

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Originator	A Gillespie, Service Manager, Business Finance
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Document Title	General Services Budget Consultation

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East Lothian Council

Additional information:

Authorised By	Jim Lamond
Designation	Head of Council Resources
Date	21 January 2014

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

DATE:

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: General Services Budget Consultation

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the results of the consultation recently carried out in relation to the Council's General Services budget.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the results of the consultation exercise and consider these in their budget deliberations.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the preparation for setting future budgets, the Council decided to undertake a budget consultation. The consultation was launched in November 2013 under the title of "You Pay....Have Your Say."
- 3.2 The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the proposals for the General Services Budget for financial years 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.
- 3.3 The consultation document was made available online and in paper format. Responses could be made by email or post, with responses being accepted up to 18 December 2013. The Spending Choices document which accompanied the consultation has been attached at Appendix A.
- 3.4 In total, 30 responses were received. Twenty six of these were received by email, with the remainder being more formal written responses. The majority of responses were from individuals, with only one response from an organisation.

- 3.5 The consultation document was framed around six specific questions and one general question about how the Council could become more efficient. The summarised responses to Questions 1-6 have been collated at [Appendix B](#). [Appendix C](#) details some of the responses to the general question regarding efficiencies.
- 3.6 Although the number of responses was low, there was a general tendency to agree with the Council's approach in relation to the financial challenges. Where an opinion was expressed, the majority of respondents were in general favour of the approach taken by the Council in relation to the planned efficiency savings, the focus on savings, even though this might mean a lower specification and the introduction of new charges as a way of recovering cost. The majority of respondents also did not see the Council Tax freeze as a being sustainable. This pattern can be seen at [Appendix B](#).
- 3.7 A large percentage of the responses received (37%) commented upon the planned savings to be made in the Library Service, particularly the review of the Mobile Library Service. A selection of the comments received with regard to the Mobile Library Service are collated at [Appendix D](#).
- 3.8 The responses relating to the Library Service have been considered by the Head of Communities & Partnerships, who noted the many positive comments made and that the service is clearly valued by those who use it. Under current plans, the Council will be reducing the Mobile Library Service from two vehicles to one. It will, however, continue to provide a service to the local villages and to our housebound customers. Although the Mobile Library Service will no longer visit some primary schools as part of the school day, the Mobile Library will be in some villages after school hours so that parents and children can access the service together. Over the past two years, four of the town Libraries have been refurbished or relocated. Opening hours have been improved in recent years and a range of activities occur in the Libraries, which encourage all ages to visit and use the facilities. Staff and volunteers in the Libraries also give assistance to those customers who are not so familiar with new technology.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget consultation process underlines the Council's commitment to resident involvement.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None.
- 6.2 Personnel - None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Appendix A – Spending Choices publication.
- 7.2 Appendix B – Consultation responses to Questions 1-6.
- 7.3 Appendix C – Consultation responses to Question 7.
- 7.4 Appendix D – Selection of consultation responses regarding the Mobile Library Service.

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DATE	21 January 2014



**You Pay
Have Your Say**

Spending Choices

East Lothian Council Budget 2014-2017
Community Consultation

Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services on 01620 827199

To comment on this paper:

- email your views to: youpayhaveyoursay@eastlothian.gov.uk
- send your comments **by post** to: The Head of Council Resources, East Lothian Council, John Muir House, Haddington EH41 3HA
- visit our website at www.eastlothian.gov.uk

We regret that, due to the volume of comments and the postal costs involved, we are unable to acknowledge all written responses to the budget consultation.

Time is short so don't delay!

You have until 18 December to take part.

You Pay... Have Your Say

Introduction

East Lothian Council sets a budget each year and has to decide how to allocate available funding to the wide range of vital services it provides to the community. In any circumstances, the budget setting process involves difficult decisions, as we try to balance national and local priorities, the needs, wants and aspirations of our residents alongside the limited resources available.

However, all councils are facing challenging times as public sector spending continues to be reduced. At the same time, East Lothian will face additional cost pressures – either from increasing demand for services, population growth, inflationary pressures (such as increasing energy costs), the cost of opening new facilities or from new or increased national taxes.

These are increasingly challenging times, but through sound financial management, by taking an innovative approach to service delivery and by listening and working with communities, we are confident that we can make the changes required to operate within our financial means. This budget consultation is your chance to become involved.

A great deal of work has already been done. In February 2013, the Council approved a budget for 2013/14 and outline budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The 2013/14 budget has already reduced spending by imposing efficiencies and reductions of almost £6.7 million to balance expenditure with available income. Some of the steps already taken to manage down costs include:

- A Voluntary Early Retirement scheme (VERS) undertaken in April 2013. As a result of this scheme over ninety staff have already or will shortly leave the Council, eventually generating annual savings of almost £3 million
- Savings of almost £400,000 have also been made from changes to the staff travel scheme. These changes are already generating efficiencies and will make further savings in 2014/15
- The Council continues to work in partnership with other public bodies to make savings. As an example, we are working with Midlothian Council on joint Health and Safety arrangements and on the joint management of Environmental Health and Trading Standards.
- Spending restrictions on new capital projects have been put in place, designed to limit the debt charges we will face.
- Our *BuySmart* programme continues to generate savings from the supplies and services which the Council purchases. In addition, all services within the Council have been set the target of limiting any possible future cost increases.

Full details of the [Council's Financial Strategy](#) can be found on the Council's website at www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Due to the anticipated restrictions in future funding, we are planning to make efficiencies of at least £7 million over the next two years. However, the likelihood is that this figure will need to increase to match any further inescapable cost increases that the Council faces. The planned efficiencies/savings for 2014/15 and 2015/16 fall into three main categories:

- **Efficient Workforce Management** - staffing is the biggest element of the Council's costs and it is highly unlikely we would be able to make the savings required if we did not try to reduce these costs. As well as saving a further £1 million in 2014/15 from the already approved VERS programme, the Council is planning to reduce staffing costs by a further £1.3 million across the next two years
- **BuySmart** – over £370,000 worth of savings on various supplies and services will be targeted during 2014/15
- **Other Service Efficiencies** – in addition to the above various services are being asked to deliver specific savings. These depend on the service involved but include:
 - Reduction in contract payments to **enjoy**leisure (who manage sports and leisure facilities on behalf of the Council) and the Brunton Theatre Trust, designed to save £114,000
 - Raising an extra £123,000 from raising charges across a number of areas such as commercial rents, licensing charges and trade waste
 - A review of the Devolved School Management Scheme for primary and secondary schools which, when taken together, aims to generate savings of £290,000
 - A range of efficiencies across adult and children's social work services which are aimed at generating savings of more than £2 million over the next two years.

