

# HIGHLAND BUDGET CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

## HOW WE RUN OUR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Contents

- Page 1**      ***Can we change how we provide care at home***
- Page 8**      ***Can we encourage a reduction in the amount of waste we produce and provide fewer bin collections?***
- Page 14**     ***Can we reduce our street lighting?***
- Page 18**     ***How should we deal with enquiries for services and information?***
- Page 23**     ***Review the long term arrangements for the Corran Ferry***
- Page 24**     ***Review development of the Am Baile Gaelic heritage web-site***
- Page 27**     ***Use of contractors to replace seasonal staff employed on grounds maintenance***
- Page 28**     ***Sourcing plant materials from external providers rather than producing this at Bught Nursery***
- Page 29**     ***Replacing external contractors (Street Lighting) with internal staff from Roads and Community Works to Street Lighting***
- Page 30**     ***Review the Materials Testing Laboratory with a view to procuring this service externally***
- Page 31**     ***Can the Council reduce the youth work service?***
- Page 36**     ***Can the Adult Education service be reduced***
- Page 38**     ***Review Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision***
- Page 40**     ***Reducing the fostering & adoption budget***
- Page 41**     ***Can we reduce the level of road maintenance?***
- Page 43**     ***Review support for sports development and play***

**Page 46**      ***Should the Council cease to support culture and sporting events and festivals?***

**Page 48**      ***Should we stop providing long-term care at The Orchard, Inverness?***

**Page 49**      ***Should we stop providing Out of Eden drama provision including the Highland wide Higher Drama course?***

**Page 52**      ***Can we stop providing a Pest Control service?***

**Page 53**      ***Can we remove the budget for unadopted roads?***

---

## **Can we change how we provide care at home**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

We asked the Citizens' Panel:

***“Does it matter which organisation provides the (care at home) service?”***

Some 93.7% of the entire sample chose to answer this question. Of them:

- 64.6% answered “no”
- 35.4% answered “yes”

By age group, those answering “no” were found in the highest percentages in the 25-44 age group (70% of that group) and in those aged 75+ (64%) – though support from the other age bands was also strong at 60% for both the 45-64 and 65-74 age groups. Of those choosing “yes”, there is little variation across groups.

Earlier in the survey, respondents **who used the Council’s care at home service** were invited to give their views on that service. These responses were analysed along with those who answered the question as to whether it mattered as to which organisation provided the service. The results were as follows:

- Of those who had expressed satisfaction with the Council's service, 53% (compared with the average of 65%) said “no” it did not matter which organisation provided the service and 47% (compared with the average for the entire sample of 35%) said “yes” it did matter;
- Of those who expressed dissatisfaction with the service, 54% (compared with the average of 35%) said “yes” it did matter and 46% (compared with the average of 65%) said “no” it did not matter.

Respondents were then asked:

***“What matters most in arranging care to enable people to stay in their own home (care at home)?”***

They were given 6 criteria which they were then asked to rank in order of importance. Some 89.3% of the sample answered the question and the results are in the table below.

### **Factors which Matter Most in Arranging Care To Enable People to Stay in Their Own Home**

	Most Important					Least Important
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Care standards met	63	20	10	5	2	0.4
Best value – combination of costs and	23	29	23	14	10	1

meeting care standards

Continuity of staff providing care	11	32	25	18	11	3
Accepting higher costs in rural areas	7	11	22	26	21	13
Maintain staff in Highland Council employment	3	6	11	18	30	32
Lowest cost	2	4	8	15	23	47

---

N= 1,416

The table shows that 63% of respondents regard **“care standards met”** as the **most important factor** and a further 20% ranked it as the second most important – thus 83% have it as one of their top two choices.

**The factor gaining the second highest level of support is “best value – combination of costs and meeting care standards”**. This attracts the support of 23% of respondents who rated it as the most important factor while a further 29% ranked it as their second most important one – meaning that a majority (52%) placed it in their top two. The strongest level of support for this option came from those aged 75 + - some 60% of respondents in this age group placed it in one of their top two choices.

**“Continuity of staff providing care”** is clearly the **third most important factor** for the sample as a whole with a total of 68% of respondents ranking it as one of their top three choices. The level of support for this factor is at its strongest amongst people who have a disability and people aged 18-44 – 49% of both groups rank it as being in one of their top two choices.

It is not until the 4<sup>th</sup> most important choices are counted that **“accepting higher costs in rural areas”** attains the support of a majority of respondents - 18% have it in one of their top two choices ; 40% in their top three; and 66% in their top four. People who do not own their own homes express the lowest level of support for this factor –31% have it in their top three while a total of 46% rank it in their two least important.

**“Maintaining staff in Highland Council employment”** is seen as being the **second least important factor** with a total of 62% of respondents ranking it as being in one of their two least important factors. Respondents who rent from the Council or from a housing association or live in a house which comes with their employment express slightly more support for this factor than any other grouping - 47% of this grouping rank this factor in their two least important.

With **47% of respondents ranking “lowest cost”** as the **least important factor** and a further 23% ranking it as the second least important one, that amounts to 70% of respondents ranking it as being in one of their two least important factors. By age group it is notable that of those aged 45 and over, 78% place this factor in their bottom two compared with 62% of those aged 18-44.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

Just over 170 separate comments were received on the general question *Can we change how we provide care at home by paying organisations in the private and voluntary sectors to do this for everyone receiving this service?* A further 152 comments were received on the secondary question whether people mind if it is the Council or another organisation providing the service. A small number of respondents, 19, also answered the question relating to outsourcing the supported housing services for people with learning disabilities in Inverness. Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums, with others through meetings with partners and special interest groups and via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire.

### ***Can we change how we provide care at home, by paying organisations in the private and voluntary sectors to do this for everyone receiving this service?***

#### ***Views in favour***

##### **Service Quality**

Overall there was strong support from respondents for changing the way care at home is provided. It was noted that care at home is already being provided in this way in many areas. Respondents were content for the private or voluntary sector to provide care instead of the Council however it was emphasised that this should only happen if the quality and standard of service is maintained.

It was suggested that if other organisations were undertaking this work then it would be important that standards and the quality of care were monitored, with a view from some that it should be the Council undertaking this monitoring.

##### **Costs**

Cost was regarded as important by a number of respondents, with support for moving to other providers if this would mean that the service provided was more cost effective. However, a number of respondents expressed concern at care being provided for profit and, whilst supportive of changing the way care is provided, felt that this should be undertaken by not-for-profit organisations rather than private enterprises.

##### **Staff continuity**

A further consideration noted by respondents was the importance of staff continuity. Although supportive of private and voluntary organisations providing care, maintaining staff continuity and current pay and conditions were regarded as important. This would result in less impact upon the elderly currently receiving care. It was noted that the quality and type of carer was very important and that there was a need for proper training and supervision.

##### **Remote and rural areas**

There was acknowledgement that staff recruitment for some private organisations may be a problem, especially within rural areas, and if this were the case then service provision should remain with Council. This view is closely linked to others which recognised that obtaining alternative provision in rural areas may prove challenging, therefore the Council will only be

able to change who provides the care at home service if there are organisations willing to take this on.

### Efficiency

A small number of respondents viewed the change in the provision of care at home as an opportunity for the service to become more efficient and effective. It was noted that if the Council withdrew then private companies would inevitably become more competitive however; it was cautioned that costs must not be allowed to escalate due to monopolies. A further view was that outsourcing all provision would be a way to increase standards as specialised companies would be providing the service. It was also noted that from the Council's perspective, such a change would result in the reduction of staff, travel mileage and therefore the Council's carbon footprint.

