



Summary findings of the 2017 public consultation on Midlothian Council's savings proposals

Interim Report – 7 December 2017

www.midlothian.gov.uk/shapingourfuture

Number of responses

Total number of individual comments received as at 7 December (consultation closes 14 December 2017)	1,300
Number of individuals and groups submitting written responses to date Single and multiple comments on savings proposals contained in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 228 emails; • 180 electronic survey forms; • 101 letters and comment sheets; • 44 'Tell Ken' staff suggestions; • 33 social media comments. 	586
Number attending community engagement meetings Meetings were held over five nights in early November with representatives of community groups in Midlothian. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number attending: 158 2 meetings were held with school students from across Midlothian in late November 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number attending: 34 	192
Number of known petitions to date Online petition Save Our Libraries – approx. number of signatories to date Keep Danderhall and other Community Libraries Open – no. of signatories Online petition against cuts in Instrumental Music Tuition – approx. number of signatories to date Paper petition against the removal of the School Crossing Service – residents of Mayfield and nearby areas Joint Midlothian Trades Unions paper petition against public sector funding cuts (submitted to the Scottish Government)	5 2,000 46 2,500 407 3000+

Summary of key findings as at 07/12/17

Key findings to date

- **Libraries**

Opposition to the proposal to shut libraries is reflected in the number of comments (121), strength of feeling expressed in comments; and number of signatories to external petitions (2000+ signatories as at 8 December 2017). Also a number of concerns and questions on library closures were raised at all 5 of the community consultation meetings and was a key concern at the meetings held with local school students.

There have also been responses from national bodies against the proposals. Submissions have been received from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland and the Scottish Library & Information Council.

- **Education**

142 comments have been received on a range of issues relation to the education proposals. More than 40 of these relate to concerns about **After School Care fees** (with the majority of these coming in the form of emails from parents and carers and coordinated through Loanhead After School Club). This was also raised as a concern at some of the community consultation meetings.

The proposal to cut **Learning Assistants** is also strongly opposed in a number of responses (around 30). The proposal to introduce charges for **Instrumental Music Tuition** has attracted 15 comments in opposition but has also attracted a very large number of signatories to the external online petition (2,500 to date). This was also a key issue at the meeting held with local school students.

- **Street cleaning, waste collection and disposal**

Of 164 comments received on waste services, the majority of concerns relate to the proposal to close **Penicuik Recycling Centre**, with 66 strongly opposed. Many respondents also raise concerns about the potential increase in fly tipping as a result of this and other proposals to alter collection frequencies or charge for certain services.

- **Removal of School Crossing Service**

A paper petition signed by 407 people from the Mayfield area has been received in opposition to the proposal to remove the non-statutory school crossings service. Opposition to this cut has also been expressed in around 15 of the responses received to date.

- **Roads maintenance and street lighting**

Of 52 respondents, almost all are strongly opposed to cuts to the **roads maintenance, winter maintenance** and **street lighting** budgets.

- **Transport and travel**

The impact on Pathhead of the proposal to stop **supported bus grants** attracted 200 residents to a recent public meeting and an increase in the number of responses raising concerns about this. Cutting **supported bus grants/ ring and go/ taxi card** was also raised as a concern by representatives of a number of community groups at the community consultation events. The impact of this and other proposed savings on vulnerable members of society was raised in these meetings and is reflected in a number of the comments under transport, communities and general comments.

- **Voluntary sector grants**

Possible cuts in **support to the voluntary sector** was key issue at the consultation meetings and the impact of this and other savings proposals on more vulnerable members of the community is recurring theme in the written responses.

- **Environmental health and trading standards**

Of 13 comments received, most are concerned about cuts to the **noise nuisance** and **pest control** service.

- **Parks and open spaces**

There are mixed views on the proposals to cut the provision of floral displays and shrub beds in the 62 responses received. The majority, although not all, of the comments on the proposal to cut support to gala days are opposed to it.

- **Council Tax**

Around two-thirds of the 30 comments received on **Council Tax** say that Council Tax should go up.

- **Staffing/ management/ councillors**

Of 90 comments received, most support cuts to **senior management** roles/ pension costs/ car leasing/ councillor costs and expenses. Many suggest that there should be senior management reductions greater than those already included in the savings proposals.

- **Town centres/ town and village impact**

Many of the comments make it clear that some communities are feeling much more hard hit than others as a result of the proposals, particularly **Penicuik and Newtongrange**.

- **Health and social care**

16 comments have been received, most of these recognising the difficult financial challenge and the need to maintain support for adult social care services.

- **Children's services**

11 comments have been received, all opposed to a reduction in **early intervention and prevention** services.

- **Property and facilities management**

A wide range of comments, with a number concerned about the proposed changes to the **schools meal service** and others raising concerns about the proposals to share **janitorial services** and to **transfer the running of local facilities** to community groups

- **Sport and leisure**

The proposal to reduce **lifeguard cover** is a matter of concern for a number of respondents, as are the proposals to **reduce astro and grass pitches** and to **increase charges**.

- **Income generation/ money saving**

The suggestion that more should be done to **increase developer contributions** features in a number of the written responses and was a recurring theme at the community engagement meetings. **Shared services** with other local authorities also received support in the written comments. Most of the ideas for money saving and income generation are fairly 'low level' – e.g. increase advertising income, reduce printing and postage costs, reduce admin costs.