Full details of the efficiencies already planned within the existing 3 year budget have been included at Appendix A.

We want to hear your views on our proposals and also any further ideas you might have on how we can cut costs or increase income while maintaining the key services our communities depend upon.

This year's budget consultation is your opportunity to have your say on how we prioritise our spending and develop new, cost-effective ways of delivering local services. Please take the time to read through this *Spending Choices* paper and give us your views. You pay – now it's time to have your say.

This consultation is about the part of the budget that is funded by the Council Tax, which we usually call "General Services". This excludes spending on Council Houses which is funded by the rents charged. We call that the "HRA" (Housing Revenue Account) and that is subject to a separate statutory tenant consultation.

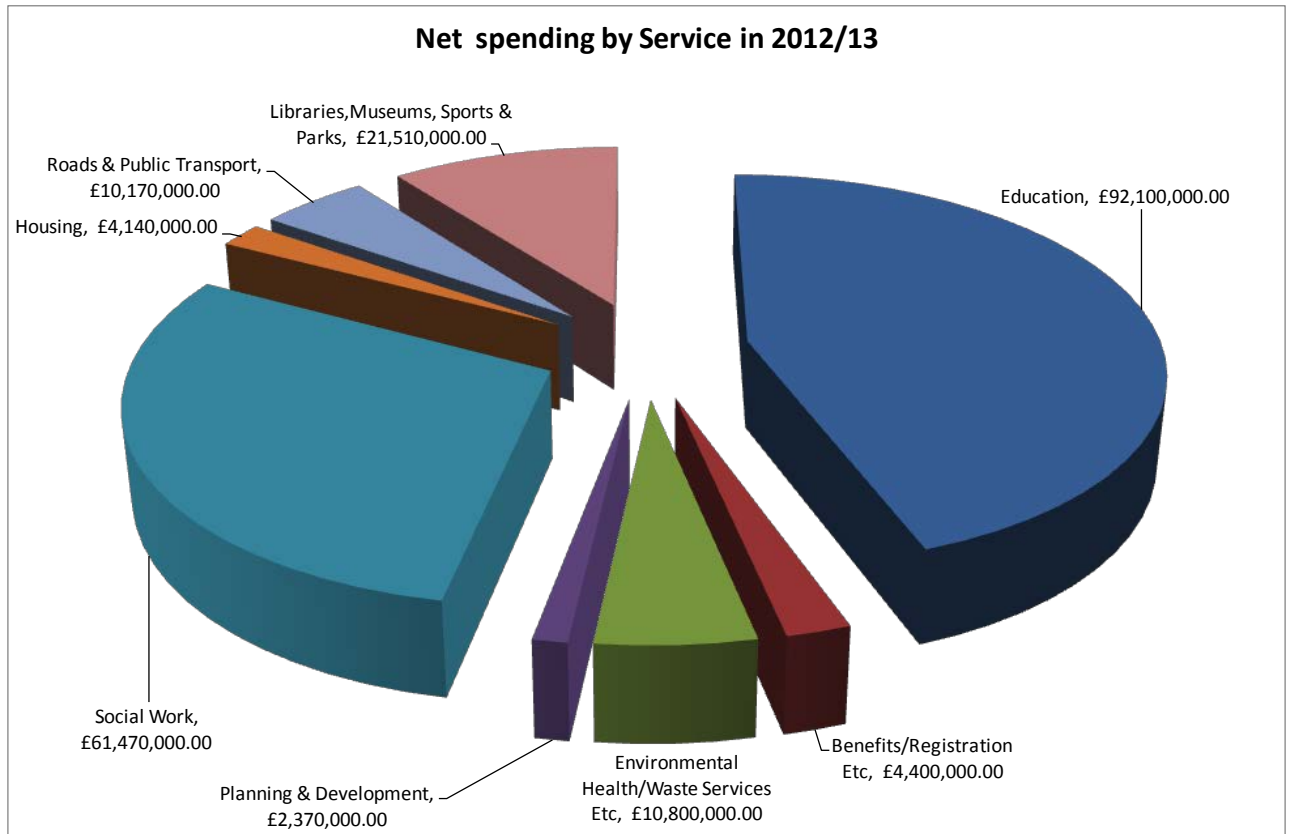
Below we present some basic facts about the Council finances. We then ask you to consider some specific questions.

Your answers to these questions will help guide all councillors when they come to consider future budgets.

Some Basic Facts

What does the Council spend?