### ***Views against***

Those against the suggestion to outsource all care at home provision did so from a position of contentment with the existing service or through concerns at the services provided by private and voluntary organisations. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the way services are currently provided. It was noted that the current mixed economy allows the customer choice which empowering individuals, especially important with the move to direct payments.

### Service quality

Respondents noted a number of concerns at the proposal, most notably that any change would lead to a reduction in the standard of care provided. It was suggested that Council carers were better generally and that those from private organisations did not spend enough time with the client and the voluntary sector unreliable. It was observed that poorer working conditions for staff in the private and voluntary sectors lead to poor quality of staff and of care. Also of concern was that with outsourcing there would be no accountability as there currently is with Council service provision.

### Costs

A further concern was that any change would not save money in the long term but instead lead to higher costs. The potential savings provided were queried, as was the cost of in-house provision. It was felt that rather than outsourcing, the Council should change its management structure to reduce costs. It was suggested that on principle care provision should not be for profit and that profit driven services lead to the cutting of corners. A further view was whether the cost savings noted justified the adverse impact on the elderly recipients of care.

There was a pragmatic view expressed by some respondents that any change would not work. As with those in favour of change, it was noted that services would not be available in all rural areas due to the shortage of carers and therefore lead to no service being available. The current example of Badenoch and Strathspey was provided as an illustration of what could potentially occur.

## ***Areas for consideration***

A number of respondents expressed neither support for or against the suggestion to change the way care at home is provided. Respondents noted areas of concern but generally suggested ways to overcome these. There was support expressed for the care at home service and the importance of retaining this due to the health and social benefits it achieves. It was noted that there was the need to increase this type of provision given the increasing number of elderly people within communities.

One view was that the focus for the provision of care must be on meeting the needs of the individual. It was suggested no matter who was providing the service, professionally trained staff were required and that the level of care necessary would dictate the type of staff required. It was noted that where services needed to be tailored to individual needs, it would be unlikely that private or voluntary would be able to provide this service. A related issue was raised by the Deaf Forum that for the deaf community, who is providing the service is unimportant but the ability for the carer to communicate appropriately with the individual is critical.

The issue of lack of provision and a shortage of carers was raised again. It was noted that this was a specific problem and a suggestion noted that there was a need for the Council to encourage private companies to move into rural areas. An alternative suggestion was to support and develop voluntary organisations within communities to provide these services. It was noted that there would be a number of benefits associated with this approach including a more holistic approach as these groups would often be delivering other services locally and a better understanding of the local community.

A further view was that related to the cost of providing the service and the need to ensure that the service is cost effective. It was queried whether the voluntary sector actually was cheaper or whether the service is subsidised by other fundraising and the cost disparity between Council provision and the private/voluntary sector. Respondents suggested that either the provision provided is different or that Council management of the service needs to be reviewed. If the Council is to continue providing care at home services, then Council costs and structure need to be changed to bring them into line with the private/voluntary sector.

It was suggested that any change in service provision must not adversely impact upon people using the service.

Respondents noted a number of further suggestions that could be looked at to reduce costs:

- Introduction of social day care rather than individual visits
- Groups of elderly people sharing a house, similar to the looked after children approach, support but independent living

## ***Do the people using these services mind whether the Council or another organisation provides the service?***

### ***Views in favour of another organisation***

#### *Quality of care*

A common view amongst respondents was that people did not mind who provided the care at home service. It was noted that currently many will be unaware which organisation is providing their care. Similar views were expressed to the first question regarding outsourcing, that the standard and quality of service are what people consider most significant. Respondents noted that the availability of care and a consistent service at equitable levels were more important than who provided the service. Equally it is the individual carer, their professionalism and caring manner that is critical and not the organisation that they work for.

Respondents believed that whilst it was not important who provided the service, the standard of service does need to be monitored and that ultimately, accountability for the service needs to remain with the Council

A further view was that staff conditions across different organisations need to be equitable and that the availability of specialist care was still important.

#### *Importance of a local service*

Those responding noted that whilst it was unimportant who provided the service, any change in current provision needed to be transparent. A local service was regarded as important, with a further view that the community could be doing more if more support was provided for the voluntary sector. There was a preference for non profit making organisations providing the service.

### ***Views against another organisation***

An alternative view from respondents was that people do mind who provides care at home services and a preference for the Council to operate the service. Respondents expressed confidence in Council run services that these are of a higher quality and a perception of risk with other organisations. It was noted that the continuity of care was better with the Council due to the improved staff conditions and therefore lower staff turnover.

A further view was that the Council has a legal duty of care, greater accountability and therefore the perception that people have a greater say if the Council is operating the service.

It was noted that the principle of outsourcing service may be fine but concern expressed at what happens to the service and individual when things go wrong with an external provider.

Ultimately, it was noted that the Council should consult with users prior to any change.



## ***Can we out-source supported housing services for learning disabilities in Inverness?***

Only a small number of people responded to the question regarding the specialist supported housing service for people with learning disabilities in Inverness and whether this service out be provided by an external organisation as it is elsewhere in Highland. There was general support for outsourcing the current provision. Respondents considered that it did not matter who provided the service as long as the service was maintained. It was suggested that if the model is already operational elsewhere in Highland and that it is both cost effective and the service of the same standard and quality, then would appear sensible to change. Respondents did note that the continuity of staff would be important, with ideally staff transferring and retaining their current conditions. Monitoring the service going forward was regarded as important.

A small number of respondents disagreed with outsourcing the service expressing the views that if the service is working well then it should not be changed and also that quality should not be put at risk. It was suggested that any change would impact on the vulnerable and the view that the Council has higher standards of care.

---

## **Can we encourage a reduction in the amount of waste we produce and provide fewer bin collections?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Two questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel on waste. They were prefaced by a paragraph explaining the cost of disposing of waste and what could be saved if there were fewer collections of non-recyclable waste.

#### **Recycling of Waste**

Respondents were asked:

***“How do you recycle your waste at the moment?”***

Answers to the various parts of this question were supplied by between 91% and 94% of the entire sample. Note that respondents could tick as many of the options as applied. The table below contains the results.

#### **Present Methods of Re-cycling Waste**

	<b>Take to a Recycling point %</b>	<b>Council collection from your home %</b>	<b>Compost %</b>	<b>Don't Recycle %</b>
Paper	22	77	11	5
Cans/tins	21	71		12
Cardboard	43	41	9	17
Plastic	35	38		31
Glass	81	11		11
Garden Waste	10	49	49	8

