work? Or pick other workers up from their local area to get to the depot. I know for a fact that council vehicles were used in the last month to enable someone to move house from Gorebridge to Innerleithen. Who paid for that fuel and wear and tear on the vehicles. Maybe monitoring vehicle use needs to be reviewed. For years council workers have taken liberties taking extra breaks and to be blunt not putting in a hard days graft and this just continues the higher up the ladder workers go and supervisors don't deal with people who continue to take these liberties because they did it themselves. Well this is a different world and it's essentially fraud taking a wage for not actually doing the job. What legal action has the council taken in regards the errors that were made in the demolition of houses in Newbyres crescent Gorebridge due to the carbon dioxide gas problems. Surely the builder, architect or someone needs to be held accountable for this. Simple things like switching off lights in buildings when no one is around. Switching off vehicle engines. Local councillors should have spent less supporting ridiculous ventures in Gorebridge like the Beacon. How much money has Midlothian council ploughed into that venture and why (assuming it isn't) is it not on a loan basis?
32. Do not cut services and then increase charges at the same time. Try cutting back on huge pensions and waste and corruption by councillors and employees.
33. Manage your money a little better and get rid of your useless, expenses grabbing senior managers. Your proposals are savage. Cuts to local services have a significant impact on our communities and seem to deliberately target the young, the old and vulnerable. I'm ashamed of what you deem to be acceptable. Look round your boardroom to see who you think is truly needed before deciding what sacrifices other people are going to have to make for you.
34. Feel your proposal is shocking. Ridiculous! You are cutting back on so much that helps Midlothian. Maybe you should look at reducing your wages instead!
35. Appoint Councillors who are actually interested in providing public services, rather than making political points???

36. Surely cutting the workforce results in redundancy payments - this doesn't seem to be included in the figures....natural reduction in workforce is a more budget conscious suggestion. No new building for the council offices....absolutely unnecessary when the residents are being asked to take a cut to their services, the council should too!
37. I use my car on a regular basis to take service users to appointments, support them to visit and access services and from hospital. I will not be able to do this without the regular car lease scheme as it will not be worth it. I also don't know how Midlothian Council are going to continue to attract social workers, OTs or any fieldwork staff at all without an incentive to work in Midlothian where it is very difficult to get around without a car.
38. How Midlothian Council spend public money is not entirely true. I don't think the public know about the cars that are rented for certain individuals on high wages who pay a very low amount to have a nice car on the road.
39. The whole of Midlothian Council needs reviewed from the top down, the council is top heavy. Money is wasted massively in areas where it could be saved. Several areas have "managers" all doing the same job where these could be consolidated to one position. There are departments where staff are off sick for long periods of time frequently - these staff should be assessed to find out if they are fit for work.
40. I think that rationalising the costs of management is worth reviewing.
41. Re-assess the Executives in the Council. Only losing one? I assume that one will be retiring? How many School Crossing Patrols could be employed for the same cost as one executive?
42. Making the Council run more efficiently. Better automated systems, less bureaucracy.
43. Making employees work more efficiently by giving objectives and expecting them to be met. Road crews having less time sitting in vans and more time doing the job!
44. Increasing expectations of employees and run the council more like a private company. If there were shareholders to please how much differently and efficiently would it run?
45. Explore outsourcing or a shared service for HR and Payroll; Customer Services and Finance. Reduce management positions across all service areas with a focus on retaining frontline staff who deliver services to the public.
46. Cut senior wages instead of services.
47. Cut office jobs and focus more on keeping Midlothian clean and safe.
48. Yes more cuts need to be made in management as opposed to men and women working on the ground actually carrying out these services. Also you should publish counsellors' expenses etc. so that we can all see if there is any way to reduce costs there!
49. Councillors/executive staff take a cut in pay before you even consider closing a single library. This has been a complete mis-management of funds.
50. I am very sorry, but I am sure a level of admin staff is unnecessary in the council. This could be a saving where the public will not be affected. Be sure to keep all services that prevent further problems in terms of mental health and anti-social behaviour.

51. Spend some of your liquid reserves. Reduce your business support services. Reduce your digital services. Reduce salary of chief executive and director of resources.
52. Cut down on high salaried positions in the council.
53. While I don't know salary levels, I would urge you to consider carefully the indirect impact of savings from some low paid admin staff. Not only would it be morally questionable to "save" these people, it may well also reduce the efficiency of some of the senior or public facing staff who then pick up the admin and do it slower. And yes, I have seen this happen.
54. Reduction in senior management throughout Midlothian council.
55. All wages over 40,000 p.a. to be reduced by minimum of 10%. And capped to a sensible limit.
56. Make a 5% reduction in the salaries of top management.
57. Reducing the amount of councillors (to save money).
58. Restructure middle management!!!!!!!
59. It's disgusting. Cut more managerial posts....
60. Reduce numbers of Council staff further e.g. management
61. Provost and Deputy Provost positions to go and their roles subsumed into those of the Lord Lieutenant.
62. Reduce number of councillors. They are not representing the area I live in so why is there a need for them. Cuts are guaranteed the quality of life and standards in the area and once in a decline it will be almost impossible to halt that path. Quite sad so-called professionals who claim to want to represent the area cannot see this.
63. Also look at work sickness and if you are thinking about offering redundancy look at who you chose carefully!!! As I know of one person who put in for it and was rejected then went off sick on and off for 7 years before eventually you gave them redundancy!!
64. Why not reduce, by at least 50%, the number of local councillors we currently have. There is no mention of looking at this in the proposed budget savings. A case of Turkeys not voting for Christmas.
65. Stop paying staff £35k+ a year to do jobs they are overqualified for. Perhaps we need less Councillors in our wards - this would save money.
66. Freeze councillors' salary.
67. Become a more efficient organisation. Instead of cuts to the public need maybe look in house first.
68. Do not cut manual workers. Ask bosses to try and do a shift.
69. Replace the full Senior Management team, the majority of the proposals outlined are obscene.

70. Look at cuts in house
71. Reduce councillors pay, pensions, allowances and expenses.
72. Reduce the recently highlighted dependency for renting luxury cars by the council.
73. EXECUTIVE TEAM: If a saving can reasonably be achieved in this area then it would seem a good place to start. However, the Council needs to be careful that it has the senior management in place to drive through a difficult process of savings and change.
74. Look at employee remuneration. Council pensions are still better than private companies.
75. Start job cuts at the top. Some of the salaries are ridiculous! Offer employees chance to work from home (where applicable) or term time opportunities for those outwith schools.
76. Senior staff should be replaced, as they obviously have not done a 5yr budget plan as all businesses do and the proposed cuts are going to severely impact on the people who need the help most. Senior management needs reviewed by an outside body and cuts to them need to be implemented as soon as possible as well as looking at middle management.
77. Clearly the biggest area of expenditure is staffing, so while nobody wants to see anyone lose their job, it is untenable for the council to maintain its policy of no compulsory redundancies while making swathing cuts that will have dramatic negative effects on the quality of life of local residents. Partner organisations within the voluntary sector, increasingly relied upon to fill gaps, are facing redundancies, pay freezes (ongoing now for nearly a decade), pay cuts or even closure. Surely staffing cuts must follow, as difficult as that is.
78. Overhaul Council staff holiday entitlement and pension scheme. From personal experience working at the Council is not an easy job and there is a stigma but the benefits are very generous and some but by no means the majority of staff are not very committed.
79. Discontinue the use of leased vehicles for employees, and the use of council vehicles for home use. Employees of other organisations i.e. NHS, police, fire, have to use public transport or their own personnel vehicles.
80. Removing Council staff cars scheme seems an obvious large saving as long as extra expense costs are accounted for in this costing. The potential consequences of each cut needs to be carefully considered but some would have little impact.
81. Scrap the lease car scheme for council workers, invest in electric pool cars for staff.
82. It is shocking that you are only proposing cutting two executive posts compared to the number of community and education posts proposed to be axed. This needs to be reconsidered and a review should be done as to whether the roles carried out by those in executive posts represents value for money for the taxpayer. In many of the private sector firms those in the most senior posts tend to represent very little value for money and I suspect the same will be true within Midlothian Council.
83. If you can reduce senior management structure from 8 to 7 why has it not yet been done to save on council tax.

84. Staff Training Courses: stop providing lunches - staff can be told to take a packed lunch where there is no facility/or shops nearby at the training venue to buy a lunch.
85. Admin costs, cut admin costs before vital public services. Midlothian Council have over 100 employees earning over £50k a year and the top salary is £115k. The Prime Minister earns £140k and a small regional Council awards £115k? This is truly ludicrous. Cut all art projects, remove a layer of top or middle management, reduce top salaries, address the working culture in the Council as productivity is shocking, cut back on wining and dining dignitaries, stop sending so much paper to residents - go digital where possible. Or stop cutting and raise more revenue - I'd be happy to pay a little more on my rent or council tax. And finally include suggestions from residents instead of presenting us with cuts
86. Maybe if the people deciding this that are the higher up on these decisions should take a pay cut themselves and let them see how hard it is without services to help
87. They won't cut their gigantic wages though? Let's be radical, march on Main St cut off all traffic, get the press to highlight the shameful #MidlothianCouncil and make our voices heard. Letters will only be kept away from public gaze
88. I also have a more radical idea, the residents march on the main road to protest, thus cutting off all traffic. Since @midgov don't respond or listen to us, perhaps blocking trade and getting the media to highlight how disgusting these decisions truly are
89. It's shameful! Especially when over 100 Council employees earn over £50k, top man is on £115k, in real terms same as our PM on £140k. They need to make "difficult" decisions by cutting their exorbitant wages and pension pots
90. Re @midgov Will you listen to other suggestions on where to make cuts, or raise more money to save essential public services in Midlothian?
91. Stop the twinning nonsense and European 'culture' trips by council.
92. Devolve more responsibilities to some frontline workers, reducing middle management staff, or have management staff adopt more frontline responsibilities.
93. I am very surprised to hear recently that Midlothian Council does not have a written Jobshare policy. I am told that the decision as to whether or not a job is suitable for job share is a random matter at Midlothian Council that is arbitrarily at the behest of a manager's personal thoughts and attitudes, and therefore is, by default, unfair and unequal. The Scottish Government have the ambition of making Scotland the very best place in the world for people to live and grow up. However, having come to live in Scotland from England, I can say, from personal experience, that many progressive private companies and public organisations have had in place, written Jobshare policies for well over 20 years. These policies were developed to retain experienced and valued staff who wanted to return to work after maternity leave for example, and were in line with research into work/life balance and the maintenance of a happy, healthy and hardworking workforce. Equally, progressive companies and organisations who have adopted Jobshare policies have registered significant reductions in time off work due to sickness. Food for thought for Midlothian Council!

94. Consider streamlining "top" management by combining services to reduce number of Heads of Service, reduce 2nd tier in a similar manner.
95. I think there should be more focus on the centre (Executive), which does not seem to be bearing as much of the cuts as other service areas
96. Why is only ONE management position being cut? Cut more of them, easy way to make big savings due to the extortionate wages being paid.
97. I am truly aghast at the amount of proposed manpower reduction. It is difficult enough trying to get hold of somebody at council headquarters. You are lucky if they get back to you within a reasonable timescale if at all!
98. Make useless council staff redundant - we can see there are plenty like that.
99. Stop unnecessary spending in the council - ie reduce number of pointless meetings to free time and resource.
100. I am assuming that all employed staff have been reduced as far as is practical and where contractors are employed that these are very closely monitored for quality of work and time involved.
101. Community workers already do a valuable amount of work and are essential in areas of deprivation and are usually augmented by volunteers and therefore it would be detrimental to the Communities they serve to cut their services any further.
102. I am pleased that you propose to cut now the 'Switch' program and the council now needs to move to compulsory redundancies. I think you should consider shared services and consider merging with both East Lothian and West Lothian.
103. The loss of one member of the senior management team will probably not be noticed, yet many of the other measures penalise the most vulnerable in society who are currently just managing because of wage freezes.
104. End the Switch program. Start compulsory redundancies.
105. Management Structure - I would absolutely support this proposal. The SM costs incurred by the council for such a small number of people are not acceptable in this climate.
106. Remove Regular Car Allowance - support this proposal. Pooled vehicles should be considered as standard, as should public transport be the preferred method of transport, rather than publicly subsidised travel.
107. I realise that cuts have to be made and everyone will be affected by something. It hard choices to make. You will also end up with skeleton staff who are vastly overworked within Midlothian Council!

Group responses

Loanhead Children's Sports & Gala Day Association

1. Introduction and General Principles

The Council currently supports Galas and local festivals with (a) a financial grant, (b) plant and labour support and (c) free lets of parks and other Council premises. Organising committees also require to engage with the Council to obtain a range of licences and consents for events, with fees being paid to the Council for items such as Public Entertainment Licences and Lottery Licences. The proposals within the Council's Change Programme impact on every aspect of this. We consider they represent a very real threat to the existence of events such as those organised by our Association.

We fully accept the financial challenges currently facing Midlothian Council and the need for the Council to make some radical changes to allow it achieve a balanced budget. In framing this response we have therefore sought to adopt an approach which seeks to work with the Council in achieving a way forward which works for all parties as opposed to simply seeking to reject the proposals insofar as they impact upon us.

We entirely endorse an approach which places greater emphasis on certain services being delivered by volunteers within the community, which seeks to maximise the potential of community volunteers, which seeks to build the capacity of communities to work with the public sector and for the Council to work in partnership with those volunteers and communities.

We are however concerned that certain of the changes proposed would actually work counter to that aim and result in the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver services and benefits to the community being seriously undermined.

A couple of examples to illustrate that point:-

(a) Galas and local festivals are currently presented by volunteer groups from the community with the fundraising for and the organisation of the events being entirely in the hands of volunteers, as well as much of the actual delivery of the events on the day. The removal of plant and labour support and the introduction of additional charges would make it much more difficult for the community volunteers to deliver the events and in some cases they would find it impossible to continue with the events. Those particular changes are therefore likely to result in the loss of considerable volunteer time and effort which our communities currently benefit from. The loss to communities through the diminution or cessation of these events would be much greater than any projected monetary saving achieved by the Council and would therefore be entirely disproportionate.

(b) It is suggested that the Council should withdraw from the labour intensive task of maintaining formal planted areas in parks, town centres, etc. It is further suggested that community volunteers could take over these tasks and that indeed this is the only viable manner in which to maintain this service. It is however separately suggested that the Council nursery at Vogrie should be closed, thus removing the in house provision of plants. If that was to occur it would effectively remove any realistic prospect of community volunteers taking over responsibility for formal planted areas as the plants would then require to be purchased on a commercial basis.

In summary, if the Council wishes community volunteers to step in and take the place of Council manpower in allowing for the continuance of certain services, the Council must recognise the need to provide the appropriate support to allow the volunteers to function.

2. The value of local Galas and Festivals

It is universally acknowledged that it is advantageous for a town or village to have a good community spirit, for residents to take a pride in their own community and for there to be a strong sense of belonging amongst members of the community. Where a strong sense of community is present, this creates a base or platform for many community activities and voluntary organisations. If the majority of residents consider they have a stake in the community, incidents of anti-social behaviour, youth disorder and vandalism are reduced.

Local Festivals preserve local traditions and provide hugely valuable opportunities for an entire community to come together in a shared annual celebration and expression of community identity. In a period when new housing and other developments are filling in the physical gaps between Midlothian's various settlements and there is a real danger of coalescence of our towns and villages, other means of reinforcing the separate identities of our communities become ever more important.

The most successful of these local festivals are, by a very considerable distance, the most important and notable occasions in the annual calendar of their respective communities. They do more than anything else to bring all sections of a community together, to create a good community spirit and to provide a positive image for the town or village concerned. They aid social cohesion, lift spirits and provide entertainment and enjoyment which is open and available to all members of the community.

Loanhead Children's Day is Midlothian's oldest and largest local festival and one of the most successful events of its kind in Scotland. Founded in 1903, the event has links to earlier annual community celebrations dating from the 1830's. It and other similar events elsewhere in Midlothian are extremely valuable assets which we cannot afford to lose. We believe this is fully understood by Councillors of all parties currently represented on the Council, one of which parties even made a specific commitment at the 2017 Council election to continue support for such events.

In addition to the value to their own individual communities, Galas and local festivals have been contributing to the currently developing Midlothian Events Strategy which seeks to benefit the local tourism sector and the Midlothian economy generally through attracting visitors to the area. The major Galas and local festivals are amongst the largest events in Midlothian. We should be seeking to enhance and develop these events for all of the benefits which they bring to the area, not placing them at risk of considerable downsizing and possible cessation.

3. Small Grants Budget

Further reductions are proposed in this area. We assume this will include reductions and possibly the complete removal of the grants currently given to Galas and local festivals through a separate strand of the Small Grant programme.

The amount of money currently being distributed through this programme is small. From our experience of the general Small Grant programme prior to a separate grant programme for Galas being reinstated, the total small grant budget does not justify the level of administration involved. The likely financial cost to the Council in administering the scheme and the cost in volunteer time to

applicants in using the scheme is disproportionately high when considered against the relatively small grant amounts involved.

Our organisation currently receives an annual grant of £833 from the Council. This represents only around 2% of our annual income. If the grant was to be reduced or removed entirely this would not have a material impact on our ability to continue to deliver our event. We appreciate the position of other Galas and local festivals may well be different. In particular, we suspect that for some of the smaller events the Council grant will probably make up a much larger proportion of their annual income. The loss or reduction of the grant could therefore have a material impact upon them.

4. Alternatives to Grant Funding

We consider there are steps which the Council could take to assist community groups generally in obtaining funding to take the place of the Small Grants Programme. We would make two suggestions in this regard:-

4.1 Midlothian Community Walk: A considerable number of mass participation charity walks and runs currently take place across Scotland where individual participants raise money for their selected charities through sponsorship. High profile examples include marathons and half marathons, the Kiltwalk and the Moonwalk plus events organised by individual charities such as the Memory Walk held recently in Midlothian. These events generally benefit national and international charities. Small local groups do not have the resources to organise such an event.

The Council could co-ordinate such an event to be held annually in Midlothian inviting individual residents, groups from workplaces, etc. to take part, with the stipulation being that all monies raised must benefit community based groups in Midlothian and with each participant selecting the particular organisation he or she wishes to support. Such an event would offer an opportunity to raise general public awareness of many of the smaller groups and charities operating in Midlothian and there would also be health benefits for participants.

4.2 Community Charter for Developers and Businesses: In common with other communities throughout Midlothian, Loanhead continues to witness considerable levels of new development involving both housing and retail/commercial ventures. With only a few exceptions, as a small community based group we have generally found it difficult to interact with the developers and with large retail operators moving into the area. It is often impossible to make direct contact with people of sufficient seniority within these organisations.

The stock response is often that, as a company, they support a particular charity at national level, such matters are dealt with at head office and they have no budget at a local level to support projects within the local community. Others have arrived amidst a great flurry of promises of support for and involvement in the local community, which promises are soon forgotten. Many of these businesses commonly operate policies which do not even permit the display of posters advertising local community events on their premises.

The Council is in the unique position of having direct contact with senior management and decision makers within such companies and organisations during the period when any development is being planned. In addition to the legally enforceable commitments under Section 75 agreements for contributions to school building programmes and highways infrastructure, we need a recognition that small local projects and organisations are equally important and should also be supported.

We need to create a culture of every developer or business moving into Midlothian recognising the need to support local community groups and projects and that this should be an ongoing process and not a one off PR photo opportunity. We suggest that every developer or business moving into Midlothian should be invited to sign up to a voluntary charter to this effect. They could then be given details of various local groups or projects seeking support, possibly from some form of directory of sponsorship opportunities maintained by the Council in conjunction with local communities.

Alternatively they could be invited to contribute to some form of Common Good or Local Community Fund established for each community, where the developer or business may wish to provide financial support but without becoming directly associated with any particular organisation or project. Such funds should be established throughout Midlothian under the management and control of trustees from within each community.

The Council could host networking events bringing together businesses and representatives of local community and voluntary groups. The Council could also establish an awards scheme which would provide businesses with recognition for their work in the local community and the ability to use such awards to promote the businesses concerned. The Council could also encourage national chain stores operating in Midlothian, businesses in retail parks and the like to install community noticeboards, providing facilities for the promotion of local events.

5. Plant and Labour Assistance

Of the various suggested removals and reductions in service, the one which is of greatest concern to our organisation (and we would suspect the vast majority of Gala committees) is the potential removal of plant and labour assistance currently provided by the Council for our events.

The Council currently provides equipment such as marquees, staging, tables, chairs, public address systems, generators, barriers, parking cones, diversion/road closure signage, floral decorations and waste bins, with the delivery, set up and subsequent removal of such items being attended to by Council staff. In addition, cleansing staff attend larger events with a suitable vehicle to deal with the emptying of bins and removal of refuse and highways lighting staff facilitate the erection of bunting. If these services were to be withdrawn, the cost of commercial alternatives would be considerable and will quite probably prove prohibitive for many organisers of community events.

The services currently provided are highly regarded by event organisers. In many cases excellent working relationships have been established over many years between Gala Committees and the Council staff delivering the services. Our clear preference is to continue the existing services which we consider to be the most valuable and important element of the support provided by the Council to allow community volunteers to deliver their respective events. If financial restrictions mean that cannot be achieved, we would make the following suggestions (some of which could potentially be adopted to provide efficiencies and savings within the existing system even if it is retained in its entirety):-

5.1 It is noted that within the Change Programme there are various suggestions for the Council developing a number of entrepreneurial (commercial) services. Such a service could be created to provide event support. This could then provide equipment for both Council supported events and additional events. It is noted that the Council intends to explore the use of Vogrie Country Park as a venue for weddings and available for hire for events organised by external promoters. A Council

service providing marquee hire and other equipment would complement that and could prove to be a source of additional income.

5.2 If the option outlined at 5.1 was pursued, a price list for individual items of equipment would be created and for supported events a “grant” would be awarded in the form of a maximum allowance to be used towards the provision of equipment for any particular event. This would allow the Council to set a maximum level of support for any particular event. It would also allow event organisers to select the equipment of greatest use/importance to their particular event and with the option to obtain additional equipment on a paid for basis insofar as exceeding the maximum supported level for their event.

5.3 It is appreciated that a large part of the cost of providing equipment for events is the requirement to have staff in attendance out with normal working hours and therefore involving overtime payments. Such costs could be reduced by having staff deliver and set up equipment for Saturday events during normal working hours on a Friday, on the basis that event organisers would require to have responsibility for the equipment left overnight and provide overnight security on site. Reductions in the maintenance of parks and the like and in frequency of grass cutting cycles could free up staff to allow event tasks to be carried out within normal working hours. The erection of bunting could also potentially be carried out during normal working hours as opposed to at other times involving overtime payments.

5.4 Equipment could be made available for groups to themselves uplift, use and return. This would allow items to be available to support events but without Council staff costs in transporting and setting up equipment. This would be particularly suited to items such as tables and chairs where no particular expertise is required in relation to the setup of the equipment.

5.5 Staff time could be saved through the replacement of equipment with alternatives which are less labour intensive than that currently in use. In particular the current large portable stage is very labour intensive. It could be replaced with a fold out trailer based stage which could be assembled and dismantled much more quickly than the existing structure and with reductions in the numbers of staff involved. It is understood that funding towards the purchase of such equipment is currently available through the Tyne & Esk Leader Fund.

5.6 The arrangements for storage of equipment should also be reviewed. It is understood that the majority of the equipment for use at events is still stored in the large shed at Vogrie Country Park. The cramped conditions there must make loading and unloading much more difficult than it needs to be. Larger premises where equipment could be stored on pallets and loaded and unloaded using a fork lift would save much time and effort. A more centrally based storage facility for this equipment would also make more sense and save on travelling time, particularly when events are being staged in the Penicuik / Roslin / Bilston / Loanhead areas. Council proposals to provide new depot facilities to replace Stobhill and other existing facilities could provide an opportunity to achieve this.

5.7 In recent years the Council has operated a Family Fun Day at Dalkeith Country Park on the Sunday following the Midstock Music Festival (Midfest). We do not have details of the most recent figures for this event and by how much costs may have been offset since the introduction of admission charges, however we understand that costs were in the region of £37,400 in 2014 and a similar sum in 2015. At that time Council support for all Galas and festivals was understood to be around £40,000. The cost of the Fun Day alone was therefore roughly equating to the combined cost of supporting all of the Galas and local festivals.

As the Fun Day does not provide any of the benefits for individual communities as outlined in section 2 above, we would submit the Council should cease the operation and funding of this event and leave events on that weekend entirely in the hands of the private promoters of the Midstock Music Festival. We suspect that ceasing support for the Fun Day could potentially achieve at least 40% of the total potential savings of £75,000 in this area without impacting on support for any of the Galas and local festivals.

6. Maintenance of Parks

The proposals to reduce maintenance standards in parks and open areas, extend the frequency of grass cutting cycles and end formal planting of flowerbeds will impinge on our events, in that areas which are our main venues (Fountain Green and the Memorial Park) will, in all probability, no longer be prepared to the standard required. There would also be a general deterioration in the appearance of the town centre. This is an area which currently requires significant improvement as opposed to a further lowering of standards.

6.1 Fountain Green. This area in the centre of Loanhead is particularly associated with our organisation, having been the location of the Crowning Ceremony on Loanhead Children's Day since 1983. It is also used as the site of the annual Loanhead Street Fair, houses the town's Christmas Tree and majority of the Christmas lighting display and is the location of Loanhead's Mining Memorial.

In view of the prominence of the area in the centre of the town, we consider it is essential to maintain the area to a high standard including regular grass cutting and the continued planting of the raised flower beds around the Mining Memorial. Our organisation is willing to investigate assuming responsibility for grass cutting and the maintenance of flower beds at this location. We would however require to continue to look to the Council for the provision of plants for the flower beds.

6.2 Memorial Park. We also have a long involvement with the Memorial Park. We worked with the Council over a number of years to achieve the upgrade of the park which was completed in 2015. We have subsequently continued to work with the Council in achieving Green Flag status for the park in 2016. We do not wish to see standards drop and the hard work of recent years wasted. Our organisation would wish to explore the possibility of elements of the park maintenance being taken over by community volunteers, with particular reference to formal planted areas in the raised flower beds at the main entrance to the park and in the garden area around the War Memorial. Again, we would however require to continue to look to the Council for the provision of plants for the flower beds.