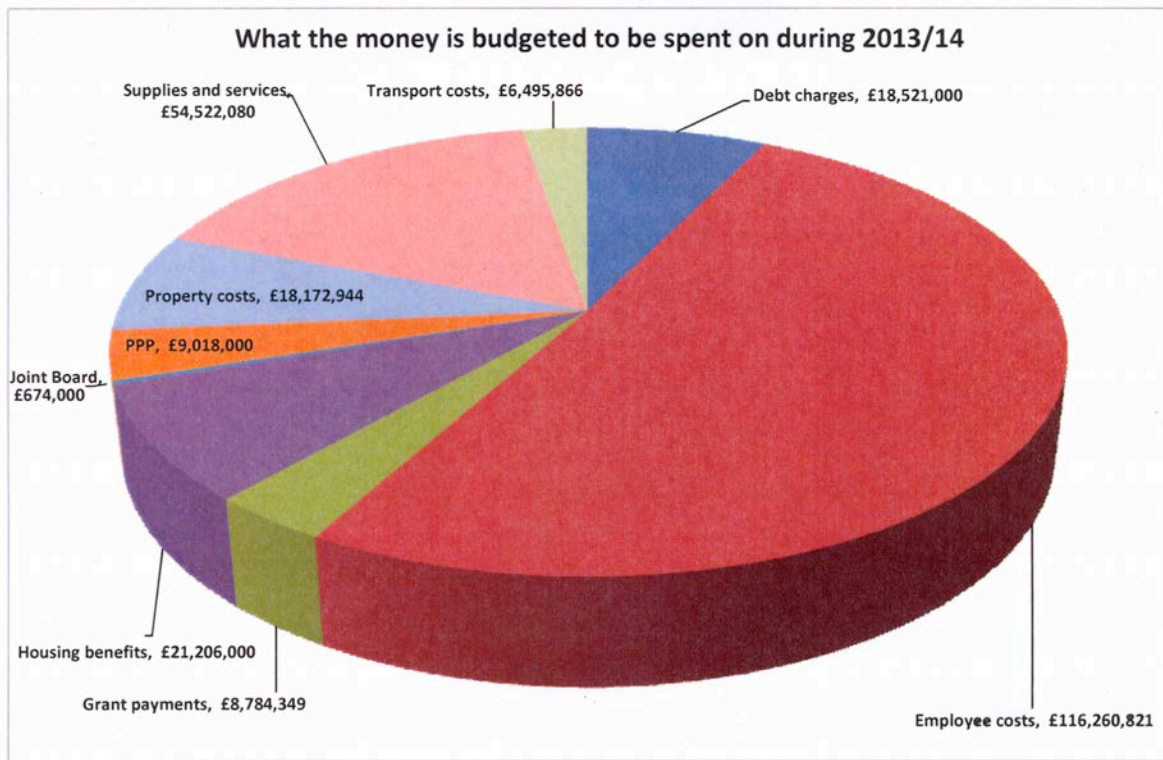
During 2012/13 the Council's net expenditure was just over £220 million. We have excluded payments to the police and fire boards and HRA expenditure and split the spend between the various services provided by the Council.



You can see that the two services with the largest budgets are Education and Social Work. Together these areas account for more than three quarters of the Council's net spending. The next largest budget is that for running the Council's libraries, sports centres, museums and parks. This accounts for £21.51 million or 10% of the total.

What is this money spent on?

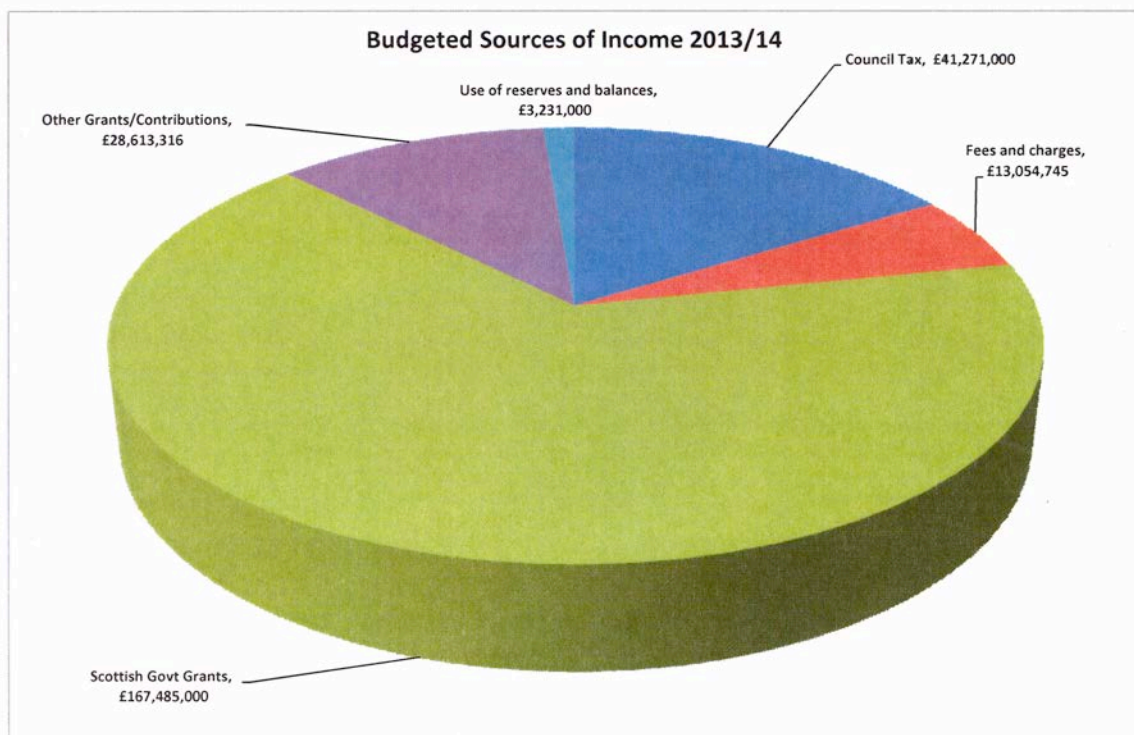
Over 42% of the Council's costs come from employing staff. After this, the next biggest cost relates to the purchase of supplies and services. This includes, for example, buying care home places, paying for waste collections and paying for gas and electricity.



General Services capital expenditure is indirectly included within the figures above since most of that expenditure is funded by borrowing which has to be repaid with interest, which we usually call “debt charges”.

Where does the money come from?

Most of the income to run all these services comes from the Scottish Government. This can be seen on the Pie Chart below.



Can the Council just use reserves to get out of its budget difficulties?

Reserves are currently being used to help manage the change towards a more sustainable financial position. However, the important point to remember about reserves is that they can only be used once. They are not a sustainable source of income. Eventually they will run out. So they can only really work as either a source of funds for projects that do not have recurrent costs or they can be a transitional measure whilst income and expenditure are brought into balance.

Some Questions

In the charts above, you can see where and how the Council spends your money. Appendix A provides details of the proposed efficiencies/savings already planned for the next two financial years.

Q1. What are your views on the specific efficiency measures already planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16?

