

# **Dumfries and Galloway Council Budget 2020/2021 Response Forms**

## **PART C**

**Responses from Organisations P327 - P383**

**Responses from D&G Council Staff P384 - P394**

Response Forms have been published in full where the respondent has given permission.

Data such as names, signatures and post codes have been removed.



## Council Budget 2020/2021 Response Form

Please note: with the exception of offensive language/comments, your response will be made available, in full, to Councillors and will be published on [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk).

I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED: YES  NO\*

\*Unfortunately, if you do not agree to your comments being published, these will not be made available to Councillors when considering the responses.

District Postcode (For example DG1)	ML12
Organisation (if applicable)	SOEC

Please share your views in the space available below

Dear Sir or Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your deliberations on the Council Budgets. We are fully aware of the very difficult decisions that Councils face at this time in Scotland.

We are also aware that for many years Dumfries & Galloway, like other local authorities, have recognised the vital importance to young people of outdoor learning and away-from-home experiences. Residential outdoor learning remains a powerful pedagogy that supports teachers and others to deliver many of the outcomes and benefits that you are looking for pupils and young people.

The activities we provide are effective in the development of qualities and skills such as confidence, resilience, team work, communication and much more. However, it is the immersive, away-from-home experience that changes a young person, their self-perception and self-belief.

With facilities closing, several local authorities are talking to us to explore how we might provide learning and developmental opportunities for their young people. SOEC believes that in a rapidly changing world, young people need these experiences more than ever before.

SOEC is a Third Sector organisation with charitable objective to work "for the social, physical and intellectual advancement of the community at large and of children and young people in particular..." We work with schools (including one from Dumfries & Galloway) and support groups for disabled young people from across Scotland to motivate and inspire young people to realise their potential.

We must all do things differently and as advocates of partnership working, we believe that innovative solutions and cost effective opportunities emerge from close collaboration between local authorities and Third Sector organisation like SOEC.

We would welcome an opportunity to explore opportunities with you.

Yours faithfully

  
Chief Executive

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG3
Organisation (if applicable)	Bethany Trust

Please share your views in the space available below

I am shocked to think that the Council would even consider closing the drop in centre on the Whitesands in Dumfries. As a volunteer at the centre I see regularly what enjoyment and benefits the visitors to the centre experience on a regular basis. Please reconsider your decision.

[Name Removed]

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Thank You.



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District Postcode (For example DG1)	LE7
Organisation (if applicable)	Ulverscroft Limited

Please share your views in the space available below

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to raise our concerns, particularly regarding the suggestion to reduce the funding for library book stock.

Although the council are looking to make overall savings of 15%, they are suggesting slashing the library book fund by a huge 85%.

Library users don't always want to/can't use digital services, and they will be severely discriminated against by this policy.

We are large print and audio books suppliers to library services around the UK and overseas. Our titles are enjoyed by everyone, particularly the elderly, disadvantaged, and visually impaired. Indeed the book fund is often seen as a "soft target", affecting those areas of society who don't have a 'voice'. Readers and listeners who need our formats have hardly any alternative sources for their books and may be totally reliant on libraries. Libraries support education and life-long learning, community cohesion, and wellbeing of young and old alike.

By slashing the book fund to only £12,750 p/a, Dumfries and Galloway will not be able to sufficiently stock their libraries, and are therefore not fulfilling their legal obligations in providing a comprehensive and efficient library service and encouraging adults and children to read.

Wigtown is Scotland's only 'book town' and home to the yearly and increasingly popular Wigtown Book Festival. This small town recognises how celebrated books can be in regenerating communities and bringing people together.

Further information in support of the library service can be found at [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk).

We do hope that you will consider making the necessary savings elsewhere.

Yours faithfully

[Name Removed]

Account Executive

Ulverscroft Limited.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland ( <a href="http://www.cilips.org.uk">www.cilips.org.uk</a> )

Please share your views in the space available below

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) are the leading professional body for librarians in Scotland and the affiliate of CILIP, the largest body of this type across the UK. We write in response to your current proposals to reduce the 'discretionary' library book budget by 85%.

We fully appreciate that you need to make difficult decisions in the present financial climate. However, we are deeply concerned at the significant amount proposed and the hugely damaging impact this could have.

Reducing the book budget to this level will leave residents in Dumfries and Galloway with a library service that would struggle to meet its requirements. With the book budget already being below the recommended level any further cut to resources would be a short-term saving that would have long-term negative impact. This would place the local community's ability to access an adequate public library service as required by the Local Government Act into substantial doubt.

Studies have shown that around a quarter of Scotland's adults have issues with literacy and libraries tackle this by promoting access to reading at a community level. There is strong evidence that reading for pleasure can increase empathy, improve relationships with others, reduce the symptoms of depression and improve wellbeing throughout life and the recent National Strategy for public libraries highlighted the abundance of studies and statistics linking improved literacy to good health, lower levels of crime, social mobility and attainment.

Good quality book stock is essential to achieving all the above. Whilst digital reading methods have become popular in recent years, 80% of the book market remains in print. Recent statistics show that Dumfries and Galloway had 450,000 annual book issues and only just over a tenth of total issues were digital content (48,000). Additionally, the number of print books issued will be likely to fall significantly should there be no new books being purchased.

The proposed cut has the potential to also disadvantage older and more vulnerable people, particularly those who may not have the digital skills to access other types of content and we urge you to ensure that the equalities impact has been fully evaluated.

A public library service, with adequate and evolving book stock, makes an important contribution to reducing inequality and demonstrates the value a local authority places on its community. I would hope that you can take the above information into consideration and we would welcome further discussion on the matter.

[Name Removed]

Head of CILIPS

[phone number removed]

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	Dumfries & Galloway Youth Orchestra (DGYO).

Please share your views in the space available below

The Trustees of the Dumfries and Galloway Youth Orchestra write to ask Dumfries and Galloway Council to re-evaluate their current plans to cut all music instrumental lessons for school pupils with the exception of those students taking SQA exams.

By cutting instrumental tuition in schools Dumfries and Galloway Council will deprive youngsters of the opportunity to benefit from a musical education and restrict the growth and sustainability of the performing arts across the region and the Creative Sector, a sector that generates in excess of £60m per annum in the South of Scotland.

Every small amount spent on a musical education yields a greater return. Not only does it develop technical abilities, it enhances communication, teamwork, analytical, listening, and creative skills. These are skills that are transferable and enable success in any profession.

A cessation in instrumental tuition will damage the region's reputation as a centre for excellence in the performing and creative arts and adversely impact the local economy.

We as Trustees of DGYO recognise the difficult of managing expenditure during challenging times, but would ask that the Council re-evaluate the value for money that a music education brings and the importance of the economic benefit that the Creative Industries have to the region.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG3
Organisation (if applicable)	Wallace Hall Parent Council

Please share your views in the space below

**Wallace Hall Parent Council** is the joint parent council of Wallace Hall Primary School and Wallace Hall Academy. At our meeting on 11 November 2019 we considered the budget options prepared by council officers for stakeholder engagement published on 1 November 2019.

The Parent Council recognises the financial challenges facing Dumfries and Galloway Council, partly as a consequence of the year-on-year reduction of the funding settlement from the Scottish government. We recognise the need for the council to modernise, reshape and improve its services, and note the council's programme of transformation. However, we are of the view **savings should not be achieved through the reduction in school budgets which will impact on the learning and teaching of our children.** Our response focuses on schools, education and learning.

**WE SUPPORT** the council's priority to **provide the best start in life for all our children:**

*"We are committed to giving all local children and young people an equal chance to fulfil their potential. For our children, raising attainment in schools is key to who they may become and how they will contribute to society. We have a strong focus on keeping children safe and helping vulnerable young people, as well as improving health and wellbeing for all children and young people. The quality of practice in the classroom and of school leadership makes the greatest impact on pupil attainment. We are therefore continuing to build capacity in our staff, develop excellent practice in learning and teaching, and support and promote leadership at all levels. By investing in our ambition to have five new learning campuses which will benefit 6,000 learners in Dumfries and across the region, we are seeing good progress on delivering our Priority."* (Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2017-2022)

And the **commitment to:**

*"Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe."*

*"Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st Century, which are at the heart of our*



*communities.”*

*“Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities”*

*“Support children to be healthy and active.”* (Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2017-2022)

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving “to maximise class sizes [in secondary schools] and efficiencies through reduced number of subjects and combinations offered”. Our children have, since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, faced a narrowing of education through its poor implementation, which conversely was introduced to broaden the education.

We are of the view that there is ample opportunity for pupils to combine practical and academic options when they are enabled to sit nine, eight or even seven exams, but when it is narrowed down to six or five there is very little room for manoeuvre.

On 23 April 2019 Reform Scotland said, “sharp reduction in National 4s and 5s available in many schools is narrowing educational opportunity for children”. Their investigation, “National 4s and 5s: The Accidental Attainment Gap”, found that the maximum number of N4s or N5s a pupil can sit varies from five to nine depending entirely on the school they go to, not on their ability only a minority of Scottish state schools now allow pupils to sit more than six exams, with a few offering only five. Independent schools continue to offer eight or nine.

Also, in April 2019, educationalist Keir Bloomer (chair of the Commission on School Reform and one of the authors of Curriculum for Excellence) said that “reducing the number of subject options is not a government policy. It has come about by accident – the unintended consequence of ill-conceived advice. This is the hallmark of poor management. This is a lose-lose”.