6.3 Other areas within Loanhead. In general terms we consider that, far from lowering standards, considerable improvements are actually required. We appreciate this can only be achieved through the use of community volunteers. We would hope that our organisation's involvement with Fountain Green and the Memorial Park as detailed at 6.1 and 6.2 above could serve as a catalyst to achieve a much wider scheme of community involvement in projects of this nature.

There is a need to enthuse the local community through the possibility of significant improvements in the local environment as opposed to creating a climate of acceptance that current poor standards are only going to decline further as a result of reductions in service by the Council. We refer to environmental issues identified in the Loanhead Neighbourhood Plan Review of 2014 and followed up in the Loanhead 350 Plan including dealing with the issue of waste bins in Clerk Street, the blight

of abandoned shopping trolleys across Loanhead, the roundabouts at the entrance to Pentland Retail Park and on the Edgefield Link Road which have never been landscaped and opportunities for community maintained planters and community bulb planting at various locations.

There is an empty plot close to the western end of The Loan which has been maintained by the Council as a garden area over many years. We would suggest investigating the possibility of selling this plot (possibly also with some adjacent ground) as a building plot and with the sale proceeds being made available to the local community to fund community environmental projects.

7. Transfer of Responsibility for Pavilions

The pavilion in the Memorial Park is currently used by Loanhead Miners' Youth FC (LMYFC) to provide changing facilities for matches played on the football pitch in the park. It is also used by our organisation on Loanhead Children's Day and on the occasion of one other event. From initial informal discussions with LMYFC we understand that club is not interested in taking over the pavilion and would instead intend to use its existing facilities at the Bayne Memorial Hall (situated very close by) to service matches in the Memorial Park.

The use of the pavilion in the Memorial Park is not critical as far as our events are concerned and there would be no material impact on our events if it was not available. The existing structure is utilitarian and does not enhance the visual appearance of the park. As it would appear that no community organisation is likely to be interested in taking over responsibility for the building, we would not object to its closure and removal from the park. In the event of demolition of the building, we would ask that electricity, water and drainage connections are maintained in a manner where they could be used on a temporary basis for events in the park. Such an arrangement would enhance the facilities within the park for events such as Loanhead Children's Day.

8. Reductions in the Number of Football Pitches

Currently there are four full size football pitches in Loanhead being those in the Memorial Park, Burghlee Park, Park Avenue Playing Field and King George V Park. The pitch in the King George V Park is immediately adjacent to the recently completed Paradykes Primary School and community facilities. It is understood that the pitch is to become a floodlit hybrid pitch as the final part of that project.

Providing that floodlit hybrid pitch is indeed installed in the King George V Park and providing maintenance (including frequency of grass cutting) in the Memorial Park and Burghlee Park can be retained at current levels, our understanding is that LMYFC (which operates between 10 and 15 teams over various age groups for both boys and girls) would be in a position to forego (albeit reluctantly) the use of the pitch at Park Avenue Playing Field and concentrate its activities on the other 3 pitches.

The area currently occupied by the football pitch at Park Avenue would then become (with the exception of pathways cut through the grass) non maintained public open space similar to the existing area lying immediately to the south and leaving open the possibility of the reinstatement of the pitch at some point in the future if there was increased demand from users and funding available.

We consider that such an arrangement would provide sufficient pitches to meet the current requirements of local teams, should allow the Memorial Park to retain its Green Flag status and

would ensure the Memorial Park continues to be maintained at the standard required for our organisation's events, whilst also allowing the Council to make considerable savings in ground maintenance and grass cutting costs. We understand that LMYFC also have further proposals and suggestions for additional works at Burghlee Park / Bayne Memorial Hall which could be of benefit to all concerned.

9. Charges for the use of Parks and other Council owned Open Spaces

It is proposed in the report that charges are introduced in areas where currently no charge is made, including for "events held in Council open spaces". It is unclear how this could impact upon our organisation.

The majority of Loanhead Gala events are held in 2 locations, being the Memorial Park and Fountain Green. In addition to the afternoon programme on Children's Day, the Memorial Park is used for a range of sporting events including a Fun Run, Children's Football Competition and Children's Sports. In addition to the Crowning Ceremony on Children's Day, Fountain Green (where a permanent platform base for our events was constructed in 2007) is used for a variety of events including the judging of fancy dress competitions at the Carnival Parade, a Dog Show and Concerts.

No charge is currently raised for the use of Fountain Green. For the Memorial Park, we take a let of the park for the entire Gala Week to allow for the various events and also preparatory and clearance works around the Children's Day. A charge is calculated based on the rate for hiring a football pitch and is then applied for 12 hours per day for the entire period. This gives rise to a charge in the region of £1,500 against which a free let is then applied to cancel out the charge.

The charge calculated for the park is entirely notional. The park remains open to the public throughout this period and there is unrestricted access to amenities such as the children's playground. The Gala Week takes place at a time when the football pitch is actually out of use for the summer period with the pitch unlined and goalposts removed. Our let (excluding the use of the pavilion for a limited number of hours on 2 days) therefore does not involve any actual cost or even potential loss of income to the Council.

If the existing free lets for the park were to be removed (and possibly also charges introduced for the use of Fountain Green), even at current levels of hire charge, the financial burden imposed upon us would be considerable. We would stress that, as outlined above, the existing arrangements do not involve any actual cost or loss of potential income to the Council. Any charges would be even more unjustifiable if we are to become involved in the maintenance of these areas as detailed separately above.

10. Fairgrounds

Reference is made in the report to increasing charges for circuses (and presumably also fairgrounds) which use Council owned parks. On this issue, due regard should be given to a special arrangement which currently applies to fairgrounds attending as part of a Gala or local festival.

Fairground operators currently pay a ground rental charge, the level of which is dependent upon the size of the fair. They also pay an administration fee and lodge a payment (bond) as a surety against any ground reinstatement costs which might arise.

With a view to having fairground operators make a larger financial contribution towards the Gala or event they are attending, in recent times the Council has agreed not to levy the ground rental charge upon the fairground operator where that operator agrees to make a suitable contribution to the event organiser. In our case, this arrangement assisted us in obtaining a financial contribution of £2,000 from the organiser of the fairground which attended our event in 2017.

We would wish to retain an arrangement which assists us in obtaining a realistic financial contribution from the fairground operator. From discussions with the organisers of other large Galas and festivals in Midlothian where a travelling fair attends over a period of a week to coincide with the event, we are aware that the particular nature of the existing arrangements often results in difficulties being encountered in negotiations between fairground operators and local Gala Committees which, in some cases, are preventing the Gala Committees from recovering the full level of contribution from the fairground operator.

The existing system is complex with separate rental and administration fees payable by the fairground operator (aside from the bond or surety payment and fee for a public entertainment licence) and a range of different charges depending upon the size of the fair. We would suggest a simplified system which builds in a fixed contribution to the Gala/local festival when the fair is attending to coincide with the event. In cases where a fair or circus is attending and using a Council owned park at times separate from any community event, the contribution which would otherwise have gone to the Gala/local festival could instead go to the local fund for the community concerned suggested at 4.2 above.

11. Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTRO's)

It is proposed in the report that charges should be introduced for the grant of TTRO's. Several TTRO's are required for our main events to allow for the likes of closure of roads for processions and ceremonies, closure of parking bays and waiting restrictions on parade and diversion routes.

Whilst we would endorse the suggestion that charges should be introduced for TTRO's obtained by contractors undertaking works on behalf of utilities for commercial purposes, we consider it is important that TTRO's required by community organisations are exempted from any such charges. Any such charges could have an adverse impact not only on local Galas and festivals but on events such as Remembrance Sunday parades and events connected with the switch on of Christmas lights.

12. Communities Officers' Posts

In common with other communities throughout Midlothian, there is a Communities Officer employed by the Council based in our community. Our own experience is that we are unaware of any significant benefit accruing to the community from the existence of this role. Whilst we are obviously unaware of the full range of duties undertaken by such officers and their effectiveness or otherwise across Midlothian as a whole, at a time when huge savings require to be made by the Council and extremely significant cuts to frontline services are being considered to achieve those savings, it would appear to our organisation that the removal of these roles would have a much lesser impact on communities than some of the other cuts which are suggested. We would therefore suggest that the removal of these posts should be considered as an alternative means of achieving part of the savings required.

13. Partnership Working between the Council and Community Organisations

The report, quite correctly, stresses the need for a change of approach on the part of the Council to deliver services with communities instead of to communities. There is a need to move away from the traditional top down delivery method for services and instead create much more of a partnership approach.

As an organisation we have a large number of different interactions with the Council. In all we had 28 different interactions with departments and officers of the Council in the course of arranging and carrying through our programme of events in 2017. In general we find the Council officers we deal with to be friendly, helpful and supportive. Sadly however this is not always the case and there is one particular area where a change of attitude and approach is required.

In recent years, in common with other similar event organising bodies, we have found ourselves required to deal with an ever increasing number of event licensing, health and safety and other such requirements. One example is the Safety Advisory Group process requiring the preparation of a detailed Event Plan and associated risk assessments, which process was applied to our event for the first time in 2016. Our Event Plan and the associated risk assessments extend to around 100 pages and a considerable amount of volunteer time is taken up in its preparation.

It is a major undertaking for small volunteer community groups to deal with all of these requirements in addition to all of the other aspects of organising and fundraising for our events. It is therefore imperative that in its dealings with community groups the Council adopts a helpful and supportive approach. Such an approach will be even more necessary if community volunteers shall in future be required to undertake aspects of our events or associated matters which have previously been dealt with by the Council.

In making arrangements for our 2017 events we encountered particular difficulties in connection with permissions for our processions. These difficulties resulted in our coming within a matter of hours of having to cancel a major parade event in June as a result of delays in the issue of the necessary consent by the Council, despite our having submitted our application in February, there being no difficulties with the Police and the TTRO's having been issued over a month before the event. The difficulties encountered have been fully detailed in a separate submission to the Council as have our suggestions to resolve these problems. The Council must ensure these issues are resolved in order that community volunteers are not placed under undue stress and that volunteer time is not wasted in this manner.

14. Volunteering Programmes

If existing services are to be transferred to community based volunteers, it is self-evident that greater numbers of volunteers will be required. In addition to residents, groups of volunteers from Midlothian based employers is another potential source of assistance. Workplace volunteering programmes could be particularly well suited to environmental projects. The Council is best placed as regards contacting businesses, making them aware of volunteering opportunities and co-ordinating offers of help.

As the largest employer in Midlothian the Council should be leading the way in encouraging Council employees to become involved in volunteer programmes. As an example of what might be achieved, we would highlight the issue of first aid cover for events. This is a basic requirement which has to be put in place by all event organisers.

For many years we have used one of the leading Scottish first aid organisations to provide this cover for our events. In recent years however, despite the actual first aiders being unpaid volunteers, the fees charged to us by the organisation concerned have risen astronomically, increasing by over 400% in the period from 2015 to 2017. We are as a result actively seeking an alternative source of provision of first aid cover for our events. There will no doubt be many trained first aiders amongst the Council's workforce. Could these people be formed into a volunteer team of first aiders who could then provide first aid cover at community events in Midlothian?

Initiatives of this nature would help to counter balance the impact of cutbacks in other areas. They would also reinforce the notion of partnership working between the Council and community organisations.

15. Instrumental Tuition

We note the intention to re-introduce charges for instrumental music tuition in Midlothian schools. Whilst this does not directly impact on our situation, large numbers of bands (principally local brass and pipe bands) are engaged for our main events and that is mirrored at the other large Galas. We are concerned to ensure that there remains a steady flow of young musicians to keep local community bands in a healthy and viable position.

We have previously raised concerns as regards the lack of any programme of piping and drumming tuition as part of the instrumental programme in Midlothian schools and the link between that and a declining and ageing membership in local bands. There is perhaps an opportunity, through input from the community, to establish a programme of tuition leading to the formation of a Midlothian Schools' Pipe Band. We are aware of an individual who is a well-known figure in the piping world who is now a resident in Midlothian and who has been involved in establishing programmes of this nature in other parts of Scotland. We understand he is willing to become involved in establishing such a programme in Midlothian. We further understand that some funding to support such a programme is potentially available from an external source.

If a Midlothian Schools Pipe Band were to be established, it could support local events throughout the area, provide a source of trained pipers and drummers for other local bands in future years and prove to be a source of pride and prestige for Midlothian. There is a danger that the Council's Change Programme, which will inevitably cause a lot of pain for communities, will create an entirely negative atmosphere throughout Midlothian. We consider it important to find opportunities arising from the changes where an entirely new approach can actually make things better. This might be one such opportunity.

Artlink Midlothian

I've responded to your invitation to Have Your Say about the Change Programme.

The plans to close local libraries in our opinion will only push costs onto other areas of the local authority as a result of isolation and lack of opportunity for people to learn and develop themselves. Resilience in communities requires base resources for points of social contact, signposting and help to onward personal and social development.

If we operate only on a reductive model, negating the potential of leverage and joint working, we miss the opportunity to expand what we do through a more alliance contracting model, where organisations strategically work together on an aim, sharing resource and bringing in investment

from other areas in relation to the aim. A very good example of this way of working is already taking place in Midlothian, described below.

In response to one of the priority areas for the autism strategy is a joint project between Midlothian libraries, Artlink, Barnardos and Dalkeith High School. Libraries applied to the Scottish Libraries Council's library improvement fund to pilot a youth club for pupils of mainstream high schools who have autism related anxiety, and who have no social lives beyond school. The bid was successful and the work, which will last a year, has begun. This collaboration will work because we share expertise – the young people bring their skill base, school provides knowledge and support, Barnardos provides autism expertise, Artlink provides specialist arts input, and libraries will host the club local to the young people, and offer resources to expand knowledge through books and online resources. Most importantly, the young people will feel part of a local library, that it's their space, and their neighbourhood.

This approach will work because resources are shared, and planning can happen to acquire what is needed to sustain the opportunity. The potential benefits for those and many other marginalised young people might actually build skills, create networks, boost confidence, increase respite for families and reduce onward pressures on health and social care budgets.

Libraries are the last bastion for the lonely, the learners who never made it onto college, the people who don't meet eligibility criteria for support, the ones who slipped through the net. Instead of closures, those services could be tapped into for one of the most welcoming and innovative places in Midlothian for small groups to meet, learn and be part of something greater. Libraries don't judge, they don't require an assessment to use them, they don't require rules of engagement, they are neutral places of community acceptance, and the potential for leveraging in resource for progressive partnership work around marginalised communities.

Kara Christine, Artlink Midlothian Coordinator

Response of the Committees of Penicuik in the Park, Penicuik Hunter and Lass, and Penicuik on Parade to Midlothian Council's Change Programme to Address Midlothian Council's Financial Challenge to 2021/22

Introduction

It will be widely accepted that events such as occur during Hunter and Lass Week in Penicuik are of immense value to the communities they serve. After all, the Hunter and Lass Week is the only time in the year when the community gathers in its thousands to share enjoyment of an event, thereby fostering a spirit of being part of - even having ownership of - what happens in the community. It is a matter of considerable regret, therefore, that some of the proposals contained in the Council's Change Programme seem directly to threaten the very existence of these events.

This document represents our attempt to suggest some means by which the Council's financial challenge, which is not itself a matter of dispute, can be overcome without prejudice to the future of the aforementioned community events. It is hoped that the document will be received in the spirit in which it has been written: one which is both constructive and conciliatory. For ease of reference, the ensuing paragraphs are numbered.

1. Provision of Equipment. The proposed change which will impact most severely on all our events is the removal, or even the curtailment, of the service whereby the Council provides, installs and dismantles equipment. The cost of the commercial hire of equipment such as marquees and stages would almost certainly be prohibitive. It is likely that events would have to be cancelled. Clearly, this is not an outcome that our committees, or Midlothian Council, would like to see. It is suggested, therefore, that the Council run a commercial marquee hire facility, the revenue from which would enable the Council to continue providing the current service in this regard, or, at worst, to charge only very modest fees to serve community events.

It is further suggested that labour costs could be significantly reduced by having equipment installed and removed during the working week, with only the hire of a night watchperson (if it is thought necessary to safeguard the equipment) being paid at unsocial hours' rates.

2. Storage of Equipment. The acquisition of a central and efficient storage facility for Council equipment would further reduce labour costs in accessing same when required.

3. Council Grants. The value of the Council grants to an event can reasonably be said to vary in proportion to the percentage relation between the grant and the overall event budget. Thus it is that the grants are less essential to the larger events. It is therefore suggested that, if the status quo cannot be maintained, the award of grants nevertheless be continued for those events whose survival most depends on them.

4. Public Parks. One proposed change concerns the introduction of a charge for events held in "Council open spaces", which presumably would include Penicuik Park. It should be borne in mind, however, that although the Penicuik in the Park committee books the use of the Park for its event (and the other two events), public access to the Park remains unrestricted, and no admission fee is charged. The booking simply ensures that no other organization, such as the rugby or archery clubs, can have coincident use of that part of the Park used by the event. These two clubs choose to be represented at the event itself in any case. Thus it is hard to see a reasonable justification for levying a charge for use of the Park for an event in the very community it exists to serve.

5. Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders (TTRO's). One proposed change is the introduction of fees for TTRO's. While it seems reasonable to charge, say, a utility requesting a TTRO to enable works to take place, we would submit that voluntary organizations running community events should be exempt from such charges.

6. Partnership with Midlothian Council. As is often stated by event organizers at our annual Council Meetings, the Council assistance with events is very significant and much appreciated, and relations with Council workers are good. This provides a sound basis for the increased partnership working which is proposed. However, we would draw attention to the matter of the provision of the necessary permissions for our parades. Historically, this is not a process which has gone smoothly, despite early submission of applications, and it is hoped that this will not be allowed to mar the otherwise good partnership as we move forward.

7. Fairground Fees. It has been suggested by a Council representative that fairground operators could pay the organizer of the event they are attending a sum equivalent to the ground rent levied by the Council, in which case the Council would waive that ground rent. This has not been easy to implement, as it seems not to sit happily alongside hitherto accepted procedures. Better by far

would be an arrangement whereby the fairground operator paid the Council a fixed fee, an agreed amount of which would be passed by the Council to the event organizer.

8. Volunteer Contributions. The Council wishes to encourage volunteer contribution to the community and its events. This is laudable, and is indeed existing practice for all of our events, but it cannot be extended unreservedly, as certain tasks require expertise and equipment which are not accessible to volunteers. This applies, for example, to the erection/dismantling of marquees, stages, etc. and to the collection and disposal of refuse. It is our contention, therefore, that there is not much room for manoeuvre in this regard.

9. Fund Raising. It has come to the attention of our committees that some authorities in Scotland adopt strategies which might usefully be considered for adoption in Midlothian. These include:

- requesting of commercial groups moving into the area that they sign up to some kind of voluntary community charter. Funds thus raised could be channelled to the community through the events committees.
- organizing an authority-wide charity walk, with participants raising funds for their specified community event.

10. Family Fun Day. The benefit of events to the immediate community is less obviously apparent in the Council-run Family Fun Day at Dalkeith Country Park than it is in the events already discussed. It is suggested that that might be reason to consider termination of support for the Family Fun Day, particularly as it seems to be especially expensive.

It is hoped that some or all of the above suggestions might be adopted by the Council, and that the Council and ourselves can continue to work in partnership to serve and bolster the communities we value so highly.

9th November 2017

King's Park Primary School Parent Council

Dear Councillors and Officers

We write on behalf of King's Park Parent Council in response to Midlothian Council's proposed budget cuts for 2018/19 to 2021/2022. We are most concerned about the cuts that will affect the most vulnerable children in our community.

The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach has been the national policy in Scotland since 2010 that puts the rights and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of services that support them. Many of these proposed cuts contradict the GIRFEC approach. Council and Government both have a responsibility to support children and young people in accordance with GIRFEC and the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014.

We strongly oppose cuts to:

Early Intervention and Sure Start - Cutting Early Intervention services and Sure Start will lead to the youngest children falling through the safety net before they even reach school. Studies show the wider value, and longer-term cost savings, of early intervention. The knock-on impact for our school

will be a more challenging teaching environment and increased pressure on vital support staff such as Learning Assistants who are also targeted.

Learning Assistants - Cutting Learning Assistants removes a vital support from some of the most vulnerable pupils in our school. Children with Additional Support Needs rely on this service. Learning Assistants improve attainment across the whole class. Teachers cannot teach a class where they have a child or children who is not getting the support they need. The Council already cannot meet its requirements on inclusion of all pupils without sufficient Learning Assistants.

Libraries - Closing local libraries starves children of a vital opportunity to access not only books, but computers, activities such as coding workshops, and a free, safe space. To date, 1334 people in Midlothian have signed a petition against library closures (at 21 Nov 2017).

<https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries>

Free instrumental tuition - Learning a musical instrument, and playing it with others, has huge benefits for building community, developing social skills, improving maths skills and improving mental health. Although the most disadvantaged will still be eligible for free tuition, there are many families who will not qualify and will not be able to afford the fees. To date, 2393 people in Midlothian have signed a petition against cutting free instrumental tuition (at 21 Nov 2017)

<https://www.change.org/p/janet-lay-douglas-midlothian-gov-uk-say-no-to-the-proposed-budget-cut-of-ourmidlothian-schools-music-tuition-service>

Many of the other cuts proposed will erode the quality of children's experience at school:

Cuts to janitorial staff - Schools depend on their janitors; they are a valuable part of the team that makes the school a community. In many cases, they show a loyalty that goes beyond their remit.

The King's Park buildings are old and require ongoing maintenance.

Cuts to school crossing service - At King's Park Primary we have worked hard to encourage children to walk to school. Cutting the crossing services makes this more dangerous and will only serve to discourage active travel to school. We have visually impaired parents who rely on this service.

Increasing charges for school meals will hit those who do not qualify for free schools meals but who cannot afford to pay the hardest. These are the children who will not get something hot to eat on a cold day. School meal provision should reflect Eating Better Living Better guidance. These are all the cuts which will impact on children and young people:

1. Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services
2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Review Surestart contracts
4. Reduce lifelong learning and Employability
5. Reduce DSM carry-forward allowance
6. Charging for instrumental tuition
7. Review charges for after school clubs
8. Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2

9. Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches
10. Reduction of library services
11. Removal of the non-statutory school crossing service
12. Increasing the charge for school meals
13. Reduction of high school lunch provision to 'soup and a sandwich'
14. Reduction in janitorial services
15. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges
16. Stopping sporting grants
17. Reducing lifeguard cover at pools

This is an unacceptable and punitive erosion of education and opportunity for our children.

What we would like you to do:

- Thoroughly assess the risks of each of the 17 cuts listed above.
- Devise full and comprehensive mitigation plans for the cuts that are agreed by Councillors.
- Publish and advertise the cuts that go ahead, including risk and mitigation, in plain English.
- Talk with people about the impact and share ideas about how it could be minimised.
- Do this, not in the Council building, but in the community - at community groups and schools, on the high street at supermarkets, Job Centres and post offices.
- Crucially, we request that you meet with all the MSPs who represent our area and ask them to oppose the cuts to Local Authority funding by the Scottish Government.

In light of increased population growth, high levels of deprivation and demand on services for children and young people, we want to see Midlothian Council take a resolute stand against these cuts.

Yours sincerely,

King's Park Parent Council

Black Diamond FM

Here is a few thoughts related to the saving that affects or potentially affects Black Diamond FM, not to mention the centre groups:

Education Communities and Economy

Service Area Communities and Economy

Proposal Staff saving from community asset transfer of Newtongrange Community Learning Centre building

Forecast Savings	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
				Total	
£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Incremental savings	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025
Cumulative savings	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
FTE staff impact	1	0	0	0	1

Staff saving of post of Newtongrange Community Learning Centre Manager following community asset transfer of the building. This would involve a full community asset transfer of the building to a community management committee, although there would need to be confidence about its ability to fund the maintenance of the building and to run it effectively as a genuine community asset. The future of the building could also be more widely considered in relation to the opportunities for activities at the new Newbattle High School, and the outcome of current master planning work at Newtongrange Town Centre.

- 1) Centre name wrong
- 2) There is no manager- the last surviving member of staff is a centre co-ordinator which is an enhanced administration assistant post
- 3) The highlighted phrase----says ‘following community asset transfer’ this could not be achieved for 2018/19-----Guidance on Community Empowerment Act (2015) has appeal process alone that could take 6 months
- 4) Phrase-‘Full community asset transfer’ not in guidance-----the request comes from the community and would be a ‘participation request’ as the use would remain same
- 5) The running costs are not shown as a saving until beyond 21/22
- 6) 1140 hrs childcare-----where is this provision to go in Newtongrange? Not the Hub in the masterplan for the village-----too small by half or even worse—
- 7) Where do all the activities go if CAT is not deemed feasible (includes Council staff, Lifelong Learning and Employability Services inc. Youth Work?)
- 8) The Management Committee already have a lease of this Centre (allowing Council avoidance of Business Rates since 1996)

Newbattle Community Education Centre Management Committee

I refer to the proposal contained in the Budget savings paper placed before elected members that affects the Newbattle Community Learning Centre.

It relates to the ‘staff saving of post of Newtongrange Community Learning Centre Manager following community asset transfer of the building’

- 1) The Centre’s name is Newbattle and it has a Centre Co-ordinator and not a Manager
- 2) The present post was created in place of the full-time Administrative Assistant

3) The Full-time Janitor or Facilities Assistant post was withdrawn in 2016

The present post-holder is a very valued member of staff who has worked very hard to keep the centre operational despite the reduction in support to the centre. We hope that when a decision is taken by the full council early in 2018 that this small saving is dropped.

The reference to Community Asset Transfer and Newbattle Centre came as a surprise to the Centre management committee and we are concerned that the proposal was put in a paper that is out for public consultation without any prior warning or discussion on the proposal /nor does it allow the management committee time or opportunity to research what the best options for the centre and its users might be let alone the implications for the future.