Staffing is the biggest element of the Council's expenditure with the Council expecting to spend almost £116 million on this area during 2013/14. Given the financial and service challenges that it faces, the Council has already acknowledged that it will have to do more with fewer staff.

Accordingly, the Council has been working on reducing staff numbers through the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme and through Efficient Workforce Management Plans (EWMP). Effective management of staffing costs is already bringing about efficiency savings. This is being done by not replacing many of the employees who leave, limiting the creation of new jobs and by better managing overtime working and the use of casual, agency and temporary workers.

Q2. Do you agree that the Council is right to continue to reduce the numbers and the costs of the staff it employs?

The Council currently spends over £97 million every year on payments to suppliers. We need to focus on gaining as much value from these payments as possible. Recent successes include a reduction in postage costs by replacing franking machines and a price reduction in the contract for anti-social behaviour mediation. This is an area where there may be scope to do more. However, in the case of non-critical supplies, we may need to compromise on the level of service which the Council is able to deliver.

Q3. Do you agree that the Council is right to focus on making savings even when this might mean a lower specification for some services?

Every year, the Council collects approximately £13 million by charging residents and customers. This money is used to support frontline services. Some of these charges, such as building warrant fees, are set by the Scottish Government. Services such as concessionary rail travel and supported bus routes are subsidised.

A number of charges are decided by the Council itself such as the school meals service, the letting of community centres and adult education classes.

There are also some services for which the Council does not levy a charge. These include services such as on-street car parking and the cost of travel to resource centres.

Q4. Do you think it's appropriate that the Council considers both increasing charges and introducing new charges as a way of recovering costs?

A policy priority for the Scottish Government has been to deliver a council tax freeze for householders for the last six financial years. If the Council looks to increase the level of Council Tax, then it will, in effect, suffer a related loss in the grant it receives from the Scottish Government. To compensate for this loss in grant would require either service reductions of approximately £1.4 million or an increase in Council Tax of 3.4%. The budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16 have been prepared on the basis that the freeze will continue in these years.

The freeze in council tax has been welcomed by some, particularly because of the challenging financial climate during this period. However, this challenging climate has also affected the Council's finances as the cost of providing services continues to increase.

As explained above we are looking at ways to reduce costs, deliver services differently and review the way we charge for services provided and the need to do this has been partly influenced by the council tax freeze.

Q5. Do you consider a continued council tax freeze to be sustainable over the longer term?

The Council currently provides a large range of services. In the majority of cases, such as education, it is clear that we have a legal duty to provide these and there are often set standards about what we have to do. However in some cases, the Council provides services not because it has to but because it has either been 'custom and practice' or they are provided in response to residents' demands. Examples include staff catering and the provision of school transport below a certain distance limit.

East Lothian Council also has a history of working in partnership with the voluntary sector and private firms to deliver services. Examples include the operation of sports centres by the **enjoy**leisure trust, the Brunton Theatre Trust and the construction project which led to the refurbishment and maintenance of our six secondary schools.

We are currently investigating whether more partnership working could deliver additional benefits. Areas currently being explored include the management of community centres by voluntary management committees rather than the Council, working more closely with those voluntary organisations that provide public services and further partnership working with Midlothian Council and the locally based National Health Services. The Council might also want to look at the use of private firms to run certain council services. In all these cases, we would have to assure ourselves that service standards are at least maintained and perhaps increased and that costs decrease as a result of any change.

Q6. Do you agree that the Council is right to investigate different ways of providing services?

And finally...

Q7. What ideas do you have for ways in which the Council could become more efficient?

Have your say...

Your views are important to us. The Council will set its budget in February 2014, which is why we need you to have your say now on shaping the Council's spending choices for 2014/15 and beyond.

Send your comments or suggestions no later than Wednesday 18 December 2013 to:

Head of Council Resources
East Lothian Council
John Muir House
Haddington
East Lothian
EH41 3HA

Or email: youpayhaveyoursay@eastlothian.gov.uk

You can also visit: www.eastlothian.gov.uk for more information.

EFFICIENCY SAVING	2014/15	2015/16
Description	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000
Voluntary Early Retirement/Severance Scheme		
Savings arising from managed reduction in workforce <i>Annual savings on staff costs</i>	(1,000)	-
	(1,000)	-
SERVICES FOR PEOPLE		
Children's Wellbeing		
Control of Overtime <i>Reduction in overtime in Year 1 and review of terms and conditions in subsequent years</i>	-	(6)
Staff Travel Scheme <i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>	(72)	-
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(15)	-
Efficient Workforce Management <i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>	(280)	-
External Residential Care Placements <i>Review and Reduction in spend</i>	(100)	(250)
Commissioning Strategy <i>Efficiencies and Cost Reductions expected to arise as result of implementation of Commissioning Strategy and review of care partnerships/contracts and packages</i>	(45)	-
	(512)	(256)
Pre-School Education & Childcare		
Staff Travel Scheme <i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>	(2)	-
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(5)	-
	(7)	-
Additional Support for Learning		
External Learning Centres <i>Savings from review of contract levels/Best Value Review of Services</i>	-	(100)
Staff Travel Scheme <i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>	(16)	-
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(5)	-
	(21)	(100)
Schools - Primary		
Efficient Workforce Management /School Management <i>Review the management resources within all schools, including review of the ratio of Principal Teachers to Classroom Teachers to achieve efficiency target.</i>	(100)	-
DSM Review <i>Review of DSM scheme</i>	(50)	(50)
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(10)	-
	(160)	(50)
Schools - Secondary		
Staff Travel Scheme <i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>	(2)	-
Improving options in the Senior Phase across the Authority <i>Use of IT to enhance/support delivery of curriculum in the senior phase (S4-S6). Subject to changes in Scottish Government policy re teacher/pupil ratio</i>	-	(160)
School Transport <i>Re-provision of transport services</i>	(100)	-
DSM Review <i>Review of DSM scheme</i>	(240)	(90)
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(12)	-
	(354)	(250)
Schools Support Services		
Staff Travel Scheme <i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>	(15)	-
Efficient Workforce Management/Central Business Support <i>Review central business support to achieve efficiencies</i>	-	-
BuySmart Reviews <i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>	(10)	-
	(25)	-
Adult Wellbeing		
Day Centre Transport <i>Re-provision of Day Centre transport</i>	(90)	-
Adult Resource Centres <i>Modernisation of Adult Day Care Services</i>	-	(80)