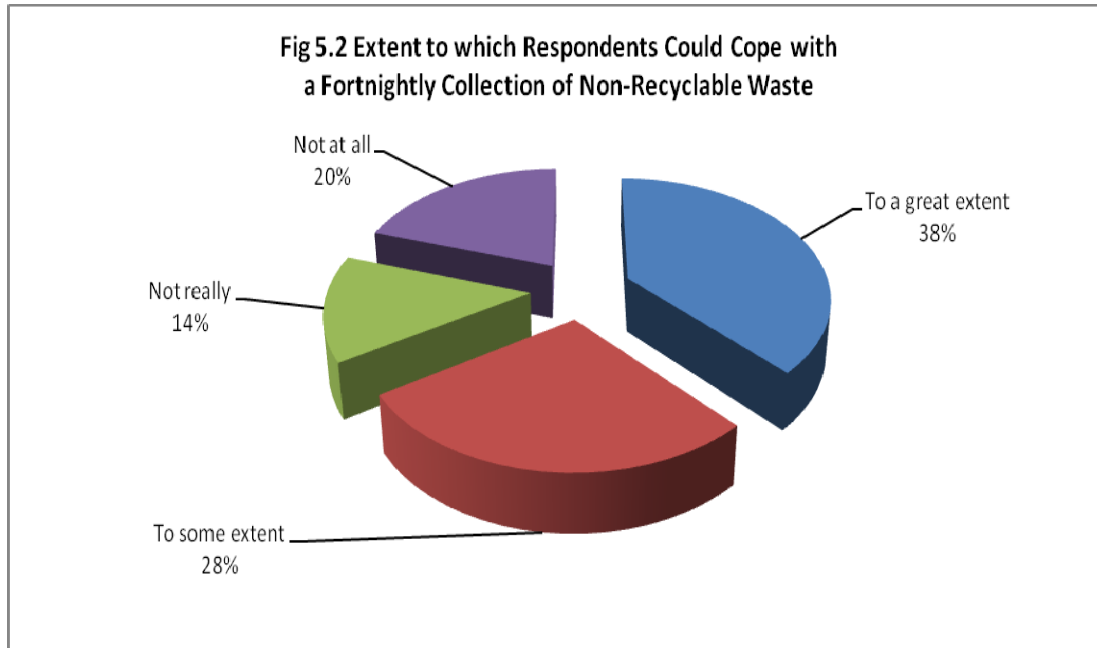
N= 1,444 - 1,492

Appendix 1 provides analysis of this response for each type of waste and highlights where differences are marked in terms of geography, age, disability, socio-economic status and length of residency in the Highlands. This information is helpful in considering how to encourage better take up of recycling for different groups in the community and in different areas of the Highlands.

#### **Coping with Moving to a Fortnightly Collection of Non-Recyclable Waste**

Respondents were then asked: “To what extent could you cope with moving to a fortnightly collection of non-recyclable waste?” They were given four options to choose from in making their replies and these are the results:

- 38% answered “to a great extent”
- 28% answered “to some extent”
- 14% answered “not really”
- 20% answered “not at all”



There are notable differences in the responses by age group:

- 52% of those aged 75+ said they could cope “to a great extent” compared with 40% of those aged 65-74, 41% of those aged 45-64 and 32% of those aged 25-44.
- 27% of those aged 25-44 chose “not at all” in response – compared with 15% of those aged 45-64, 12% of those aged 65-74 and 12% of those aged 75+.
- Looking at the percentages of those who said they could cope either to a great extent or to some extent the differences are also apparent – while a total of 58% of those aged 25-44 chose one or other of these options, the figures for the older age groups are 72% for those aged 45-64, 74% of those aged 65-74 and 79% of those aged 75+.

By employment status, 77% of those who are retired said they could cope either to a great extent or to some extent – whereas that percentage stands at 66% for those who are employed and 62% of those who are unemployed.

It is notable that of those who, earlier in the survey, expressed dissatisfaction with the refuse/bin collection service a total of 51% said they would not be able to cope (adding those who said “not really” and “not at all”). The comparable figure for those who expressed satisfaction with the service is 28%.

With a high response to this question (95% confidence level with +/- 3% confidence interval) these results can be seen to be representative of the adult population as a whole.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Just over 240 separate comments were received on the general question

***Can we encourage a reduction in the amount of waste we produce and provide fewer bin collections?***

Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums, with others through meetings with partners and special interest groups – such as RoWAN, and the Environment Forum - and via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire.

### ***Views in favour***

There was considerable support from respondents regarding the suggestion to reduce the amount of waste we provide and provide fewer bin collections. People were supportive of a fortnightly collection combined with increased recycling, with alternate residual and recycling collections. It was felt that fortnightly collections would help to reduce waste overall and increase recycling but that this should be combined with a programme of education to promote recycling. It was also suggested that the Council should be working with supermarkets to reduce packaging and therefore reduce waste overall.

#### **Need for increased recycling**

Whilst generally supportive of fortnightly bin collections, people reported a need to increase recycling facilities to enable this to happen. This should be an increase in the type of products which could be recycled through the kerbside collection, for example plastics, cardboard and glass, and a suggestion that perhaps there should be a blue *bin* facility as already available in a number of rural communities. It was noted that a number of areas have no kerbside collection at present, especially rural communities, and that this should be addressed prior to introducing fortnightly collections.

A further suggestion was that there should be an increase in community recycling facilities, both the availability in smaller communities and the ability to recycle cardboard and plastics at these points. It was acknowledged that for those in rural communities and people without transport, kerbside recycling was very important and community recycling would not always be a viable alternative.

Respondents noted that the move to fortnightly collections may mean that extra bins would need to be provided for larger households. An alternative view to this was to charge anyone who wished a secondary bin as they should be recycling.

#### **Improvement to existing recycling**

There were a range of suggestions regarding the current recycling arrangements. It was suggested that the collection of brown bins could either be suspended entirely during winter months or reduced to once a month which would save money. Blue boxes currently available for paper and tins were reported not to be user friendly and particularly difficult for the elderly to use and it was suggested that a move to blue bins would overcome this challenge.

It was reported that there was a need for consistent recycling schemes across Highland, given the range of boxes and bins that people currently have. By making it easier to recycle, people would be encouraged to do so. It was suggested that there could be incentives to encourage recycling, such as a reduction in Council Tax for those producing little waste, whilst an alternative view was to fine people if they do not recycle.

#### **Role of community groups**

There was some support for greater community roles in waste and recycling. It was suggested that households could share recycling bins and that community composting schemes should be taken forward. People were supportive of community recycling schemes such as RoWAN and Green, and it was suggested that these should be increased across the area.

### ***Views neither in favour nor against***

A number of respondents did not state whether or not they were in favour of moving to fortnightly bin collections. These respondents did however report an interest in increasing both kerbside and community recycling facilities and felt that there was a need to promote recycling across the area.

### ***Concerns***

This group of respondents also expressed concern about the current recycling arrangements - the limitations of the blue boxes and the need to increase the range of products able to be recycled. The move to alternate collections and a greater emphasis on recycling was also accompanied with concerns about the impact on larger families and also on people unable to drive, for example the visually impaired.

### ***Improvements in waste management***

Although some respondents were unclear about whether to move to fortnightly collections, a number of suggestions were made about how to manage waste and that Highland needed an integrated waste disposal policy. It was suggested that new landfill sites, perhaps small scale ones, could assist in reducing transportation costs outwith the area or that an incinerator for Highland could be used to dispose of waste and generate income. A further idea was that there was a need for bio-digestion and waste to energy plants within the area.

### ***Views against***

A small number of respondents were against the proposal to move to fortnightly bin collections. Those against were concerned primarily about an increase in litter, fly tipping, rats and the potential smell in hot weather. A further view was that whilst there should be an increase in recycling, this shouldn't be combined with a reduction in bin collection and that people want an increase in this service overall. It was also suggested that any reduction in service should be combined with a reduction in Council tax.