The initial discussion held with you has raised more questions than answers and now having done some research I realise that it is up to the community body to make a request for such a process to commence. The management committee are happy to engage in dialogue to ensure that this valuable resource is retained to continue work with children and young people as well as a learning centre for adults.

We have worked in co-operation with the Council to our mutual benefit for close on 50 years and would hope for that partnership to continue in the future.

In conclusion, we hope that the Council will not adopt this proposal to delete the last surviving post at the centre.

Elizabeth Rowe, Chairperson

People First Groups in Midlothian

As a charity and subject to funding, People First members are worried about the proposed cuts to the third sector. The third sector provides value for money and any cuts to this sector will result in a loss of services for vulnerable service users. In times of austerity, the third sector takes on more and more work and funding to carry out the work is essential. If some charities and third sector agencies close due to lack of funding, their loss will be felt by service users and once they have gone, re-establishing these services in the future will prove extremely difficult.

If Midlothian Council is reducing services and expecting the third sector to step in, without adequate funding, this will not be possible.

Our members spoke about how it is important for the Council to look at innovative ways to bring in money.

Lifelong Learning and Employability Reduction – People with learning difficulties have already been affected by the reduction of services. A further reduction for young people and adults at risk of poor outcomes would mean that less people would be supported into employment.

Revenues and Benefits – many of our members find online services difficult, for example benefits such as ESA on line can result in sanctions when timescales are not met due to a lack of understanding in using online services.

Libraries – members do not agree with the closing of libraries. Some people can't afford to buy books. This will be more difficult for people to get bus passes. Libraries are also used for the

facilities – computers, courses and events for children. Groups can hire the libraries free or cheaply. Our Members have said that they find Automated systems difficult to use and not very user friendly for people with learning disabilities and others with disabilities.

School Crossing – Members do not agree with reducing the crossing patrols. Many of our members find it hard to cross at crossings as they don't always give people the required time to cross. Having support with this ensures the safety of disabled people.

Reduce the winter maintenance budget – this might be dangerous in bad weather. Some areas could get shut off. Some people may get stuck at home. Disabled people find it hard to get out and about when it is snowy and icy.

Reduce street lighting maintenance – This has already been a problem for some people. If repairs are not carried out timeously, reduced lighting may result in people not going out. People may be worried about not being able to see or at risk of attack because it is dark.

CCTV – Reducing this may result in more crime. Less resolution of crimes. More shop break-ins may occur.

Brown Bin - charge may be difficult for some people. This might result in fly tipping. A charge for recycling boxes may also have financial implications for people on low budgets. Sometimes, the boxes get broken by recycling staff throwing the boxes down. Should the client then have to pay for a replacement?

Stop supported bus grants – This may result in hardship for some people or they may choose not to go to a day service/social event and may result in isolation. Community Hospital to Woodburn/ Gorebridge (39) is essential. This will affect people attending the community hospital, resulting in the loss of a vital service.

Stop the taxi card scheme – Many of our members are against this as they rely on using taxis to get out and about. Buses are not an option for everyone.

Reduce Learning Assistants by 10% - This may impact on people with learning difficulties. People First believes that people with learning difficulties should be schooled in mainstream schools. The right support for this is essential to ensure the person gets the best opportunities in a learning environment.

Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council (ENCC)

Midlothian Change Programme 2018 - 2022

On behalf of the Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council (ENCC), I am pleased to submit this response to the proposed Change Programme.

We recognise the scale of the challenge facing Midlothian Council and understand that unprecedented measures will have to be taken. We hope to actively engage with officers and elected representatives to develop practical approaches to mitigate the negative impacts of any necessary cuts and to develop better partnerships to maximise community participation in alternative methods of delivering services.

However, we are not convinced that the Change Programme, as published, is an adequate or appropriate response to the current situation.

The programme offered is overwhelmingly negative. It offers little hope for the future. All this just at the time when Midlothian is about to embark upon the most concentrated period of growth in a century.

There is no mention of what we do well. What is worth keeping? What is worth protecting and what can we build on?

There is no identification of what we do badly. What should we dispose of? What can we give up?

Instead we are offered an incoherent 'shopping list' of incremental savings. There is no sense of pride in what we can do and have already achieved. There is little to engage and enthuse the wider community. In short – there is no vision.

Our first criticism of the proposals is that we are disappointed that Midlothian Council has not taken advantage of the 10, or more, months that have elapsed since the Scottish government made clear its intentions to make significant reductions in the Local Authority grant settlement.

In our view it is a missed opportunity to have spent this precious time - and so much effort - on prioritising cuts to basic services. Rather, this time should have been focused on growth and efficiency, developing more shared services, more urgently, with other local authorities and finding ways to generate additional income to compensate for central government shortfalls. Additionally, it is regrettable that Midlothian Council did not appoint some outside objective body/consultants to review officers' proposals, propose alternatives and assess impacts.

Our second criticism is of your assumption that cuts are the answer. We cannot cut our way to resolving this budget shortfall, even in the short term, without an unacceptable reduction in the quality of life of Midlothian citizens. Unfortunately, council officers have taken exactly this unrealistic approach. In our analysis of the proposals, we note that 60% of the proposed savings come from the reduction or elimination of services and facilities that we all depend on. A further 13% of savings come from increasing charges, meaning that almost three quarters of the savings come from cancelling services people currently depend on, or charging them more for them.

Whilst increased charges must always be an option, a strategy that depends so much on a reduction in quality of life and limitation of care for the needy must surely be met by an energetic embrace of much more transformative options and a determination to make fundamental changes to the system that places local authorities in this position.

In formulating the budget options we believe effort should be focused on "What kind of Vision can we offer Midlothian?" and "What changes do we need to champion in local government financing to ensure we are never in this position again?".

We do not believe that the answer to these questions can possibly be "Midlothian is to become a place where vulnerable people are unable to access vital services through lack of provision or lack of transport, where our children's safety is compromised, where public spaces are unkempt and overgrown, and our libraries - one of the few spaces left in communities that aren't monetised - are closed". Nor do we believe that it would be acceptable for Midlothian not to develop a strategy to work with all relevant bodies to create a financing system that works for local government. If the

Scottish Government won't provide councils with the funding they need, they must give them the power to raise more money themselves.

Our final criticism is that so many of the proposed cuts are accompanied with a totally inadequate impact assessment that is disappointingly superficial, with no considered estimation of the potential costs of unintended consequences or mitigation efforts. In short, many of these proposals are unrealistic and non-implementable. It is hard to believe that there is a single member of the administration or management who believes that this plan is a credible blueprint for action.

Our alternative proposal, therefore, is that all effort is now dedicated to the development of an alternative strategy. This strategy should recognise that future budget settlements are unlikely to improve local government finances through grants and the only civilised solution to our funding difficulties lies in a multi-pronged approach that prioritises:

1. Benchmarking Midlothian performance in service delivery against other Scottish local authorities, so that we can build on what we do well and remedy what we don't do well.

These performance parameters must be easy for citizens to understand and regularly reported on.

2. Reviewing the proposed cuts to identify all sensible measures to achieve savings and implement optimisation of operational efficiencies to reduce costs, without fundamentally damaging the fabric of society.

3. Retaining and developing the proposed commercial activities in the plan, but enhance the chance of success by actively partnering with established businesses to maximise revenue generation from MC assets and to import best practices.

4. Increased rationalisation of the workforce to eliminate unjustifiable staff costs, through a continuous process of top-to-bottom review of current work practice.

5. Increasing the number and accelerating the development of operational agreements with other Local Authorities to achieve economies of scale.

6. Developing a realistic programme of work to develop community and third sector capacity to reduce demand on MC. This would include measures to maximise the contribution of the Community Justice Team.

7. Coordinating with all other Local Authorities to lobby Scottish government to permit actions to raise income and council taxes to meet some of the increased costs.

8. Quantifying the negative impact on Midlothian of insufficiently compensated development activity and seeking redress through modifying the governing legislation and permitted use of funds.

9. (Recognising that steps 4 - 7 are only going to realise gains in the medium term and that the budget has to be balanced in the immediate term) :Seeking investment from Scottish government, instead of increased grant, for a 5-year plan to develop the skills, capabilities and commercial enterprises necessary to achieve the planned transformation of service delivery and increase in revenues.

The following paragraphs elaborates aspects of our views, related to the above proposals.

1. Accept that not all the proposals are unacceptable: Whilst the totality of the proposed cuts in the Change Programme represents an unacceptable level of degradation of service, there are certain elements in them that may be considered to make sense and should be considered for retention in any programme of cost-saving. Midlothian Council needs to do more to engage with the public to identify which measures attract most support and cause least harm. The current round of public consultations must be recognised as insufficient, given that officers and elected members had full background of all the issues while members of the public were presented with “like it or lump it” choices. It is totally unprofessional that the people who have been elected to make choices on behalf of the public should abdicate their responsibility on these matters and that professional officers did nothing to identify options for the public to consider.

2. Work with established business partners: Proposals contained in the spending plans for revenue generation are interesting but, given the shortage of commercial expertise in the organisation, for these proposals to be considered as credible it is necessary to demonstrate that the management capacity exists - and that the market exists - for the services proposed. Midlothian Council should undertake such ventures only if external partners can be persuaded to participate in their financing and development. Success in attracting external financing would be a convincing indicator of project and market viability. High priority areas for joint investment with external partners would include:

- Banking; the creation of a Bank or Credit Union, to serve the needs of local people and businesses ought to be explored. A Credit Union for the Lothians would perform the vital service of supporting local businesses and communities, unlike the big national banks who are busy closing branches. In addition, banks, quite literally, create money.

- o Energy generation: in addition to embracing energy savings, the production of energy ought to be added to the options considered. This could take the form of small-scale community joint projects, or larger-scale, commercial operations. The energy company, OVO, already has a number of operations in partnership with local authorities in England.

- o Leisure Services: There can be no justification for continuing with ownership of the Winter Sports Centre at Hillend. It is long-established that the major market for this facility is in Edinburgh. The current “suggestions” that it might be made more profitable cannot be considered as convincing. A commercial partner should be sought for the further development of Hillend Winter Sports Centre - and perhaps other leisure facilities - to inject some much-needed cash for improvements and commercial skills. Midlothian Council should consider selling an appropriate stake in all such ventures, retaining some ownership/shareholding to benefit from future profits.

3. Reducing Headcount: Redundancies must be part of the options considered. It is unacceptable that consideration is being given to reducing levels of care while keeping people on staff who have no job. In parallel with sharing services, consideration ought to be given to sharing staff functions. With all of our neighbouring local authorities going through the same process and possibly applying the same logic, there will be a significant reduction in manpower across the Lothians alone. In that circumstance, it seems remarkable that only one senior management position will be cut. It is our view that there must be scope for considering sharing some levels of expertise across several local authorities, resulting in an overall saving to each.

4. Extend scope and speed of sharing services: The proposals for sharing of services with other local authorities are both disappointing and timid, given the scale of the approaching crisis. It seems hardly credible that it will not be possible to negotiate any sharing of services until the 2019-20

budget period and that, ultimately, less than a cumulative £2 million can be saved. It seems more credible that significant savings can be made from operating joined-up multi-authority services than from selling consultancy expertise to them.

5. Transferring responsibilities to Communities: Significant emphasis is being placed on transferring assets to communities, or to mobilise communities to maintain some facilities. This is a very worthwhile objective but is not being considered realistically. Experience from other Scottish Councils, under the Resilient Communities initiative, shows that it can take up to 5 years to develop the necessary capacity and capability in the community. Local examples such as the Kabin in Loanhead and the Storehouse in Penicuik illustrate the dangers of failing to prepare communities appropriately for taking on such responsibilities. Midlothian needs to develop a comprehensive plan to build community capacity and needs to invest in this activity and the necessary continuing support services.

6. Work with other authorities to change the environment: It is not unrealistic to assume that the public may be willing to pay more to preserve and protect essential services. We advocate an approach to Scottish Government - in concert with all other Scottish Local Authorities - to delegate authority for a proposal to significantly increase the revenue raised through Council Tax. A 3% increase is projected to raise £1.274 million, so a 15% increase would raise over £6 million, which would make a significant dent in the budget shortfall. This may seem extreme, but Midlothian Council must fully engage with the public to fine-tune any proposals and establish what people are willing to pay for. The process used for participatory budgeting should prove to be adaptable for this.

7. Ensure developers pay a fair share: Midlothian is required, under the terms of the recently approved MLDP, to accept the development of almost 8,800 homes over the period 2018 – 2024. Approximately 4,400 of these homes will be built in the period 2018 – 2019, if targets are to be met. Midlothian currently charges developers around £23-24,000 per dwelling in developers contributions for each home built, which will raise more than £100 million in this period. Unfortunately, this is not enough to compensate for the negative impact of such intensive development. We propose increasing charges to developers for every home they propose to build on a speculative basis, to a level which could eliminate the deficit completely. If, for example, the contribution was doubled, this would raise an additional £100 million in the next two years. Midlothian Council needs to adopt the principle that any home being built in Midlothian must make a positive contribution to the overall wellbeing and financial sustainability of the county. With significant growth over the next few years being one of the major contributing factors to the budget shortfall it is unacceptable that developers are not being required to increase their contributions significantly. It is recognised that there is a considerable body of law and regulation that constrains what can currently be asked of developer contributions and what uses can be made of them. That is no excuse for ignoring both the negative impacts of increasing development and the potential for leveraging that development to mitigate its effects. It will, undoubtedly, be a medium-term task to make the necessary changes to current law and regulations, but that is not a reason to fail to confront the self-evident need to make speculative development as profitable for communities as it is for developers.

8. Eliminate the Growth Penalty: The current situation, where local authorities suffer a reduction in Scottish Government Grant whenever Council Tax revenues are increased, severely penalises Midlothian, in particular, due to the growth targets we have had imposed on us by Scottish government. Midlothian must engage with all other Scottish Local Authorities to achieve a change to

the formula for calculating these grants. Otherwise we will remain in the invidious position of being penalised for any growth we accommodate, or for any Council Tax increases implemented.

I look forward to receiving your considered response in due course. Yours sincerely,

Bill Kerr-Smith, Chairman

Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council

Pathhead & District Community Association

We note that Midlothian Council proposes to stop its subsidy of £18,000 to Borders Buses for the service 51/52 that serves the A68 through Pathhead. We understand from previous proposals and the response by the bus company at that time, that the 51/52 service may as a consequence be reduced or rerouted or may become more costly to use.

Following consultation of the membership organisations that form the Pathhead & District Community Association and the wider community, we must protest this proposal and ask the Council to reconsider.

The 51/52 service is the only bus to service the A68 through Midlothian and is already more infrequent and more costly than similar services to other parts of Midlothian. If this proposal was in place, the communities of Ford, Dewarton, Newlandrigg, Edgehead, Whitehill and various nearby smaller communities will lose their only bus service. Residents from Fala and Pathhead as well as those listed above will be unable to alight/board in Dalkeith or travel to those villages mentioned above.

It has become clear from our consultation that many residents rely on the bus service for access to hospitals, universities, colleges, shopping, post offices, sports facilities, places of worship and work places. It also potentially denies people access to shops in Dalkeith, forcing them to pay extra for deliveries, pay much higher prices or rely on the good will of neighbours to get food. Removing this service will have profound effects on the people who live along this route.

We note how the various councils of Midlothian, City of Edinburgh and East Lothian emphasise the need for us all to be environmentally aware. Indeed Edinburgh is becoming increasingly more congested and looks for people who travel there to use public transport. Implementation of this proposal would make a mockery of these collective aims.

Part of the role of the Community Association is to support the wellbeing of the residents. We have been told there are many people who are rely on this bus service to support their wellbeing, whether to attend hospital appointments or for just the simple act of meeting friends. We would ask if the Council has considered the additional cost to the NHS of supplying an ambulance service for those attending appointments. Much is made in the press of the need to improve the provision of services to support mental wellbeing and how better social integration plays a part in reducing the incidence of loneliness, depression etc. Removing this bus service can only work against efforts to improve peoples' wellbeing.

It is the request of the Community Association that that the current subsidy remains. In fact given our new understanding that it is such a small amount, we would actually like it increased so that the

fares from Fala onwards are more comparable to those for example e.g. in Gorebridge. Alternatively Midlothian Council should be arguing for a Lothian bus service to best support the A68 residents.

Finally in asking for the Council to reconsider this, we should record that our consultation has noted a considerable level of concern around the lack of attention paid to this district by Midlothian Council. It has been noted by many that there is a disparity in services provided to Pathhead and the A68 corridor residents compared to say those provided to Gorebridge and the A7 corridor residents. The Community Association would like to work with the Council to see whether it, as a charity, could help provide some services impacted by cuts - e.g. as a location for a community library, but in turn The Association would ask Midlothian Council to better help it in supporting them.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Heydon-Dumbleton

Chairman, on behalf of The Pathhead & District Community Association.

Danderhall Playgroup

Danderhall Playgroup is a registered charity and has been running since 2006. Before this there were two playgroup in Danderhall which were both quiet so the two joined forces to create Danderhall Playgroup and it has gone from strength to strength.

Danderhall Playgroup is a quality early education and childcare provider to not only Danderhall but the surrounding area. We are open between the hours of 9am to 3pm and also provide a wraparound service where we pick up and drop off children to and from Danderhall Nursery. The service we provide to the local community vital and has allowed parents to work longer hours or allows them to work as there childcare is taken care of for the most part of the day.

We are part of the Midlothian Council 'A good time to be two' and are inspected regularly and provide spaces for children who are eligible for these spaces. We recently received a very good report from our quality inspection.

We are a fully inclusive setting and are an important service. We hold an annual open day where we invite the local community. This has been a huge success.

We are also regularly inspected by the care commission and have received very good grades for the service we provide.

As we are a charity and are not profit making we can keep our prices affordable for the parents/carers. We do not pack children in as we believe in a quality service where we can give all children the care they deserve.

I as manager are extremely proud of the service we provide and my fully qualified team of early years practitioners.

Angela Morrison
Playgroup Manager
Danderhall Playgroup

Feedback from parents:

For me as a single parent, Danderhall playgroup has helped me tremendously. I first received the 'good time to be 2' funding for my son in which he attended Danderhall Playgroup. He absolutely loved it and came on leaps and bounds with speech, sharing etc. It also gave me some time to get things done and have a moment to breathe. Now at 3, my son has started attending again 3 mornings a week which allows me to work. It is easily affordable for parents, like me, on a low income. I have not seen any other playgroups with similar prices within their range. Danderhall playgroup is a vital early years place where children, from ages 2 - 5, have the freedom to grow and learn. I would not be able to work if it weren't for my son attending the playgroup. The ladies do a fantastic job of running it and teaching the children. An increase in fees may mean that I might not be able to afford to send my son at all or I would have to reduce his hours which would impact me with my job.

(Mother)

If it wasn't for the Danderhall playgroup I wouldn't have been able to go back out and work again until my daughter went to school! Thanks to the low fees I'm able to have childcare so I can work and still see some benefit from working as it's not all being spent in childcare and I also have a life again. I'd be lost without Danderhall playgroup

(Mother)

Dear Angela,

I am horrified to hear that the playgroup is at risk of reduced funding provision from Mid Lothian Council.

As a parent who works part time with a partner who works full time, we jointly earn too much to qualify for benefits and have to fund for childcare out of our own pocket. This makes ensuring that our son has the best early year provision difficult, however finding Danderhall Playgroup has been an absolute god send as their fees are very affordable and without it we would be lost. Our son originally was at Playgroup for two sessions of 2 hours, however after a few months we decided to up it to four days per week as he loved it so much, which in turn meant that we could go to work without having to worry about finding additional child care.

The thoughtful care that they put into teaching the children is brilliant and given that they are only in receipt of what is probably a very small amount from the Council, they provide excellent physical surroundings – you would never know that you were part of a sports pavilion when you walk in!

They have been very accommodating in every request we have had for our son and although we are now in a position to place him in the local school nursery (on morning sessions), we are still keeping our son in the playgroup for the afternoon as 1 – he LOVES it there and 2 – the pickup / drop off service they do in conjunction with Danderhall Primary is amazing – I don't know any other playgroup that does this and all my mummy friends are always shocked when I tell them this as it seems unheard of. This will now give me an opportunity to look for additional hours at my work or gives me the time to have ME time before picking him back up again and knowing that from the minute I drop him at school nursery that the staff at the playgroup will take care of him until 3pm. What a fabulous service!!!!

I do hope that this Playgroup does not suffer budget cuts, if anything more provision should be made to them. The benefit to the local community and surrounding areas is massive. The active

participation from parents and the community is always high – from donations to food banks, fun days, charity events, social events to raise money etc. These things benefit everyone – the community AND the playgroup so in reducing or closing the playgroup would have wider impacts.

I hope that this information has been helpful and if any further information is required, I am happy to help.

(Mother)

Literature Alliance Scotland

Shaping Our Future: A Programme for Change - Protect Midlothian Library Services

My name is Peggy Hughes and I am the Chair of Literature Alliance Scotland (LAS), which represents the principal literature and languages organisations in Scotland. I write with great concern in response to the proposed changes to Midlothian Council's library services.

The changes include the proposed closure of all eight Branch libraries and the withdrawal of the mobile library service to be replaced by a single service from Midlothian Central Library, and that non-staffed facilities and volunteer operated services are being considered. We understand this will impact 30-40 staff.

While I appreciate that Midlothian Council is under pressure to make financial savings and there are difficult decisions to be taken, the argument for investment in public libraries is strong.

Libraries are crucial in providing access to literature, assisting digital literacy, and improving people's chances in life. Reading is Scotland's favourite cultural activity, which brings with it important health benefits. In fact, a 2013 study conducted by the Scottish Government shows clear and significant links between cultural participation and improved health and wellbeing. Public libraries provide meeting places where people have access to culture, knowledge and the chance to learn. In fact, successful countries, such as the Nordic countries and The Netherlands, are actively strengthening and building upon their existing networks of public libraries. They see them as the principal way for their societies to provide local democratic access to knowledge and culture in the digital age.

Libraries provide equal opportunities for everyone, and everyone in our society has a right to choose their own path.

Scotland has long been known for its strong support for public libraries, and for the excellent network of libraries that has already been created. We would encourage you to maintain a strong viable network of libraries in your local communities, many of which are rural, so that people who live in Midlothian can have a library close at hand which is easy for them to travel to and to use. On behalf of our members, the community and the young people in your area, we urge you to please protect Midlothian's Library Service in the forthcoming budget.

Yours sincerely
Peggy Hughes, Chair

Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council

Response to Shaping our Future a programme for change

Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council recognises Midlothian Council needs to set a budget for 2018/19 in a few months' time and this will involve saving over £13 million pounds compared with the current 2017/18 financial year. We welcome the Administration's voiced commitment to changing the culture within the Council to expand its capacity to generate funds and not just be reliant on the council tax, business rates and Scottish Government grants. However, this change in emphasis will take more than a few months, and probably more than the four years until 2021/22. Cultural change is not achieved overnight. Our concern is where the financial axe falls meanwhile as some of the proposed savings would prevent the reinstatement of particular services if the financial situation improved.

Shaping the Future – a programme for change is a document that suggests there is no programme for change but rather a number of randomly suggested small cuts, many of which may not achieve the desired savings. We would like to understand the vision and template for Midlothian Council post 2022 as it looks like cutting where it is possible is the only principle at present. The lack of vision emanating from the Administration concerns us greatly. It is difficult to see how decisions can be made on services to cut or new activities to pursue if there is no strategic view on the future shape and nature of Midlothian Council. We would appeal to all Councillors and Council staff to work first on the vision for the future.

Our vision is a leaner Council more focused on core services that can be delivered efficiently. We would also like to see a Council with a more evidence based approach to what it does. The Single Midlothian Plan 2016-19 commits the Council to reducing inequalities in learning outcomes, health outcomes and economic circumstances. This agenda can cause conflict for the delivery of services to all. We would be pleased to see the Administration articulate just what are its priorities.

In order to get through the next financial year, we would like to see a programme of efficiency in the first instance from better use of Council property, removal of duplication between departments, savings everywhere from the lighting and heating bills to the use of photocopying and paperclips. This can of course start immediately with every member of Council staff tasked to find 5% savings in their sphere of operation.

It has been suggested Community Groups could take over facilities such as pavilions and pitches. If so it is essential these Groups pay the commercial rate and maintain the buildings to a high standard. Only organisations offering services with mostly volunteer labour and providing services that contribute to the Council's statutory duties should be given subsidised rents or hire charges. We favour the Council investing in large Capital Projects with the potential for commercial exploitation such as energy generation from solar or wind. This would lead to local employment and help reduce Council energy costs but could lead on to revenue generation. We hope the Council will take advice from existing successful businesses and senior business professionals within the county as this would be an invaluable resource with the necessary experience of managing change.

There should be not false economies that skimp on maintenance such as 16 and 17, roads and structures, of the Resources proposals. How can it save money to reduce maintenance of roads and structures? Such action always causes more long-term problems. It is highly unlikely the budget for roads will not have to increase as the extra traffic in Midlothian, consequence of development and growing population, will lead to a requirement for more maintenance not less. Likewise cuts in rubbish collection that lead to more fly-tipping are pointless.

Lighting operations. There must be a possibility of reducing street lighting in some places at some times. For example, walkways do not need to be lit between midnight and 6 am. This is also true of many roads. Indeed, the night sky can be better seen with less lighting and many housing estates could go onto half-light for part of the period of darkness.

It would be unfortunate if Midlothian Council decides to shut down nearly all Library Services. Libraries are not just about books. They are about information (books and newspapers just used to be the means of acquiring knowledge and information in the past). Libraries offer one of the few community spaces that are accessible to everyone in the community without the need for travel to other centres. They should be recreated as Information Centres providing a key service to all the population, with access to professional help that can signpost members of the public with regard to local services both Council, charity and community group. Information is empowering and the goals of the Single Midlothian Plan to reduce inequality could be quicker met if our citizens are given the tools to help themselves. Libraries already offer a space for Councillors and MSPs to hold surgeries but other Council services could use them as a contact point. CAB and/or Welfare Rights services could deal with many of their queries from this base with only the more complicated issues being referred to a central team. Web access does not reach all of the population and in particular it leaves out those who most need the support. A Library network is more likely to reach this group. It is worth pointing out that at the recent Annual Community Planning day the afternoon group discussions on dealing with the rapid development in Midlothian one of the most common solutions put forward to nearly every question was to have Hubs. So why close Libraries?