A further reduction in the number of subjects offered by this council in our schools would not provide the flexibility to offer a range of pathways that meet the needs and raise the attainment levels of all learners.

**WE SUPPORT** the saving to “use networking and digital delivery to increase minimum class sizes in the senior school phase of secondary” **but only if it provides greater opportunity for more practical and academic options, and can retain personalised learning experience.**

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving to “remodel of service to provide for essential SQA tuition only and direct non SQA students to community groups and private tutors across the region”.

We support the Scottish Parliament’s Education and Skills Committee’s extensive recommendations detailed in their report “A note of concern: The future of instrumental music tuition in schools” published on 22 January 2019, including:

- “The Committee recognises the many ways in which a music education can benefit young people, as well as enriching both local and national culture and the economy.”
- “The Committee recognises that international evidence demonstrates that music education can play a pivotal role in raising attainment.”
- “The Committee believes there is a lack of clarity regarding whether instrumental music tuition necessary to provide adequate preparation for SQA examinations in the senior phase can legitimately be subject to charging.”

- “The Committee acknowledges that the education delivered by instrumental music tutors supports a core part of the curriculum, and recognises that tutors are vital to ensuring that pupils have access to a diverse range of instruments and a sufficient level of teaching time in order to present for SQA examinations. Consequently, the Committee believes that instrumental music tutors should be considered to be part of core education provision.”

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving to “remodel the current 5-day hot main meal option to 2-days (Tuesday / Thursday) with the remaining 3-days offering of a premium cold deli provision including hot baked potato or a soup option in primary schools with a roll of 50 or below that will meet the new Nutrition Bill Legislation”.

It is unclear how a hot baked potato or a soup option would comply with the new Schools Food Regulations (to come into effect by autumn 2020) for “a minimum of two full portions of vegetables and a full portion of fruit are offered as part of a school lunch, with full portions of fruit and or vegetables also available in, for example, tuck shops”.

We recognise that for many school pupils, the only hot meal they will have each day is at school.

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving to “change how a portion of non-class contact time in primary schools is managed for teachers” if it disadvantages or impacts on our children’s learning.

**WE SUPPORT** the saving for “timetabling efficiency to maximise effectiveness of Secondary School day” **but not as a means to further narrow subject options.**

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving to “streamline Additional Support for Learning” teachers.

We support the retention of Additional Support for Learning (and others specialist) teachers. We are of the view such specialist teachers are the best way to identify, provide and review the additional support needs of their pupils which can arise in the short or long term as a result of the learning environment, family circumstances, health and wellbeing needs or a disability – obligations placed on education authorities by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2001, and supported by an extensive architecture of laws and policies, including Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child (an aspect of the Children and Young People Act 2014), the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving of “modernising and prioritising the delivery of school crossing patrols”, unless appropriately consulted road traffic measures were put in place at Drumlanrig Street (A76 trunk road), and East Morton Street.

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT** the saving to “reduce winter service treatment to roads” on primary or secondary routes. As a rural school many of our children rely on safe rural routes to school.

END

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG4
Organisation (if applicable)	SANDVANDR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please share your views in the space available below

REMOVE BUDGET FOR LARGE EVENTS  
AND OFFICER SALARY - [REDACTED]

WHAT HAPPENS TO INCOME FROM  
WINDFARM DEVELOPMENTS, RATES?  
THEY SHOULD BE SPENT IN  
COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE WIND FARMS.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG4
Organisation (if applicable)	Sunpiper Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

I am happy to have 3 bins provided and with the collection arrangements. I use our local recycling centre regularly and always find the staff helpful and supportive.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Royal Burgh of Wigtown & District Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

We recognise that the Council is under extreme financial pressure and there has been a lot of effort involved in achieving the required savings over recent years. We also appreciate that large scale dramatic changes are likely to be needed to balance the Budget in the years to come.

Many of the proposed options in the consultation make sense but feelings against cuts in Education is where the main consensus within the Community Council lies. Most of the proposed savings in Education are unpopular but reducing subject choice for secondary pupils is especially undesirable, since it risks reducing both engagement in education and resultant future skills and knowledge that could benefit this region. Education is investment in the future so it must be valued and supported.

Another area where the Community Council agrees is the suggested reduction in roads maintenance. Funding for roads maintenance is a challenge and its funding should not reduce, as poorer maintenance encourages more rapid deterioration; evidence also shows that compensation costs increase and any initial savings are lost. This is a small part of Council budget which a huge impact on all, and it has been squeezed a lot already. Wigtown has already experienced significant delays (over a year) in resurfacing of a major road in the Burgh with the promise of the job now being finished towards the end of the 2019-20 financial year.

The proposed reduction in the frequency of grass cutting of road verges to once a year is the one area which has its supporters within the Community Council with the suggestion of improving environmental diversity by sowing wild flowers on the verges. Having said that, there are verges that would still need to be cut more regularly because they provide pedestrian access to community assets eg Bladnoch Park.

The community in general has provided a wider range of views on the Budget Options but they have been submitted separately as individual responses.

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Community Council	KIRK COWAN
PLEASE FIND OUR RESPONSE TO RELEVANT SAVINGS.	
Please share your views in the space available below	
<p>① Reduce winter service treatments to roads? NO!</p> <p>② Reduce grass cutting on verges (NSL) roads? NO! (Potential danger, possibility just junctions, timings of cutting mid late summer - Autumn.)</p> <p>③ Reduce spending on road maintenance? NO! (Cullage used for diversion if A75 closed. if maintenance done regularly would not be so expensive later.)</p> <p>④ Change catering in small primary schools? NO! (Not good nutrition &amp; effect local employment)</p> <p>⑤ Reduce funding for library books? NO!</p> <p>⑥ Reduce housing support? NO! (effects elderly and disadvantaged people)</p> <p>⑦ Non-class contact time in primary schools? NO! (Impact on school)</p> <p>⑧ Implementing timetable? NO!</p> <p>⑨ Further development teacher roles? NO! (shortage of learning support)</p> <p>⑩ Social work staff? NO! (High risk)</p> <p>⑪ Increase charges pre-planning? NO! (Listed buildings)</p> <p>⑫ Prioritise core subject offerings? NO!</p>	

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Community Council	Dalton and Carrutherstown Community Council
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Please share your views in the space available below

The paper was discussed as requested, the consensus was that it was very difficult to make constructive comment without a lot more background information. That coupled with the late request for comment made it difficult to respond.

I have listed the points we discussed and made comment and request for further information.

1. The Crichton Hotel Project was queried, the site being sold for £50k with 12 acres of land was considered too cheap even although it is stated that it would create 250 jobs. There is a history of promised job creation falling short, without seeing sight of the project plan we found difficulty understanding the Council decision.
  2. Need to see sight of the Building and Maintenance Budget, we were unable to see where the Council lost money on building projects (e.g. DG1 and Schools) and comment on the failure of DG Council to manage projects professionally. It is alleged the individual responsible left the Council with a Golden Handshake, all too often failure at senior management level in business is rewarded, this has got to stop.
  3. The Council Plan for Flood Prevention on the Sands was a serious topic. A public enquiry was held last November, there were over 1000 people who voted NO to that proposal. There are other proposals noted by [REDACTED] which I understand have good value. We need to know if the Council have considered these options seriously and the reason for their decision.
  4. On the subject of job losses, it was felt that the Budget was prepared by Officers designed to protect their jobs at the expense of Public Services
  5. Cost Saving, Privatise DG1 there are reports that the management of this facility is chaotic and requires urgent review.
  6. Why are Council supporting Westminster Austerity measures by passively making cuts while underspending the Devolved Budget, a response to this question is required.
  7. Roads and Transportation, The Community Council is opposed to cuts to this budget, the Rural Community is badly served in this area. People living in Rural areas need cars due to the lack of public transport, the poor quality of maintenance has a severe effect on their cars. This is borne out by local repair specialists. The CC is opposed to the reduction in cutting the verges due to the many problems of the deterioration of the road edges and danger posed by holes and deep ditches hidden by weeds. On Rural Roads which are frequently narrow, poor quality edging results in cars being pulled off the road into sometimes very soft ground.
- The CC is also opposed to any reduction in the Winter Service, salting the roads is essential. The Rural Community does not get its fair share of service in this area. With more information we would have been able to contribute further.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG7
Organisation (if applicable)	Buittle Parish Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

The Dumfries and Galloway proposed cuts to the budget for 2010/2021 were discussed at the most recent Buittle Parish Community Council meeting on 14 November. The financial cuts of £106 million since 2010 have had a noticeable effect over the whole region leaving anyone living here with the feeling that the support to society and the provision of services have taken a considerable knocking. What is proposed in the budget of 20/21 to achieve the £49 million cut required will most certainly compound the negative effects already being endured in the region and, if the budget is passed, will no doubt hasten the end of many Council-supported institutions which all, in their way, make life in this diverse, rural region more positive and enjoyable. It is impossible to make a realistic comment on the cuts to the 23 services and institutions the Council currently supports other than they appear to be dangerously draconian and will create a great many unexpected consequences if carried out. It can only be hoped that, with so many expansive financial promises being made by virtually all the major parties competing in this upcoming election, that pressure can be put at the door of government that will lead to the reverse of this almost impossible financial demand by the money being found from an alternative levy.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	RUTHWELL & CLARENCEFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please share your views in the space available below

### **Core Subject Offerings in Secondary Schools**

The document is unclear as to which core subjects would be affected making meaningful comment difficult however, from local reports if this is to include the teaching of music, including instrument tuition, then we have serious concerns. This will seriously impact on less well off students, in some cases completely excluding them from learning. It will also endanger the hard earned acclaim that our area holds for developing musical talent.