---

## **Recycling of Waste: Analysis of responses from the Citizens' Panel to the question "How do you recycle your waste at the moment?" by type of waste.**

### **Paper**

The most popular method of recycling paper is via a "council collection from home" (77%). This method is particularly popular with those aged 75+ (84%) and those living in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (84%) and people who are retired (84%). Some 22% of the sample said they took their paper to "a recycling point" – a method more favoured by those living in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (26%) than people in other areas. For 11% composting is a method deployed. Just 5% said they did not recycle paper - the highest percentage of those who don't recycle is found amongst 25-44 year olds (8%) and indeed of those aged 65-74 only 1% said they didn't recycle while the figure amongst the 75+ is 0%. Every respondent aged 75+ says that they use one method or another to recycle paper.

### **Cans/Tins**

The most popular method of recycling cans/tins is also via a "council collection from home" (71%). This method is less popular in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (66%) than it is in the other corporate areas (74% and 75%). But those in Ross, Skye and Lochaber record the highest percentage (24%) of those who recycle via a recycling point (18% and 22% in the other areas). Some 12% say they don't recycle cans/tins with the highest percentage being found in Ross, Skye and Lochaber at 15% – compared with 7% of those living in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross. The highest percentage of people who recycle cans/tins by employment status is found amongst the unemployed of whom 6% said they did not recycle these items.

### **Cardboard**

Some 43% of the respondents said they took cardboard to a recycling point with this practice being noticeably more common in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (51%) than those living in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (30%). Recycling via a council collection from home (41% of the overall sample) was the most popular method for those aged 75+ (48%) – compared with those aged 25-44 (38%) especially – and for people living in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (54%) – compared with those living in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (29%). Some 9% said they recycled via composting. A total of 17% said they don't recycle cardboard – the ones most likely to be recycling it are found amongst those aged 75+ (11% said they don't) and respondents living in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (13% said they don't recycle it). It is notable that of those who, earlier in the survey, expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's recycling facilities 31% said they don't recycle cardboard – the comparable figure for those expressing satisfaction with these facilities is 12%.

### **Plastic**

A total of 38% said they recycle plastic via a Council collection from home with this method being noticeably less used by respondents from Ross, Skye and Lochaber (24%) than those from the other two areas (36% and 40%). Some 35% said they took plastic to a recycling point – a method used much more in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (52%) than respondents living in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (27%). The percentage of those who don't recycle plastic is 31% - although that figure is notably higher in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (35%) than it is in the other two areas (25% in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross and 28% in Ross, Skye and Lochaber). By employment status

there is a marked difference in that those who don't recycle plastic stand at 17% amongst those resident in the Highlands less than a year while it is at 35% for those resident in the Highlands for 5 or more years. It is notable that of those who, earlier in the survey, expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's recycling facilities 46% said they don't recycle plastic – the comparable figure for those expressing satisfaction with these facilities is 26%.

### **Glass**

The favoured method of recycling glass for respondents (81%) is by taking it to a recycling point. While 11% of all respondents report that they recycle via a council collection from home this method is used more by people living in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (15%) than it is by those living in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (8%). Some 11% of all respondents say they don't recycle glass – with the highest percentage of those not recycling found amongst those aged 25-44 (13%) and the lowest amongst those aged 75+ (7%). Those who have lived in the Highlands for less than a year are the category who are the least likely to say they don't recycle glass (4%). It is notable that of those who, earlier in the survey, expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's recycling facilities 18% said they don't recycle plastic – the comparable figure for those expressing satisfaction with these facilities is 6%.

### **Garden Waste**

There are two methods which are of equivalent popularity for the recycling of garden waste – 49% say they compost it and 49% say they recycle it via a Council collection from home. The highest percentages of respondents who compost the garden waste are found living in Ross, Skye and Lochaber (64%) – compared with 42% in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey and 49% in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross – and amongst people who do not have a disability (52%) compared to those who do have a disability (37%). Those least likely to use composting are people who are unable to work (34%). Of those who use a council collection from home these respondents are much more likely to be found in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (65%) than in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (46%) and Ross, Skye and Lochaber (32%). This is a method also least likely to be used by people resident in the Highlands for less than a year (37%). Taking garden waste to a recycling point is something which 10% of the sample do. Those who don't recycle garden waste stand at 8% of the entire sample with a notably higher percentage being found in respondents unable to work (15%).

---

## Can we reduce our street lighting?

### Quantitative Analysis

A paragraph detailing the level of expenditure on street lighting, traffic light and illuminated road signs preceded a question to the citizens' panel on street lighting which asked

***“To reduce energy costs which of the following is the best option?”***

Four options were presented for respondents and they were asked to rank them in order of preference. Some 85% % of the sample opted for at least one of the choices. Results are in the table below.

#### **Street Lighting: Preferences Expressed**

	<b>Most Preferred 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Least Preferred 4</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Turn off every second street light	70	18	10	2
Turning off some street lights between 12 midnight and 6am	21	48	28	3
Dimming street lights between 12 midnight and 6am	14	19	29	38
Turning off all street lights between 12 midnight and 6am	7	9	26	58

N= 1,187 to 1,356

Before we examine the detail of the results note that the total percentages of the sample responding varied according to the option with which they were presented. Thus for the option “turn off every second street light” 85% ranked this option on the 1 to 4 scale. However, by comparison 75% gave any sort of ranking to the option “turning off all street lights between 12 midnight and 6 am. That is why the preferences for each row total 100% but the preferences read vertically do not total 100%.

The 85% of the sample who responded to this option gave a clear result – 70% of them opted for **“turn off every second street light”** as their top preference and a further 18% made it their number 2 (so 88% rank it in their top 2). Of those who made it their number 1 preference this measure is even more strongly supported by females (73%) than males (66%). Those ranking this choice as their number 3 preference total 10% while just 2% have it as their least preferred option.

Of those who responded to this option, **“turning off some streets lights between 12 midnight and 6 am”** attracted the support of 21% who placed it as their leading preference with a further 48% choosing as their number 2 (so 69% rank it in their top 2). By age group 76% of those aged 75+ rank it in their top 2 while the comparable figure for those aged 25-44 is 66%. Those ranking this choice as their number 3 preference total 28% while just 3% have it as their least preferred option.



Of those who responded to this option, “**dimming street lights between 12 midnight and 6am**” is the leading preference for 14% and the second preference for a further 19% (so 33% rank this option in their top 2). Those ranking this choice as their number 3 preference total 29% while 38% have it as their least preferred option. Respondents from the Wards in Inverness city have a slightly different perspective on this preference – 43% rank it in their top 2 (compared with 33% overall) while 27% rank it as their least preferred option (compared with 38% of the total).

Of those who responded to this option, “**turning off all street lights between 12 midnight and 6am**” is the leading preference for 7% and the second preference for 9% (giving a total of 16% who ranked it in their top 2) while 26% selected it as their third preference and a clear majority of respondents - 58% - ranked it as their least preferred option. Respondents living in Inverness Wards (67%) ranked this as their least preferred option to an even greater extent than the average (58%).

With a high response to this question (95% confidence level with +/- 3% confidence interval) these results can be seen to be representative of the adult population as a whole.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

Just over 200 separate comments were received on the general question

### ***Can we reduce out street lighting?***

A further 195 comments were received when people were asked which of the proposed options for reducing lighting they would prefer to see. Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums, with others through meetings with partners, including community safety partners, and special interest groups and via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire.

### ***Views in favour***

Most people responding to this question were very supportive of the suggestion to reduce street lighting. It was noted there would be considerable environmental benefits to this, such as the reduction in energy use and light pollution, in addition to the reduction in costs.