In summary we would like to see Midlothian return to prioritising its service provision. Education, social work and care of the elderly, roads, lights, rubbish collection, planning, social housing. There may well have to be many cuts in peripheral areas but we must try efficiencies first together with a more business oriented philosophy to enable Midlothian not to be so dependent on outside funding.

Midlothian Voluntary Sector Forum: Shaping Our Future Consultation Response

Please find a response to the consultation from the Midlothian Voluntary Sector Forum, based on the proposals outlined in the papers for the Council meeting on 10 October. Our key issues of concern are:

Reduction in Grants Budget by £600k/Transfer of the Welfare Rights function to external agencies
A cut of £600,000 will be devastating to the local voluntary and community sector. It will inevitably lead to a much reduced service in areas such as youth work, and could lead to the closure of some long established organisations. These cuts will have a serious impact on the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership's ability to work preventatively – a key theme of the Christie Commission. It will impact on the targets set out in the Single Midlothian Plan and area targeting.

There is a lack of transparency in how this relates to the plans to transfer the Welfare Rights function. The proposal notes 'Some of the priority areas for grant allocation, such as the citizens advice bureaux, could be converted into commissioned services' but despite our attempts to establish how this would be funded, there continues to be a lack of clarity regarding whether this would be included in, or additional to, the proposed £600,000 cuts.

The equalities issues of these cuts are not discussed in the proposal. The welfare rights proposal does not have this box completed, and the equalities consideration in the Grants Budget proposal is a bid for more funding for the Communities Team. The Grants Budget supports work with some of the most vulnerable people in Midlothian. Given the current stress of austerity and Universal Credit, we cannot believe that these cuts are being considered with so little thought for equalities issues. Review Sure Start Contracts for £50k cut.

There is an absolute lack of detail on this proposal, and how the £50k figure was arrived at. This cut will impact on the Council's ability to give every child the best possible start in life, and will disproportionately impact on low income families. Again, there is a lack of detail regarding any potential mitigation or equalities issues.

Review Charges for After School Clubs/Wrap Around Care Provision - Council to compete with ASC
The increase in charges to after school clubs is huge, and there is no information about the financial modelling use. The Clubs strongly dispute the £4 figure used, and predict much higher cost increases for parents, which could result in parents on low income having to give up work. It is unlikely that Tax Credits would cover the full increase for most parents. This strongly conflicts with the Council's Child Poverty Strategy, and will disproportionately impact women and single parents.

There is an absolute lack of clarity in the proposal for Wrap Around Care Provision. Midlothian already has quality, affordable care on offer from after school clubs. It is completely unclear why the Council has decided to compete with organisations which have, until now, been valued partners in delivering outcomes for children and families.

Transfer of Newtongrange Community Learning Centre/Transfer all halls and pavilions to community groups.

While some communities may welcome the opportunity to take ownership of local facilities, it is important that they are offered assets that are fit for purpose, on appropriate terms.
Closure of libraries.

Proposed closure of libraries removes a vital asset from our communities. Libraries provide information, vital access to computers and printing facilities for the most vulnerable individuals, free and accessible learning opportunities and safe, warm spaces for people of all ages and abilities. There is no evidence of impact assessment related to the loss or centralisation of libraries.
Stop the support to galas and events.

Gala days are an expression of community spirit across Midlothian, and it is noted in the report that some of them will not happen without Council support. This undermines attempt to promote community empowerment.

To fulfil all the cuts outlined in the proposals would take a large additional input of local volunteers. Given that Midlothian already has an above average level of volunteering figure, with 29% of the local community already volunteering. It is not clear where these volunteers would be sourced, or how they would be trained or supported.

By targeting the areas above for cuts, Midlothian Council risks undermining the social infrastructures of our growing communities, damaging work toward Community Empowerment, and creating problems that will generate significant cost over a long-term period to address.

Women for Independence Midlothian

Women for Independence Midlothian (WFI Midlothian) are extremely concerned to see the extent of cuts proposed to front line Council services in Midlothian. While we recognise the difficulties of the austerity measures being imposed by the UK Government, via the Scottish Government, it must be recognised that the brunt of austerity has been absorbed by women and disabled people. Amid the backdrop of Universal Credit, these plans will also have an unequal and disproportionate impact on women, children, and other vulnerable people in Midlothian. Further, the proposed redundancy of 242 staff will also heavily impact on women given they make up roughly 69% of council staff.

The proposed cuts will increase poverty, isolation and impact on mental and physical health. They will reduce inclusion and diminish widely used services, facilities and resources. This will in turn put more pressure on existing Council services., costing more in the long run.

The council document itself appears inconsistent, reflecting primarily the short term concerns and objectives of individual departments. It lacks strategic vision, cohesion and the aspiration to improve the lives of Midlothian citizens. It is our assertion that the cuts will destroy the heart of the majority of the Midlothian communities. While acknowledging the doubling of the number of older people over the next 20 years and the need for Social Housing, the selling of “common good” and publicly owned land and other assets would result in a short term injection of funds but a decrease in future opportunities to tackle the changes in demographics. In our view the plans are an attempt to privatise public property and common land, a loss for the many, for the benefit of a few.

The removal of Welfare Rights services will impact on people most needing advice about benefits and other services and put more pressure on the already overstretched Voluntary sector such as CAB.

Closure of 90% of Libraries will reduce access to computers, and therefore to many services that are delivered and applied for digitally. Libraries provide meeting places and a life line for many people by providing social contact, access to literature, community information and education. The diminishing of this service will be felt most by those in most need and will no longer be within local communities.

WFI Midlothian is intending the launch of a “Free Period” service using the Libraries as a means of distributing products to women and girls hit by period poverty. This too will be endangered by the Council’s proposals.

If Community Safety services are to be removed, street lighting, paths and road maintenance services reduced, school crossing services abandoned, the impact will be most felt by women, children, elderly and disabled people. Meanwhile the Community Action Team, costing over £500,000 pa, when Police Scotland are already paid for, could be viewed as a vanity project of the Midlothian Labour Group. It is our assertion that dropping the CAT team would free up budget to avoid many of these unnecessary cuts.

With imagination the council could offer and do far more. By investing in and strengthening communities for the future, by thinking creatively, innovatively and holistically, making full use of existing and new funding resources coming via, for example, the City Deal and Borders Blueprint funding. These could be used to improve people’s lives and aspirations within their communities, which is after all the intention of these funds. We encourage the council to focus on improving skills and opportunities to young people through supporting entrepreneurial business and tech start ups such as Skyscanner to open offices in Midlothian. The council need to encourage high value community focussed local businesses that support tourism and provide employment rather than give permission for yet another drive through McDonalds or building houses and selling them off. It needs to focus on preserving and improving sustainable community resources and facilities, not reducing them.

We challenge the council members to think more creatively for the benefit of ALL Midlothian citizens and their communities.

References

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With best regards,
Women for Independence Midlothian

Lasswade High School Parent Council

Dear Mr Milligan, Councillors and Officers,
Response to Cuts 2018/2019

On behalf of Lasswade High School Parent Council, I write to set out our strong objections to many of the proposed cuts which will affect every pupil at Lasswade High School (LHS). As with many of the proposals set out in the “Shaping Our Future – a Programme for change” document it is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community who will be hit hardest. This is unacceptable and the Council is urged to reconsider many of the proposed targets to alleviate the burden on this group.

There are 17 planned cuts which will effect Education and 13 of these will specifically effect High Schools. These are highlighted below:

PLANNED CUTS EFFECTING EDUCATION

1. Reduce Early Intervention and Prevention Services
2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Review Surestart contracts
4. Reduce lifelong learning and Employability
5. Reduce DSM carry-forward allowance
6. Charging for instrumental tuition
7. Review charges for after school clubs
8. Integration of Pathways, Pave and Pave 2
9. Reduce the number of grass football and astro pitches
10. Reduction of library services
11. Removal of the non statutory school crossing service
12. Increasing the charge for school meals
13. Reduction of high school lunch provision to ‘soup and a sandwich’
14. Reduction in janitorial services
15. Increase sport and leisure fees and charges
16. Stopping sporting grants
17. Reducing lifeguard cover at pools.

As a Parent Council, Five Parents attended one of the Public Meetings held at Midlothian House. The contents of that meeting were then discussed at our Parent Council Meeting. This letter has been circulated round the Parent Council which consists of 90 members. It has also been produced on the Parent Council facebook page to ensure maximum opportunity for input from Parents. Whilst impossible to represent all views in one document, please be assured this letter has been widely reviewed and discussed and revised following input from Parents.

It is accepted that cuts are inevitable. However the number of cuts effecting Education is unacceptable. Comments on specific cuts are undernoted.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC CUTS

Learning Assistants - Cutting Learning Assistants removes a vital support from some of the most vulnerable pupils in our school. Children with Additional Support Needs rely on this service. Staff rely on this additional resource as Learning Assistants have such a wide variety of roles in the classroom. Learning Assistants improve attainment across the whole class. Teachers cannot focus on teaching a class when they have a child or children who are not getting the support they need. Learning Assistants also have direct contact with parents and improve communication with Parents as a result. This takes the pressure off teaching staff. They assist in creating an environment conducive to the whole class learning and achieving.

Currently the Council fails to meet requirements on inclusion of all pupils having introduced significant cuts in this area over the last few years. The Scottish Government's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is being used to recruit more learning assistants to improve attainment. This PEF resource will be negated by these proposed cuts.

Finally, it is very short-sighted to make significant cuts to the provision of learning assistants. This could have significant long term consequences for the Council in relation to failures to provide adequately for young people with complex needs. Costly Education Tribunal decisions could have a significant impact on the budget particularly if costs are awarded against the Council in respect of their failures. Furthermore there will be long term indirect costs as a result of the policy which will result in poorer long term outcomes for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Libraries - Closing local libraries starves children of a vital opportunity to access not only books, but computers, activities such as coding workshops, and a free, safe space. At LHS, the library with its dedicated school librarian is used as specific subject time where Pupils learn to use resources, draft dissertations, and study. Pupils from a deprived background can use the resources and access homework on line. Edmodo and other teaching programmes are only accessible to some through this resource. Approximately 10% of pupils have no IT access at home. The library is a peaceful and safe space for pupils to study and it is well used before School commences and at the end of the School day. In this digital age, it is extremely short sighted to limit access to IT to pupils out with School hours.

Those attending the Public Meeting were stunned that the Director of Education, Communities and the Economy, Mary Smith was unable to guarantee that Schools with Public Libraries adjacent to them would retain this resource and couldn't even commit to the library being retained during School hours.

The proposal of a single hub library for Midlothian is a short-sighted and wasteful cut which will affect all pupils but disproportionately effect those who have no IT access at home. It will significantly affect digital skills and learning. Libraries are vital community hubs and are crucial to digital learning and literacy.

Charging for instrumental tuition - Learning a musical instrument has a huge value for pupils and the wider community. It builds strong values around discipline and is conducive to wider learning. Music adds to the diversity and depth of the school and this cut will gradually erode music from State Schools in Midlothian. Music will become a skill accessed only by the privileged few at private schools.

Although the most disadvantaged will still be eligible for free tuition, there are many families who will not qualify and will not be able to afford the fees. The reduced fee structure in place prior to 2016 seemed to work reasonably well and whilst there was a drop off from the numbers when it was free, it was still accessible to many as evidenced by the successful Midlothian Concert held annually at the Usher Hall.

This new fee structure with a 300% increase in fees will reduce the opportunities to the privileged few. Many pupils who are not academic but excel at music will lose the opportunities and benefits playing an instrument provides. They will be disadvantaged significantly by this cut, their options limited further. This will dramatically affect the options of pupils in High School who take music and will result in the erosion of Music being taken to SQA levels. In the next 5 years, once this generation of Secondary School Pupils have departed education there is likely to be no functioning music departments which will negatively alter the fabric of the school and reduce options for many.

It is unacceptable that Music should be used as vehicle for increasing the Council income given the significant impact this cut will have.. It is being viewed cynically as a soft target to boost funds but this huge increase in fees will result in the uptake of music significantly decreasing which will detrimentally affect pupils and will therefore not generate the income anticipated. It is again a shortsighted cut with no impact assessment having been considered.

Finally why is it always music that is targeted in these cuts? Presumably because a charge can be levied which is not possible in PE or other areas of the Curriculum.

Cuts to janitorial staff – Janitors are a vital part of the school community and often contribute beyond their remit. They provide a vital service in maintaining the fabric of the school. Reductions to this service will have a huge impact on morale and discipline within our Schools. By maintaining the appearance of the School, vandalism is kept to a minimum and the building is respected. Once the condition of the School deteriorates, the respect for the building decreases and graffiti and damage returns. This is a well-known fact. This will have knock on effects on morale and discipline. Litter which is already a significant issue will increase. This will result in creating an environment which is not conducive to learning and good discipline.

Reduction in janitorial staff will have a direct effect on teaching staff who will be left with no choice but to take on jobs previously done by the janitors such as re arranging rooms and classroom spaces. This will reduce morale which is already at an all-time low in teaching as a result of years of cuts. School Events will be particularly effected.

Increasing charges for school meals – This proposal will hit hardest those who do not qualify for free schools meals but who cannot afford to pay the increase. This will have the effect of pupils going hungry or eating poor quality and high fat food from take away outlets outside of school. There is already high incidence of diabetes and obesity in Midlothian. Shrinking healthy options provided at school will hit the least well off most. 12% of our pupils receive a free school meal. A hot nutritious meal at school is sometimes the only hot meal they will eat in a day. School meal provision should reflect Eating Better Living Better guidance. Reducing hot meal provision to just soup in High Schools runs counter to this Guidance.

CONCLUSION

These cuts will erode the quality of children's experience at school.

The cuts hit the most vulnerable and most deprived most.

The cuts will nullify the benefits of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)

The cuts run contrary to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Scottish approach known as GIRFEC – getting it right for every child.

It runs contrary the Scottish Ministers ambition: that Scotland is the best place to grow up and bring up children. “This is a high aspiration and one that will require all of us – politicians, parents, public services and the public – to play their part.”

It means the stated aim for Public Services in GIRFEC is not being met : “For public services our aim is to work in the best possible way to improve outcomes for all our children and young people. And to do so in a way that respects rights and encourages early appropriate help – not once issues have become too acute.”

By introducing all of these cuts it is impossible to see how the Local Authority can comply with the duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to ensure they are taking account of children’s rights and wellbeing in fulfilling their functions.

Closure of school libraries will contravene the plan and strategy for development and delivery of School libraries announced by the Deputy First Minister in November 2017.

The cuts highlighted in this submission are short sighted and the costly long term impact of them has not been calculated. The consequences have significant financial consequences which outweigh the short-term gains. It is staggering that these have not been given the analysis and consideration that would be expected given the consequences for our young people.

Schools are vital to the future of our Country and our economy. It is essential that we educate well-rounded, ambitious and focused pupils and that staff are supported and resourced. These cuts undermine all the Government policies mentioned above and will damage the education system for generations.

ACTION REQUIRED

- We urge you to rethink these cuts and take into account the specific submissions made in this document
- Proper analysis of the long-term costs rather than short term gains must take place
- We request you arrange to meet with all Parent Council Chairs prior to the finalisation of your budget
- We suggest you meet face to face with this most effected to totally appreciate the effects these cuts will have.

Yours Faithfully

Lindsey M McGregor
Chair Person
Lasswade High School Parent Council, 13 December 2017.

Tynewater Primary School Parent Council

As representatives of the Parents and Carers of our school, would like to register strenuous objections to some of the proposals made by Midlothian Council in order to address budget concerns.

The proposed cuts will have a significant impact on our children’s future in many ways; those we have particular concerns about are:

1. Reduction of Early Intervention & Prevention Services
2. Reduction of Learning Assistants by 10%
3. Review of Surestart contracts

4. Reducing the existing provision of the Devolved School Management carry-forward allowance from 2.5% to 1.5% resulting in a saving of 1%.
5. Charging for Instrumental Tuition.
6. Review of let charges for after school clubs, proposing an increase from 5% to 50% of the full let charge.
7. Reduction in Library Services.
8. Withdrawal of supported bus grants and reduction in community transport support.
9. Increasing the charging for school meals.

One of Midlothian Council's key objectives as stated in the paper presented to the Council on 10 October, is to reduce the gap in learning outcomes. We firmly believe that a number of the proposed cuts will have a negative impact on progress towards this goal, for all children in Midlothian, but more significantly for those children who are most in need of the support offered by these Council policies. We also believe that the Scottish Government's nationwide approach for Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is significantly undermined in Midlothian by the proposed cuts.

1. Early Intervention & Prevention Services.

These services provide benefit for the longer term, ensuring that vulnerable children are identified as early as possible and preventing problems from developing in the first place. With an increasing population in Midlothian, a reduction in these services is likely to allow potential problems to be missed, incurring longer term costs as well as passing on problems and costs to schools. Relying on Pupil Equity Funding to cover these costs means that schools in turn are not able to allow all pupils to benefit from PEF.

2. Reduce Learning Assistants by 10%.

Learning Assistants make a significant difference to the school experience and attainment levels not only of those who have Additional Support Needs but also to those children around them. Teachers cannot offer the best quality teaching to a class where one or more children are not getting the support they need.

3. Review Surestart contracts.

As Surestart provides support to families pre-birth to 11 years, it is a valuable service directly linked to early intervention and prevention. Reducing this service will have a negative impact on families who need guidance and support, particularly those with children under 5.

4. Reduce the existing provision of the Devolved School Management.

Allowing individual schools to manage expenditure on local issues offers flexibility and greater value for money. By reducing the allowance from 2.5% to 1.5% you will be reducing resources that will best contribute to the educational outcomes of pupils.

5. Charging for Instrumental Tuition.

This provides an opportunity that many children would not otherwise have, either for financial or cultural reasons, or simply family circumstances. It offers huge benefits to the development of social skills in belonging to a like-minded group, encourages collaboration, broadens children's experiences and has significant health benefits. While the most disadvantaged children will still benefit, a much greater proportion of families who are "just about managing" will lose the opportunities and benefits that playing a musical instrument can bring.

6. Increasing let charges for after school clubs from 5% to 50% of the full let charge.

After school clubs will be forced to pass on increased costs to families. Passing on an increase of 45% will force many parents/carers to re-evaluate whether or not it is financially viable to work at all. In a rural community where employment is in large part not local and families travel significant distances to work, affordable after school care is vital. A recent study by Growing up in Scotland (Published by the Scottish Government, October 2017), "Patterns of Maternal Employment and Barriers to Paid

Work”, found that one of the main barriers to maternal employment was childcare “simply being too expensive to make looking for work worthwhile”. We note that Pathhead is fortunate in having an alternative venue for the After School Club. However, this means transporting children across the busy A68. If the After School Club is forced to move for financial reasons, it could be argued that the Council increasing the rent for school premises is in fact putting children at risk. It would also result in the loss of this revenue for the Council entirely.

7. Closure of all branch Libraries and withdrawal of the mobile library service.

Libraries are promoted as centres of information and resources for a vast range of activities. Children are encouraged to explore and use these, not just to improve their reading skills but also to broaden their knowledge and skills in finding and using information and information resources. Depriving children of the opportunity to access these resources will be to the detriment of their education, both formal and informal. In Pathhead the mobile library service enables children to engage with library resources, which they might otherwise not be able to do given the distance to the nearest library (particularly if the bus service is also to be withdrawn). While the school library can encourage children to read, school budgets do not extend to offering the range of books and materials available in public libraries. To date, 1840 people in Midlothian have signed a petition against library closures (at 7 Dec 2017). <https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries>

8. Withdraw subsidy for 51/52 bus service.

We have a real concern that the withdrawal of the transport subsidy will mean that Pathhead no longer benefits from a bus service at all. We firmly believe that the school is part of a vibrant and connected community and that withdrawing the bus service will be a significantly isolating factor that will be of detriment to the whole community. The Midlothian Local Plan suggests that a significant number of new houses will be added to Pathhead, but attracting working families to such properties will be more difficult if the public transport links are non-existent.

9. Increasing the charging for school meals.

While those eligible for free school meals will be unaffected by this proposal, again, those families that are “just about managing”, and are least able to manage increased charges, will be hit hardest.

We would urge you to ensure that thorough impact assessments of all proposed cuts are undertaken and that the risks and consequential cost implications are fully understood. We would urge you to consider carefully the longer term implications of these measures, both for future distribution of costs and the future of our children’s health, wellbeing, education and opportunities.

We would also urge you to lobby Members of the Scottish Parliament to oppose the reduction in Local Authority funding which necessitate the proposed cuts.

Sincerely, Tynewater Primary School Parent Council

Loanhead and District Community Council

Response to Budget Proposals from Midlothian Council

The Community Council had asked our local councillors for some input, but unfortunately only the conservatives responded that the majority of their correspondence was to retain libraries. We agree that this is a very under-rated service and felt that this should be one of the top priorities to protect. There would be no objection to moving libraries into hubs, e.g. schools, community centres, council offices or any other public building to save on individual building costs. However the service they provide within the community is vital to many.

Overall the Community Council felt that some of the savings outlined in the document would have a huge detrimental effect to the community, with little financial gain. We felt that the document was a good exercise in getting communities to think about what was important. Overwhelmingly, we felt that front line services had to be protected.

In particular the areas we think should be protected are Adult Social Care, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Teaching Assistants, Library Services, Non statutory School Crossing Service and Community Bus Grants. We could live without hanging baskets and planters, but flower beds in parks, and grass cutting standards of public areas and football pitches need to be maintained. With the growing problem of childhood obesity it is essential parks and pitches be maintained at current levels to encourage use.

Generating Income

- We felt that the document missed some opportunities for generating income. E.g. in Fife all the flowerbeds on the roundabouts on the main roads are sponsored by local businesses. The Council could generate income or minimise costs in maintaining green spaces by getting local business sponsorship in return for advertising. In Loanhead alone there are large industrial estates, the Straiton Retail Park, Noble's Garage, MacTaggart Scott, Costco, IKEA, Asda, Sainsbury's and many other small businesses operating in the area. One of the attractions of the area is the green space and that it is well maintained.
- Local business could also be approached to sponsor bus services to areas currently not covered, re-route services or to retain services currently under scrutiny. This would enable staff to travel to work by public transport, encourage people to shop and bank within Midlothian. Shortly Dalkeith may be the only bank available. Currently Auchendinny has no bus service, therefore people with no transport are isolated and do not have the opportunity to use the large supermarkets along the A701. With the increasing volume of traffic throughout Midlothian air quality could become a big problem in future so better public transport is necessary.
- We note that a business plan for "Destination Hillend" is nearing completion and encourage the Council to be ambitious with this unique facility and setting.
- Building Social Housing. There is a chronic shortage of social housing in Midlothian, the Council could be taking over disused buildings e.g. the police stations that are to be sold off in Newbattle, Gorebridge and Loanhead or any other buildings being disposed of by public services and convert them to affordable homes. This would not only generate rent income, but reduce Bed & Breakfast costs for people currently on the housing waiting list. Another way to reduce the housing waiting list is to ensure that builders do incorporate 25% social housing on any new development. We note that there is a suggestion to establish a Housing Company to build houses for mid-market rent and for sale, but would hope this would also be for social housing.
- Recycling – could more be done to increase the revenue from recycling? We see no problem in introducing charges for waste uplift or changing the collection cycles.
- Energy – with the abundance of old mines in Midlothian, the Council could look at heat recovery systems to generate energy. We note that the plan hopes to invest in renewables to reduce expenditure by 10%. However, we would like to see all public buildings fitted with solar panels and/or windmills to reduce energy costs. In time the Council may even be able to generate income by selling excess energy to the national grid.
- We note that one of the income generating ideas is to create a Building Services Company (ALEO). We think this could be expanded to offer a service to the public in preparing planning and building warrant applications etc. with the relevant fees. At this time when Midlothian is undergoing

massive developments, it would be false economy to reduce the number of staff in the Planning Department, especially in enforcement.

- All fees: library, leisure centres, hall lettings etc. should be increased in line with inflation each year. There is a delicate balance here, if fees are increased too high it will discourage users. We note that currently After School Clubs only pay 5% of the let charge, we agree this is too small, but this should be increased incrementally to 50%.
- Decriminalising Parking. There is an opportunity here for the Council to increase revenue from parking fines and to retrain staff as parking wardens to police restricted parking areas. This would reduce redundancies and the increased fine revenue would cover the salary costs of additional parking attendants.

Reducing Costs

- One of the main costs in any organisation is salaries and pensions. The Council is still running a final salary pension scheme. Most other large organisations including Universities and the National Health Service have now moved to Average Salary Pension Schemes. As the Council is publicly financed it should be looking at such a move also. Although this would not generate a saving in the short term, over the long term this would have a significant effect.
- Merging senior posts. As all councils are facing the same situation, we suggest that all senior managerial posts covering statutory obligations could be merged with East Lothian and/or reorganise the management hierarchy within Midlothian Council to have managers covering more than one linked statutory area. Also where there are two schools within one campus merge the Head Teacher post to manage both schools. These suggestions would reduce the number of redundancies of front line staff.

Contact Details: Gina Temple, Secretary, Loanhead & District Community Council, 55 Fountain Place, Loanhead EH20 9DT. Email ldcc16@btinternet.com

Passenger Transport, Scottish Borders Council

Proposal to Stop Supported Bus Grants in Midlothian

Scottish Borders Council would not normally comment on other Local Authority consultations however it is felt that the passenger data received from Borders Buses for the 51 and 52 services will be helpful when it comes to considering future financial support for local bus services.

The services are currently operated by Borders Buses and are supported by Scottish Borders Council with an £18,000 per annum contribution from Midlothian Council.

The services 51 and 52 form part of Scottish Borders Councils strategic bus service network providing links to Edinburgh and Midlothian from communities along the A68. There are approximately 20,000 passengers a month who use the services across the whole routes, with almost 4,000 journeys per month originating from Pathhead, Edgehead and Dalkeith. This link is even more important as these communities are not on the route of the Borders Railway.