### **Verge Cutting**

As a rural area we're well aware of the dangers of the reduction in verge cutting, particularly as experienced by our parish during Summer 2019. The lessening of such work is a health and safety risk, particularly at rural road junctions. The reduction in the current budget has resulted in members of our parish (none of whom are young) having to personally trim back road junctions to avoid accidents; this totally unacceptable.

### **Reduce spending on Road Maintenance**

Again you give very little useful information on what is to be reduced, we fully agree that any sub-contractors should be monitored far more closely and the standard of their work scrutinised. However, bearing in mind the condition of the roads across D&G which are an absolute disgrace, our view is that there should be no budget cuts but the money should be spent in a more cost effective manner.

### **Change catering in small primary schools**

This cut will impact most on rural schools where class sizes are smaller and where there are more low income families. As an area with a large number of food banks operating, school meals may be the only hot meal many children get each day. We are strongly against any cut in the provision of a 5 day hot meal service. The saving on this proposal compared to other areas that could bear deeper cuts is minimal, but the impact would be great.

### **Reduce the funding for Library Book Stock**

We have already lost the mobile library service; the Annan library has been moved and reduced in size, if book stocks are not maintained, (not everyone has access to digital reading), the use of our libraries will reduce further. Much more of this and we fear our library provision will disappear altogether.

### **Review the range of museums & galleries**

It is difficult to comment on this as the section only refers to a review, the scope of which is unclear. However, as just one example, we are against any thought of closing Gracefields which provides a wide variety of exhibitions, classes, etc. If anything this facility should be expanded. Better advertising & promotion of our galleries and museums would improve their usage and attendance to the benefit of our communities and our tourist sector.

**Improve D&G as a wedding destination**

The proposal to improve and promote D&G as a wedding destination is directly contradicted by the proposal to increase fees by 20% which would be a deterrent. Do you want to encourage this lucrative market or not?

**Phased recovery of Burial Costs**

Again the information does not detail what the impact of this proposal is on individuals so it is difficult to make any meaningful comment; even a percentage uplift indication would have been helpful.

As a general comment we have now had a number of years of such budget proposals and we assume that further cuts will be necessary. A significant amount of council tax is spent on consultants, much of which appears to be wasted as their advice is not taken. Would it not be sensible to appoint independent auditors to undertake a full 'Zero Budget Analysis' of all expenditure within the Council. This would give an independent view on what should be the Council's 'core' activities and what are the 'nice to haves'. This would provide a sound basis for a long term solution to some of the problems rather than this yearly piecemeal exercise.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	G2 2LB
Organisation (if applicable)	Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)

Please share your views in the space available below

The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) appreciates that Council Officers have hard choices to make when setting budget proposals against the difficult financial backdrop in which local government operates. This being said, SLIC is extremely concerned about one of the proposals in the document which, if approved, will lead Dumfries and Galloway Council to be in breach of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994.

The proposal which SLIC is concerned about is:-

“Reduce the funding for library book stock - Reduce the discretionary library book stock funding of £85,000 by 85% with the remaining budget focussed in a way that reflect changes to library use - particularly digital lending.”

Dumfries and Galloway Libraries have taken a disproportionate range of budget savings over recent years which has meant an overall decline in the library offer and a much reduced library service to the residents of Dumfries and Galloway. As well as efficiency savings, the service has seen the removal of the mobile library service, much to the detriment of those living in rural communities and rural schools, and also the service suffered from the lack of a library management system for almost 2 years due to internal departmental wrangling. Both of these service changes were brought to the attention of the SLIC office by frustrated members of the public who having exhausted local engagement with the Council were keen to escalate their concerns.

It is against this backdrop that a further reduction in service provision causes great concern.

SLIC notes the use of the term discretionary library book stock funding. There is nothing discretionary about it. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 requires the council to provide an adequate library service. The recommended spend per head of the population for an adequate library service is £3.80. This when applied to Dumfries and Galloway Council area would mean the book stock funding budget should be £566,200. SLIC notes the last published records show the spend to be well short of this and equating to £1.45 per head. So the proposal to further reduce this raises the question about a viable future for the library service.

With over 43 million visitors last year, public libraries remain the most popular service which local government provides either directly or indirectly. More people visit public libraries than go to Scottish

Premier League football matches and visit the cinema combined. So there is very strong engagement from the public. Furthermore a significant amount of additional funding has been invested in public libraries in Scotland to implement ***Ambition and Opportunity: A National Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*** <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1133/ambition-opportunity-scotlands-national-public-library-strategy.pdf> This has enabled Scotland's public libraries to reinvigorate their offer to the public and this has resulted in an overall increase in visits to libraries by 9% during the lifetime of the strategy. Over an additional £5million has been diverted to public libraries through the SLIC office to support service reform to introduce free public wifi in all libraries, distribute 3D printers to all library services, train staff across Scotland to deliver Code Clubs for children, deliver film education, support digital inclusion, introduce health related self management initiatives to support people within their own community and deliver READ WRITE COUNT in all libraries to support attainment.

SLIC is offering any support or expertise which can be brought to the discussion about public library service provision in Dumfries and Galloway.

SLIC is asking the Council to reconsider whether the level of saving earmarked for the library service is actually something the Council would like to take forward in light of the points made above.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG3 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	Thornhill Improvement Group

Please share your views in the space available below

Roads Dept are unresponsive to requests for improvements asked for to help us to help the Council

In many instances mechanical sweeping of roads is much more efficient than the hand sweeping we carry out.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG11
Organisation (if applicable)	North Milk Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

Firstly we would like to start by saying that some difficult decisions will have to be made by Dumfries and Galloway Council in view of the huge challenges you must face. We are not envious of your task, and appreciate that you will please no one, with "no win -win" outcome. Every resident will have their own concerns based on their individual circumstances.

Our first choice as a Community Council would be to see DGC strive for efficiency savings before any cuts are implemented and note your "Best Value Assurance Report". As a CC we object to the potential loss of front line services but welcome DGC striving to identify efficiency savings not only in the short term but also the longer term.

We have considered your Budget Options prepared by Council Officers and have the following specific comments to make.

Reduce Winter Service Treatment to Roads. We believe that this will be a Health and Safety issue with all the implications and consequences of reduced gritting. In addition the rural areas and minor roads support a large number of logging wagons which benefit the economy.

Reduce spending on roads maintenance. We see this as a short term false economy, putting off the inevitable. Doesn't help tourism nor the residents.

Change catering in small primary schools. This is not a popular option, however implication of the Nutrition Bill Legislation will steer the direction on this issue.

Maximising income. Is there potential for DGC to participate and carry out works and functions, including some of the Council's statutory responsibilities, by those who have to participate in community payback orders.

We would support all our measures identified in "Maximising our income and underpinning fairness through targeted concessions". Although I suspect that not all residents will support the Increase Council Tax by 3% each year, and suggest it may be better indexed linked to inflation with a max 3% cap rather than a fixed rate.

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Community Council	Kirkmahoe Community Council
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Please share your views in the space available below

We believe school crossing patrols are important for the safety and wellbeing of our children and think that any cuts to this service may be detrimental to this. Provision should be in response to a risk assessment and could be enhanced by the provision of appropriate light controlled crossings and education.

Streetscene. Property owners should be made responsible for keeping the areas surrounding their properties clean and in a good state of repair. This may require an initial Council organised clean up to set a standard. We are not keen on community groups being tasked with doing the work previously carried out by the council. What if you are in an area where the population is elderly, what about areas where there is no community council - how will these be managed?

Reduction in core subjects in secondary. Subject choice is too limited in schools as it is - pupils will be disadvantaged if they cannot access all subjects in their local school.

Reduced winter road treatment will lead to loss of life an increased number of people unable to get to their place of employment. We understand the need to prioritise bus routes and trunk roads but people in rural areas need to access the main roads. Increased numbers of salt bins would help individuals to keep their access routes passable.

We would be happy for a reduction in maintenance of road verges however this would be on a risk based assessment. Keeping areas clear for aesthetic purposes only is not required but where site lines are compromised these should continue to be maintained.

Reductions in roads maintenance will result in more civil claims being made against the council for damage done to vehicles etc. Since these claims are met directly from council budgets as most are under the £50,000 threshold for insured losses we think this is a flawed argument and that cutting the service will, in the long term, cost more.

Since school meals are often the only hot meal available to some children each day reducing these will target the vulnerable in our society. Can we suggest that cooking becomes part of the curriculum and children taught how to cook a basic meal from cheap ingredients.

Going digital in libraries would require the purchase and lending of Kindles etc to enable all sectors of the population to access this. In particular for young children reading should be encouraged and paper format is important for them as part of their education.



The benefits of music education extend far beyond the music itself, social, group working etc - in fact all the requirements for the Curriculum for Excellence are met through music education. It is the only way many children will have access to a musical instrument and learn how to play it.