Some respondents reported that across Highland as a whole there was no need for street lighting all night, whilst others felt there should be seasonal variations to lighting, with no lighting required during the bright summer months.

### **Rural and urban variations**

A number of respondents considered that regional variations to lighting would be required.

It was reported that the level of street lighting in rural areas was unnecessary and that lighting in many communities could be removed completely. There was also support for the removal of lighting on trunk roads, road junctions and roundabouts. It was noted that a number of public buildings have excessive, lighting which is on all night, e.g. monuments, schools, piers, and that there was no need for this.

Although supportive of reducing lighting, there were varying views about the extent of that reduction in urban areas. Some respondents felt lighting could be switched off completely at

night, especially in residential areas, whilst others felt that in towns a reduction in lighting would be more appropriate, in non-essential areas. Safety concerns for the elderly and children were noted, along with a concern about the potential increase in crime. However, one respondent did note evidence from Essex that a reduction in lighting actually reduces crime. One respondent suggested that a reduction in lighting should be combined with a programme of road safety in schools noting the situation in Norway situation where in many areas lights are positioned only at corners and crossings and where children are taught road safety.

#### Implementing new technology

A number of respondents reported that there needed to be an overall review of lighting, especially in areas where lighting is due to be replaced. New developments should all have the capacity to dim lights and energy efficient lighting should be installed. Further suggestions included that options for solar and low energy lighting should be explored, along with LED lighting where evidence from British Columbia suggests a 40% saving.

A number of comments were also made about the need to reduce the hours of lighting and introduce improved time settings or automatic timers which could be programmed more flexibly. A further suggestion was that motion sensors should be introduced on certain street lighting, e.g. areas with CCTV cameras.

#### **Views against**

A small number of respondents were either against the idea of reducing lighting altogether or were concerned about the proposal. Those against the idea of reducing street lighting were generally opposed on the grounds of community safety. Concerns about the increase in crime were noted, along with concerns about road safety and the operation of CCTV. There were also a number of concerns about the costs to implement certain of the proposals, especially dimming.

#### Concerns for specific groups

A number of respondents reported concerns about reducing lighting but were not against the proposal completely. Safety concerns were paramount and were noted for specific groups in the community notably the elderly, the deaf or hard of hearing and visually impaired. Representatives of the deaf community noted the need for the community to have some lighting in order to use sign language effectively but suggested that switching off every second light or using solar or motion sensor technology could overcome these concerns. Representatives of the visually impaired community expressed similar concerns regarding the need for some light to distinguish between pavements and roads but that switching off every second light would be a compromise.

#### **How to reduce lighting**

Regarding the potential ways in which to reduce lighting, a range of responses were received. In comparing the options of dimming, switching of some lights or switching of all lights, results are inconclusive. For those who felt switching some lights of would be appropriate, a small number added to their response that this would be more appropriate in rural communities and that this would be more appropriate in non-essential areas. For respondents who selected switching all lights off, a small number reported that this would not be appropriate in major towns and that at weekends lights should be left on.

The majority of respondents felt that the most effective way in which to reduce lighting would be to switch every second street light off. It was felt however that the redundant lighting posts should not be removed, which would avoid the additional costs of removal. Some respondents felt that whilst switching off every second light would be most appropriate; all lights could be switched off during the summer months or during the week. It was noted that this option may not be appropriate in every area, e.g. road junctions or areas of community safety concerns, and that each area would need to consider what is appropriate.

---

## **How should we deal with enquiries for services and information?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

We asked the Citizens' Panel:

***“If more services were available via telephone or the internet would you use these options rather than make a personal visit?”***

For the telephone, **64% answered “yes”**. There were no distinctive differences in responses according to the various categories of users.

For the internet, **71% answered “yes”**. There are however notable differences in responses according to the following categories of users:

- By age there is a very clear picture in that the younger the age group the more likely they are to answer “yes” as these figures show: 25-44 age group (87%); 45-64 age group (71%); 65-74 age group (53%); those aged 75 and over (25%);
- A smaller percentage of those who have a disability (53%) answered “yes” than those who do not have a disability (70%);
- People resident in the Highlands for less than a year (85%) answered “yes” to a greater extent than those resident for 1-5 years (74%) and those living in the area for more than 5 years (66%).
- A narrow majority of those who are retired (51%) chose to answer “yes” - this compared with much greater percentages of those who are unemployed (75%) and employed (77%).

We asked the Citizens' Panel about Community Facilities. We said:

“Community services are provided in a number of settings supported by the Council. Shared buildings could let us retain some services while reducing costs as we cannot afford to maintain and ruin all the local facilities separately.” Respondents were asked:

***“Thinking about where you live and the facilities in your local community now and in the future, please tell us which of these you would be willing to see run in a shared building?”***

A list of 11 different facilities, including service points, was presented and respondents “please tick all that apply”. **66% of respondents said they were willing to see a service point in a shared building.**

We asked the Citizens' Panel about “Reducing Running Costs”. We said:

***“As well as considering sharing some buildings we are having to consider other options to reduce costs.... As well as considering sharing some buildings, what else would be acceptable to consider to reduce costs?”***

Six types of facilities, including service points, were listed. The views on reducing costs in service points are shown in the table below.

**Service Points: Views on Options for Reducing Costs**

Facility	Close some facilities %	Reduce opening hours %	Provide more services by telephone or online %	No Response %
Service Points	15.2	31.8	54.7	22.0

*N who responded = 1,148*

The percentage of the entire sample who selected one or more of the options as acceptable was 78%. Note though, this overall figure masks a substantial variation in the percentages who did not respond to any of this question – especially according to age group. Whereas some 84% of those aged 25-44 and 80% of those aged 45-64 and 71% of those aged 65-74 found one or more option acceptable, only 47% of those aged 75+ found one or more option that they could endorse.

One of the choices – “provide more services by telephone or on-line” – was chosen as acceptable by a majority of all respondents (54.7%). But this level of support also hides major differences in the extent of the support for this idea:

- While this option is endorsed by 64% of the 25-44 age group and 56% of those aged 45-64, support for it amounts to 39% of respondents aged 65-74 and just 18% of those aged 75+.
- By employment status too, a marked difference is also noticeable – 60% of those who are unemployed and 58% of those who are employed find the idea acceptable but only 37% of those retired find it so.
- While 53% of those who do not have a disability find this option acceptable, only 39% of those who have a disability support it.

A reduction in opening hours is thought of as being acceptable by slightly less than 1 in 3 (32%) while the closure of some service points is chosen by just 15%.

**Qualitative analysis**

The following analysis has been undertaken on responses received to questions posed as part of the Council’s budget consultation. Just over 200 separate comments were received in response to the question

***‘How should we deal with enquiries for services and information – should we have fewer face to face contact points and provide more services by telephone and the website for more self-service?’***

Most comments were generated from face to face meetings and discussions at ward forums, with partners and special interest groups, notably Highland Youth Voice, Sight Action and the Deaf Forum. Internet feedback was generated from the blog, the on-line questionnaire and e-mails. In addition, a petition was received regarding Fort Augustus Service Point, with 96 individuals requesting the protection of the service point at Fort Augustus.

Opinion on this area of the consultation was divided between those who were supportive of reducing face to face contact points, those against and those not expressing an opinion either way.

### ***Views in favour***

#### **Increased use of web and telephony**

There was support for reducing the number of face to face contact points combined with increasing access to both on-line services and telephony. Respondents felt that the Council should be encouraging the use of on-line technology, with perhaps libraries assisting in this and providing more on-line access points either in libraries or community centres.