Any pressure placed on these services through withdrawal of support would have an impact on approximately 48000 passenger journeys per year.

If looked at on a cost per passenger journey per annum, £18000 per annum equates to just 37p per passenger.

As can be seen from the origin destination reports above, there are journeys made to almost all stages from passengers boarding from the three Midlothian boarding points of Pathhead, Edgehead and Dalkeith.

I hope this information proves to be valuable in assisting you when making a decision on the support being provided for the services.

Gordon Grant
Passenger Transport
Scottish Borders Council

Newbattle Community High School response to Midlothian Council's 2017 Budget Proposal to charge for instrumental music lessons

Midlothian Council's proposal to reintroduce charging for instrumental tuition at £411.56 per annum will have a very detrimental effect on Newbattle High School pupils and school attainment figures. In the 2017 diet of exams, Newbattle presented 38 pupils in SQA Music qualifications at N5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels. 74% of these pupils received free instrumental tuition through Midlothian's hugely successful Instrumental Music Service (IMS) programme. With a 100% pass rate in Music qualifications at all levels, and significantly high numbers of A passes (N5 = 63%; Higher = 64%; Advanced Higher = 66%), these results contributed greatly to the school's overall attainment figures.

The school is situated within a deprived catchment area, with 66% of pupils living in the lowest deciles of 1 to 3 (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) and 76% living in deciles 1 to 4. Many of our pupils live in poverty, and whilst some have Free School Meal entitlement (18%), there are many others who do not qualify for the entitlement, but are still living in homes with severe financial constraints.

Newbattle cluster is very fortunate to have inspirational instructors who care passionately about their pupils' musical, academic and pastoral wellbeing. Newbattle pupils receive far more from their lesson than simply a 30 minute music lesson. The lifelong, transferable skills developed through instrumental lessons/ playing in ensembles are numerous, providing learners with vital citizenship skills for progression into society, employment, further education and lifelong learning.

Extensive research shows that learning an instrument develops an essential variety of skills for young people to take into adulthood, including:

- resilience
- self-confidence
- patience
- focus
- discipline
- concentration
- perseverance
- non-verbal communication
- responsibility
- listening
- stress-relief
- creativity
- memory
- time management
- co-ordination

- composure
- team work and so much more.

With the introduction of charging, many Newbattle families will be unable to make the financial commitment required to continue, or start, instrumental lessons, thus denying young people the opportunities to receive lessons, perform in ensembles, participate in opportunities such as the Usher Hall concerts and Midstock, and undertake foreign trips.

Charging will drastically reduce the number of pupils in the community who will be able to afford lessons and, as already stated, 74% of pupils benefitted from instrumental tuition to achieve their Music qualifications – without instrumental tuition, these pupils would not have achieved such high marks, thus negatively affecting their own attainment, and the overall school attainment figures. Our response to the proposed introduction of charging is, as stated above, that instrumental lessons remain free for Midlothian pupils. If this is not deemed feasible, we would propose that lessons remain free for all pupils playing one instrument, with the introduction of charging for pupils who wish to receive lessons on a 2nd instrument.

If Council members decide that charges must be introduced for all learners, then a return to the previous levels of charging should be given serious consideration i.e. £150 per annum with bursaries available for low income families. This previous model maintained a healthy number of pupils partaking in Instrumental Music lessons in all schools, whilst generating income to support the Service.

The benefits of learning an instrument, as mentioned previously, cannot be ignored. Our Newbattle pupils need opportunities such as these to equip them with skills and values for life, and we see the benefits on a daily basis.

The highly successful partnership with Midlothian's IMS enables Newbattle High School to work towards achieving Scotland's national priorities such as Closing the Gap and Raising Attainment; our youngsters flourish in Midlothian as a result of the excellent IMS, therefore we urge Council to revoke the proposed introduction of charges for instrumental tuition.

VOCAL – Voice of carers across Lothian

Feedback on Midlothian Council savings proposals

Adult health and social care

'Family first' focus

The service redesign proposals, which are part of a response to tackle the challenges of a growing and aging population, financial and workforce pressures, need to be considered within the wider context of care provision in Midlothian.

Each month in Midlothian 50,000 care home visits are delivered. At the same time at least 480,000 hours of unpaid care is provide by family members, partners and friends, who make up the 12,000+ unpaid carers in Midlothian. The current provision of unpaid care – often without support from statutory services – is already under pressure with many of those involved dealing with loss of employment and finances, social isolation and years of intensive caring without a break.

Taking into consideration the current range of care provision in Midlothian – both paid and unpaid - the proposal to 'build on a family first approach' as one solution to managing the 'high risk' areas of Care at Home services, is very concerning. The short term savings that may be realised by asking family members to do more need to be balanced by the longer term social and economic consequences and in particular consider:

- The stability of a 'family first' approach if there is no entitlement to: regular breaks from caring; appropriate financial support; access to training and counselling – all entitlements that are made available to the paid workforce
- The long term employment issues and impact on the wider local economy if carers are forced to give up paid employment to provide care
- Equality implications – as local and national evidence indicates that the majority of carers are women.

Outcome focused reviews

VOCAL welcomes the focus on self-directed support, promotion of independence and personal outcomes, and the proposed move away from a 'time and task' approach which can often lead to inappropriate or ineffective support. The review of individual packages of care to ensure they are meeting the personal outcomes of the individual is welcome however when this is presented in the context of saving money there is likely to be conflicting motivations. Reviews need to be undertaken with the intent of meeting an individual's personal outcomes, not with the aim of reducing care packages in order to save money.

Transport

Isolation is a significant issue for many carers, and it is intensified by the rural nature of Midlothian and the difficulties in accessing public transport in certain areas. The proposals to:

- reduce the winter maintenance budget
- introduce and increase parking charges
- stop supported bus grants and reduce community transport support
- reduce the ring and go taxi scheme
- stop the taxi card scheme

will have the unintended consequence of increasing this high risk of isolation even further. It will also limit the mobility of vulnerable groups including the elderly, disabled or low income families, many of whom may also be carers.

The proposals may lead to an increase in car usage and new parking fees which would have significant implications for carers who have already been impacted financially by taking on a caring role - in addition to the environmental impact.

Transfer of Midlothian Council Welfare Rights functions to external agencies who may require an additional grant allocation to meet increased demands.

In VOCAL's Carer Survey 2015, over 50% of the 180 carers who responded said that taking on a caring role had an impact on their finances, and that access to benefits support was very important to them. VOCAL has responded to this need through the provision of in-house benefits advice and as an active member of MFIN (Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network) we are aware of the need for a multi-agency approach to tackling this growing social and economic challenge.

With the introduction of Universal Credit, alongside the findings of the Impact of UK Welfare Policy on Disabled People report, the need for support to apply, appeal and navigate complex welfare benefits systems has never been higher. The transfer of any existing support services without the necessary financial resources to deliver it, at least, at current level will simply shift the problem to other departments and agencies that may not have the capacity or experience to deal with these issues.

Reduction in the Large and Small Grants budget

Carers are just one of the groups benefiting from access to social, leisure and health-related activities within their community. These vital services – often funded through the large and small grants budget and responding to need at a local level – provide many carers with valuable time away from their caring role. The loss or reduction of services would also undermine the strategic objectives of the new Midlothian Carers Strategy which seeks to increase carer access and engagement with local community, social and leisure opportunities.

General comments

- There is reference throughout the proposals to the use of volunteers and the strong culture of volunteering in Midlothian. There is a risk that this culture and community spirit will be undermined if volunteers are overburdened with additional responsibilities, including legal responsibilities, as a means of saving money. Whilst external agencies and community groups may be willing to take on additional responsibilities, there needs to be resources attached to this.
- Closure of local libraries would not only increase social isolation for groups who depend on them, but also contradicts the move to use a range of community facilities to deliver public services and support.
- Transition to digital solutions and a digital platform needs to take into account the latest HEATmap statistics which rate areas of Midlothian as highly likely to be digitally excluded (<http://heatmap.thetechpartnership.com/?area=Midlothian&metric=total>). If the appropriate support and infrastructure is not in place to support this digital transition, then vulnerable groups – the elderly, those living in areas of deprivation and experiencing health inequalities – will be increasing excluded.

Roslin and Bilston Community Council

Response to the public consultation Shaping Our Future – Have Your Say 2017.

Suggestions for possible savings:

1. Midlothian Council should ask the Scottish Government for time to allow them the opportunity to phase in all necessary budget cuts (agreed by council in the early part of 2018) – thus allowing the council services and associated groups the time needed to devise systems and strategies that are made necessary because of these cuts.

Cuts in services may well lead to additional pressure and stress on existing services, both internally within the council and externally with associated groups. An additional impact of these budget cuts could be to affect remaining services adversely, and a result could be rising costs.

Once services have been cut it will be costly to set them up again. All significant cuts must be implemented only in a realistic way.

2. A701 relief road. In August 2017 funding was approved for the proposed A701 Relief Road and A702 Spur Road. Peter Arnsdorf recently stated that Midlothian Council was contributing £4 million to the A701 relief road. Residents of Midlothian have serious concerns regarding the proposed A701 relief road. With the severity of the proposed cuts Midlothian Council should ask the Scottish Government for the contribution to the A701 relief road to be waived. This money should be allocated to essential council services in Midlothian.

3. Lighting For many years residents within Roslin and Bilston have seen street lighting used unnecessarily. A full review of the street lighting system used within Midlothian, and potentially within other local authority areas, should be implemented as a matter of urgency. The potential to

save money is likely to be considerable. With the Scottish Government's support a full review of this type of council service could be carried out at a national level in an effort to reduce costs.

The use of street lighting – earlier in the afternoon or evening and later in the morning than it is needed, in each 24-hour period – is wasteful. Every day large numbers of street lights are on in daylight hours, and a significant number of street lights are not switched off until well after dawn. Adjustments could be made easily and quickly.

Any unnecessary use, or overuse, of other public lighting should be examined and addressed.

4. Entrepreneurial initiatives. Midlothian Council has evidenced entrepreneurial initiatives to this Community Council, and this has been seen as encouraging. Through viable ventures there could be further increases in the level of income generated by the Council. Effective consultation with Midlothian's growing business community must be undertaken. We hope that the necessary support and financing can be made available for the Council to continue to undertake these initiatives. Is there any funding available from external sources?

5. Concerning design of new dwellings/developments and AH&SC. Midlothian Council must make strong representations to the Scottish Government that local authorities must have powers to insist that developers include crucial features within all new housing developments.

To ensure that residents can be self-reliant for as long as possible, the integral provision of the following in the construction of any new dwelling will decrease the costs to the Adult Health and Social Care budget of caring for adults with physical and/or cognitive disability in their own homes.

In these times, when thousands of new dwellings are being built across Midlothian, the council has a real opportunity. Housing developers should consider carefully the terms of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) guidelines on inclusive environments and the RTPi guidance on dementia-friendly environments (attached), which are known to improve the lives of everyone in a wide range of ways:

- Staircases should not include any tapered treads, as these are known to be dangerous for people of all ages. Most, if not all, council-owned dwellings have straight staircases. They are safer and installation of a stair lift is achievable and straightforward.
- The ground floor room that can be converted to a bedroom when needed should be of a size that can accommodate nursing equipment. The Building Regulations are not yet adequate in this respect.
- Developers should adhere to the CIC Guidelines (attached) [available on request due to size of document] – in advance of these becoming statutory requirements.
- Developers must be invited to contribute to the support of local healthcare provision. Otherwise they should be required to alert prospective buyers of their dwellings that they may not have access to healthcare.
- Care villages. Councillor Derek Milligan has spoken of the possibility of building 'Care Villages' within Midlothian. In the medium to long term such initiatives would lead to more effective use of carer time and better outcomes for residents, thus resulting in overall savings.

6. Neighbourhood Crews. Mark Rankine (Midlothian Council Roads Operations and Asset Manager) has suggested creating and developing four 'Neighbourhood Crews' across Midlothian Council, these would provide a quick response to local issues across Midlothian. This Community Council is fully supportive of this initiative and believes the council should adopt and support this approach.

This system will lead to many inexpensive improvements being carried out quickly and has the potential to save money in other ways – for example, the mending of potholes will mean a significant reduction in the rate of deterioration of roads .

7. Shared services Midlothian Council actively works in partnership with neighbouring local authorities on some Shared Services initiatives. An expansion of such shared services across local authorities should be actively supported by the councils and by the Scottish Government, as there is a real opportunity to lower expenditure and save money by working together.

8. Community Justice With the reduction in short term prison sentences, more unpaid work in communities will have to be provided to fulfil community payback orders.

The Neighbourhood Crews initiative noted in point 6 above has the potential to deliver constructive forms of community justice where offenders improve the community they have harmed through working with Crews such as this.

Response to Midlothian Council Summary of Proposed Savings

Concerns and questions

Education, Communities and Economy

1. The Citizen's Advice Bureau within Midlothian is an already heavily overloaded system.

- Please consider and explain how more volunteers are going to be found and trained in time to deal with the increased influx of clients needing help with Welfare Rights. When these cuts begin to bite at an individual level within the community of Midlothian, even more people will need the support and advice of the Bureau.

6. If the pest control service is reduced or deleted, how are residents to access adequate help with the control of vermin?

7. If the post for noise control and enforcement is deleted, how do residents access necessary support? Will the removal of this enforcement role see an increase in the level of anti-social behaviour within communities?

8. Which additional services will be reduced or deleted as a result of the additional reduction in the Environmental Health Service proposed cuts?

Children's services

1. A reduction in the Children's Services budget prejudices the future of already disadvantaged children. The impact of reductions is likely to result in an increase in costs later in a child's life – in adolescence and the transition to adulthood and an effective working life. How will this risk be addressed within the proposed budget cuts?

Education

1. Reduction of learning assistants – in an already overstretched service – will mean that children who need additional support will be left with little or none. Struggling children may not be able to make adequate sense of the education that they are being offered. Within the proposed budget what provision has been made for an alternative support system?

2. Surestart is a valuable system across Midlothian, and the recent legislation for enhancement of Childcare and Early Years provision cannot cover its functions. Any review of contracts must bear this in mind.

3. Lifelong Learning and Employability. The proposed reductions in this service carry with them a high risk of creating more stress and need for financial input in the short, medium and long term.

6. Means testing of user families should be part of this review, so that families on low incomes are not further disadvantaged.

Adult social care

1. The current adult social care system is already under considerable pressure. For example, there are sufferers of dementia who are living alone, unable to care for themselves adequately, the assessment and implementation of whose care is delayed. There are people whose carers at times fail to appear and local relatives are not alerted to the shortfall. These systems should be failsafe, and yet they are not. How are you going to ensure that reduced systems reach basic minimum standards that existing ones have not yet been able to achieve?

Customer and Housing Services

4. Library Services: Libraries should be renamed as Resource Centres. With the changing demands on their services and the type of support they now provide the service has expanded to become more than the traditional library service.

If libraries are not provided, then already disadvantaged residents will become further disadvantaged, leading to further, as yet unknown, costs. Within Midlothian approximately 20% of the population does not have access to the internet. Resource Centres would provide this vital service. Should the library service not exist how will those who access their services continue to do so? For example residents who are in receipt of benefits may not have access to computer equipment to apply for their benefits.

If volunteer groups are to be recruited to operate these services, adequate time will be necessary to make the transition effectively, in a sustainable way.

Continuing the provision of a Resource Centre in Roslin benefits not only the residents of Roslin but also those of Bilston, Auchendinny and Rosewell. All these communities are expanding rapidly due to numerous housing developments. If the service is closed, any later attempt to recreate the service would be expensive. Can some bridging arrangement be agreed with the community for a set period of time while we are trying to find a suitable solution?

Mary Smith thought that library facilities in some schools might be made publicly available. How would this operate, with insurance etc.? Would computers be made available for public use? Public use of school libraries in will presumably need extra school staff to ensure security of the pupils.

5. Consideration must be given to the significant portion of the Midlothian population who do not have access to the internet to be able to do more online. The proposal of encouraging residents to do more online needs to be developed in tandem with ensuring adequate computer access.

Commercial Operations

2. Should the Penicuik recycling centre be closed a substantial increase in fly tipping within our Community Council area will take place. The consequent cost of dealing with this and potential increases in vermin will impact on the limited budget. There may also be a substantial loss of

materials that can be recycled. The Oatslie Road that runs south of Roslin is badly affected by fly tipping presently. It is our concern that this issue will increase with the closure of the centre. At the very least, can some of the service be retained?

5. By introducing a commercial waste charge at the Stobhill CRC site, how will the council reduce potential escalated fly tipping issues within the proposed cuts?

16. Reducing spending on road maintenance of already deteriorating roads in an era where there is more traffic using them sounds potentially dangerous. By not maintaining roads properly now, the future cost of remedial work will be greater. The poor condition of roads creates a poor environment for residents along with the increasing number of tourists coming to Midlothian. It is a very poor image for tourists and will put off potential investors in locations such as Bush.

17. The proposed reduction in the structures maintenance budget could lead to potentially dangerous issues in the future.

18. and 19. Reductions in the street lighting budget should first concentrate on the hours of use of lighting – thus achieving potentially instant savings. Can the target response time be realistically maintained under this lesser proposal?

22. Loss of active CCTV is highly likely to increase the incidence of criminal activity, disturbance and damage created by disaffected young people and so on. This then throws more stress on our already reduced and limited police force.

23. and 24. Introducing and increasing parking charges will disadvantage the less well-off within the Midlothian community. How will elderly people in those areas be able to get their shopping, visit their GP practice or access other vital services?

Finance and integrated support services

3. Effective use of technology is not fully inclusive of all those who populate Midlothian. With approximately 20% unable to access the internet the proposed cuts must consider how people who do not have access to a computer or the internet will engage with the council online. With no library services there will be no public access to necessary equipment.

Property and Facilities Management

5. An increased charge for school meals should have a means test system applied to it, in order to support those who are within lower income thresholds.

11. Sharing janitorial services between 2 primary schools may not be feasible in some locations.

20. Reducing the lifeguard cover within the listed locations could result in safety issues, not only at peak times within the facilities but also cover for essential breaks would not be available.

23. The transfer of all halls and pavilions to community groups is a high expectation. Very few, if any, community groups are in a position to undertake a community asset transfer agreement. Any such transfers could only take place in the longer term and that is if there are personnel and resources in communities that can ensure that all the management requirements can be addressed in the present and in the future.

Directorate Proposal Summary

It is our understanding that £23,258 million savings would not address the funding gap. Please will you let us know what your supplementary thoughts are at this stage.

Other considerations

Increase in the number and degree of the disadvantaged:

People who are already disadvantaged will suffer more than before under the proposed cuts. For example cuts in public transport, library services/resource centres, will impact most on low income households - which rely on these services for numerous reasons, including study, job applications, benefit access.

People of all ages who cannot afford to have a home computer rely on libraries/resource centres for computer access. As previously highlighted Midlothian libraries provide a range of services and should therefore be rebranded as resource centres, providing computer access, advice, copies of consultation documents, hearing aid batteries and so on. We are aware that people in particularly deprived areas come to trust library staff to advise them about how to apply for the help they are due.

Children:

Mary Smith's response to questions about supporting children from struggling families was inadequate. It is imperative that we focus resources into the lives of already disadvantaged children so that they have the best chance of having productive lives.

Affordable homes and social housing:

There is some confusion surrounding affordable homes and social housing within Community Councils. Clarification is sought around this subject area and a confirmed statement on the position Midlothian Council holds with regards to the provision of these services shared.

Volunteers:

Midlothian has a large number of volunteers, whose spare time is fully committed. Can the council clarify how new volunteers will be recruited and where from?

In a first flush of enthusiasm to help in a deepening crisis, it might be possible to assemble volunteers to take over facilities currently run by the Council, but is this system sustainable for the long term future? Volunteers will require support and training. How does the council propose to ensure that sufficient support systems are in place within this proposed budget? The question must be raised: is the transfer of facilities and services to volunteers merely delaying the inevitable closure? A system of strong People, Places and Profile is essential in order to provide consistent and quality services within communities.

Elderly people:

Elderly people should not be perceived as a burden on society. They should be respected for the contributions they have made, and might well still be making.

Carers Action Midlothian (CAM)

Feedback on Midlothian Council savings proposals

At the Carers Action Midlothian (CAM) meeting held on 16th November 2017 carers and carer organisations discussed some of the key areas of the budget cut proposals that they felt would have the biggest impact on carers:

- **Transport**

A number of carers felt that less public transport would only increase the social isolation already experienced by many carers. In addition, cuts to transport services for service users would mean that they were unable to continue attending community groups, centres etc. This would increase the pressure on carers to pick up the pieces and provide the replacement care needed.

- **Adult Health and Social Care**

Some carers in the group commented on how worried they were about the impact on them. One couple felt that it wasn't clear exactly what changes will take place and with no respite/care provision available in Midlothian for their son, they receive very little support as it is.

Carers were also concerned about the future and that in few years they will be unable to continue caring but there will also be less resources available. They worry about the impact further cuts will have and about the lack of/reduction in appropriate respite facilities. They want to plan for the future but are very concerned about what the future holds if there is no suitable support available for the person they care for.

Some CAM members commented on the 'family first' focus highlighted as part of the redesign of care at home services. Many felt that whilst this initially sounded like a positive statement about supporting families, it was in fact carers being expected to carry out a lot more with even less resource.

- **Impact on parent carers**

Some of the group highlighted the impact that cuts to learning assistants, increased costs of after school clubs and transport will have on parents who have children with additional needs. Children with additional support needs who attend mainstream education require appropriate support which meets their needs. This is often provided through after school clubs with appropriately trained staff or through more individual support within the classroom.

- **Midlothian Carers Strategy**

The group discussed how some of the proposals – cuts to community groups, impact on local social and leisure opportunities that exist because of the small and large grant funds – could negatively affect the strategic objectives of the Midlothian Carers Strategy which seeks to increase access to and uptake of universal services and support. The strategy also focuses on supporting carers to plan for the future, but many carers commented that they were even more concerned about the future with the threat of cuts to services and support. Carers' health and wellbeing, economic well-being and address social isolation are also key areas within the strategy which could be undermined by the proposed cuts.

Midlothian Federation of Community Councils

15 November 2017, Newbattle Community Centre

Representatives from community councils:

Rosewell & District
Roslin & Bilston
Newtongrange
Damhead
Eskbank & Newbattle
Mayfield & Easthouses
Loanhead
Moorfoot
Tynewater
Bonnyrigg and Lasswade
Poltonhall & District
Gorebridge
Danderhall & District
Dalkeith & District

In attendance

Stephen Bermingham	Midlothian Council (minutes)
Derek Milligan	Councillor & Council Leader
Jim Muirhead	Councillor & Council Deputy Leader
Stephen Curran	Councillor

Midlothian Councils Budget Savings, Discussion with Derek Milligan – Council Leader.

The Chair (Robert Hogg) welcomed the elected members to the meeting and thanked them for discussing the proposed savings with the Federation.

- Derek Milligan set out the budget challenges and details of the public engagement discussions. He outlined the importance of discussing this with a range of stakeholders including community groups, staff and service users who will all be affected by the proposed savings.
- Derek explained how a £13.5 million saving is required for next financial year and that the previous administration had depleted the council's reserves, which are now at a historic low of approximately £2.1 million. The housing reserves are still significant but this is primarily due to the lack of new houses being built. He went on to explain that every directorate is reporting a projected overspend and up to £44 million savings will be needed by 2021. He explained that growth in the demand for education and adult social care growth is putting additional pressures on the budget. In terms of government funding, Derek explained that about 58% was ring fenced leaving little room for manoeuvre, and that increasing charging for services was limiting and unpopular. He explained that the cuts by central government were particularly challenging for Midlothian because it is the fastest growing authority in Scotland and the settlement was calculated based on out-of-date population figures. He also explained that political decisions, such as the proposed lift on public sector pay cap, were not centrally funded and will place even greater financial pressure on local services. The 'services to communities' paper had identified £2.25 million worth of savings. Derek explained that the council would have to make very difficult decisions and that it is important that these decisions are informed by engaging with residents and furthermore, these decisions are informed by people experiencing disadvantage and not just by those that 'shout the loudest'. The 2017/18 budget will need to be set in February 2017. Derek asked the Federation for feedback:

- Robert thanked the councillors for coming and speaking directly with the Federation. He raised concerns about the consultation and went on to question the timescales, asking if some decisions had already been made? Derek responded by saying the council needs to be more business focussed. He also made it clear that the proposals were not presented to elected members until August and that this has resulted in challenging timescales. Jim pointed out that many of the savings relate to council staff employment and thus have to be communicated extremely sensitively.
- Robert asked what steps were being taken to generate income and make the council entrepreneurial. Derek replied saying that there were opportunities such as leisure centres having a commercial focus and also applying for contracts to generate income. He also confirmed that the business community had been engaged.
- Ann M, questioned whether the last administration created this financial situation noting that many other local authorities are also in this position. Jim made it clear that the last administration were not being blamed for everything. He thought however, that they had avoided some hard decisions and relied too heavily on the reserves.
- Ron asked if all local authorities are in the same position and how are they addressing this with the government. Derek said that there was ongoing representation via COSLA and that he and others had visited parliament to raise these concerns. Derek encouraged the Federation to raise the budget situation with members of parliament.
- Malcolm raised concerns about the proposed savings from adult health and social care. He also queried why an entrepreneurial approach had so little impact and profile in the council? He asked why the council couldn't compete with property developers. Jim thought this should be explored further as the housing lists have doubled to nearly 5000 and it would be good to explore house building as an income generating strategy. Derek highlighted that there was value in exploring a care-village model for adult health and social care.
- Robert asked what the absentee rate was in the council and what was being done to reduce them? Derek accepted that care home absence rates are particularly high due to the nature of the work and that there should be careful monitoring of staff absence rates across the council.
- Henry explained that he had done some benchmarking research and absence rates are amongst the best in Scotland. He also found other good news stories which he felt should be promoted to ensure that staff are motivated. He went on to ask whether the income generated by new residents outweighs the cost of providing additional services. Derek confirmed that new residents do have a net cost to the authority.
- Ron raised concerns about the services available to new residents and thought as demand increases less people will want to move to the area. Derek, accepted that it will reduce the appeal of the authority but this is the same for all local authorities in the East of Scotland.
- Robert, raised concerns about the impact of civil society with the reduction of community groups and gala days that he thought would will reduce local community spirit. Derek accepted this to be the case but explained that there was little option but to do this because of reduction in central funding.
- Daya, raised concerns from Loanhead that community groups are overly concerned about their own issues and not outward looking. Daya said that her community council believe that savings should be made from a reduction in senior managers and not just frontline staff. Derek accepted that executive posts should be rationalised but pointed out that significant savings have already made from management posts. Daya said that community groups should be supported to take on some public services where they have the ability to do it.