Transportation across the area should be looked at and streamlined. eg empty buses running through the day must be a waste of money. In some rural areas there is the provision to order or pre-book a seat on a bus/minibus. School bus services could be improved by restricting the ability of parents to choose which school their children go to. The provision of a modern new school in Dumfries, thereby allowing the closure of inadequate, poorly designed and out of date buildings.

Comment from one of community -

I work for Bethany Christian Trust in Dumfries and the proposed cuts will have an impact both on my job and on the service users who rely on the services offers by the charity.

I run a drop in for homeless, disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Dumfries. We open 3 times a week and serve toasties, hot drinks and snacks.

I have witnessed the positive impact the drop in can have on individuals mental and physical health as we provide a safe place for people to meet and socialise without being judged.

Many of the service users have described the drop in as being a 'life saver'.

The proposed cuts would result in the drop in not being able to continue which would have a devastating effect on some of the most vulnerable members of our community in Dumfries.

Bethany Christian Trust also has 11 flats which offer supported housing to homeless people in Dumfries and this service would also not be able to continue without the current funding from the council.

Bethany Christian Trust employs 5 people and has around 20 volunteers who would all be devastated not to be able to offer this vital service in Dumfries.

From this you can see that the Bethany Trust is excellent value for money with the support of volunteers. Deaths from drug related issues is at an all time high in Scotland and

removing this vital lifeline is unacceptable and goes against national priorities.

Reduction in staffing numbers of schools can't be done entirely by delivery of digital courses.

The cuts to education will eat into one of the main strengths of this region. It will be even more difficult to recruit staff with families to come and work in the NHS etc if they realise the future limitations to their childrens' education.

Who will fund the agencies with whom the council wants to work? In the past that has been the Council, are these budgets being cut?

Museums, libraries etc could be redesigned to allow them to make money, eg providing a coffee shop which will encourage people to use the buildings.

If face to face teaching time is reduced it will be important to replace teacher time with other activities eg after school groups etc - these could be run by staff on a much lower pay grade but would still allow parents to work full time. Closing schools on a friday afternoon makes child care difficult and expensive for working families especially in rural areas.

Additional support for teachers has been cut to the bone already and we can see no further savings being possible in this area without having a detrimental effect on staff and pupils.

We searched for "Keeping Our Communities Safe" Strategy on the Council website and can't find it so unable to comment on this issue.  
charges on boat berthing will discourage tourism in the area. This is one of D&Gs biggest earners and we should be encouraging more visitors not deterring them.

Happy with charging for leisure facilities as long as there is provision for those who can't afford to pay. Links to NHS via doctors' surgeries and hospitals should be provided for. This will save money for both the council and the NHS in the long term.

Most respondees were happy with a rise in Council Tax. We don't mind paying more for better services.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	Bethany Evangelical Church

Please share your views in the space available below

I am Rev. [REDACTED] of Bethany Evangelical Church in Dumfries. We are located in the very town center and quiet often meet and are visited by the homeless people or those struggling with drug addiction. We meet them at a cuppa in the premises of the church or laing down around our building walls. Just recently we met one who was new in town, was dark and cold and through a Bethany Trust employee that we contacted we could direct him to a place for finding shelter. Right at the moment we know of another young person that is very appreciative of the Bethany Trust for having a place to live, friendship to keep him company and support in finding his self confidence and purpose in life. We couldn't be any happier than to see people's lives restored, returned back to a meaningful life into the society. There is no greater joy than to see that a life in ruins is flourishing right under your eyes with hope and something to look forward. I could not recommend enough Bethany Trust the sacrificial and selfless work their are doing for the people the society at large avoids them. We want to see that many more needy folks will benefit of the moral, material and social help Bethany Trust offers to the homeless and less fortunate of society. It would be a tremendous loss for Dumfries as a town to fail those in need. All efforts must be directed in supporting the vulnerable, so many fed up with their lives, attempted suicide... Nothing moved me most than when I had seen folks showing their cut wrists and begging for help only then to see them rehabilitated, totally changed with a smile and a purpose in their lives. I strongly encourage and recommend Bethany Trust for full financial support. Let's support them so that they can continue to support others who I believe have to give so much back for our needy society. A life restored has a much greater impact for another life in need of restoration. This is exactly what Bethany Trust is doing and we are so proud to know that a couple of our members are involved with Bethany Trust.

Thank you very much for your support in the past years and in the years to come.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. [REDACTED]

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG7 1JA
Organisation (if applicable)	Castle Douglas Primary School

Please share your views in the space available below

[NAME REMOVED] I am the new Chair of Castle Douglas Primary School Parent Council. Whilst I have been on the CDPS Parent Council, key concerns that have been repeatedly raised and now seem to have become more acute particularly pertaining to the budget cuts ahead. These are the requirements of those children in the school who have special support needs. Specifically, those at the school who are not regarded at the 'top end' of the needs' spectrum, but those lower down. These pupils need professional support to help them integrate and thrive in a classroom setting. At the last PC meeting several parents of children with support needs attended and voiced their concern that there was not enough practical support to ensure this and that the situation was now reaching acute levels. In many cases, the class teacher alone is being left to manage the class including those with support needs. This means, that in some cases, if the children who need support are not getting it at the required level, then this can affect their behaviour and that affects the entire class.

This lack of practical support in a classroom context, the parents believe, is as a direct result of cuts already executed and will be further heightened by those cuts to come.

Castle Douglas as a primary school was particularly highlighted in a recent HMIE report which said the school's integration measures were so successful that it was virtually impossible to tell which children had support needs and which didn't. The school has one of the main school learning centres for Dumfries and Galloway. It prides itself on ensuring that children with additional support needs spend as much time in the classroom as appropriate, to benefit from being with their peers. It is key that this integration continues but to do that, the class teacher and the pupils concerned must have appropriate support. I am a lay person, do not have a teaching background but am a parent at the school. I do not have an expert knowledge of the factors behind where we are now and am trying to get to grips with potentially what is to come, but I have to write and have it formally noted that CDPS Parent Council feel extremely concerned that this situation is causing such visible distress amongst the families concerned. The school, its Head and its staff are doing everything they can to create a successful, integrated environment with the stretched resources they have, but there is a very definite issue with support levels in the classroom for those with additional needs.

The Parent Council of Castle Douglas Primary School wish to formally acknowledge their support for the families concerned and wish the Council to note our concerns in the context of the budgetary decisions ahead.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG2
Organisation (if applicable)	Auldgirth and District Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

Following a lengthy and lively discussion we have the following points to make on reducing Council expenditure:

It was generally agreed that the proposal put forward for consultation that offered departments shaving money from their budget and service was unsatisfactory. The budget consultation meetings only offered this approach too with staff not taking note of other contributions or suggestions. The Council income needs to be laid out clearly including revenue, capital funding and ring fenced grants for specific purposes. It currently makes no sense to the public when there is expenditure on new schools or flood defence when, for example, grass cutting is being reduced. A review of Council expenditure looking at statutory functions and their cost could be a starting point.

Some options put forward were universally regarded as very unsuitable such as reducing salting routes that would put lives at risk and have a negative impact on day to day life. Roads maintenance was thought necessary and to cut back further would create greater problems for the future. Indeed it was thought that investment in the basic infrastructure of roads and pavements should be increased.

Council support for external activities, events and festivals should be reviewed. If funding is reduced these are luxuries we can no longer afford. The discretionary grant given out by Nithsdale Area Committee could be scrapped. Funding Christmas lights and galas in communities with generous wind farm community benefit income is unnecessary. Carrying on traditions, such as twinning, that were possible when the authority had plenty of funds now need to be reviewed.

Schools were thought to be an area where considerable savings could be made. One Community Councillor has considerable experience at reducing the number of schools in an authority and therefore saving money but also enhancing the educational experience. At present there are too many school places across the region and very small inefficient schools, both primary and secondary, which are expensive to run. A region wide review of schools is needed and smaller schools need amalgamating. The increase in school transport costs is far outweighed by the saving in staffing. The prospect of change is generally feared by parents initially and so it was suggested that the best time to do this is

after Council elections to allow time for the new system to bed down and fears are allayed before the next round of elections. By following the current approach of "salami slicing" the education budget means a reduction in essential, and relatively cheap, support staff rather than addressing the under utilisation of more expensive teaching staff.

Some Council departments could be scrapped; for example Economic Development which is a permissive power and not a statutory function. Other bodies, such as Scottish Enterprise, are in place meeting this need. The best thing D&G Council could do for the economy of the region is to keep roads and pavements safe to use - the towns are looking scruffy and unattractive because of poor maintenance. It is no good funding bedding plants when there are potholes, loose paving slabs and damaged street furniture. A wholesale review of all functions of the Council is needed. Statutory functions must be streamlined and efficient. Then if there is any extra funding available the public should be asked what they would value and support their money being spent on.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Royal Burgh of Sanquhar and District Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

Keep classroom assistants  
 Keep funding in place for the Hubs deposit scheme  
 Money to be spent on road repairs  
 Agree to increase in Council Tax 3%  
 No to reduction in Library book stock  
 Yes to reduction in admin costs  
 No to reduction in Winter Maintenance and no to reduction in spend to roads  
 Yes to removal of funding to third party for tourism sectors  
 No to reduction in hot meals at small schools from 5 to 2 hot meals  
 Yes to removal of funding for major festivals

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG12
Organisation (if applicable)	Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

### **Prioritisation of Resources on Council Plan Outcomes:**

Proposal 4 -Our view is this will have a detrimental effect on senior pupils particularly. If some subjects are not available to senior pupils this puts them at a disadvantage when applying for universities where they are competing against pupils from the central belt who have access to a wide range of subjects. Senior pupils from our area are at a disadvantage at present because they cannot access Advanced Higher English (a requirement for Law) unless they travel to Dumfries. (Is English not a core subject)?