Respondents supportive of a move to increasing telephony and web access felt that this needed to be combined with improvements in current arrangements for both. It was reported that there is a need to improve the Council's website and increase the availability of on-line transactions. If moving to more telephone services, calls to the Council need to be local calls, there is a need for out of hours services and calls should not be automated. It was suggested that service centre hours should be increased if reducing the number of service points.

#### **Concern for specific groups**

Although supportive of reducing number of face to face contact points, there was a recognition that some face to face provision is still required. Concern was expressed for the vulnerable and elderly in the community and it was noted that not everyone is on-line.

#### **Suggestions to make services more efficient**

Respondents noted that a way in which to retain services but make them more efficient would be to combine services in one building; both Council services such as service points, libraries, schools, registrars and also partner services such as the Police and NHS. Further suggestions were to replace service points with mobile provision, perhaps through the mobile library service or to include on-line access points to enable people to access services themselves.

### ***Views against***

#### **Need to retain face-to-face**

There were a number of respondents against any proposal to reduce face to face contact points. It was reported that people cannot get all the information they need on-line nor over the telephone. Respondents noted that if someone is making a complaint, there is a preference for this to be dealt with face to face, and that people utilise service points for assistance with form filling. This was especially true for people with visual impairments or learning difficulties.

There was considerable concern expressed that the move away from face to face contact would disadvantage vulnerable groups and the elderly. It was noted that the elderly often struggle to use the telephone due to hearing problems and are often not on-line. Of further concern was the general point that not everyone has access to the internet and that, in addition to the elderly, this is particularly true of people living in rural areas.

Respondents reported the important social role played by service points in communities, especially within rural areas, and that there was still a significant need to retain face to face contact.

The importance of local contact as a source of local information was raised as an issue. The current telephony arrangements already cause problems as services are centralised, resulting in a lack of local information. Concern was noted that further moves towards telephony in the future could result in services being out-sourced outwith Highland.

#### Alternatives to closure

Respondents provided a number of alternative suggestions to reducing the number of face-to-face contacts. It was felt that opening hours or the number of staff could be reduced before closing Service Points or that services could be combined in one building to be more efficient e.g. service points in libraries. It was recognised that there is a need to encourage greater use of web technology and telephony but not to reduce face to face contact.

#### ***Views neither in favour not against***

A number of respondents did not stipulated whether they were for or against a reduction in face to face contact but did express concern at the potential impact or offered alternative options for consideration.

#### Concern for specific groups

Concern was expressed at the impact of reducing face to face contact when not everyone was on-line and the impact this would have on the elderly and vulnerable. It was noted that not everyone has a bank account and rely on cash payments and a concern that the collection of Council Tax could reduce if face to face contact was reduced. There was also concern that current ideas to reduce the number of libraries could have an adverse impact for some if there was a move to more on-line services when many rely on libraries for internet access.

#### Improvements needed to technology

There was support expressed for increasing access to both on-line services and telephony. A number of respondents reported that the Council's website needs to be improved and become more user friendly if there is to be a move to on-line services. It was suggested that people need to be encouraged to move to on-line services but support would be required to do this. It was felt that a phasing in of increased web and telephony may be appropriate.

A number people reported that the service centre hours should be extended to provide out of hours provision and that a text phone may help improve services, especially for people with hearing impairments.

Alternatives to closure

Respondents reported that there was still a need for some face to face contact and that a variety of contact methods should be available. There was considerable support expressed for considering combining services such as the service point and library in one building. Examples of this already operating such as Alness, Golspie and Bonar Bridge were given as good practice. A mobile service point, with web access for customers was suggested as a way of reducing the number of face to face contact points and encouraging internet usage.

It was suggested that reducing opening hours, staffing levels and the number of counter positions of current branches could assist in reducing costs.





## **Review the long term arrangements for the Corran Ferry**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the future of the Corran Ferry.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

17 separate comments were received on the question of

#### ***Reviewing the long term arrangements for the Corran Ferry.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils, the Community Safety Steering Group and Highland Youth Voice. Responses on this issue were not confined to the Lochaber area but across Highland.

Respondents on the issue of the Corran ferry were divided in how best to configure arrangements for the ferry in the future. A number of respondents noted how vital the service is and that any review must consider the impact any reduction in service would have on the community, both economically and socially. It was reported that rural communities need services and should not be penalised. Specific consultation with the local community was suggested. Any potential change in arrangements should also consider the impact this would have on the emergency services and this point was also made by the Community Safety Steering Group.

Some respondents reported that it was essential to replace the Maid of Glencoul. It was suggested by some this should be a new vessel whilst an alternative suggestion was that this could be replaced by a private vessel on a contract arrangement as and when required. A further suggestion was that to assist in meeting the costs of a private vessel the fares should be increased. One respondent noted that the replacement vessel could be through a community business partnership.

A further suggestion was that the ferry should be used less frequently in order to preserve its lifespan, for example only at peak times for school or work.

An alternative view was that the Maid of Glencoul should not be replaced. To overcome this it was suggested that the overhaul timetable should be set in advance to allow people to make alternative arrangements when repairs are being made. A further comment was that if necessary, the whole service may have to cease, noting that many communities have to make long journeys around pieces of water. It was suggested that the Council should look to European funding to build a causeway or bridge in the future.

## **Review development of the Am Baile Gaelic heritage web-site**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the future of the Am Baile website.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

45 separate comments were received on the question of the Am Baile website and specifically

***If no-one else is willing to run it, should the existing site be put onto a care and maintenance basis with no further development work?***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also generated from discussions with partners such as the Compact Partnership and Environment Forum and some from discussions at ward forums. Submissions were also made by specific interest groups which included Caithness Family History Centre, Clan Chisholm society, Director of the UHI Centre for History, Shetland Islands Council Library Service and West Dunbartonshire Council Library Service and also Bernary Historical Society.

#### **Alternative organisations**

Respondents to the question on the Am Baile website were divided regarding its future. There was a strong response from respondents in favour of another organisation taking on the running of the website, with respondents noting that local Gaelic organisations may be interested in maintaining the service or that national organisations should also be approached. There was a general feeling that should no other organisation be prepared to take on the operation of the website, then it should be put on a care and maintenance basis. However, even amongst those who agreed with the proposal, some did note the benefits of the website and concern regarding its future. There was recognition however that in the current times such a resource cannot continue when it is not a statutory service.

There was a view expressed that the running of this website should not be the role of Highland Council and that cultural activities should be run by an appropriate body – either a private or community organisation. A further suggestion was that the public should be able to add material to the website. Concern was expressed that mothballing the website may be against Council policy to promote Gaelic.

#### **Concerns at the loss of the resource**

Although many respondents to the proposals for Am Baile were supportive, many were also against the proposal citing the benefits of the resource and concern at its potential loss. Respondents noted that the website is award winning and that few compare to the quality of it in terms of its accessibility and design. It was noted it was of benefit not only to Highland heritage locally but also nationally and internationally. Respondents noted that it was a valuable resource for individuals but also for libraries, museums, archives and genealogists. The educational benefits of the website were also highlighted, noting its use by schools, colleges and universities.

Respondents noted that people submit information to Am Baile as they know it is professionally run and concern was expressed that if the website is put on a care and maintenance basis then much of the resource will be lost. It was viewed that the long-term benefits of the website outweigh any short-term cuts.