Description	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000
Staff Travel Scheme	(92)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Control of Overtime	-	(65)
<i>Reduction in overtime in Year 1 and review of terms and conditions in subsequent years</i>		
Review of Income & Charging	(50)	-
<i>Review scope to extend charges to economic cost and review of charging policies, including the taper and allowable expenses.</i>		
Staffing	(35)	-
<i>Benefit realisation. Review of Admin staffing levels across the service following implementation of Frameworki</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(25)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Voluntary Organisations	(75)	-
<i>Focus spending on organisations involved in direct service provision meeting assessed clients needs</i>		
Learning Disability Residential Care	(85)	-
<i>Review of cases and examine scope to reduce costs using fair cost approach</i>		
Physical Disability Residential Care	(75)	-
<i>Review of cases and examine scope to reduce costs using fair cost approach</i>		
Occupational Therapy Aids	(40)	-
<i>Signposting to alternative sources/review of low level self referral</i>		
Redesign of Services for Older People	(50)	(750)
<i>Savings from reassessment of residential requirement in medium to long term</i>		
Adult Placement	(50)	-
<i>Develop opportunities for adult placement with savings within care purchasing budget.</i>		
Emergency Social Work Service	(30)	-
<i>Re-negotiation of existing service agreements</i>		
Supporting People	(75)	-
<i>Review of block contracts and movement to spot purchase arrangements</i>		
Allocation of Respite	(75)	(75)
<i>Allocation of respite based on ongoing re-assessed of need</i>		
<i>Review and prioritisation of system support activities</i>		
Review of Respite provision for older people	(60)	-
<i>Review of Respite provision within ELC homes</i>		
Make greater use of Sheltered Housing	(100)	-
<i>Make greater use of Sheltered Housing to provide higher levels of community support and reduce numbers of purchased care home beds</i>		
Recommission services within local neighbourhoods	(62)	-
<i>Development of day local services to replace services purchased out with East Lothian</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(200)	(100)
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
Review allocation of care between Free Personal Care and Non Personal Care	(25)	-
<i>Identify potential to increase level of chargeable services within care packages.</i>		
	(1,294)	(1,070)
SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES		
Community Housing		
Staff Travel Scheme	(28)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
	(28)	-
Planning & Environmental Services		
Staff Travel Scheme	(38)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
	(38)	-
Property		
Staff Travel Scheme	(24)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Increase in rents for Industrial Rents	(20)	(20)
<i>Rents will increase in line with rent reviews/Increase to match existing actual income</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(27)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management/Property Services Service Review	(71)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(142)	(20)
Facility Support Services		
Control of Overtime	-	(52)
<i>Reduction in overtime in Year 1 and review of terms and conditions in subsequent years</i>		
Staff Travel Scheme	(7)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(45)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(18)	-

Description	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(70)	(52)
Landscape & Countryside Management		
Staff Travel Scheme	(9)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Control of Overtime	-	(45)
<i>Reduction in overtime in Year 1 and review of terms and conditions in subsequent years</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(18)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(27)	(45)
Roads, Transportation & Waste Services		
Income Generation	(30)	-
<i>Increase in Trade Waste Charges</i>		
Staff Travel Scheme	(21)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(36)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Control of Overtime	-	(40)
<i>Reduction in overtime in Year 1 and review of terms and conditions in subsequent years</i>		
Fuel Costs	(25)	-
<i>Review of fuel costs across vehicles with aim of securing a 5% reduction</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(164)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(276)	(40)
SUPPORT SERVICES		
Communications & Marketing		
Staff Travel Scheme	(4)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
	(4)	-
Policy & Improvement		
<i>Welfare Rights Officer funded by external income/Fairer East Lothian Fund</i>		
Staff Travel Scheme	(2)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(26)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(28)	-
Culture		
<i>Increased costs associated with opening of the refurbished Brunton Hall</i>		
Staff Travel Scheme	(11)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Brunton Theatre Trust	(30)	-
<i>Reduction in contract payment to BTT</i>		
Library Services	(20)	(50)
<i>Review of mobile library service, reductions in revenue costs of Library Management system, review of branch professional posts, & introduction of new tech</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(52)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(113)	(50)
Community Learning & Development		
Staff Travel Scheme	(10)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Free Lets	(20)	-
<i>Increase in fees for use and reduction in number of free lets</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(10)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(80)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
Cluster Management Committees - Joint Working Development	(155)	-
<i>Savings arising from joint working</i>		
	(275)	-
Healthy Living		
Staff Travel Scheme	(5)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(9)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(50)	-

Description	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000	Efficiency Measures/Savings/Increased Income £000
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
Enjoy Contract Payments	(84)	(56)
<i>Reduction in contract payment to Enjoy over the next three years</i>		
	(148)	(56)
Economic Development		
Staff Travel Scheme	(8)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(9)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(17)	-
Customer Services		
Staff Travel Scheme	(3)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(20)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(23)	-
Financial Services		
Staff Travel Scheme	(4)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(15)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(62)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(81)	-
Revenues & Benefits		
Staff Travel Scheme	(11)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(10)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(29)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(50)	-
Information Technology		
Staff Travel Scheme	(3)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(40)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(43)	-
Law & Licensing		
Staff Travel Scheme	(2)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
Licensing Fees	(3)	-
<i>Increase in Civic Government application fee charges in line with October 2008 Cabinet Report</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(20)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(25)	-
Human Resources		
<i>Budget transfer due to changed management responsibilities</i>		
Staff Travel Scheme	(4)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(15)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
Efficient Workforce Management	(38)	-
<i>Group savings target to be met from service redesign, strict management of variable staffing and agency costs.</i>		
	(57)	-
Governance & Democratic Services		
Staff Travel Scheme	(4)	-
<i>Renegotiation of Staff Travel Scheme</i>		
BuySmart Reviews	(40)	-
<i>BuySmart Review of supplies & services - leading to either reduced purchasing, ensuring contracts set up and used or buying to an alternative standard.</i>		
	(44)	-
TOTAL	(4,862)	(1,989)