Proposals 5,6 and 7 – Our view is these services are already cut to the bone and therefore any further reductions will have a serious Health and Safety issue to our community. It is already difficult to see on some roads with the current grass cutting arrangements.

Proposal 15 - Reducing the Rent Deposit Scheme could increase the Council's obligation to provide homeless accommodation within the region. As no money is actually paid to private landlords up front as it is only a guarantee that is required. We believe this is a short-sighted proposal and could cost more in the long run.

Transform our customer experience and improve our digital offer.

Proposal 1 Again our view is this proposal will result in our senior pupils being disadvantaged when competing for university places against pupils in the central belt. This is a double whammy for Secondary School teacher numbers. Secondary schools already use teachers to cover classes that they do not normally teach the subject. Reducing teacher numbers and introducing networking will not make this situation any better.

### **Develop a smaller and more flexibly skilled workforce for the future.**

This whole section is looking at cutting front line staff and could therefore put the Council at risk of the remaining staff suffering from increased workloads and stress related illnesses. The mental

health of staff is already a high-profile issue for employers and we feel this could be putting the Council at risk.

**Maximising our income and underpinning fairness through targeted concessions.**

The Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council would support most of the proposals and would add a few

1. Reduce the number of Councillors in each ward of the Region.
2. Introduce a small charge for Senior Citizen bus passes (£15) per year. As well as generating income it could result in fewer bus passes being applied for cutting out the passes applied for and never used, therefore ensuring only those actually using the transport benefit.
3. Put the remaining Council Caravan parks out to private lease.
4. Charge all groups for using Council facilities for meetings including Councillor surgeries.

Finally, the Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council would like to suggest more financial scrutiny is implemented when property is leased from the Council and capital projects are undertaken in the region. We further believe the lack of Council scrutiny in overseeing the work carried out by contractors has cost the Council in respect of DG One and Lochside School.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG2
Organisation (if applicable)	On behalf of Bethany Christian Trust

Please share your views in the space available below

Cutting funding to a struggling organisation that is a vital lifeline to many homeless persons in the region, is terribly cruel in its impact on those vulnerable persons.

Anyone could find themselves suddenly homeless and in the terrifying position of having no shelter, food or money. Bethany Christian Trust provides at least a few hours of warm shelter, company, hot food and opportunities to address personal problems or educational limitations, both of which may figure largely in keeping a person homeless and/or jobless.

Please consider increasing funding.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG16
Organisation (if applicable)	Springfield and Gretna Green CC

Please share your views in the space available below

We have looked at the proposed budget cuts and would like the following to be considered. The points we have agreed are the ones that affect us as a community.

1. Extended Streetscene - CC agreed that if we had a budget we could possibly deliver some of the services cheaper. Also more consultation between council and community groups to save repetition on work carried out in communities.
2. Reduce Spending on roads maintenance - CC agreed that this is ridiculous. Money would be saved if the pot holes were repaired properly in the first instance. If a vehicle is in an area would it not be better to repair all the potholes when the man power was already there.
3. Change catering in small schools- The CC felt that this was another nail in the coffin for small schools in that parents may choose a larger school where their child has the option of hot meals 5 days a week. Concerns were raised that this may be the only hot meal a child receives in the day. Discussion about how council can find money to feed children during the holidays and not in school time !! Members felt that this service that has been provided by council needs looked at as some parents were abusing the meals during the holidays. Council need to ask themselves if parents that can easily afford to feed their children should use this out of school service for meals. What we say save this money and feed the kids when at school.
4. The increase of 20% for registration fees for Saturday weddings - The CC felt that this idea is bonkers. The wedding industry in Gretna Green/ Gretna is already struggling with 2 hotels on the market and at least 3 large guest houses. There are also other small businesses - hairdressers, taxi companies and retail that all depend on wedding industry. This increase would most definitely put jobs in the area at risk.

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I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED: YES  NO\*

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Keir Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

As a CC we regret any decrease in services which are already at a bare minimum, and we oppose any further reductions in staffing levels. We feel priority should be on cutting waste, and ensuring greater caution and restraint in pursuing expensive vanity projects. Any Council Tax rises should be kept to a minimum.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	Bethany Christian Trust

Please share your views in the space available below

### **Response to proposed reduction of Housing Support Contracts for provision of Supported Temporary Accommodation currently delivered by Bethany Christian Trust.**

Bethany Christian Trust has been delivering housing support services to homeless and vulnerable people in Dumfries since 2003. Over that time we have supported in excess of 300 people with multiple and complex needs to navigate from homelessness to a permanent housing status.

Bethany Christian Trust is contracted by Dumfries and Galloway Council to deliver 92 hours of support per week to individuals residing in temporary supported accommodation provided by us, for which we receive the sum of £81,000 per year which has remained unchanged over the length of the contract held by Bethany Christian Trust. The cost to Bethany to deliver the service in Dumfries has however increased year on year with the result that we have operated a deficit budget for our Dumfries service over the last eight years. In this financial year alone Bethany has budgeted £164,000 to deliver these services with Dumfries and Galloway Council funding just under 50% of the total cost. Bethany Christian Trust have willingly covered this additional cost as part of our social responsibility to ensure that much needed housing support service are delivered within Dumfries and as such should not be viewed solely as a sub-contracted organisation but as a valued partner that equally invests into the services delivered within Dumfries.

Over the last 16 years we have built up fantastic working relationships with council departments such as housing and social work who have intimated to us that it will be a sad day if the proposal put before councillors is accepted and the partnership between Dumfries and Galloway Council and Bethany Christian Trust comes to end. If that was the case the councils housing support service would lose the availability of the ten properties that we provide for short term supported accommodation and we would have serious concerns over the future provision of support for the client group that we have worked with since 2003.

As previously noted above we work with people with multiple and complex needs and it should be noted that over the past few years we have seen an increase in referrals to our

service for people experiencing mental health issues as a result of previously experienced trauma, who were not in receipt of support from specialist mental health agencies. Recent Scottish Government publications on waiting times for access to clinical mental health services indicates that from point of referral people should not wait any longer than 18 weeks to accessing treatment. The standard set by the Scottish Government is for 90% of referrals to access treatment/services within 18 weeks, as of March 2019 Dumfries and Galloway Health Board fell short of that target achieving only 74% of referrals within the target timeframe. An 18 week wait for someone to get the help they need is bad enough but the fact that in Dumfries and Galloway 26% of referrals to mental health services are waiting much longer is devastating when those individuals who have to wait so long are suffering to find ways to cope with their mental distress. Over the last year Bethany has worked with 8 people who fell into this category and as a result of trauma previously experienced in their lives turned to drugs and alcohol, self-harm and attempted suicide to numb their pain and anguish. Our staff are on the frontline dealing with damaged and broken individuals on a daily basis and as a result carry the burden with them wherever they go. On many occasions staff have given up their free time over evenings or at weekends to support and console people as they go through their personal times of trauma, attend the local accident and emergency department with clients who have overdosed, self-harmed or attempted suicide. Our staff go above and beyond in order to support their clients and will not see them left on their own in their time of need.

Bethany also works closely with criminal justice teams and prisons throughout Scotland to facilitate the transition from prison to communities in Dumfries for individuals who come to the end of their term of incarceration.

Studies have shown

- That a lack of education, employment and housing are the biggest barriers to individuals successfully reintegrating into society after a period of incarceration.
- That key challenges for prison leavers are: limited accommodation options, location of accommodation and the complexity of needs they may experience and that a lack of stable housing increases the risk of re-offending
- Effective approaches to supporting prison leavers include: proactively providing advice and information on housing needs before release, support after release to help sustain tenancies and working with agencies that offering practical support.

Over the last year alone Bethany has accommodated 5 such individuals and supported them to overcome the challenges they faced upon leaving prison.

As mentioned above Bethany receives the sum of £81,000 to deliver 92 hours support per week to people living in supported accommodation however as an organisation we contribute so much more to the community of Dumfries. Since 2011 we have operated a drop-in service, from our premises situated in Whitesands, Dumfries and Dumfries Free Church, which is funded solely by charitable donations received by Bethany. Each year the drop-in operates on average 135 sessions with an average of 1950 attendances in each year. The drop-in provides a safe and secure environment for marginalised and vulnerable people to enjoy a simple lunch, interact on a social level with each other and receive advice and support with various issues including signposting and referring to appropriate agencies. The drop-in also enables other agencies opportunities to access "hard to reach" people.

As well as the set drop-in times our staff are accessible at any time during the working day to assist people who are not in receipt of any formal package of support and turn up at our offices looking for help which is over and above the contracted 92 hours of support.

Earlier in 2019 Bethany Christian Trust received the gift of a one bed flat within Dumfries that we have been keen to put to good use to accommodate vulnerable young people leaving care. We have been in discussion with Social Work over the last few months and we have now identified a suitable young person to move into the property early January 2020. 364

We are keen to develop this new relationship with social work to see where this new work could go in the future however the proposal put before you could negatively impact on that plan.