#### Alternatives to care and maintenance

Rather than Am Baile being put on a care and maintenance basis, respondents proposed a range of alternatives. A number of respondents proposed focusing upon income generation, either charging to download images or looking at advertising. One respondent suggested that current staff may be interested in taking on the running of the website, whilst there was also an offer from Clan Chisholm to be involved in the running of the website. A further suggestion was that website development should be scaled down but that the site should not be mothballed and another that the Council should look at alternative funding partnerships but with Highland Council still operating the website.

One respondent expressed concern that the website had been described as a Gaelic heritage website, indicating that it was more a bilingual website. There was concern that this description may encourage people to be against maintaining the website.

#### Responses from specific interest organisations

A number of specific responses were received from organisations with a specific interest. The details of these responses are summarised below:

##### **Director, UHI Centre for History**

*"This is simply to register with you the fact that the Council's Am Baile website is a key resource for myself, my academic colleagues and our students. It's one that will become all the more important as our range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses continues to expand.*

*Of course, I appreciate the many pressures on Highland Council's budget and the necessity to make cuts in council expenditure. However, it's most important that, if at all possible, Am Baile is kept in business, as it were. While we can't help financially with this, we'd be happy to explore with council colleagues any means by which we might jointly look to secure this objective."*

##### **Shetland Library Service**

*"Shetland Library would like to express a wish that Am Baile be retained as a valuable local and national resource.*

*We have had frequent cause to visit the site, both in search of specific information and as a guide to good practice in terms of digitisation and presentation of materials.*

*Am Baile exemplifies a contemporary, inclusive approach to the sharing of knowledge and information, with everything being available on line anywhere in the world and not just open to those fortunate enough to be able to travel to the Highlands."*

##### **West Dunbartonshire Libraries**

*"This is a wonderful, imaginatively produced web site and one which leads the way in celebrating local history and local culture. Its demise would not only be a huge loss to the people of the Highlands but would also have a negative impact on our ability here in West Dunbartonshire to source information and help our customers with their Scottish and family research. So many people in Scotland and throughout the world can trace their families back*

*to the Highlands and Am Baile is an invaluable source of information and ideas in helping with this.*

*On behalf of West Dunbartonshire Libraries, I would ask that you protect - and, indeed, celebrate - this unique resource and, in doing so, support libraries throughout Scotland and elsewhere in accessing the great wealth of learning materials associated with the Highlands.”*

***Berneray Historical Society***

*“As project worker for a relatively small local history group, Comunn Eachdraigh Bheàrnaraigh, I have found the site to be very useful when researching historical events, people and places, particularly those on the mainland. I have always found the site informative and easy to navigate. It has also been of use generally, in providing links to other heritage organisations.*

*The public’s interest in heritage and culture is ever-growing, and the loss of a resource such as Am Baile would be disappointing. To the contrary, I would like to see it expanded. It is the natural location for historical documents and photographs to be made freely available.”*

---

## **Use of contractors to replace seasonal staff employed on grounds maintenance**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding replacing seasonal staff employed on grounds maintenance with external contractors.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

28 separate comments were received on the question

#### ***Can we use contractors to replace seasonal staff employed on grounds maintenance?***

Most comments were generated from individuals, via the blog and email, and from Community Councils. There was support for the proposal from the Environment Forum however concern expressed by the Joint Trade Union group whose response is detailed below.

Overall, respondents were generally in favour of the proposal to replace seasonal staff with contractors. Respondents noted that the model already operated in Highland and had demonstrated savings therefore on this basis it should be adopted elsewhere. It would be important however that the quality of the current provision be maintained. Some respondent did note that local contractors should be utilised and that there should be no disadvantage to current employees working conditions.

Of those unsure about the proposal, the main concern related to staff currently undertaking the work. One respondent queried whether this would have a negative impact upon people on employability programmes and another that people in rural communities often rely on this seasonal work. However, an alternative view was that contractors were most likely to employ the same individuals and therefore the impact of change was unlikely to be significant.

The GMB union specifically expressed concerns on the proposal, noting that '*staff with knowledge and experience need to be involved in how best to deliver the service and that best value is not just about price*'. It was requested that the Council works with Trade Unions to protect services and jobs through full and open consultation.

Reflecting the response to the general question about reducing grounds maintenance, an alternative was expressed. It was proposed that instead of contractors, communities should be encouraged to take on responsibility for grounds maintenance. It was suggested that Community Councils could take on this role and either use local staff or volunteers to undertake this work.

## **Sourcing plant materials from external providers rather than producing this at Bught Nursery**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding sourcing plant materials from an external provider rather than producing this in house at the Bught nursery.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

24 separate comments were received on the question of:

***Procuring plant material from an external provider rather than producing this in-house at the Bught Nursery.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils and the Environment Forum.

The general view from respondents was that bedding plants should be procured externally on the condition that savings are made but that quality is maintained. It was regarded as important that any change would not have a negative impact upon vulnerable groups, such as skill seekers on employability programmes. Respondents also noted that current employees should be provided with alternative employment.

A number of respondents suggested that the current Bught Nursery could be offered as a social enterprise venture or to a community organisation. It was suggested this could be a positive development and focus on employing people with disabilities. A further suggestion was that bedding plant production could be transferred to the Floral Hall or to the Isobel Rhind Centre. An alternative proposal was that the Council should review the use of mechanised or automated horticulture approaches to producing bedding plants.

A small number of respondents questioned why the activity of bedding plant production should continue at all. It was noted that this was not core Council business and in the current climate, the Council should be focusing upon what people need and not what they want. It was suggested that there was no need to have any bedding plants.

An alternative view was that the current operation at Bught Nursery should continue. It was queried why it would be cheaper to procure the service externally and suggested that the Nursery should be used to provide work experience and training opportunities.

## **Replacing external contractors (Street Lighting) with internal staff from Roads and Community Works to Street Lighting**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding replacing external contractors for street lighting with internal staff.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

23 separate comments were received on the question of:

***Replacing external contractors for street lighting with internal staff.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils and the Environment Forum.

There was strong support from respondents for replacing external contractors with internal staff, as long as internal staff are highly qualified and safety standards ensured. One respondent viewed internal provision as a way of ensuring a high standard of service is provided. It was also seen as a way of maintaining jobs within the Council.

There was confusion from respondents that an internal service option would be cheaper, when elsewhere it was noted that money would be saved by procuring a service outwith the Council, for example grass-cutting.

It was noted that any change to provision should not result in one particular area in Highland losing out in terms of jobs and the service provided and also that where heavy capital expenditure is necessary for equipment that is rarely used then it may be necessary to contract out this part of the service. External always need to make a profit

A small number of respondents were against the proposal to replace external contractors with internal staff. It was noted that external contractors are always more efficient and cheaper than directly employing staff. An alternative view however was that external contractors are always looking to make a profit.

One respondent did note concern at the potential loss of private sector jobs.

## ***Review the Materials Testing Laboratory with a view to procuring this service externally***

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the future of the Materials Testing Laboratory.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

22 separate comments were received on the question of:

***Reviewing the Materials testing laboratory with a view to procuring this service externally.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils and the Environment Forum.

There was strong support from respondents for reviewing the current materials testing laboratory, with a view to procuring the service from an external provider. Respondents noted this should be progressed if savings can be made and standards are maintained and can be verified. It was felt that this service was not the core business of the Council unless it could be an income generator. Respondents suggested that the review should consider sharing the service with other Local Authorities - either providing the current service for other Local Authorities or purchasing the service directly from another Council.