Response Number	Q1 - What are your views on the specific efficiency measures already planned for 2014/15 and 2015/16?	Q2 - Do you agree that the Council is right to continue to reduce the numbers and the costs of the staff it employs?	Q3 - Do you agree that the Council is right to focus on making savings even when this might mean a lower specification for some services?	Q4 - Do you think it is appropriate that the Council considers both increasing charges and introducing new charges as a way of recovering costs?	Q5 - Do you consider a continued council tax freeze to be sustainable over the longer term?	Q6 - Do you agree that the Council is right to investigate different ways of providing services?
1	They are over-optimistic	No	Yes	Yes	No	With reservation
2	No comment	Yes - as long as a real saving	Only on non-critical services	Yes	No	Yes - with voluntary partners
3	Continue/Keep agency workers in check	Generally yes - but more creative thinking on moving employees to other areas	Yes - especially Home to School	Yes - as long as done fairly and doesn't discourage tourists	No in the long term and not until wages start to rise	Yes - as long as assessed
4	Generally yes - well thought out and useful	Yes - this will be essential	Yes	Yes as long as charges are affordable	This is a matter for the Scottish Government	Yes - as long as cost-effective
5	No comment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	No comment	Yes - Sad but True	Yes	Yes - OK with beach charges	No	Yes - this is the future
7	Generally Yes - but some concerns over lower standards	Yes	Yes	Coastal Car Parks could be counter-productive	No comment	Yes
8	No comment	Yes	Yes	Not to Coastal Car Parking	Yes	No comment
9	Yes	Yes	Yes - but not essential services	Yes - this is appropriate. But on-street parking charges would encourage shoppers to abandon East Lothian	No - this will have to be abandoned eventually	Yes

				Would like to see charging for all parking spaces - beaches and high streets		
10	No comment	No comment	No comment		No comment	No comment
11	No comment	No comment	No comment	No comment	No	No comment
12	No comment	No comment	No comment	No comment	No	No comment

What ideas do you have for ways in which the Council could become more efficient?

Response 1

Although I think jobs should be protected there is some scope within terms & conditions that could make savings. Whilst the Unions would probably not like this and may raise issue with it - only a small % of employees are actually IN the union and I'm sure if you asked the rest of the employees then the vast majority would rather lose / have some cuts to "perks" and keep jobs, than see people being made redundant!

Some things to consider would be:

- Employees should not be able to sell leave - this costs money! (they should be able to buy it though as this will save money)
- Relocation costs - should not be paid unless a specific job has been advertised say twice & no suitable applicants received. At the end of the day, if someone chooses to apply for a post in East Lothian - that is their choice and if they have to relocate, then that's their decision and the Council should NOT pay towards that!
- Sick pay - reduce max payment period of both full & 1/2 pay
- Flexi leave - this must cost a considerable amount of money. Reduce back to 1.5 days max / month (pro rata)
- Employees who work compressed hours & public holidays eg someone who works Tues to Friday still gets their public holiday entitlement to a Monday - even though they don't work that day! This means they actually gain up to a full weeks' extra leave (4 Monday PH this year which is a full working week if they only work 4 days). If you work a public holiday day, you should get it, if you don't work it, you shouldn't! It has been their choice to not work that day after all!

Response 2

It is forecast that full economic recovery of the UK is unlikely to be achieved before 2019, and that at least until then significant financial strictures will have to be tolerated and maintained. If, however, Scotland becomes fully independent in 2016 the situation thereafter is at present entirely unclear. Because of these very considerable uncertainties I consider that the Council should conduct a "worse-case" review of all its services and cut all those which are "extra" or inessential to an absolute minimum, putting all its resources as far as possible in to its statutory and core responsibilities. In this way it would be better placed for recovery in due course.

Response 3

Perhaps more thought needs to be given to outsourcing services acting as suppliers / facilitators rather than providers of services. There seems to be a marked increase in paperwork (and consequently costs) in simple tasks like room bookings which used to be simple. Volunteers are stepping up to fill in behind when tasks are not being done e.g. Bloom groups, Day Centres .etc. Could more be done to support

voluntary groups (not financially but verbal recognition of efforts to support the community in ways which the local authority might have been expected to do in the past would be appreciated)

I think rather than focusing on cuts, the council should be looking more to income generation and savings of unnecessary spending.

Council Tax/Rent Arrears – Should be pursued fully – to court and eviction if necessary, or wages arrest if council staff.

Overdue library books should be invoiced for if the reminders don't bring them back and sent to debt collection if necessary.

Dog poo bags should not be free. It is not the council's responsibility to help people clean up after their pets. These bags can be bought very cheaply in discount stores e.g £1 for 100 bags in Semi-Chem.

Recycling collections could be done monthly, and give people who need them larger collection boxes.

Whilst baskets of flowers hanging in high streets etc look lovely they are really not a priority.

Benefits need to be looked at more closely. If someone claims housing benefit because they cannot work due to being an alcoholic/obese/drug addict more stringent rules need to be in place as these are self inflicted and should not be treated like other medical conditions.

When people sign the lease for a council house it could say that once the house is too big for their needs they will have to be re-housed thus freeing up a much needed house for a family. That way they would know from the beginning that this house would not be their home until they die.

All new staff should be employed on temporary contracts – then if the person turns out to be unsuitable their contract does not need to be renewed saving the council from having to employ “dead weight” because it is too difficult to dismiss them.

Car parking in council car parks at beaches etc should be charged for but at a small amount which would not put people off and still generate some funds the council would not otherwise have had.

The School bus service could be charged for. It is people's choice where they live and it should be their own responsibility to pay for/get their children to school if they are too far away to walk.

Staff cuts are fine, provided they are done carefully and don't leave the remaining staff with more work than they can reasonably handle, resulting in stress and sick time.