It is our hope that you will see Bethany Christian Trust provides services in excess of the contract value noted above and in our opinion provides Dumfries and Galloway Council with value for money. If it is decided to end the contract we have with you then we fail to see how you the council can meet your obligation to supporting vulnerable people in Dumfries over the coming years, our concerns are as follows;

- Will the client group Bethany currently works with have the support they need in the future or will people fall through the cracks and end up in a cycle of homelessness they cannot escape from?
- Who will advocate for the most vulnerable people who need specialised mental health services but struggle to obtain the support they desperately need?
- Who will provide accommodation and support that enables individuals leaving prison to successfully reintegrate back into communities within Dumfries and Galloway?
- Where will the people using the drop-in service provided by Bethany find another community setting that provides positive social interaction as well as finding the help and advice along with signposting to agencies that are specific to their needs?

It is our hope that councillors within Dumfries and Galloway Council can look beyond the savings suggested within the proposal put before them and see that reducing Housing Support Services from 2020 onwards will have a serious impact on the most vulnerable and marginalised people within the region.

Finally we would like it to be noted that any decision taken to cease the contract Bethany Christian Trust has with Dumfries and Galloway Council from 2020 onwards, removes the viability of Bethany continuing to operate in Dumfries as the extensive added value and community benefits that we provide, coupled with the additional investment in revenue we contribute to the service each year, revolve around the continuity of the Housing Support contract. We are duty bound to be clear with councillors that if this contract is removed Bethany has no option but to seriously consider whether or not we can continue operating any provision in the region, which would be a very regrettable but preventable outcome.

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I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED: YES  NO\*

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	All DG Postcodes across the entire region
Organisation (if applicable)	Visit South West Scotland Cooperative Ltd.

Please share your views in the space available below

The tourism industry across Dumfries and Galloway supports 7000 jobs and brings in £302m for the local economy<sup>1</sup>. In the Regional Tourism Strategy for 2016-2020, D&G Council stated its commitment to the ongoing support for the Tourism sector to assist with developing further growth, employment and income for our Tourism businesses across the whole of Dumfries and Galloway. It set targets of an increase in the value of tourism from £300m to £330m; and increase the volume, length of stay and extend the season from 2.43m tourist visitors to 2.6m visitors, and an increase in direct and indirect jobs from 6,969 to 7,300. It outlined a desire to work in consultation, support and 'buy-in' from the communities, businesses and agencies involved in Tourism.

Visit South West Scotland (VSWs) is a voluntary trade organisation representing over 350 tourism business across the South West of Scotland. It works to support the tourism sector across Dumfries and Galloway and has strived to support the Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Framework in the achievement of its goals. The organisation came into existence in 2014 and has just been awarded the Visit Scotland **Working Together for Tourism Thistle Award** in recognition of its achievements to date.

In 2019, the primary focus of VSWs has been to deliver a campaign promoting the South West Coastal 300, a touring route developed by the organisation in 2018. The route is modelled on the North Coast 500 which, in the first year after its launch, delivered 10% net increase in visitor numbers and a 16% increase in jobs. If we could mirror those results in Dumfries and Galloway, it would deliver on the strategic objectives of the Regional Tourism Strategy for 2016-2020.

Funding for the initial SWC300 promotional campaign comprised £10k from VSWs membership fees, £10k from D&G Council and £20k match funding from Visit Scotland Growth Fund (VSGF). With this funding VSWs launched a campaign in Nov 2019 which will run until Apr/May 2020. Response to the initial elements of the campaign has reinforced VSWs' belief that there is strong demand for the offering. It is already on track to significantly outperform the campaign KPI's:

- VSWs has already outperformed its PR targets by 200%, including securing an 8 page feature about the SWC300 in the British Travel Journal, inclusion of the route by BBC's Our Coast

programme (yet to air); inclusion of the route in a feature on the Kaye Adam's show on BBC Radio Scotland; and inclusion in the Scottish Daily Mail's pull out on Driving Routes.

- we are on course to outperform our social media engagement target by at least 200% over the full campaign. We are now averaging engagement of 25.5k per month with a reach of 76.7k.
- despite not yet rolling out the paid advertising element of the campaign, we have already reached 800% of our social media promotional video views (90k views) with a huge response to our first social media influencer visit.

VSWs has also secured strong support in kind for the SWC300 from large strategic partners including Stena Line, DFDS and AVIS. Given these early results, VSWs is very keen to maintain momentum on the promotion of the SWC300 as it is delivering strong return on investment.

The organisation is also working hard to grow its own revenue streams to a point of independent viability. It is estimated it will take two years to achieve however, and in order to deliver that, short term financial support is required. Without sufficient resource, there is a strong risk that the project will lose momentum, volunteers will become disillusioned and cease to offer their time and energy free of charge to the organisation, without that voluntary contribution the organisation will not be able to function.

Further funding from VSGF to support the promotion of the SWC300 will not be available before Q2 2021 at the earliest and would require demonstration of availability of match funding. Potential funding from SOSEP cannot be used for the promotion of the SWC300 as use of SOSEP funds is limited to **Pan South of Scotland projects only**. No SOSEP funding has yet been secured, indeed our application to them for funding was rejected back in August.

Competing offerings in Ayrshire and the Borders are receiving significant local government funding and are likely to gain greater traction if the SWC300 cannot continue to build momentum through promotion. North Ayrshire Council has given £50k in funding to the COIG which is a set of five touring routes in Ayrshire, the COIG has also received central government funding of £700k. The Borders Council has agreed funding the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership's 'Scotland Starts Here' app with £25k and a further £40k core funding through SOSEP for their Business Development work yet VSWs has in 5 years only secured £20k from council and £20k from the VS Growth Fund.

With funding to further grow the SWC300 brand, VSWs is confident it could act as a significant economic catalyst for Dumfries and Galloway. **Cessation of promotion of the route has a potential opportunity cost of £30m and 1,120 jobs to the local economy.**

Given that VSWs were advised a further £20k was set aside by D&G council for 2020 and possibly more beyond, as it was recognized that one years funding was not enough, we strongly urge you **NOT** to pull funding for tourism but rather keep to your commitment to fund tourism in line with the 2016-20 Regional Tourism Strategy as a minimum but preferably increase it. This region desperately needs tourism to start to reverse the downward trend it has been subject to in the last 10 years.

With funding from D&G Council both directly and via SOSEP, VSWs would in parallel strengthen its membership and business model to work towards its goal of independent viability over the course of the next two years, without it all the hard work and dedicated commitment of the last decade or so could be wasted.

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2014 Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM)

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**I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED:** YES  NO\*

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG8
Organisation (if applicable)	Douglas Ewart High School Parent Council

Please share your views in the space available below

ASL Provision – We strongly feel this is an area of the budget that should be protected at all costs. This has been widely affected already and the lack of provision within schools will continue to put pressure on classroom teachers which will have a detrimental effect on every single child in the class – not just the ones who are in need of extra support.

School timetables – This move would be a huge departure for the DEHS which has benefited from the current 20 period week timetable but appreciate that the 33 period week timetable allows greater teaching efficiencies and opportunities for senior phase pupils. In principle we would be supportive to moving to this new model, however, it is imperative that such a move happens across all secondary schools within D&G to avoid inequality between schools across the region. Furthermore, If schools in the West are going to have any benefit from the investment made into the Hub in Dumfries, all timetables need to be aligned. A main concern is the provision of transport to accommodate such a move. There appears to be a lack of collaboration between the various services to work to the greater good of all services.

Reduction in core subjects – We have huge concerns about this. In a smaller high school like the DEHS, the suggested 15 pupil cut off for a subject would have detrimental effect on our young people. As we continually strive for greater academic achievement and ambition we cannot stifle this with removing choice from our curriculum. Already, many of our schools have fewer choices than larger schools in the more urban areas which can be a disadvantage when applying to Universities. Our young people do not need any further impediments to disadvantage them as they try to compete outwith the region.

Digital Learning – Our children are not afraid of this as indeed they learn via technology all the time. Our concerns lie with the investment required for suitable internet connectivity to support this form of teaching, suitable hardware and software and provision for when there is inevitable technological failure. Investment will also be required in training teachers to deliver the curriculum in this way and the and the assurance of regular timetabled contact with the teacher. If introduced it would need an agreed monitoring and review process, both within and between schools to ensure it is not compromising standards of education and all schools are equally sharing the burden. Serious concerns remain about lack of supervision in the digital classroom.

Whilst we are aware that school closures cannot be discussed as part of a cost saving exercise the parent council has real concerns that due to current legislation it is impossible to make decisions that are both sensible and equitable. In order to achieve more equity in our childrens' teaching and learning the disparity in the cost per pupil must be looked at. The fact that in our secondary schools the cost per pupil ranges from just over £3000 per pupil to over £20,000 is unfair and unsustainable and compromises our childrens' education. We urge Councillors to find a way to look at this. We are in no way advocating the closure of small schools but feel the time has come to address the long-term viability of some of our schools.

In all future decisions we ask for clarity, transparency and honesty. As parents we can only support our children throughout their school years. To do this we wish to fully support Education Services but we must have trust that any decisions will have a minimum negative impact on our children, our teachers and our schools.