- Henry referred back to his benchmarking research and reiterated that there were some good news stories, for example, Midlothian has the fastest response to noise issues in Scotland.
- Ann M, raised concerns about council enforcement. She thought that there is a perception that the authority is poor at enforcement. Derek didn't accept this but would welcome details about specific cases. Information should be fed back to Derek directly.
- Robert asked for clarification on timescales of the savings. Derek confirmed that the Scottish Government would be announcing its budget on the 14 December 2017 and the council would agree its budget in February 2018.
- Ron acknowledged that there were significant and difficult decisions for councillors. Ron asked for elected members to work across parties to keep the public of Midlothian at the forefront of the thinking.
- Robert thanked the elected members for coming and engaging in a constructive and helpful discussion about the budget.

Cuiken Parent Council

We object, in particular, to the proposal to cut Learning assistants posts by 10%. LAs provide an essential support role in schools, particularly to a variety of pupils with need for such support. What is frustrating is that the Impact assessment for this suggestion gives no justification or reasoning for the proposal, and certainly no Impact Assessment. It is poorly thought and seemingly random – perhaps because every area had to suggest a cut or reduction?

We also object to the proposal to increase charges for lets because of the financial impact that this would have on some organisations offering wrap around care, and the increased costs for some families.

Other suggestions for cutting costs or increasing income at schools – reducing janitorial posts; increasing meal charges; reducing the DSM budget – also seem arbitrary and unfair as they run counter to the heavily promoted campaigns to improve education for all and are likely to lessen the school experience for many pupils because of the impact on school and family budgets.

Scottish Library and Information Council

CONSULTATION – OUR BUDGET CHALLENGE

I am writing to you in response to the proposal within your “Consultation – Our Budget Challenge - have your say on Council savings proposals” in which you outline that you propose to save £240,000 by removing library services. “These savings are based on providing only 1 Midlothian central library withdrawing the mobile library (a shared service with ELC) and closing the branch libraries.”

With over 42,000,000 visitors last year, public libraries remain the most popular service which local government provides. Scotland’s public libraries deliver positive benefits to local communities. Libraries are no longer only a transactional service where people come to exchange books, they deliver on a number key government agendas to support digital inclusion, reduce poverty and inequalities, support social isolation, support employability and play a key role in supporting attainment through initiatives such as the First Minister’s Reading Challenge and Bookbug.

The Scottish Government and COSLA developed Scotland's first National Strategy for Public Libraries – Ambition and Opportunity: A strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020. Since the launch of the Strategy an additional £4million has been diverted to public libraries to support the implementation of the strategy.

Midlothian Libraries have successfully obtained a portion of this additional funding from the Scottish Government to :-

- Deliver Brawblether - a bibliotherapy project which supports vulnerable people within Midlothian
- Introduce 3D printing services – a first for local communities
- Ensure READ, WRITE, COUNT materials are in every library to support family learning in the community
- Deliver BOOK WEEK SCOTLAND events in libraries which ensures Midlothian residents have access to world class authors
- Provide the autistic community in Midlothian with supported events
- Develop community based Health Information Services which benefit the local people of Midlothian, especially older and vulnerable adults
- Deliver Get It Loud In Libraries – a music based project aimed at young people
- Deliver Code Clubs to children aged 8-11years which enable STEM skills to be developed
- Deliver Film Clubs to vulnerable adults
- Participation in reading initiatives which support literacy and attainment

This is in addition to the core library offer which supports reading, learning, access to information (especially important in the era of fake news), employability and health and wellbeing.

The 2017 Scottish Household Survey highlights that reading is the most popular cultural activity in which people in Scotland partake. Shining a Light research which Carnegie UK Trust published in April 2017 finds that the Scottish public are strongly engaged with their libraries with more than 1 in 2 visiting their local library on a regular basis. This report also outlines that in Scotland, it is the 18-25 age group who use libraries most as it is seen as a key support when finding routes to employment.

It is against this backdrop that I am astonished that Midlothian Council would consider depriving Midlothian residents of this essential local service.

Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004 public libraries are a statutory service. The level of public library provision you propose moving forward falls short of Midlothian Council's obligations under the Act. The reason that libraries remain a statutory service is for the benefits to local communities as highlighted at the start of this letter which are seen as a basic entitlement and some point to a Human Right.

I am sure that you and your colleagues do not intend to deprive Midlothian communities of such benefits. It is because of this that I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your proposal in more detail.

Melville Golf Centre

(see scanned document in Appendix 2)

Response from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland

(see scanned document in Appendix 2)

The Church of Scotland – Presbytery of Lothian

(see scanned document in Appendix 2)

Forward Mid

(see scanned document in Appendix 2)

Comments of Penicuik Athletic

(see scanned document in Appendix 2)

Unison’s Budget Proposal

	Proposal	Estimated saving
1.	Sell all vacant properties/ pavilions	£5.6m one off
2.	Build affordable housing on old Dalkeith H S site and Penicuik C A site	£6.1m from rent and council tax
3.	Employ 2 traffic wardens	£1.3m per year
4.	£1 slot machine at Midlothian Council car park (weekends). Vogrie car par pay at all times. Stop contract with Newbattle Golf Club	£0.7m in first year then reducing in years after
5.	Recycle garden waste to make compost for use and sale	£1.8m after 2 years then every year
6.	Community Safety team rather than Police	£0.5m per year
7.	Stop newsletters and using external mail unless deemed necessary	£1.1m per year
8.	Employees Grade 12 and above change contract to 39 weeks worker	£5.1m per year
9.	Advertise on Council vehicles	£0.25m per year

10.	1 Head Teacher per 750 pupils	£0.24m per year
	Total:	Over £22m

Additional Proposals (Unison)

- Look at Council Tax reductions for 2 properties and more – no discounts
- Bring in all Health and Social Care and sell service – can't come to figure as council have not given us an idea of cost per hour for this service
- Advertise garage services to employees and members of the public – generate an income and employment
- Collect clothes to recycle – could sell from council building/ shop to help people on low income. Thus generating an income and employment

This list is neither inclusive nor exhaustive.

Petitions

Removal of School Crossing Service – residents of Mayfield and nearby areas - 407 signatories

Residents and users of the vital school crossing service in Midlothian do hereby submit for your attention a signed petition against the proposed cutting of the above vital service.

The area over the years has become more dangerous and busy due to new houses being built and more members of the public passing through the area to the 3 schools located in the district. Mayfield and St Luke's in particular have very severe traffic problems congesting up the area at their schools.

In the interests of putting children's safety first we feel this to be a very worrying concern for all involved. We feel in particular that a removal of the service is an accident waiting to happen. Near accidents have been witnessed in the area and certain car users simply do not care about the safety of children present at crossing locations. Feedback from local guides would tell us that on occasions over the years they have made reports to the council' and also police have been involved in multiple occasions. Car users have been seen parking irresponsibly and blocking areas that are clearly marked on roads not to park' they have also been seen to park on top of public pavements.

We appreciate that budget cuts have to happen, but the value of a child's life must surely come before money. We have appreciated the value of a school crossing service over the years and as we look back we know accident statistics would have to be increased if it was not for this very valuable service within the communities.

The voices of paying council tax residents of Midlothian have a right to be heard and we would hereby now submit our signed petition for your attention.

Submitted 31 October 2017

Keep Danderhall and other Community Libraries Open – 60 signatories

Our library provides access to books, newspapers, internet, global and local news for residents of Danderhall. It provides a meeting place and a venue for classes, community support, Citizens advice, parent/child groups and a safe, warm place for children to read and participate in indoor activities. Danderhall Library makes sure that books and DVDs are affordable and accessible to everyone, it provides hearing aid batteries and bus pass applications. It is a centre for community information, and supports the community in many other ways. The proposed closure of all but one library in Midlothian Council would deprive our community of much needed support and opportunities to meet, learn and grow. We the undersigned are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to keep Danderhall Library open.

Received 5 December and 15 December 2017

Libraries online petition 1,911 signatories (as at 8 January 2018)

<https://www.change.org/p/derek-milligan-midlothian-council-save-midlothian-s-libraries>

Selection of comments from the petition website

1. Any attempt to close libraries is short sighted folly. The cost to the Council will be far greater in the long run than the immediate savings
2. Local libraries are essential to ensure equality of access to facilities and resources to all sections of the community regardless of location or income.
3. These libraries provide a whole range of interpersonal services which cannot be met with on-line or centralised hub resources.
4. Midlothian's libraries can't be allowed to die. This cultural vandalism needs to be stopped. Get the money off the Duke of Buccleuch.
5. All people need access to books and library services we need more not less
6. Libraries are important community hubs that need to stay open for all to use.
7. Books are being made obsolete by the Internet which though convenient is both limited and frustrating due to the number of advertisements, or pitfalls of the "search engine" to understand what you are looking for...
8. I believe in the importance of libraries. Not only a source of entertainment and learning, but also a community hub. Easy target for the clowns in charge of Midlothian Council.
9. Libraries are a vital source of information, access to books, IT services and much more. They need to be accessible to all within reasonable distance from people's homes. If families have to travel a long way to a library they will stop using it and their quality of life will be reduced
10. I think libraries are important, they play an important role within the community. It would be extremely sad to see them being such down! It gives people of all ages access to literature and technology that they otherwise wouldn't have.

11. How dreadful, Hope you manage to get this changed.
12. Libraries give access to books and so much more now for both children and adults. Not everyone can afford to buy all the books they would like to read it have computers. They are great places to introduce children from a very young age to the amazing world of books and help.
13. The library is more than a place to borrow books, it's a meeting place and community hub
14. Books are learning and imagination!
15. Such a small amount of money for so much social benefit! Let's look at ways to generate income, such as community energy generation, to support libraries.
16. I worked in public libraries in Edinburgh for 10 years - they are a vital part of local communities for all ages. I have signed this as everyone should have access to books etc whatever the medium. Modern day libraries can do this. Please sign
17. Libraries are such an important community resource
18. Midlothian Council vision of local communities - 1 x community hub to serve several wards and districts; no village halls, no village libraries, no village community centres, no village leisure centres, no village meeting places. Add on no village banks, no Post Office (in practice)
19. Access to books and computers are the right for every community
20. We need these facilities in the community!
21. Closing libraries is not a saving in real terms.
22. Libraries open up whole new worlds to children, and to all those who cannot afford to buy books. They are the last bastion of a civilised society, encouraging informed thinking, but also flights of fancy!
23. Libraries are not just books. They are social centres and actually save money by keeping people sane. Old, young, kids, teenagers can be safe and can find company there. They can also access impartial information by asking librarians. Libraries also promote and enable better democracy
24. We need our library! It is a major part of our community
25. Libraries are core places for people to think and develop beyond school/college on into their lives till the end. Fact, fiction, music, reference, internet, local knowledge and information, a friendly face, the heart of the community. Don't close the libraries.
26. The library is a vital part of the community and is within easy reach. Some people would find it difficult to get to a new 'centralised' library.
27. In one of the richest countries in the world, there is no need for these cuts.
28. Libraries are not optional, they are not a luxury; they are essential.

29. We have loads of libraries here in Brisbane Australia, they are an invaluable resource for the young to the old. I remember libraries as a child growing up in Scotland and believe they were an integral part of fostering my life long love of books and learning.
30. A fine way to make a community a little poorer for every one in it -is to take away its assets.
31. Community needs them
32. My children have used our local library since before they could speak, the book bugs programme helped them learn to speak and read and socialise. Since then they have played music in the library, used computers in the library, met their friends in the library and, most importantly... Read more
33. Libraries are so important, they are the one place we can access not only books but computers, etc. And some quietness, sometimes hard to find in the home these days!
34. I don't want to lose our local library which we visit once or twice a week. Encourages both my children to enjoy stories and reading. Also many activities that we attend after school and during the holidays. I also borrow books myself.
35. They are social meeting places as much as resource centres, and we need to encourage youngsters to start reading when young.
36. This service is so important for so many people in the local communities.
37. I'm signing this petition to highlight the lack of consideration in rationalising the library service in Midlothian to a hub that will be neither convenient nor appropriate for the people of the county.
38. These are vital resources for the community, they must be kept open
39. Libraries are crucial for everyone in the community.
40. Appalling. Thanks SNP cuts to local government

Music Tuition Online Petition 2,752 signatories (as at 8 January 2018)

<https://www.change.org/p/janet-lay-douglas-midlothian-gov-uk-say-no-to-the-proposed-budget-cut-of-our-midlothian-schools-music-tuition-service>

Selection of comments from the petition website:

1. Music is an important part of life. Can you imagine life without music. Do not cut the budget.
2. Free music tuition in Midlothian was the reason I achieved my Grade 8 Clarinet. I went on to get an honours degree in music and now work for a leading music publisher. That early music education and participation in school ensembles were some of the best education and life skills I ever received - proving invaluable to my future. I'm proof that free music education works. I'd hate to think that that opportunity is being taken away from today's students.
3. Music is important in education, recreation, mental health and throughout life!

4. All the councils see a cut in music as an easy win, but music is such a saviour to so many young folk as they navigate adolescence, we need to fight to keep it accessible to all.
5. I'm now a full time touring musician and might not be if it wasn't for my Midlothian school musical classes.
6. Music should be available to all children. It's an important part of their development and can bring young people together
7. Music has been proven to boost intelligence and plays a key role in a child's education.
8. I think music can be a way for less academic children to shine gain confidence and self esteem
9. It's unthinkable to make cuts that affect our country's future!
10. Music, arts and creativity should be given equal funding and priorities as academic subjects. Our kids are not robots, they need to learn and experience a broad curriculum that lets them explore their strengths!! we are more than a test score. Kids need creativity
11. Children & music go together. Every child has the right to explore music and decide for themselves what extent they want it to play a part in their lives.
12. All children should have the chance to learn an instrument. It boosts brain power. It will improve their memory. It's a confidence builder and it teaches patience. But most of all its fun!
13. There should be no financial barrier to pupils when it comes to gaining an education. Your background should not dictate whether or not you have access to the arts and we should strive to include more pupils not fewer.
14. More and more studies show that a musical education does more to improve overall academic results across the board
15. Access to music should be available equal to all children.
16. Musical tuition is a very important aspect of a child's education
17. Too many child musicians will lose their music tuition if these cuts are approved, a great loss for the children and for the cultural future of Scotland. School music tuition brings joy and fulfilment to children. Those attributes contribute to balanced learning in all subject areas. Take a longer term view, keep school music accessible to all students.
18. My son played in the brass band and my daughter in the orchestra. Both played at the concert and the confidence it gave them was fantastic to see. Midlothian Council have no sense of value if they are proposing cuts to this programme and kids in the future will not have the chance to experience the joy of music.
19. Austerity is a political choice not a necessity.
20. Without music, we have no culture. Without culture, we are but fodder for the voracious machine driven by lost and hardened men for their own empty satisfaction.

21. Austerity is a political choice, not a necessity
22. I believe every child should have the opportunity!
23. Music tuition should be available to everyone. Not just those lucky enough to afford it.
24. Music tuition helps improvement in other subjects such as maths
25. Over the last 6 years I have attended the Midlothian Schools annual concert and see the joy being involved in the various groups brings to the pupils and their families. Music should be available to all and children given the opportunity to develop their talents.
26. I believe music should be encouraged as in poor areas in the world and a good example is in Raploch in Stirling. There is a lot of talent out there and not all families can afford to pay for it. It inspires confidence in children.
27. I am a musician and teacher who, despite now being a private teacher, is eternally grateful for my free music education in the 1960s/1970s
28. All education at school should be free for children and young people. It is not a luxury! For a lot of young people it is crucial in keeping them engaged in education.
29. We must encourage our young ones if they wish to have music tuition and school is the ideal place to have it.
30. A lot of children could miss out on this chance to play an instrument and realise their full potential due to the cost.
31. What a short-sighted decision. Money spent on music education is money well spent, as research has shown time and time again that music education enhances and improves results in other discrete subject disciplines as well as in personal and social development.
32. I believe music is the one language that unites this world.
33. Disgraceful
34. Without the Arts there is no society nor is there a sense of community. The arts should be a free service for all who wish to participate end of.
35. Learning to play an instrument should be accessible to everyone and where there is a want and talent in young people regardless of your parents income .
36. I believe access to music is a right of every child at school.
37. I've played music since I was 4 years old. The free tuition I received through school has been invaluable to me and has allowed me to pursue my greatest hobby. I think it's utterly wrong to deprive other generations of children the same right just because their family might not be able to afford it. Learning a musical instrument can be life changing!
38. As someone who received free music tuition in school from 8-16yo I have never stopped playing live music. If I counted up the £s that'd be a big number, but nothing compared to the wealth of joy, connections, friends and memories made using my free music education. It's invaluable.

39. The free tuition gives so many children the opportunity to develop their musical, educational and social, skills that they would not otherwise have. as well as allowing the rich brass and silver bands heritage of Midlothian's communities to survive and reach such high standards nationally. A cut would be a very short-sighted move unlikely to save money in the long run.
40. music is important for every child, not just those who can afford to pay. It has been proven time and again that it is superb for the developing brain too.
41. Music is a great leveller, and it can help give non academics a time to shine .
42. If this facility is taken away we may lose talented children from Midlothian
43. School Bands or orchestras will decrease or even disappear
44. My children are benefiting from a great school service. Why should Midlothian children miss out on something other children will still receive. It is causing a postcode lottery if the council agree to this.
45. Music tuition is essential to everyone's educational progress.
46. Sadly again, we see how those "in charge" don't understand how important instrumental tuition is across the board academically. We need to fight for it
47. Music should be offered to those who have an interested in it and not just those who can afford it! Economic discrimination.
48. An absolute disgrace they only just stopped charging. Why the sudden turn around? They are putting the youngsters futures at stake. Suppose we will have councillors taking credit on 24/11 at the usher Hall, certainly hope not.
49. children need to learn an instrument just look at St Davids band they are doing well for their school
50. Music tuition is vital!
51. The cuts will seriously damage the life chances of young people in the area
52. Unlike many things I learned at school, music has been useful and endured into my twilight years. I think others should have the same opportunity.
53. I'm signing because I believe this will prevent many children from receiving this service.
54. All of my children had benefitted from music tuition over the past few years.
55. Music and the arts always seem to suffer but these skills are important and our kids should be given these opportunities as we were.
56. Music is life!
57. It's not just the music, it's education, it's learning, it's new experience, disheartening the mind, it's team work, it's achievement, it's grrr friendships, it's discipline, it's enjoyment.....
58. Music, Dance, as well as Sports should never be cut or reduced from Schools. In fact I fully support the call for funding in these areas to be increased. I am a former

Woodburn/Lasswade pupil, Dalkeith & Lasswade had good reputations for Music Teaching, and Sport. I endorse this petition and urge Midlothian to change its tactics and find the funds needed.

59. This music tuition is for many children in Midlothian, the only opportunity to access a musical instrument. The children are excited and motivated to take part and this should be promoted by Midlothian Council as a shining example of inclusive educational provision for ALL - not... Read more
60. i am signing this petition as I feel very strongly about kids having and participating in all music and music based programmes, kids thrive with music as i very much know with my daughters.
61. Music is more important than ever these days.
62. musik is a part of our live and history....musik helps people get over bad things...musik is good for improving your skills and musik brings people together!!!!
63. Music should be a free pleasure for children to enjoy
64. Music is such a valuable part of the curriculum and helps bridge the attainment gap. Cutting funding means many of our poorer pupils will not be able to afford music tuition. This cannot be allowed to happen.
65. Music has been proven to be more important for a child's wellbeing than some of the compulsory subjects
66. Music is a vital part of every child's development and should never become just an add on for those with money.
67. We need music in our lives!

Community Engagement Meetings

Meeting 1 – Council Chambers, Dalkeith 6 November 2017

In attendance: Cllr Derek Milligan, Cllr Jim Muirhead Chief Executive Kenneth Lawrie, Director of Education, Communities and Economy Mary Smith, Director Resources John Blair, Head of Finance and Integrated Support Services Gary Fairley and Joint Director Health & Social Care and Chief Officer of Midlothian Integrated Joint Board Allister Short.

No. of community representatives: 28 of 36 booked

Summary of key issues discussed:

Record of meeting:

Question and answers after Cllr Milligan's presentation

Q1. Does this year's shortfall figure include the £2 million required to top up the reserves fund?

A1. Kenneth said the council is looking at additional savings to add to reserves but also to give councillors more savings options so no, the deficit figure did not include the £2 million.

Q2. A document published by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition on local authority reserves published in August 2017 states that Midlothian has £17.6 million of General Fund reserves, none of which has been allocated, £29.7 m in Housing Revenue Account reserves, none of which is allocated and a further £22.4m in Capital Receipts reserves. Is that the case?

A2. Gary Fairley explained that by March 2018 The General Fund reserve is projected to be £6.846m of which £4.744m is earmarked and so £2.107 million available as a contingency. The Housing Revenue Account reserve is committed to fund the continuing investment in the new build housing programme. Rent income alone from the new properties does not meet the costs of construction these. The council has a capital fund which is currently being reviewed but is expected to be required to support investment in our asset base such as our schools and other capital pressures. In September, a new Learning Estate Strategy was agreed that will require a significant additional investment over the coming years.

Q3. In the street where I live, many people are not paying their rents. Does the government take into consideration rents not collected when allocating funds to Midlothian Council?

A3. Kenneth said that the Housing Revenue Account, which includes rents, does not impact on the General Revenue Fund therefore the Scottish Govt does not take rents not collected into account when allocating the council's grant. Cllr Milligan added that using money from the Housing Revenue Account would not solve the budget issue as you can only use this money once before it is gone and the issue of the funding gap would continue year on year. He added that it would be unthinkable to raise rents to and use the income to pay for other council services.

Q4. I am involved in OAP groups and when you put up the rents to pavilions, like Birkenside, it makes it very difficult for older people to continue to come. This is because there are smaller numbers of members so those who do come have a big share of the costs to cover. For many of them, coming to those groups is the only time they get out during the week.

A4. Cllr Milligan said the council is looking at charges and potentially protecting pensioners' groups from increases to encourage them to continue using clubs.

Q5. I wondered how much pressure you are able to put on developers? No one seems to be encouraging developers to build sheltered housing.

A5. Cllr Milligan said developers' decisions are finance led and they don't build what they cannot sell. Allister added that adult health and social care is working with social landlords like Melville Housing Association on providing housing for the elderly.

Q6. What is being done to help elderly people remain in the community by having services in place to allow them to transition to different housing arrangements as their care needs change and increase?

A6. Allister Short used the example of Cowan Court in Penicuik where, as people age, their care package increases without them having to move. He said other social landlords can follow the council's example.

Q7. Have you looked at other councils able to run a profit from entrepreneurial initiatives to find out if you can do the same?

A7. Kenneth Lawrie said yes, one of the main projects is to learn from other councils down south who are entrepreneurial. Initiatives are already underway. He also gave the example of the Midlothian Snowsports Centre which was losing around £500,000 a year and is now in profit to the tune of around £200,000 to £300,000 a year with the prospect of further development leading to over a £1 million profit eventually. Kenneth also talk more about the new heat and waste plant at Millerhill, an example of using our asset base effectively while following best practice. Note: The £144 million waste recycling and heat and power plant is being constructed at Millerhill and will treat and provide energy from waste collected from Edinburgh and Midlothian that currently goes directly to landfill. The project see up to 135,000 tonnes of mixed waste processed annually to produce electricity for the National Grid.

Q8. When I suffered from post-natal depression, Midlothian Sure Start was a lifeline. I am very concerned to hear about the renegotiation of its contract.

A8. Mary Smith explained that the contract to Surestart is worth around its £1.2million and we are looking to reduce budget by working in new ways. The council is looking at different models of support for children. For example, by 2020 all three and four-year-old children and eligible two-year-olds will be entitled to 1140 hours of FREE early learning and childcare, up from the current 600 hours. That means those children will be in a nursery or other setting for about 30 hours a week, so potential issues with children will be identified and actions taken to address quickly.

Q9. I live in Newtongrange and I am concerned we are losing our leisure facilities. The masterplan also suggests there's a threat to the church building and you are getting rid of all the libraries. The Newtongrange library is well-used in the community. Also the community centre seems to be coming back into community hands but there may be nowhere for us to go.

A9. The master planners and the Newtongrange Partnership, an informal body of local people including community councillors, are making sure all plans for the village are 'joined up'. The church wants to redevelop their hall for community use and Castle Rock is looking at developing in the area. The Newtongrange Partnership is also looking at can the village get a meeting place for the community and a library that are suitable for the next decades.

Q10. I am shocked and disappointed to read of the proposed budget cuts. They are drastic. I don't think you can just blame the government, it's not just their fault. You must take some responsibility. I'm very worried about the closure of schools libraries. Once they are gone they are not likely to be reinstated.

A10. Cllr Milligan said there was a £4million black hole in the budget from the last administration and restrictions on Council Tax (as in not allowed to increase until this financial year) exacerbated the problem. If freed up to do so, the Labour administration would consider increasing Council Tax by more than the 3%. Cllr Milligan added that it was highly unlikely that the council would close the library at Lasswade, Loanhead and Newbattle (yet to open). However, if they are not closed, then we must find an alternative cut to the budget. He said that even if the council keeps all the facilities open from the last Newbattle consultation (when communities said they did not want local facilities in Newtongrange and Gorebridge to close and be replaced by facilities at Newbattle), funding to keep these existing facilities open has already been withdrawn. How are we then going to keep them open? Mary Smith clarified that school libraries will not close.