Council Tax increases are fine, but only if council staff pay rises increase to keep up with inflation.

That's the end of my twopenny worth and hope some of it may be useful!

Response 4

ELC should stop the weekly general refuse collection - particularly in rural areas, and commence a 2 weekly collection, with a free second wheelie bin being supplied to larger households that request one. This will also encourage greater re-cycling of waste.

Response 5

Some thoughts :

- Ensure quality of services is maintained even if quantity / frequency is altered to achieve efficiencies. Requires effective oversight , supervision & performance management
- Invest to save - consider using portion of reserves to achieve longer term sustainable savings rather than just as an interim bridging measure
- Avoid introduction of charges that are costly to administer or which would have an adverse effect on tourism & inward investment
- Consider further areas for the sharing of services with other public bodies - not just other Councils, eg Lothian Health Board & possibly the Scottish Government. This could be in areas such as procurement - eg office supplies, cleaning materials, protective clothing, fuel, vehicle leasing, etc or in terms of service provision, eg Occupational Health Services, catering, office cleaning, property & grounds maintenance
- Campaign through COSLA to increase the Scottish Government Grants funded by increasing the qualifying age for - free public transport, Winter Fuel Allowance & any other age related benefits. Defer any further investment in house insulation

Response 6

Have read the article in the East Lothian Courier and would just like send 2 points for consideration.

First Point - Replace Supply Teachers with recently qualified Teachers from college. Whatever, you currently spend on Supply Teachers you recruit new Teachers to the same value on say a yearly contract. The "extra new Teachers" could report every Monday morning to say Ross High and be allocated throughout the County as and where required. If they were not needed on any Monday they could be sent to schools to help with pupils who perhaps needed extra tuition. Believe the Council would have keen newly qualified teachers in place rather than recruiting a "supply teacher" who is on their way to retiring completely, but bolstering a pension. The counter argument is that you would loose experience - the "experience" will eventually go when their time is right. Lastly, in specialist subjects e.g. science you could still bring in Supply Teachers if necessary within the above budget. In summing up there may be a saving once the new system is successfully tested.

Second Point - Council Street Cleaners. Get the Secondary Schools pupils corrected in where they drop lunch time litter and the savings could be worthwhile. Police could monitor the streets for say a month and issue fines if necessary. Head Teachers could also address pupils about the litter problem and how to prevent it happening. There are 6 Towns with Secondary Schools - the cleaning bill is

approximately 30K per annum just for cleaning at the back of school children. Based on 6 towns x £120 per week cleaners time spent cleaning after pupils x 42 weeks per year. There is also the point that litter should not be dropped, and if you train them young enough it may pay dividends in the end.

Final Point - I do think the road repair staff do a good job in their roadwork role and filling in holes throughout the county.

Response 7

I do not think that a continued freeze on Council Tax is sustainable and our household would be prepared to pay more PROVIDED we saw a real improvement in:

The standard of service from almost every ELC we have had to deal with as private individuals or as third sector volunteers. My general sense is that there are a lot of worthy employees but that very few of them seem to have any sense of a need to provide an excellent and swift service. I feel strongly that a review of staffing levels, roles and responsibilities and a rationalisation which saw the right people doing the right job in a full working week would pay huge dividends. The blending of departments may help this as there will be fewer opportunities to 'teflon desk' enquiries.

I would consider the rationalisation/removal of a lot of the 'soft' jobs e.g. community liaison type jobs which do not seem to add any real value.

Roads and paths: The sum spent on roads seems very low. Roads and infrastructure send important messages about the quality of the environment in which we all live. It is an awful shame to see the high quality finishes of paths and crossings in Dunbar High St gradually eroded by tarmac and concrete infills. What a waste this is. Wholesale and repeated 'patch' repairs also seem very short sighted.

Responses to repeatedly expressed concerns over dangerous steps etc are awful and/or non-existent.

Litter collection. Improved litter collection from peripheral spaces e.g. the bank at East Links would vastly improve people's perception of place.

The level of debt costs. At £18m pa this seems massive and anything that can be done to reduce borrowing costs must be good.

Facilitating economic development: Support from the Planning Dept would be very welcome - it cannot be right to make development difficult and costly, particularly where there is a real need to regenerate in conservation areas. A 'light touch' would be welcome.

Specific Responses relating to Library Service/Mobile Libraries

Response 1

I live in a rural area of East Lothian, in a farm. I have three children ages 3, 6 and 8. There are other families with children around those ages, also, in the other cottages of the farm. While reading your Spending Choices , on the East Lothian Council Budget 2014-2017 Community Consultation, I noticed that you are planning to cut costs of the Library services, namely on the Mobile Library service. Considering the amount and quality of books, in particular, that I've been able to access, especially for my children, along with an extremely professional and knowledgeable help from the librarian (even when researching for specific subjects was needed, for me and/or my husband) has proved to be invaluable. I've been working from home and I am setting up a business, so my time is very scarce for anything else that does not involve working or taking care of my children. If I hadn't had the Mobile Library coming up to visit us in the farm every fortnight it would have been impossible to have had the amount and variety of good quality books for my children to engage with while they learn about the world, as well as to read and write. I do hope that the planned spending cuts don't affect the Mobile Library service, as in that case we won't be able to compensate for the loss. Finally, I would like to stress the fact that even if in the present digital era, all sorts of electronic resources are available and useful, including e-books, they still don't substitute the paper ones, particularly when it concerns children and their learning and growing processes.

Response 2

I believe that the East Lothian Mobile Library service is to be reviewed. Living out in the country as I do I find the present service is wonderful. As the mobile library goes round during the day, the people it benefits are people who are at home - elderly, infirm , or young mothers who are at home looking after children, or housebound for one reason or another.... The mobile library is their lifeline. I myself am so thankful for the door to door service as I have a disabled badge and am not able to walk far, I don't get out much, so am housebound a lot of the time myself. I would be lost without the fortnightly visit and the help and enthusiastic advice from our librarian and all the books she provides for me to read. I do hope that the review will not affect that and that the service as it stands will not suffer.