[NAME REMOVED]

On behalf of Douglas Ewart High School

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG11
Organisation (if applicable)	D & G OVER 50s GROUP

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposed funding cut for the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

IN TODAY'S ECONOMIC CLIMATE, THOSE  
IN LOW PAID JOBS NEED ALL THE  
HELP AND ASSISTANCE THEY  
CAN GET.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG11
Organisation (if applicable)	D&G OVER 50s GP

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposed funding cut for the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

BECAUSE LOW PAID WORKERS DESERVE  
ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Action for Children Upper Nithsdale Family Service

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposed cuts to the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

At the Action for Children Upper Nithsdale Family Service we support children, families and young people who are experiencing poverty and deprivation. The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme is a vital and necessary service at a time when social housing is experiencing a shortage of homes and the only option for housing is through the private let sector. Many of the families and young people we support do not have the financial funds to provide a deposit along with first month's rent and the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme has helped many young people and families in this area that without that support would have ended up in homeless accommodation out-with their community or "sofa surfing" between friends and family. It is crucial service and one that will have a detrimental impact on children, families and young people who are experiencing financial and housing hardship.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG2 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	Irongray Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposed cuts to the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

This is a valuable scheme on many levels which, if withdrawn, would in the long term most likely cost the Council much more - in financial, social and human terms. Please continue with the RDGS and positively assist those to help themselves.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	Independent Living Support

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposal to end the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme  
 The rent deposit guarantee scheme is essential to help people with lower incomes access private lets in our communities. At ILS we work with people going through the homeless system. For our clients who have been assessed as intentionally homeless, as a duty of care, we will strive to find suitable accommodation in the private let sector. The RDGS allows us to secure these homes. Without the RDGS there will be an increase in homelessness across Dumfries and Galloway.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	The Royal Burgh of Sanquhar and District Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposal to end the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. Funding should be continued for the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme as this will enable the Hub to keep providing additional support to low income people looking for a home. It is a basic human right to have a home and the service that the Hub provides assists people in attaining a place to live at affordable costs.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	Leaving Care Team

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposal to end the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

It is a worthwhile scheme that has helped our Care Leavers obtain there own tenancies and promote independent living. It is a vaulable service and would be a huge loss for our service.

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**I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED:      YES       NO\***

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	G3
Organisation (if applicable)	Musicians' Union

Please share your views in the space available below

To Whom It May Concern,

- The Musicians' Union (MU) is the Trade Union for professional musicians, representing over 32,000 members across the whole of the UK, many of whom rely on teaching as a crucial form of income. As well as representing the interests of its members, the MU campaigns to protect music for future generations by ensuring participation in music and culture for all.
- We take the position that participation in music can have a profound impact on society as a whole; offering young people sustainable career options, improving overall educational results and improving mental and physical health outcomes for all age groups.
- In recent years, we have witnessed an increasing number of local authorities across Scotland impose hefty charges on students who wish to learn a musical instrument. This has caused much concern across the music education sector; both in terms of the impact on instrumental music teachers and also on students who may be experiencing an unfair fiscal barrier to learning an instrument. This is something which is not imposed on other areas of learning within the curriculum to anywhere near the same extent.
- It is imperative that we strengthen opportunities to develop new artistic and creative talent, irrespective of background. In the field of music, not only should all children participate in classroom music teaching, but they should also all have the opportunity to learn an instrument at the hands of a qualified instrumental teacher. Research tells us that participation in musical activity has a positive impact in other areas of academic learning as well as on behavioural and cognitive development.
- There could be a dangerous knock on effect across Scotland should one council decide to cut this provision, destroying vital services beyond this one council area. The ultimate cost of such a decision, could be far more than the savings anticipated in the consultation document and could have an impact on the local cultural output and subsequently, economy of the area and beyond for years to come.

Restricting music to SQA study will remove access to extra-curricular music entitlement. Music is not just for those pursuing it for exams – it is part of the life of the school community.

- If students are provided with the opportunity to learn an instrument in school, it is important to consider what impact will this have long-term on local bands, groups, ensembles and ultimately on the wider economy which we know is stimulated by the music industry to the tune of £431 million in spending in Scotland and sustains 4,330 jobs. In 2018, Scotland saw the strongest growth (38%) in music tourism which rose from 880,000 visitors in 2017 to 1.1 million in 2018 according to the latest UK Music figures.
- The proposal 'SQA tuition to be delivered by building capacity with teachers in Music Departments and individual experts in community based music organisations' is vague and unworkable. 1) Building capacity in music departments will cost money where the council is seeking to make savings, and 2) community-based music organisations typically operate on minimal funding with limited capacity. Further, the proposal to involve community organisations represents the outsourcing of education to groups that vary hugely in their approaches, and is therefore a negation of the council's duty to provide consistent, high-quality publicly funded education.
- Directing non-SQA students to private tutors will immediately create a wealth gap in terms of access to music education where the current system seeks to include all. It is unfeasible to expect that Community groups would have the capacity to pick up the slack. This wealth gap could adversely affect Scotland's creative economy and the diversity of its artistic landscape in years to come, especially if there is a knock-on effect into other councils.
- Music is a shop-window subject that the council could do more to celebrate and promote. The current investment in music tuition not only benefits young people but could also yield much positive publicity for the council if retained.
- The proposal overall is unworkable and the MU would be happy to contribute to discussions around retaining this vital provision, which has been well supported by the council until now.

**[NAME REMOVED]**  
**MU Regional Organiser**  
**Scotland and Northern Ireland**  
**December 2019**

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	
Organisation (if applicable)	Kirkbean Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

There has only been one response to the Community Council with comments about the recent budget proposals.

Namely, there is a proposal to cut hot meals to 2 days a week in schools with a roll of less than 50. This will mostly effect rural schools and it feels like rural schools are being discriminated against. It also seems a harsh decision not least because this could be the only hot meals that some kids get in any given week.

Other than this, we can only re-iterate the comments made by people within our community to previous council budget cuts. These fall in to 2 broad areas:

- People are keen that services which directly affect older people are not cut any further. There was some considerable consternation when the mobile library service was abolished. We'd be keen that, for example, bus services were not reduced any further.
- With the recent attempt to close the local school, there is a lot of concern within the community that more attempts will be made in future. While people are sensible enough to appreciate that a school with very few pupils might be considered for closure, we'd need to be convinced that other options had been investigated fully. Otherwise we'd be totally against such a proposal and would oppose it vigorously. Especially as our school has so many positives for the community, the school roll is forecast to increase and any actual savings outlined in the previous attempt would've been minimal.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG11 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	Lochmaben Community Council

Please share your views in the space available below

Council Budget Options Proposals - Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS)  
 Letter from The Hub about the proposal to cut the £35K annual funding for the Rent Deposit-Guarantee Scheme (RDGS) was discussed at length at our meeting on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December and several points were agreed  
 The RDGS helps people who are on low incomes, in housing need but not deemed a priority to help themselves to find housing with a guarantee bond and ongoing advice from the Hub to find housing. Removal of the grant is likely to result in the misery of homelessness and the expense to the council of temporary accommodation, which may become more than the grant at present given to the Hub.  
 We strongly and unanimously support the Hub for the continuous grant of £35K annually to continue this valuable service

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG7 [REDACTED]
Organisation (if applicable)	ex Solway Sinfonia, Gatehouse Singers

Please share your views in the space available below

When pupils want to take A level art they do not have to pay for lessons to get them to an appropriate standard. If the music lessons are not provided in school parents have to pay for individual lessons for their children to reach the level expected in order to take A level music and to give them the opportunity to read music at University or Music College. Is that fair?

It has been proved that the study of music is a discipline such that it rubs off in children's other studies, teaching them concentration in particular. It provides them with a skill that they can enjoy all their lives, together with a way of learning to co-operate with others, a discipline of great value in their working lives. A former pupil of ours (now BBC Commissioning Editor for Music and drama) worked at the National Theatre with [REDACTED] and she reported that the best cast they ever worked with was when they produced 'Guys and Dolls' which meant that they had to work together as a close team instead of as individual actors, with a much better atmosphere in the company.

It has been noted throughout Scotland over the years that Dumfries and Galloway have never had a County Youth Orchestra - until now, since two ex BBCSSO players (one an ex pupil of my husband's, who was fortunate enough to win a music scholarship to an exceptional school) have built on the work done by the Solway Sinfonia which invited musical youngsters to join the orchestra for a day to play alongside members of the orchestra. For pupils who do not have the opportunity of ensemble work in their schools this was such an opportunity which they all appreciated so much that [REDACTED] with the help and guidance of the SS, have started a D&G YO. They had experience of working in schools with the BBCSSO whose members used to go into schools. Will that young orchestra now be threatened with a lack of possible players? If Stirling and Raplock can manage to provide such a service I feel it is important that Dumfries and Galloway children should not be deprived of similar opportunities and made to be the poor relations of Scotland.

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Community Council	Loreburn
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Please share your views in the space available below

Note of Discussion (extract from Minute - names replaced by "A Member")

A member raised that the current consultation is on proposals created by council officers and that there could be other ways to look at the need to reduce council spending. ■ suggested that job losses in the proposals were mostly at lower level rather than middle management – where greater savings could be made for smaller numbers of redundancies. also suggested:

- that there could be more services and facilities taken into community control or Trusts
- Economic Development could be cut as South of Scotland Enterprise has now arrived on the scene

A member made a statement that LCC should not support any cuts to council budgets at all, but we should be arguing for protecting council budgets.

A member agreed with this position and warned against the take-over of council services by the free market and/or community organisations (who are not funded)

■■■■ made the point that DGC councillors have a legal responsibility to make the budget balance with available funds.