Q11. We need to not look back, unless to learn lessons. We need to deal with the current financial situation.

A12. Kenneth Lawrie said that since 2010, more than £30 million of savings have been made. While authorities with reducing populations have a protected grant from the Govt, those with growing populations, like ours, don't get enough of a grant increase to cover costs associated with the rise. Effectively we are contributing £2.4 million annually because of this anomaly. Kenneth added that private companies providing adult health and social care services had not met their contractual obligations and the services had to be brought back in-house. There was a big cost impact because of this, he said.

Q13. The after schools club figures, which state that a saving of £250,000 could be met in next financial year and a further £450,000 the year after, don't add up. The proposal is to charge ASCs 50% of the current let charge for a council facility rather than the current 5%. He said this would mean, in his case, costs would go up from £7,500 for lets to £75,000.

A13. Mary Smith explained that she set up the first ASC 25 years ago in Midlothian to get people back into work or learning. ASC only really needed limited areas for snacks and play etc. Over the years, there's been huge growth in these clubs. Let charges have been reviewed across the council in last couple of years because, depending on which service you booked via such as libraries or education, you could be charged completely different rates. There is no uniformity across the council but more needs to be done. ASCs using Midlothian buildings are not charging a huge amount less than the private sector yet they are only paying 5% of let costs. We need to follow the public pound so the proposal is to increase those charges but still subsidise the ASC's let charges by 50%.

Q14. Could you tell us more about the wrap around care provision proposals. For example, would yours be open 7.30am to 5.45pm as mine are currently?

Q15. Mary Smith said ASCs do a great service. The focus will be on the P7s, S1s and S2s – could we be more entrepreneurial when accommodating their wrap around care needs? For example, could the council offer summer camps? We would work with parents to establish the hours required to make the service work for families.

Q17. I still don't understand the £250,000 saving. We are a charity and we are trying to be cost effective for parents.

A17. Cllr Muirhead asked how much of the increased let charge he would have to pass on to his service users. The man asking the question said he would get back to Cllr Muirhead.

Q18. What happens if the Integrated Joint Board rejects your adult health and social care savings proposals?

A18. Allister Short said 'that's part of the conversation as set out in the integration scheme'. There needs to be due diligence. Four elected members and four NHS members sit on the board. If the budget offer is not reasonable this would have to be discussed between the council, the IJB and NHS Lothian.

Q19. Do the deficit figures assume the Council Tax will go up by 3% a year and do they take into account increased CT from a rising population?

A19. Yes.

Q20. The summary proposals put the most vulnerable at risk, which in turn, will put more pressure on the third sector. There seems to be a big reliance on community groups and volunteers. Midlothian already has a high number of volunteers compared with out areas in Scotland yet if you cut grants to volunteers then how can you expect them to help deliver services?

A20. Kenneth said this subject is part of the transformation work ongoing. We are working with communities and in partnership with the voluntary sector. Mary Smith added that in terms of the CAB proposal – potentially to transfer Welfare Rights support to CAB rather than keeping in house – that’s for councillors to decide. Mary said three organisations, CAB, housing and customer services and health were all offering this advice service to some degree. It made sense to have a ‘one stop shop’ to be more cost effective.

Cllr Milligan said he has real concerns about some cuts, for example, to child practitioners and care packages for the elderly. Adult health and social care can overspend because it is demand led.

Mary Smith added that the council values the voluntary sector and said they can attract additional money from other grant providers. There does seem to be an issue, however, with community groups etc. finding the money for ongoing running costs of buildings etc. We need to think differently, therefore, about how these groups are funded to tackle this issue.

Q21. I need carers. I feel guilty about it. Could we see if people getting social care can pay a bit more for it?

A21. Cllr Muirhead said that potential was being looked at.

Q22. Has the council looked at green energy as a way of bringing in revenue? For example, wind farms, solar panels on new builds and schools?

A22. Kenneth said we are making energy more efficient and we are reducing our energy consumption. The new energy from waste plant will help cut energy bills even further.

Q23. Tell us about the Pure Gym proposals to transfer smaller facilities to communities and run on an unmanned model? It seems they will create a two tier system with gyms run by communities much cheaper than Tonezones. Why would people want to pay for Tonezones?

A23. John Blair said all charges and models are being looked it. No decisions have been made.

Cllr Milligan then asked for a show of hands as to who would be willing to ‘pay a bit more’ either through Council Tax or Income Tax. There was not a full show of hands. Two seemed to vote against with nine in favour.

Q24. I’ve been reading about how you could have different Income Tax rates depending on how much you earned. People earning up to £10,000 would not have to pay the increased rate. If you earned under £24,000 you would pay an extra 1% on top of the basic rate and more for higher earners. You are talking about being more entrepreneurial. Have you taken advice from businesses?

A24. Kenneth said the council had already won quite a few contracts, for example in landscaping and cleaning. The energy company has the potential to raise significant funds, he said as does the Snowsports Centre. We are using land assets in a dynamic way. One proposal is for a solar meadow on a former ping.

Q25. Why are you putting up Tonezone charges for the over 60s by 50%?

A25. John Blair said we need to raise additional income and the rise takes into account the change in retiral age. Cllr Muirhead added that we do have to have a look at charges to make sure we don't put them up to the point where people can no longer afford to use the facilities. This would obviously mean a drop potentially income. There needs to be a balance.

Q26. Is the £35 garden waste for one uplift or is it once a year?

A26. It is an annual cost.

Q26. My wheelie bin was stolen. Why should I have to pay to get it replaced?

A26. Replacing is a cost to the council and is passed on to the customer.

Q27. Would it be possible to come out of the Skanska contract rather than renegotiating it?

A27. Gary Fairley said as it is a contractual arrangement it is legally binding therefore Skanska would look for recompense if we tried to withdraw. What we can do, however, is potentially negotiate a better deal.

Q28. Who decides how much Section 75 contributions from developers should be?

A28. Cllr Milligan said we say what we need and the developer comes back and says what it thinks it should pay. It's a negotiation.

Meeting 2 – Council Chambers, Dalkeith 7 November 2017

In attendance: Cllr Derek Milligan, Council Leader; Cllr Jim Muirhead, Depute Council Leader; Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive; John Blair, Director Resources; Dr Mary Smith, Director Education, Communities and Economy; Gary Fairley, Head of Finance and Integrated Support Services, Kevin Anderson, Head of Housing and Customer Services.

No. of community representatives: 47

Summary of key issues discussed:

Record of meeting:

Following a welcome by the Chief Executive and outline of the council's budget challenges by the Council Leader, the meeting was open to questions and comments.

Q1. Clear the problem needs a solution from the governments (UK and Scottish) in relation to funding. To what extent do you want us to comment on that – or would you rather we focus on the savings proposals?

A1. Cllr Milligan explained that both are needed. He advised that he had met with the Finance Minister but his plea for extra funding had been rejected. The budget settlement is awaited in December. Important however, that MPs and MSPs get the message in relation to the council's budget position.

Q2. Where do we sit compared to other councils in relation to our budget problems?

A2. Cllr Milligan: Other councils have similar shortfalls but our problem is made greater as we are the fastest growing area in relation to new housing and population growth.

Q3. House builders make huge profits. If we're obliged to provide houses and infrastructure, we need to increase developer costs. If we're obliged to provide the infrastructure for the new houses we need to increase developer costs

A3. Cllr Milligan: We do target developers. We can ask developers to contribute to capital building costs but we're left with the revenue costs for employing people and running facilities, like schools. There are limits to what we can do to make developers give us a contribution (note the outcome of the case in Aberdeen last week, where a developer was successful against the council in a court case). However, if there's anything we can get out of developers, we will.

Q4. Community facilities in Newtongrange are set to close. Can the council get a commitment from developers for contributions to help meet the funding gap.

A4. Mary Smith: All housing development needs to be matched by our learning estate strategy. We are also directed on how many houses we must build. When the new school was planned for Newtongrange, the decision was taken to build a school similar to Lasswade with all the community facilities or, building a new school and keeping the old facilities open. The proposal was to close the buildings but this was not brought back to council. The Newtongrange masterplan exercise underway is due to report back to council, following which there will be further discussion.

Q5. Are the Newtongrange facilities already included as a saving?

A5. Gary Fairley: The savings associated with the current review assume savings from the Newtongrange closures.

Q6. This [savings proposals paper] is a lazy document with little imagination and no serious energy around the savings proposals. Much greater imagination and innovation is needed. [The speaker gave examples of innovative practice elsewhere, such as a council who gave him the ability to choose how many times a year he put his household bin out for collection, attracting savings for the council and customer].

A6. Kenneth Lawrie: We are an ambitious council and have implemented a transformation programme and service reviews, and introduced preventative measure to reduce long-term costs. We also have entrepreneurial council proposals set out in the Change Programme I'm not saying that we shouldn't have more imagination, innovation and energy but in many ways we're regarded as a forward looking council.

Cllr Milligan: We will give serious consideration to the ideas speakers are bringing forward, particularly if they are able to give us further details after the meeting.

Q7. How are residents going to get rubbish to Newtongrange if Penicuik recycling centre closes? What about the problems of fly tipping? The adverse effect could result in it costing even more.

Q8 Libraries proposal. If we are reduced to one central library, where will it be?

A8. Kevin Anderson: We have looked at the Newcastle example, where they have reduced the service to one central library. We have also looked at what the council has to do in terms of the library service it provides. We don't know at this stage which library would be retained, if these proposals were agreed. Other options could be looked at, with libraries as part of a hub facility, such as we have at Loanhead, as an integrate service. Schools would continue to have library use under the proposals.

Q9. Why close them to the public then?

A9. Kevin Anderson: We are looking at a range of alternatives, e.g. self-service, smartcard access, etc.

Q10. Developer contributions – do we get a flat rate or % of house sale price?

A10. We need to prove what's needed by way of infrastructure, demonstrate requirements and costs.

Q11. East Lothian gets more by way of developer contributions than Midlothian does.

Q12. Why can't we get more from developers for our land?

A12. Cllr Milligan: Vast majority of development land is privately owned. Council ownership by comparison is small, compared to large estate and other landowners.

Q13. Can't we ask these landowners to donate to the council for benefit of the community?

A13. Cllr Milligan. The reality is that developers and landowners are unlikely to part with their money in this way unless they have to

Q14. Closing libraries will not be good for the community. Lots of groups use their local libraries; many people with learning difficulties will find this hard to use electronic systems.

A14. Cllr Milligan: There is no doubt that this would have a serious impact on people particularly those who rely heavily on these services. We will try to lessen the impact on those in greatest need.

Q15. How many new schools are planned for Bonnyrigg? Rumours are that it could be 4?

A15. Cllr Milligan: Another 2, possibly 3 primary schools will be needed to meet the growth in population in the area.

Q16. If we don't get more from developers, the area won't be attractive to house buyers and house builders. For example, the GP practice at Gorebridge has had to shut its waiting list due to the pressures.

A16. Cllr. Muirhead: We can get capital from house builders to help build new surgeries but this is not the problem. The problem is getting the doctors to staff the surgeries.

Q17. Shocked to hear that the only bus in and out of Pathhead is to be cut, along with community transport, and cuts to road maintenance. What about community safety, the supporting partnership, etc. We have only been given 4 weeks to respond. Too short a period to get around the community to inform people of what's proposed. Will we be given longer?

A17. Kenneth Lawrie: This is not a one-year budget issue; savings are required over the next four years and beyond. Proposals and comments are welcome at any time. 14 December has been set as the close for the consultation because this is the day the Scottish Government announces its council funding decisions.

Q18. For developer contributions, the council needs to evidence things like how many times people have to ring their GP and can't get an appointment. Evidence the problem.

Q19. We need to work together as a community, keep people socially included and we need to work smarter.

A19. Kenneth Lawrie: We do. And we work closely with voluntary groups. The community working together is really important.

Q20. The proposal to cut the third sector's budget from £1 million to £400,000 is short sighted. We are going to be relying more heavily on the third sector if you implement the cuts. The third sector brings in £6.56 for every pound it gets.

A20. Cllr Milligan said the council is aware of the value of the voluntary sector and appreciates the work it does. He is open to looking at other ways to cut costs for the voluntary sector, for example, getting third sector organisations to share office space.

Q21. Cutting instrumental tuition is going to hit the people in the middle the hardest. I've got two kids who do piano lessons. That's going to cost £100 a month.

A21. Cllr Milligan said the instrumental music tuition is not stopping, it's just with a £13.5 million budget deficit his hands are effectively tied as what he has to spend will be dictated largely by the government grant settlement.

Q22. Some of these cuts should have started five or six years ago.

A22. Kenneth Lawrie said that more than £32 million of savings have already been taken out of the budget since 2010. He said the position had become more serious in the last couple of years.

Q23. Why not install a card machine or an Apple pay machine at Stobhill recycling depot and charge businesses £35 a time to dump their waste?

A23. John Blair said the service was looking at various options to increase income streams. He added that diverting waste from landfill saves £100 per tonne. Cllr Muirhead added that he didn't believe the potential to increase fly tipping was an argument in favour of not taking some of the cuts outlined in the savings proposals. Unscrupulous people will fly tip whatever the situation and it is fly tipping we should be tackling, he said.

Q24. We've been hearing just about cuts, what about the innovations mentioned?

A24. Kenneth said again that £32 million had already been saved since 2010, the majority of this saving had been achieved by working differently. More projects, such as the waste to energy plant, could be identified. However, actually getting them off the ground and delivering profits takes years. We still, therefore, need to address next year's budget gap by identifying cuts in the shorter term.

Q25. Why can't you exponentially increase fly tipping fines every time you catch the same person doing it? For example, £200 the first time and a second offence could be £1,000? Same for people parking in disabled bays. They could be fined £200 and that could go up if caught again.

A25. It is a criminal offence and dealt with by Police Scotland rather than the council said Cllr Milligan. Cllr Milligan added that when parking is decriminalised, the council will be looking at issues like disabled parking fines. Kenneth Lawrie said that councils are often hemmed in by legislations regarding what actions they can take. He said the council uses the freedoms it has as well as it can.

Q26. Why don't you work with other councils to lobby central government to get the powers you need to, for example, tackle fly tipping or share services?

A26. Kenneth Lawrie said councils already lobby central government as members of COSLA. There are also initiatives to share services underway.

Q27. I don't agree with libraries closing. Can we look at whether vulnerable people could use the high school libraries if the public libraries are to close?

A28. Kenneth agreed it is important to look at how we use our buildings. For example, we could have fewer public buildings but open them longer hours.

Q29. The Newbattle Centre is not on a bus route. Could there be a bus that stops in the school?

A29. Cllr Jim Muirhead said his understanding is that there is a bus stop just at the roundabout, just short of the centre's entrance.

Q30. Is the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) funding included in the potential saving of £600,000 by cutting large and small grants budgets?

A30. Mary Smith said no final decisions have been made about funding specifically for the Citizens' Advice Bureaux. Ultimately councillors will decide if, for example, the Welfare Rights function should be transferred to the CAB.

Q31. Massive signs are up in Lanarkshire saying that people caught fly tipping signs will be fined £1,500. Why don't we have those?

A31. John Blair said we do have signs up pointing out CCTV cameras are in situ at some hotspots.

Q32. If you are looking at reducing the grants budget by £600,000 but also reducing the Welfare Rights service, you'll have to potentially get help from CAB as there's a waiting list for people looking for this service. If you are heaping more services on the third sector but cutting the money, because the third sector brings in more than £6 for every £1 given to it, you will effectively be imposing double cuts.

A32. Mary Smith said that currently there are five or six organisations all offering a Welfare Rights Service. It made sense to have a 'one stop shop'. Councillors will decide if the one stop shop should be CAB.

Q33. We have five scout halls used every night. We are struggling to grow but we are not allowed to hire halls within schools. Is that not an opportunity for income – if we were allowed to book the school halls?

A33. Mary Smith said this could be investigated.

Q34. Is there still a no compulsory redundancy policy at the council?

A34. Kenneth said we are seeking to avoid compulsory redundancies which is not quite the same as a no compulsory redundancy policy. We are working to reshape our workforce. For example, we will need more staff to accommodate the expansion in early years entitlement, which is increasing to 1140 hours by 2020.

Q35. You have spoken about developing hubs with libraries, leisure centres and schools in them. Could you develop profit centres such as cafes within these that could be rented out and run by the third sector?

A35. One of our biggest profit making enterprises is the Cafe at Lasswade. There's also a new one at the new Loanhead Centre and there will be one at Newbattle. The Lasswade Cafe generated 300% more income than anticipated when opened. Kenneth added that the council is winning contracts to increase profits. Examples include landscaping contracts. He also added that the Midlothian Snowsports Centre, which was making a loss of around half a million a year five or six years ago, is now making between £200,000 and £300,000 a year.

Q36. Should the next meeting not be bringing business leaders to discuss how to generate money?

A36. Kenneth said we can undoubtedly consider such a move.

Meeting 3 – Council Chambers, Dalkeith 8 November 2017

In attendance: Cllr Derek Milligan, Cllr Jim Muirhead, Director of Education, Communities and Economy Mary Smith, Director Resources John Blair, Head of Finance and Integrated Support Services Gary Fairley and Joint Director Health & Social Care and Chief Officer of Midlothian Integrated Joint Board Allister Short.

No. of community representatives:

Summary of key issues discussed:

Record of meeting:

Following a presentation by Councillor Milligan, the meeting was opened to questions and contributions.

Q1. What are the criteria for gritting the roads? A temperature of +4 degrees? Depending on whether roads are dry or wet?

A.1 Cllr Milligan explained that a range of factors were taken into account, depending on the weather forecast. John Blair added that Met Office forecast information was used as a guide along with sensors on key parts of the network, which allowed spot-gritting when required.

Q2. The cuts are affecting people with health problems disproportionately – including people with mental health problems.

A2. Cllr Milligan: We are paying particular attention to these areas and need to do what's right here. We're with you here, and agree that cuts like this can cause 'double whammy' in terms of their impact. We will genuinely keep the vulnerable in mind when we are looking at what decisions to take.

Q3. Closing Libraries will hit the poorest in our communities. Many children don't have computers at home. All our libraries are busy. For the elderly they are the hub of the community. Mums with toddlers and babies use them. People not getting out would add to mental health issues.

Q4. If we are to have one central library, what would be the location? What about costs of travel?

A3 ,4. Cllr Milligan: School libraries are not part of these proposals and there are other options that we will look for public libraries including self-service access and checkouts for users.

Mary Smith: Self-service libraries is one option and others are being considered. There is discussion on keeping some sort of services around communities.

Q5. Has consideration been given as to what will happen if you don't set a balanced budget?

A5. Cllr Milligan: The consequences of not setting a budget are too extreme to contemplate. The government would send in civil servants who would look at cutting everything other than statutory services – and the government would blame us.

Q6. It is impossible to cut our way to solvency. This is caused by government not raising taxation. We need to find ways of demonstrating the consequences to government.

A6. Cllr Milligan: The prediction is that the Scottish Government will give us a cash flat settlement, with money going to protect health, police, etc., effectively taking money from our part of the settlement.

Q7. The situation is not unexpected. It's tiring to hear people passing the buck. It's not possible to cut our way out of the problem. We need to look more radically at other funding. What representations will you be making to central government?

A7. Cllr Milligan: I have met with the Finance Minister and made pleas to him to fund Midlothian Council and council in general, properly. I welcome the fact that the Scottish Government is looking at the tax system with the possibility of raising income tax.

We have also taken £32million out of the local authority in savings in the last 8 – 10 years.

Q8. Could we look at going beyond the council and more about boosting the local economy, resulting in more people paying rates, etc.?

A8. Cllr Milligan: Business rates go into a central pot and are allocated by the Scottish Government, so this is not within our control. We are though, major players in the City Deal, generating hi tech industries and investing in centres of excellence, such as the proposed digital centre of excellence at Newbattle High. Our house building is also the biggest in Scotland per head of population.

Q9. Why are we reducing vocational opportunities? Some kids are not going to university but have other skills to contribute. Also cutting intervention in children's services and education will only result in more costs later.

A9. Mary Smith: Children's services work hard with the community to increase the number of foster carers and adopters. We are also successfully working on other early intervention, such as Good Time 2B2 . In terms of vocational education, we have gone from 31st to 5th in Scotland in terms of our positive destinations for school leavers. We think we can save by changing the way we deliver services, still keeping the high level of positive destinations.

Q10. How are we reviewing Surestart? Lots of children have very difficult needs. We've got to improve and make sure people have the right training.

Q11. We don't elect people to tell us what we can't do. Talk about what we can do. What impact assessments have been done? I'm not hearing about a collective strategy, about how you are

planning to grow the economy. Should you not be involving local businesses such as Tesco? Local communities could take on some services.

A11. Cllr Milligan said the council is working with local groups to take ownership of some services. He gave the example of a dance club that wants to take over the bowling club, currently under threat of closing. The dance club would be happy to accommodate the bowlers. Cllr Milligan said Tesco also works with local groups via its communities teams.

Mary Smith said impact assessments had been done on each proposal.

Q12. Did you say you were going to raise developers' contributions?

A12. John Blair said we are currently getting a high level of developers' contributions. Cllr Milligan said we get £24,000 per house compared to £22,000 in East Lothian. Cllr Milligan added that this money is a capital payment and doesn't cover the revenue costs of running schools, such as teachers' salaries. Council Tax and government grant does not cover the revenue costs.

Q13.. Should there be a five year investment plan.

A13.. Cllr Milligan said he agreed. He went on to talk about how local authorities should be able to implement compulsory purchases from private landowners. Mary Smith added that as well as the developers' contributions all new developments must have 25% affordable housing included.

Q14. I've heard there are a lot of loopholes in developers' contributions contracts.

A14. Cllr Milligan said this was an historic issue from pre 2000. Nowadays though, developers have to put up bonds so that if they become bankrupt money is still available for them to fulfil their obligations to the council. There are other safeguards. For example, it might be that the developer is required to build a new school by the time the 80th house is built on a site or, alternatively, within three years.

Q15. You got the figures wrong regarding how many pupils needed to be accommodated in a school in Mayfield.

A15. Mary Smith explained there is a national formula for predicting future pupils numbers based on housing developments in the catchment etc. This formula works the majority of times across Scotland. However, there have been two occasions when it didn't in Midlothian and one of these was in Mayfield.

Q16. Is the plan to stop the taxi card scheme?

A16. John Blair said Yes.

Q17. The proposals seem to rely on volunteers doing more. However, if you are cutting money to the third sector, where are these volunteers to come from?

A17. Cllr Muirhead agreed there were lots of references to the third sector taking on more responsibilities throughout the document. These proposals impacting on the third sector would be considered thoroughly before any final decisions made.

Q18. The increase in lets for After Schools Clubs will have a big impact on my ASC which works hand to mouth. Can the increase be means tested?

A18. Mary Smith said the economic development team was keen to help ASCs with making the most of their income. Some ASCs were making a bigger turnover than others. Those ASCs getting the 95% discount on lets don't charge significantly less than the private sector, so the saving is not getting passed on to the customer. Parents could be eligible for tax credits to help pay for the after school club costs. Our estimates are that £7 a week per child will be passed on to families if the proposal goes ahead. Cllr Muirhead agreed to look at the published accounts of the ASC.

Cllr Muirhead asked who would be prepared to pay 'a bit more' for council services either through a rise in Council Tax or Income Tax. The majority of those in the room put their hands up.

Meeting 4 – Council Chambers, Dalkeith 13 November 2017

In attendance: Director of Communities, Education and Economy Mary Smith, Chief Executive Kenneth Lawrie, Director Resources John Blair, Head of Finance and Integrated Support Services Gary Fairley, Head of Customer and Housing Services Kevin Anderson, Council Leader Derek Milligan and Depute Council Leader Jim Muirhead.

No. of community representatives:

51 booked to attend the event. In total, 35 people came along.

Summary of key issues discussed:

Record of meeting:

Q1. Have you done an equality impact assessment as some of the cuts are cumulative and will impact on some groups more than others? Gorebridge has been "decimated". The library and leisure centre is all we have left. Also, we hear rumours there is going to be a new school in Gorebridge. Where is it going to be built and can our existing services be protected at least until the new hub facility opens?

A1. Cllr Milligan said equality impact assessments have all been done for the individual cuts while Kenneth also confirmed one has been done for the cuts as a whole. Mary Smith said there will be a new school. No land has been identified yet and the question will be "can we afford it?". Discussions will be carried out with developers.

Q2. It is very important where the new school is built. If it is at Redhaugh then that would be a shame as the centre will become a "ghetto". The hub at Lasswade is central and very successful. We want the same model in Gorebridge.

A2. Referring to the funding package in excess of £2 million for Gorebridge being announced on Wednesday 15 Nov, Kenneth said there is a lot of money going into regenerating Gorebridge centre at the moment.

Q3. If you raised Council Tax (CT) by 3%, how does that impact on the pie chart showing that Council Tax accounts for 22% of the council's income?

A3. Gary Fairley said the 22% would rise by approximately 1% to 23%.

Q4. I realise Council Tax income stays in Midlothian. However is it the case that if we raised the Council Tax by more than 3%, the government would then take that money out of the pot by reducing the grant it gives us accordingly?

A4. Cllr Milligan said if we put the CT up by more than the 3%, which is a SNP Government manifesto commitment, it is likely that there would be some form of sanction by government.

Q5. We need to ask ourselves why officers have put forward these proposals now. What has happened to cause this issue?

A5. Kenneth explained that more than £32 million has already been taken out of the budget since 2010 by cost saving measures such as closing buildings. The issue is the continued reduction in Scottish government grant. The current year saw a year on year cash reduction with further cash reductions expected over the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 There's also financial pressures in adult health and social care because private care providers have been unable to fulfil contracts and the service has come back in-house. We're also the fastest growing authority in Scotland and while we do get some extra Govt grant because of that, we are also penalised to some extent because councils with falling populations don't have their grants cut in proportion so we are, in effect, paying for that by getting less than our fair share of the pot. Gary Fairley added that CT collected in Midlothian does stay in Midlothian and each 3% increase raised, brings in an extra £1.2million to the budget. He added that the government may put sanctions on those authorities raising CT by more than 3%.