Response 3

As part of East Lothian's budget consultation I would like to put my views forward regarding the mobile library service. I am resident in Macmerry and I find the mobile library service essential to the community. It is perfect for people who aren't easily mobile and are unable to travel to towns like Tranent or Haddington. It also visits Macmerry Monday evenings and for individuals who work during the day, the evening visit is ideal. The staff are extremely helpful and very friendly, and make a visit to the mobile library a pleasure. Please consider these views when you review the 2014/15 budget. Thank you for your time with this matter and I hope for a successful conclusion.

Response 4

As a regular user of the Mobile Library I very much hope that the outcome of the review of the mobile library service is not going to result in a reduction of the current service. I am aware that there are two mobile libraries in East Lothian and that they serve many of areas of the county where access to libraries may be otherwise limited, in addition to many village schools. Reasons this service should be maintained:

- A Mobile library brings all the benefits of a modern library service to people who cannot access one of the larger libraries, or who prefer to use a more local service within their own community.
- It brings the local Authority service to the heart of the rural community. It places a high priority on answering the needs of the individual. In many villages the Mobile Library is a focal point for social interaction and activity, providing a meeting place for friends and neighbours.
- Towns within East Lothian have had substantial upgrades to their library service with new facilities. The same commitment to provide a regular and reliable mobile library service should be in place for residents not living near to a library building. Many residents living in villages would not be able to travel to town libraries due to the financial cost of travel, the time taken to do this, or they may not be physically able to visit a town library. Residents living in a village should not be disadvantaged just because of where they live.
- Mobile Library visits to schools provide a very valuable part of a child's education. It allows children to enjoy choosing their own books and to further develop their reading skills out with the classroom. It allows children in village schools to have the same opportunity to visit a library as children who attend school in a town with one. A regular service to schools also demonstrates the council's commitment to ensuring that the development of literacy skills is at the heart of their educational values.

My family and I enjoy using the Mobile Library in Macmerry and hope that this service continues in the future.

Response 5

I have recently been looking over the consultation document regarding the budget for 2014-2017. I notice that there is to be a review of community library facilities and am wondering what this will mean for the library van service that currently runs to the villages. I take my children to the van every week and they very much enjoy choosing their books and talking to the staff about what they are reading. I feel that the intimate nature of the library van environment really makes their choosing the books a special time of the week. The staff know them by name, are always interested in what they have to say and are always extremely welcoming. Local children also get to use the mobile service at nursery school and at playgroup which is a vital early introduction to their understanding and appreciation of books and of libraries. I would be very disappointed to hear of any considerable cuts made to the mobile library service in our area (Pencaitland) and I am sure many other families living in East Lothian villages would feel the same. Although many of us do drive, it is

the convenience and friendly nature of the library vans that makes them so invaluable. I would not manage to take the children every week as I currently do and we would be extremely sad to lose the service in our area. I look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultation.

Response 6

I would strongly recommend that any project or organisation trying to get information to individuals in very rural or deprived areas of the county link up with the mobile library services. The staff are very well positioned to hand out information to a target audience due to the way in which they are able to build up trusting and valued relationships with members of the public who use their service. This is particularly useful for agencies who do not have protected capacity for staff to do outreach work, while also being an efficient way to engage with individuals who are not able to access online information. Mobile Library staff are also able to informally educate and engage children in literacy and learning; through the relaxed environment and setting of the mobile library.

Response 7

I understand the future of the mobile library is under consideration. I would like to put forward the following to add to your information. I work as a local GP in a rural practice and I am aware the fortnightly visit of the mobile library is looked forward to by many of my patients not only for the services the library provides but it is often the only visit they receive for non care purposes. This is very important to help these people to continue to feel that they are part of the community. I have used the mobile library for years as we live in a remote area and I realise when services have to be pared I can cope without but I am very concerned for the housebound who cannot attend the local library.

Response 8

I really have a couple of things but I'm sure once I've read the document I may have more. Two important things being out in the country and not having 24 hour access to a car! I find the mobile library service a vital part of a public service along with our weekly bin collection and fortnightly recycling services are all perfect the way they are run just now and would be better left untouched. Please can you consider not changing this as it I'm sure that they are both easy options to cut but education of the library bus and refuse collection cleanliness!

Response 9

This library is vital to the children's learning and engagement with books. The ability to choose books from the library bus from school develops a life-long love reading and consequently learning. My children love it.

Response 10

I would like to praise the Travelling Library service, to emphasise how important a visiting library has been to my family during the 40 years we have lived at Campdown. The library van made a great contribution to my children when they were small; we are not on a bus route and it was important to have that link with books -

all long ago grown up, one of my children is now a published author who acknowledges the value of his childhood immersion in reading. The children who use the van today seem equally enthusiastic. Facing old age, I value highly the service which Cecilia brings each week and rely on it. Of course access to books is the main value which the library van brings, but for a community like ours, miles from shops and with no public transport, it also brings contact with people; for the elderly this can be vital. Cecilia and her van are a joy, an essential part of life. With no other community meeting point, the library van is very important to us and gives a service which we all appreciate and look forward to it continuing.

Response 11

We were concerned to hear that the library van that visits our school fortnightly may be stopping. Some of the children would like you to know their views.

'The staff are really helpful and cheery, my friends and I really enjoy the library van so I don't want it to stop...'

'The library van has great books to read and I really enjoy reading them..'

'It has a lot of books for different age groups'

'I don't want the library van to stop coming because the books we get are fun and exciting'

'I don't want it to stop coming.....it is fun to borrow such good books'

'Because there is no library in Gifford and we love the books'

'I don't want the library van to go because it has great books and funny ones too'

'It gets you to read new books that you haven't read'

'I love the library van'

'I still like the library van to come'

'It's very, very, very good'

'I love the books and they are kind to me'

'I like the library van because it helps us read'

'It has really good AR levels for me and my friends'

'The library van is very good to come to our school because there is no library in Gifford'

As you can see our class really appreciate the library van and are enthusiastic each time it visits school. It gets the children into a really good habit, borrowing books from their local library and encourages them to read more for pleasure.