A member suggested that DGC Councillors did have the option of refusing to balance the budget as a protest against these cuts.

A member commented that Scottish Government have an increased budget from Westminster, but have opted use this settlement on priorities other than local authorities.

Discussion of the potential to increase council tax and what level of increase would be acceptable to local people.

A member made a request that basic environmental services should be protected – such as grass cutting, which could easily give a very bad impression of the town to everyone.

Agreed LCC position:  
LCC will not single out any particular services for cuts as these are not decisions we are not qualified to make. We do, however, support the principle of savings through increased efficiency. We note a willingness amongst members to support an increase in council tax to cover the cuts and would ask DGC members to explore this option and convey the message from LCC that we support the maintenance of all council services (with caveat about efficiencies) and encourage DGC to make the case to Scottish Govt for maintaining existing budgets

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Dumfries & Galloway  
Council Offices  
English Street  
Dumfries, DG1 2DD

Dear *C. Smith*

**Dumfries & Galloway Budget Consultation**

I am writing to respond to the budget consultation currently underway in Dumfries and Galloway.

Dumfries and Galloway's Major Events and Festivals Strategy has been hugely successful over the years and one which contributes to the National Strategy Scotland the Perfect Stage. Your strategy and the practical delivery of this is a model of best practise and one we would often refer to when speaking to other local authorities, particularly of similar scale.

We absolutely understand the challenges all local authorities are facing and the difficult decisions that must be made which is why we wanted to respond to your budget consultation and the reference to the reduction in your Events & Festivals budget. Whilst we appreciate a reduction to the event budget looks likely we are keen to work with you to protect that as much as possible and to support the council in their ongoing vision to support the event sector in the region.

It is worth highlighting that in the last 6 years of the strategy, EventScotland has invested over £1 million into events in Dumfries and Galloway. Having a proactive council with a clear strategy to support events which contribute to the National Strategy without doubt leverages this investment at a national level from EventScotland. It is therefore worth flagging that a significant reduction in your own ability to support events, also reduces the ability to leverage national support through EventScotland.

We are keen to work with you through the review and will continue to sit on your Major Events and Festivals Partnership Group to help shape the strategy for the events sector through this challenging period.

Your sincerely



Director of Events, VisitScotland



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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	

Please share your views in the space available below

The benefit maximisation team is under severe pressure following the announcement in the budget proposals that the service we offer to residents aged 60 and over may end completely.

This would be a disaster for the elderly vulnerable population of D & G and would certainly not meet with the Council's priority of alleviating poverty.

Pension poverty is still an issue as we often see referrals coming in for health benefits and we are shocked on checking their current position, by the small amount of pension some are living off. This is something we would address when carrying out the benefit health check prior to arranging a visit to help apply for any additional money we can get for them.

There is no one else in D & G who currently deliver this service, so this age group would be left with no one to help them deal with benefit claims.

In future around 2023/24 Scottish Social Security will start to have local officers who can offer this service, but until then there would be a significant gap in service provision for pensioners trying to claim benefits.

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**I AGREE TO MY RESPONSE BEING PUBLISHED:**      YES                       NO\*

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG7
Organisation (if applicable)	[REMOVED] High School

Please share your views in the space available below

Working in a school we rely greatly on the Mail Pony Service delivering our internal mail. We have already had this cut to 3 days a week which has had an impact on how we do our job. If this service was completely taken away it would result in more costs for each individual school. The inconvenience of having to go to the Post Office with larger mail items and packages. The service therefore cannot be cut any more to ensure the smooth running of our school.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG12
Organisation (if applicable)	EDUCATION

Please share your views in the space available below

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS A SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION SO THE CUTS THAT ARE BEING PROPOSED DO NOT MATCH SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT.

ANNAN SWIMMING POOL - NOT ENOUGH STAFF TO STAFF THE ADDED SWIMMING LESSONS PROPOSED??

SOME PEOPLE CANNOT AFFORD TO ATTEND SWIM SCHEME. (HEALTH & WELLBEING OF CHILDREN) AND INCLUSION OF CHILDREN

SWIMMING IS A LIFE SKILL

NEED IT FOR SECONDARY P.E. SO IF YOU CAN'T SWIM YOU ARE THEREFORE DISADVANTAGED.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG7
Organisation (if applicable)	

Please share your views in the space available below

"Mail Pony Service" ... This service is an invaluable service for our local schools within the region. Without it there would then be massive outlays from our school funds to then post items that would normally have been sent through the internal mail system. We already feel this hard down sizing from 2 days to 1 day at Kells as things can sit for a long period of time waiting to go out.

The Internal mail system was designed to keep costing low within our council for sending mail between council buildings so without it would be have massive financial impact on us all .... If this were to change and post came from our own school funds it would then ultimately impact every child in the region as there would be less school funds to put towards our children's educational needs.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	

Please share your views in the space available below
<p>Hi</p> <p>I have been informed today that our Mail Pony Service may be under threat due to budget cuts.</p> <p>We have been using the Pony for many years now and we greatly value this service. We have had nothing but the best customer service over the years and I hope the Council reconsiders their budget plans in this particular area so we can still receive this service in the future.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p> <p>████████████████████</p>

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	Education

Please share your views in the space available below

I am sorry to hear the Mail Pony Service is under threat. I feel this is a valuable service that we depend on weekly.

We rely on it to have our Library Project Kits delivered and collected, medical forms to and from the NHS, collecting the lunch money from the kitchen staff. Transferring pupils records when they move to another school, the big concern being when the P7's move to secondary this would cost hundreds of pound to post.

It is used for all correspondence between D&G schools.

I feel discontinuing this service would be short sighted.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	DGC - Staff

Please share your views in the space available below

The library book fund has already been reduced annually by £100 000. This current proposal would reduce it to virtually nothing. Over four years this would total over £600 000 less being spent on books. When the mobile library service was removed, it was promised 'Vulnerable people will still receive services'. It could well have been added 'but they won't get any new books to read'. Our council lists 'protecting vulnerable people' as a priority. Here, the deeds don't match the words. If agreed to, this will have a severe effect on library users, including many who are housebound. A true money saving could be achieved by controlling the heating in the Ewart library. Climate protestors would have a field day seeing windows open and fans running in winter as the building heats the universe.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	

Please share your views in the space available below
<p>Hi</p> <p>I have been informed today that our Mail Pony Service may be under threat due to budget cuts.</p> <p>We have been using the Pony for many years now and we greatly value this service. We have had nothing but the best customer service over the years and I hope the Council reconsiders their budget plans in this particular area so we can still receive this service in the future.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p> <p>[NAME REMOVED]</p>

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	[REDACTED]

Please share your views in the space available below

**MAIL PONY SERVICE:** This service has already been reduced but is necessary as a means of relaying information internally. There are still many items sent via this system where digital means are not able or allowed. What would replace this? Postage and Courier services are expensive and would not save money in the long term.

**MANAGEMENT:** Many employees, below management level, who do much of the necessary work to keep the cogs turning, are of the same opinion that mid and higher management are plentiful in numbers, their job roles/duties somewhat non-essential and many lack the skills required to be an effective manager overall. This is an issue throughout the working sector, not just within our Council. The question needs to be asked; do we really need as many people employed in management? An effective manager would be able to oversee many staff and projects, like they used to! Due to the high salaries paid to management there would certainly be money saved here. Don't cut the staff who really do all the work, it would be the demise of the Council.

**BUDGET QUESTIONNAIRE:** The wording of the questionnaire could not have been more difficult. It was an effort to read and dissect in order to fully understand. Why could it not just be worded in layman's terms, so that everyone, from all sectors and walks of life can understand it! Is it a ploy to bamboozle the 'lower classes' and put them off having opinions and making comments??

**GENERAL SPENDING:** If we really are taking austerity measures, the budget should only be spent on essential criteria which enables the region to function; NHS, Education, Protecting Vulnerable People, Policing. It certainly does not include the Arts and such like. The benefit system, all over the country, is far too generous. People not only need to be encouraged back into work, but there needs to be a certain amount of pressure on them to earn money and gain self worth. Its all too easy for people to choose not to work and is a bone of contention with the majority of the population who do work.

**COUNCIL TAX:** It is not fair to increase the Council Tax, which will once again, target mainly the working class, home owners. I would agree to a slight increase but, as a working class/homeowner/not receiving any benefits, I personally would see nothing for the extra. I would rather pay that increase into a fund of my choice such as; provision for children in the region/sports activities/social clubs etc for the elderly. That way, you could actually see something positive for your money.

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG8
Organisation (if applicable)	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 1.2em;"></div>

Please share your views in the space available below
<p>Mail Pony Service</p> <p>This service is essential for us as many different organisations use the Merrick to drop in their internal mail. Also for us as a centre, as we are outwith the town centre and due to staffing shortages, it would be impossible for anyone to actually leave their post to take mail to the local post office.</p>

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District Postcode (For example DG1)	DG1
Organisation (if applicable)	[REDACTED]

Please share your views in the space available below

I do not agree with the proposal to end the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. I have worked in two separate areas within D & G Council where the Rent Deposit Scheme has proved to be a necessary support for those with lived experiences and on a low income.

If this area of support is cut then families/individuals within the region will find themselves in impossible situations to try and locate secure housing.

This in turn could lead to an increase on the pressures of the Council's homeless Department to try and provide families/individuals with support.

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