Q6. You mentioned there was a good response to the consultation last year. What is the relation between those outcomes and the proposals you are outlining here tonight?

A6. Kenneth said we have endeavoured to take the outcomes of that consultation on board. The position this year is more severe, however.

Q7. What I am hearing is that we shouldn't have bothered participating in last year's consultation.

A7. Cllr Muirhead said that the outcome of the consultation in 2016 were taken on board when setting last year's budget.

Q8. I don't see anything about benchmarking, nothing that helps you as members make decisions. I mean, are we good at some things but not at others?

A8. Kenneth mentioned our positive destinations figures and pointed the individual to the COSLA website for benchmarking information. Note: Performance info and benchmarking on council website.

Q9. How many council employees do you have in Midlothian compared to Council Tax payers?

A9. – The proposals in front of members will see a reduction in the staffing complement of over 240 full time equivalent posts.

Q10. How informed can comments by us be? Communities are keen to engage but the information provided is either meaningless or difficult to follow.

Q11. I am chair of Volunteer Midlothian. If you are to become more reliant on the voluntary sector then that requires investing resources in it. For every £1 spent on the voluntary sector, it contributes £6.56.

A11. Cllr Milligan said the council is very aware of the good work of the voluntary sector. The council is looking at ways to make efficiencies by, for example, looking to see if some voluntary organisations could share office space.

Q12. If we close the libraries where is everyone going to go to get online for example? They need to apply for jobs on MyJobScotland etc. I'm also from Pathhead and if you cut our bus service too, how are people going to get to work and how are children going to get to school if they miss the school bus?

A12. Cllr Milligan agreed. He stressed he was aware of the issue with the bus service in Pathhead.

Q13. Do you still have a no redundancy policy?

A13. We now have an avoiding compulsory redundancy programme. We also need to make sure that in the future we have enough staff to comply with new 1140 hours entitlement for all three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds. We are also discontinuing Switch.

Q14. I am a parent with a child who benefits from learning assistance. I'm very concerned to hear about the cuts of 10% in numbers of learning assistants. Can I ask what we are doing to push back to the Scottish Government. Can we lobby it for more of an increase in grant?

A14. Cllr Milligan said he has met with local MSPs, cross party politicians. There is a formula agreed by COSLA as to how government grants to local authorities are worked out. However, it is quite old now and we are taking a lot of housing and we need the funds for infrastructure. Mary Smith said that learning assistants are our undervalued staff members with no progression pathways. That is being addressed to create learning pathways.

Q15. Are we working with other local authorities to share services?

A15. There was a lot of work done to share education services a few years ago but they were met with reluctance on part of East Lothian. Kenneth added that there's about a dozen services that are shared with East Lothian currently and we share audit services with Borders. Joint working is not altogether in our control as we have to have buy in from other local authorities.

Q16. I am from the parent council at Tynewater. Your proposals to increase let charges for After School Clubs from a 95% subsidy to a 50% subsidy only with cripple families.

A16. Cllr Milligan said ASCs have been asked to work up proposals as to the potential impact of the increase and what kind of increase they can accommodate or what they can do to mitigate against any increases.

Q17. We are trying to grow our community in Pathhead. However, we feel that the more we put in, the more we get forgotten about. What are you doing to help us when we are willing to do what we can to offer our services?

A17. Cllr Milligan said the council has started to engage with community associations. He added there are areas we could work together.

Q18. I am a treasurer for a voluntary group providing an after school club service. We are trying to get reserves, as the council is too. However, it is a case of constant juggling of finances. We need to work out how much of the increased let costs we would have to pass on to parents.

A18. None required.

Q19. There are no alternative ASC facilities at Tynewater. Where are you getting the £4 per child increase a week figure?

A19. Mary Smith said the estimated increase for each child would be £7 a week. The 95% subsidy is something many other groups don't benefit from. We don't have a statutory requirement to support after schools clubs financially. Mary Smith added that the ASC using council facilities are not substantially cheaper than the private sector so they are not passing on the letting subsidy to families.

Q20. Smaller volunteer organisations bring great value. If we are to rely on more volunteers, you need to give us more support.

A21. Cllr Milligan agreed.

Q22. You are saying the problems are demographic. What are you doing to create jobs?

A22. Kenneth said we are an entrepreneurial council and that we have won a fair amount of contracts recently, including landscaping ones. We are creating an energy company too that should be profitable.

Q23. What are you doing to share learning and good practice with other councils?

A24. We are sharing good practice and learning from examples of good practice.

Q25. If you make all of these cuts it's not going to be the same community. We are a caring community but we've nothing left to cut. The more you cut the less justification there will be to keep your jobs.

A25. Cllr Milligan said he would not want to go back to the old days of Lothian Regional Council.

Q26. Have you looked at cutting senior executive posts?

A26. Yes, there used to be five, now there's 2.5 senior executive posts.

Q27. You cannot compare the prices of private nurseries, who also provide after schools club services, with after schools club services using council facilities. This is because they use the nursery fees to subsidise the after schools club service so can keep prices competitive.

A27. No response noted.

Q28. The austerity measure in the last 10 years have impacted the most on our young people, especially those in deprived areas of Mayfield and Easthouses. Have we consulted with them to ask their opinions on the latest proposals?

A28. Cllr Muirhead agreed this was an excellent point and as we had not, we need to rectify.

Q29. Can we not get tax and VAT benefits from making library and leisure centre trusts?

A29. Kevin Anderson suggested “the door is shutting” on those benefits.

Q30. Have we explored, for example, getting Sustrans to pay for school crossing guides or external agencies to contribute to council services?

A30. There is dialogue.

**Meeting 5 – Council Chambers, Dalkeith
14 November 2017**

In attendance: Cllr Derek Milligan, Cllr Jim Muirhead, Director of Education, Communities and Economy Mary Smith, Director Resources John Blair, Head of Finance and Integrated Support Services Gary Fairley, Head of Adult and Social Care Alison White and Head of Commercial Operations, Ricky Moffat.

No. of community representatives: 22 people attended; 31 booked

Summary of key issues discussed:

Record of meeting:

Q1. What consideration have you given to the longer-term impact of all these cuts? In years to come and hopefully when the economic situation improves, we’ll still be struggling to get capacity back up if you cut funding now to charities and community groups. It will take years to recover. For every £1 invested in the voluntary sector, yields a return of £6.56.

A1. Cllr Milligan said he was very aware of the great work done by voluntary groups. What the council is doing is looking at ways to help the voluntary sector make efficiencies. For example, could they share office space?

Q2. I think you should limit the cuts to those that will have the least impact, especially if services are reliant on volunteers. I’m especially worried about libraries as closing them will impact most on the most vulnerable people in our society.

A2. Cllr Milligan agreed libraries are not just used by people looking to borrow books so much is done in libraries from accessing the internet to apply for jobs to pupils using the facilities to do their homework. He stressed that school libraries will remain.

Q3. Can you clarify as the summary document says all but a central library are to close?

A3. Cllr Milligan said that Paradykes, Lasswade and Newbattle libraries will all stay open.

Q4. Given the potential cuts to services, could you not actually do more in libraries by moving some of offering the services, such as welfare advice, in there?

A4. Cllr Milligan agreed ‘one stop shops’ are a good idea where you can speak to one person about a range of issues not ten people. Libraries are also making other efficiencies such as self-check outs. That said, the council is very reliant on volunteers in libraries. Kenneth added that taking services out into the community of Mayfield, in the library there, has been successful.

Q5. You talked about local authorities in the west having protected budgets. Could you tell us more?

A5. There is a formula used to distribute the government's grants to local authorities. Councils with rising populations get some growth in their budget. However, those with dropping populations take a cut but there is a 'floor' to that cut to protect their services. Kenneth added that we are the fastest growing council in Scotland and that, because of that and the fact we are effectively having to subsidise other councils with dropping populations, we are penalised in a sense to the tune of £2.4 million. Cllr Milligan asked those present to lobby your Westminster and Scottish Parliament politicians to ask for a fairer settlement. He added that Midlothian is taking extra housing and growing because Edinburgh can't cope. The Minister, he says, has the power to change the formula about allocating grants to local authorities. We need more money to cope with our growth to build infrastructure.

Q6. Why does the government give pupils in P1-P3 free meals? Most of us could afford to pay for them.

A6. Cllr Milligan said it is a national policy and we don't have a choice.

Q7. I agree with the concerns already expressed about cutting libraries. All the cuts will have a huge impact on the most vulnerable in our society. The reduction in early years funding impacts on the less advantaged, cuts to subsidised buses will impact on the vulnerable like elderly people or those in more rural areas. The cuts to libraries really goes much further than closing a building. Are the grants not divided up within COSLA?

A7. The Scottish government and COSLA agreed the formula about nine years ago and it has not been revisited since then, said Cllr Milligan. We are aware that some of the savings proposals will be a 'double whammy' for some local people. For example, a woman who attended a previous meeting made it clear what the impact would be if we removed the bus service from Pathhead. Mary Smith said that by 2020 all three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds will be entitled to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare. We can, therefore, realign early years services and work differently – saving money along the way - because of this new entitlement. Our positive destinations success is a good example of working differently with financial constraints but achieving a great outcome. We were ranked 32nd when it came to our positive destinations record just a few years ago but now we are joint fifth with 95% of our young people leaving school and securing further education place, training etc. The council is finding that while we have success in getting young people into jobs and training we are now turning our attention to the over 50s, as it's this demographic that is not in jobs. We need to refocus our energies there and use resources differently. Kenneth added that equality impact assessments have been carried out. He added that while we want to be a modern, forward looking council allowing residents to do more online, we do realise that face-to-face interactions with residents who don't have I phones etc. remain important.

Q8. The whole thing is very negative. Should we not be looking at more positive solutions. For example, among our biggest assets are schools and the land around them. In many cases the buildings are closed out with school hours. What about the Bush Estate and the film studio – will they not bring in more economic benefits? You talk about lots of building work but what are the builders doing to help – could they not be contributing more to our communities? There's no allotments in Midlothian. What about the old Dalkeith High School site?

A8. Cllr Milligan said allotments have been identified in areas in the new local plan. That said, he thinks it is a good idea to those looking for an allotment to team them up with older people with gardens who may now not be able to maintain them. He added that developers contribute money

from each house built to capital costs, for example, the roads and schools required to accommodate the people living in the new homes. However, the money doesn't go towards revenue costs like paying teachers' salaries so that's a big problem. Kenneth Lawrie said that on a positive note, the council has already taken more than £30 million out of the budget since 2010. We are looking at an energy company and heat from waste generating plant (under construction). Our commercial teams are winning contracts to carry out services such as landscaping and there's potential plans to establish a solar meadow. Mary Smith said developer contributions are £24,000 for each house built. 25% of the houses built in each new development must be affordable housing.

Q9. The summary document is eight pages of grief and pain. Pro rata across Scotland, Council Tax and income tax payers are facing £810 million of deficits. Increasing income tax would help. What about the City Deal, will that not help make savings?

A9. Cllr Milligan agreed that raising income tax by 1p or 2p in the pound would help mitigate against some of the cuts. Every service cut always impacts the most on poor people. We need to do what is right, not what is palatable. Kenneth said that £600 million of City Deal money, the vast majority of which – 75% is capital – will be spent within 10 miles of 'this building'. We are working with City Deal partners to get the maximum benefit for Midlothian. The deal will help cut costs as some of our services can be 'picked up' by the deal. For example, we are delivering Centres for Excellence in our schools with City Deal money. We have good working relations with the Bush, Edinburgh College and other partners to make that happen.

Q10. What happens in 2021/22 onwards? We can 'salami slice' shaving bits of money off from here and there but we really need to think of new ways of running the organisation. Should services merge with other local authorities?

A10. Kenneth said while we've already taken £32 million out of the budget since 2010, this year there's been a 'step change' in circumstances. We got a worse than expected grants settlement last year, for example, and two social care contracts had to come back in-house as private providers could not fulfil their contracts. We do currently share about 12 services with East Lothian but they tend to be important but smaller services. There's certainly scope to do more. Cllr Milligan added that a lot of work had been done back in 2012 to merge education with East Lothian but when it came to signing off on the deal, East Lothian failed to do so. He said we are not the only local authority facing big cuts. West Lothian is looking at around £70 million of savings, pro rata, that's about the same as our budget challenge. He agreed that the council is going to have to work differently. He pointed out that even doing so might not manifest as much savings as you might think. Cutting the bin collections to monthly, for example, does not half your costs because you still have landfill charges etc. Alison White said a good example of a shared service with East Lothian is Public Protection. This has been very successful thanks to a commitment by senior management. She added that in adult health and social care there are continuing challenges in finding and retaining a core workforce of carers etc. The model of we have finding and keeping these staff is not working, she said. We need to make it more cost effective for the council and more attractive as a job choice. The council is supporting people to live independently. If clients are in their own homes, that can be challenging as carers have to drive distances between each client and when they get there, they could perhaps do with a bit of a helping hand. A model at Cowan Court works well, however. Here people can live independently within a complex. It's more cost effective and as clients' care needs increase, people are on hand. We work very closely with housing colleagues on this cluster model of working.

Q11. Back to the library issue. In Mayfield, the primary school make a lot of use of the library. What provision will be made for children to use the library during their class time with it shuts? I'm also worried about the potential cuts to the number of learning assistants. And the ski slope is a massive benefit to Scotland. Why are we having to run it? Can't sportscotland do it?

A11. Cllr Milligan said he did want to close the snowsports centre eight years ago as it was losing about £500,000 a year. Now it is making about £200,000 and, with continued investment, it's projected to bring in around £1 million a year so we want to keep it. Mary Smith explained that cutting 12 learning assistants equates to 0.3 of a full time equivalent post in each school. We feel we can make that saving. She said that currently there's no career pathway for learning assistants. These are valued members of staff and we will be addressing the absence of career progression opportunities. With the extended early learning and childcare hours coming, there will also be opportunities for people to take up careers in early learning and, indeed, there will be clear learning pathways for those who do. As for Mayfield library, we need to reuse that library for the learning estate.

Q12. A representative from Melville Golf Range in Midlothian indicated there is some sort of rate relief anomaly that is benefitting three courses in Midlothian, including Melville. The range is willing to give up this discretionary rates relief. The business would also be interested in sponsoring a roundabout.

A12. Ricky Moffat agreed to speak to the gentleman at the end of the meeting. Ricky also stressed that three members of his team are pursuing sponsorship deals. Previously there were restrictions on what you could put on the roundabouts but this seems to be less of an issue.

Q13. The Third Sector is not as well paid as Midlothian employees and we are very good at making every penny count. I think it is very important to work with the third sector.

A13. Cllr Milligan agreed.

Q14. I am here to support libraries. Am I correct in that you now seem to be saying that four will be kept open – Lasswade, Paradykes and Newbattle - along with a central library? It also sounds as though you need us to ask politicians to give Midlothian a fairer grant. Also, do you still have the no compulsory redundancies policy and people in Switch?

A14. Kenneth said the policy had changed to an 'avoiding compulsory redundancy' policy and that Switch is coming to an end. He added that as a council we are open to radical solutions to budget issues such as merging with other councils. Cllr Milligan added that he had met with the Finance Minister and MSPs from all political parties to lobby for more government grant. He said every local authority is facing similar savings challenges. The government does give extra money but it is ring fenced for the government's own priorities such as education. The extra money collected on the higher bands of Council Tax went back to local authorities – in our case £2.2million stayed in Midlothian and went into schools.

Q15. You spoke about private social care providers handing back contracts. I'm a third sector social care provider. What can we do to work with the council to lessen the impact of those budget cuts?

A15. Cllr Milligan said the impact will be "unimaginable". There is a mass overspend in the adult health and social care budget as the private providers couldn't get the staff to fulfil the contracts. As a council, we are hoping that redundant staff can be retrained in adult health and social care or early

years jobs. Alison White added that the council has a fantastic working relationship with many care providers. She pointed out that changing legislation has seen health and social care merge with decision making now sitting with the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) so what might seem like a few bland sentences about the social care challenges, is really more because the real decision-making is happening within the IJB rather than the council.

Young People Consultations

29 November 2017 – 34 school pupils attending 2 meetings

Meeting 1 – Meeting with two teenage girls who have been helped by the Pathways team – 2 attending

In attendance were councillors Derek Milligan and Jim Muirhead along with Mary Smith. After an introduction to the budget challenges by Cllr Milligan, Mary Smith asked the young girls if, until now, they had been aware of the issue.

The first girl said she thought her mum might have spoken about it but she wasn't sure.

Mary also explained that one proposal is to reshape the Pathways and both Pave teams. She asked if the girls thought there might be drawbacks to that proposals.

The first girl said combining the services might mean there would not be as much help for people like her. She was getting excluded from Lasswade High School. She didn't like the fact it was a big school. When she went to Pathways in Pathhead, it was much smaller. That helped she said. Teachers at Lasswade didn't seem to understand her needs whereas there was more support at Pathways. She's now back in school some of the time doing courses including Home Economics and Fashion & Textiles. She's in third year.

Cllr Muirhead asked her how she got to Pathhead from Bonnyrigg, where she lives. She said she got the bus. Bus subsidies may be impacted by the savings proposals. Cllr Muirhead asked if being in Pathhead was a disadvantage. She said it wasn't as when she got angry, she couldn't leave.

Keith Millar of Pathways said he was supportive of the proposals to combine Pave and Pathways. It's not about location really, it is an opportunity to pool resources and make better use of everyone's expertise.

The second young girl said she had been at Pathways for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy which was helping her not get angry any more. When she got angry, there was the potential for her to lash out. She spent hours in guidance. She didn't want to be at school or home. The CBT helped her deal with school and now she's fully back in school.

Mary spoke about the plan to potentially make those who can afford it, pay for music tuition. The second young girls said she didn't like the sound of that. Music is a big part of people's lives, she said, including hers. It was the only thing she was good at. Why should her parents pay for her passion? she added.

The conversation then turned to the proposal to cut learning assistants by 10%. The first young girl spoke of how learning assistants had helped her when she was excluded from classes and in 'the base'.

Mary explained how the cut would mean 0.3 less learning assistants per school. She was also going to introduce learning pathways for learning assistants as this does not currently exist. This would mean learning assistants could progress in their careers and get training in things like ADHD and CBT.

The second girl agreed that learning assistants are really helpful.

Cllr Milligan then asked for the girls' views on potentially having one head teacher to look after two schools and janitors that had responsibility for more than one campus. The second young girl had concerns as she thought Cllr Milligan potentially meant the two Penicuik schools might merge. She felt a bit lost in a big school and didn't think some pupils could cope. She was concerned that class sizes would then rise to up to 50 people. Cllr Milligan and Mary explained a combined school would be a new facility and that class sizes are not allowed to reach 50.

The girls were asked if they use council leisure facilities. The second girl does some of her Duke of Edinburgh classes in the Penicuik Centre. She said the centre was really important as classes such as netball are held there in the evening. The first girl said her mum used the gym.

Cllr Milligan said it was important to make sure that facilities used by the school during the day are then available to local people and community groups in the evening to get maximum rental potential.

Meeting 2 – 32 pupils representing all year groups and six secondary schools came to the meeting in the council chamber on Wednesday 29 November 2017.

In attendance were Cllr Derek Milligan, Cllr Jim Muirhead and the Director of Education, Communities and Economy, Dr Mary Smith.

Q1. Music tuition is very important. It's opened up many doors for me and got me to meet lots more people. I took part in the Usher Hall concert last week and went on a trip to Germany because of my music.

A1. Cllr Muirhead spoke highly of the Usher Hall concert. He said charging for music tuition was not something the council wants to do. However, with £32 million already taken out of the budget, we are now in a position where very difficult choices have to be made to present a balanced budget. For example, should we be charging tuition fees to those families that can afford it or giving a bed to an elderly person with a health issue? Music will still be taught in schools. If you are taking an exam, you will get your first instrument for free, which will save families money.

Q2. To get people to actually sit the exam then they have to be taught and they have to be learning an instrument potentially from primary school. The fees will put people off so less people will be ready to sit the exam when they get to secondary school.

A2. Cllr Muirhead said that was a valid point.

Q3. Music gives you the chance to meet new people. Class numbers will drop if people can't afford the tuition.

A3. Councillors and Mary noted the point.

Q4. I am doing National 5 music and because I've had music tuition, I'm the only one confident of passing.

A4. Cllrs and Mary noted the point.

Q5. What about if you pay for lessons and then you are off for a long time? Would you still have to pay for the ones you missed?

A5. Mary Smith said aspects about how the charging would work such as refunds were still being ironed out.

Q6. Do you expect a drop in numbers of pupils taking music tuition when you start charging?

A6. Cllr Muirhead said pupils who are good at football have to pay for extra tuition so why should those taking music not pay?

Q7. There's lot of opportunities to take part in football, there's not the same for music.

A7. Cllr Milligan said it's only been in the last couple of years that the fee has been abolished. He will be checking what happened previously when music tuition fees were in place. Did numbers drop when the fees were introduced, for example? He added that sometimes the council has to do what is right, not what is popular.

Q8. The music tuition fees will really hit people just above the payment threshold. Music therapy is really popular, it really helped me. It's 25 minutes in the week when you don't need to think of all the bad things happening to you. What happens if people in that situation can't afford to pay?

A8. Cllr Milligan said mental health is not funded to the extent we need it to be. Music tuition will still be going on in schools, said Mary. There's currently a mental health sub group putting in a bid for mental health work with schools. It's about doing things differently, she added.

Q9. When you started charging before, the number of primary pupils taking music tuition definitely dropped.

A9. Councillors noted this.

Q10. Would pupils taking two instruments have to pay twice?

A10. Mary said it would depend on if you are doing SQAs for both instruments.

Q11. How much will you be charging?

A11. Mary said £411.56 per annum for each instrument per child.

Q12. If you share a lesson, will you pay less?

A12. Mary said you are paying for the expertise and the cost to the council of delivering that service. Final details are still to be worked out, for example, the length of the lessons etc.

Q13. Could you have a deposit scheme and could you pay weekly?

A13. Cllr Muirhead said that would be considered.

Q14. If families have a lot of children taking music, how are they going to pay for that?

A14. Cllr Milligan said they would potentially look at a tapered/discounted scheme in that situation.

Q15. My point is homelessness and are you going to still build homes as I am staying in supported accommodation.

A15. Cllr Milligan said house building is paid for from the Housing Revenue account. This is separate and all the money to build the homes comes from rent. Council tenants are being asked if they would be prepared to pay a bit more rent. If the answer is yes, then the council will be building at least another 1,000 homes. Even though we've built circa 1,300 homes since 2006, the waiting list has almost doubled.

Q16. What about school meals for people who earn just enough to make them not eligible for free school meals. If you put the prices up then it means these pupils will go outside school for the cheaper and healthier options. This will then potentially have a knock on effect making people more obese etc. which, in turn, will ultimately cost the council money to fix. Sometimes a hot school meal is the only decent meal pupils get all day.

A16. Cllr Milligan said the service was looking at a hot soup and sandwich affordable option.

Q17. We can't do without learning assistants.

A17. Mary said learning assistants are the only service with no learning pathways. The 10% cut represented less than a third of a learning assistant per school.

Q18. You are asking after schools clubs to pay 10 times more than they are currently for rent. That's really ridiculous.

A18. After schools clubs will still get a 50% discount, said Cllr Milligan. At least one of the clubs has a turnover of around £700,000, that's a lot of discount. The clubs are not charging significantly less than the private sector so parents and carers not benefitting from the council subsidy. We've asked ASCs to come forward with more details of what increase they could afford.

Q19. Putting up the prices of school meals or after schools clubs it will only add to the obesity problem. I used to be bigger but then I started to play rugby.

A19. Cllr Muirhead said this was a valid point.

Q20. I do a placement at a home for the elderly. If you cut the mobile library service it's going to have a big impact on people like them.

A20. Cllr Milligan said all of the schools' libraries such as in the Loanhead and Penicuik centres will stay open. However, he is conscious of the impact withdrawing a mobile library service would have.

Q21. If you cut LLE, it means there will be less one to one opportunities for pupils at Beeslack. These pupils are vulnerable and if they don't get extra help they could become disruptive which will impact on us all.

A21. Teacher numbers are protected, said Mary. LLE is not a statutory requirement and we are going to have to make difficult choices.

Q22. The 50% cut in after schools clubs is going to have a big impact.

A22. Cllr Milligan said the 50% is a lot more than most clubs get. He also clarified that ASCs are not sports clubs etc. offering after schools activities, it's those offering childcare, which had been confusing some of the pupils.

Q23. If you close the Penicuik Recycling Centre it will end up costing you more because of fly tipping.

A23. Cllr Milligan said other areas outside of Stobhill that don't have a recycling centre don't have a substantially higher fly tipping problem. However, he will look at if closing the centre could ultimately cost money.

Q24. Closing the mobile library service could have an impact on smaller villages that don't have their own libraries.

A24. Cllr Milligan said that was noted and also looking at if smaller communities could run their own libraries, those that have them.

Q25. I am a member of Pathways. If you cut youth workers then we often need youth workers to drive us to Pathways. If you could youth workers, we rely on them and if they are not there for us there could be a rise in antisocial behaviour.

A25. Cllr Milligan said education takes up a big chunk of our budget. If we are limited as to what we can take out of that bit of the budget then we have to take out twice as much from elsewhere.

Q26. If you cut CCTV in places like Mayfield there will be a rise in antisocial behaviour. There's already a problem with antisocial behaviour in Mayfield.

A26. Cllr Muirhead said it was a good point but not all areas are covered by CCTV.

Q27. What happens if you can't pay your music tuition all in the one go?

A27. You can pay per term, said Mary.

Q28. If you cut street sweeping at weekends it could lead to a rise in antisocial behaviour with folk dropping litter, smashing bottles etc.

A28. Cllr Muirhead said the boy has been the very first person to raise the street sweeping cut. Street sweeping proposal was to cut it at weekends because staff on an enhanced rate then and so most expensive.

Scanned written individual submissions

118 additional documents with comments not included in the main report have been scanned and can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. These are available at www.midlothian.gov.uk/shapingourfuture and should be read in conjunction with this paper (Paper B).

More information on the consultation and its findings are available at www.midlothian.gov.uk/shapingourfuture