A small number of concerns were expressed by respondents namely whether an external provider can be relied upon to give unbiased reports and also that given last year's bad winter, it would not be appropriate to give up the service.

---



## **Can the Council reduce the youth work service?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens Panel was asked:

***“We want to know if a reduction in youth workers of up to 50% was required, should the remaining staff be asked to cover larger areas or focus their time where the need is greatest.”***

The question asked: **“If we have fewer youth workers, should we...”**- and then there followed two options of which respondents were invited to select one only.

Of the 91% of the sample who answered the question this was how they responded:

- **68%** chose **“target remaining staff in areas of low income, lower educational attainment and where fewer opportunities exist”**
- **32%** chose **“share the remaining provision across Highland”**

Support for the targeted approach was slightly stronger than the average amongst people aged 75+ (74%) and slightly weaker amongst those aged 25-44 (63%).

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Just under 100 separate comments were received on the question of Youth Work and

***Should this provision be reduced by 50% and focused upon areas with relatively higher levels of poverty and unemployment?***

Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums and meetings with partners such as the Compact Partnership, Youth Voice, Community Safety Steering Group and the Environment Forum. Other comments were generated electronically through the blog, email and on-line questionnaire and came from individuals and specific interest groups such as Community Councils and Parent Councils. A submission was also made on this question from the North Youth Development Workers Team and another from young people in Skye. In addition, a petition was received regarding Alness Youth Work Team, with 425 individuals requesting the team's retention.

#### ***Views against a reduction***

In general, respondents to this question were against the proposal to reduce the Youth Work service by 50% and target it on areas of high unemployment and poverty. Respondents reported the importance of the service, the need for it amongst young people and that access for all young people is vital. Youth Voice noted that most young people will have benefited from youth work at some time. One respondent reported that the overriding consideration should be whether the service is effective or not. If the service is effective then there should not be any attempts to reduce it.

### Targeting Concerns

There was concern amongst respondents at the proposal to target the service on communities most in need. It was noted that if areas are targeted then it is inevitable people will miss out and concern that there is an assumption being made that less academic young people live in areas of higher poverty. It was also noted that in the current climate, unemployment is increasing across all communities therefore what would be the baseline for 'most in need'.

There was concern noted about the impact this approach would have on rural communities who would be likely not to qualify but require a youth work service just as much as areas of deprivation. One respondent noted that this approach would likely penalise small schools. An alternative view was that there was a need to prioritise who receives the service but that this requires effort and attention, not just an area based approach, as otherwise the vulnerable will fall through the net.

### Impact of the reduction and targeting of the service

Concern was expressed at the impact upon young people and the community in general should the youth work service be reduced. It was noted that activities such as those provided by the service are invaluable to young people and research evidence backs this up. The service inspires many young people and provides a sense of achievement for them but also support for those who may have family problems. Some respondents noted that the service provides a useful information resource to all young people in terms of sexual health, drink, drugs and road safety.

Respondents also expressed concerns at the long term impact should the service be reduced, reporting that any such cut would be counterproductive in the longer term. There was a strong view held amongst respondents that the service assists to reduce boredom, drug and alcohol use and crime amongst young people and therefore ultimately saves the Council and the community both financially and socially by engaging with young people.

Respondents also noted that within many communities the youth work team provides the only extra-curricular provision for youth people as no other voluntary organisation provides this. There was concern that youth clubs would be likely to close with nowhere for young people to go.

There was concern expressed that a reduction in the current service would ultimately lead to young people having nothing to do and engaging in anti-social behaviour.

One respondent noted that the positive work the youth worker had done with young people within the community by providing extra-curricular activities had helped to change the perception of youth within the community.

### Personal Benefits

A number of young people responded to this question of the consultation, expressing concerns at the potential reduction and the value of the service to them as individuals:

*“As a former member of Highland Youth Voice I have seen first hand the work that this project does to help improve the current condition in which young people in the*

*Highland are subject to. This team has proven to be extremely valuable to the council and to the wider community and should be preserved.”*

*“I want to keep the youth workers in school and in the council, I feel cuts will be made but please don't take the youth workers from us as there the type of people which we can speak to in confidence”*

*“I've noticed that you are trying to take youth workers away from schools. I would not like this to happen since they are the ones that give me confidence at hard times in school.”*

*“Please keep the youth workers in schools because they help us learn and we appreciate the help she does”*

A number of responses focused specifically on certain youth work provision across the Highland area and the benefits these services provide. These included:

- Ullapool – the youth worker serves a 130m round catchment area but many young people benefit from the service
- Alness youth team - very valuable service and providing opportunities for young people. Petition requesting retention: 425 signatures
- Broadford – providing lots of activities locally and young people would be lost without it as there is nothing for young people to do especially in rural communities
- Minginish – valuable service in a remote rural area
- Cromarty and Fortrose – number of responses from young people themselves highlighting the value of the service

A detailed response was also received from a group of young people benefiting from the youth work service on Skye. Their response provides details of why the service should be retained and the benefits to them as individuals:

- It keeps us off the streets and away from drugs
- There is someone there if you need to talk to someone
- They help us to get out more and do new activities
- They make weekends fun
- More sociable
- They're awesome
- We would probably have gotten into trouble if they weren't here for us
- Enjoyable
- Lets us do awards like Duke of Edinburgh
- There is no other entertainment areas for young adults on Skye to go to
- There are many activities that wouldn't be able to run without youth groups on Skye
- It keeps us from taking part in anti-social activities
- Do not get rid of it as we get to be with our friends and socialise
- There isn't many things to do after school in our area
- Keeps us off the streets

### Alternatives to Reduction

The North Youth Development Worker Team also submitted a response to the consultation focusing upon alternative ways in which resources could be put to best use. A summary of this response is outlined below:

#### **Highland Youth Voice-**

- Cut the HYV residential to cheaper alternative. We could look at using council facilities such as school hostels eg Portree
- Restrict to 1 event, more value for money than local forum events
- Could this event be sponsored by businesses rather than out of budget
- More involvement presentation by young people themselves.
- Travel- Bus to pick everyone up en route

#### **SPICE (Consultation with pupils re schools)-**

- Cut costs with food and presenter,
- Delete it YV can replace it (popular decision, seen as a costly PR exercise), Held within areas at schools and recording fed into YV ,
- Spice should be held within schools as it relates to schools, No action ever taken as result of this event.

#### **Staffing:**

- 1 line manager instead of 2 for the Highland Area
- or
- Ward managers as line managers for the YDO team
  - Revert to ILC teams with the 2 Area YDOs as specialist YD support
  - Delete 2 or 3 senior management posts out of the current 4 with a sub group co-ordinating HYV (Principal Adult and Youth Services Officer, Youth Service Strategy Officer, Senior Youth Dev Officer(Engagement), Senior Youth Dev Officer (Participation) )
  - Retain youth convener post but it becomes mobile doing blocks at each ILC but retaining all existing voting rights

#### **Other suggestions**

- Outdoor Education doesn't justify having an outside provider anymore and also do we really need a full time post for the person looking at risk
- The Badaguish trust could be paid to provide the caretaking of the lodges with their current caretaker A11
- ILC meetings done by conference calls/ video conferencing to cut travel costs for some areas

A number of other respondents also proposed alternative ways in which to save money. It was suggested that the youth convener post be abolished and also that resources from Youth Voice be re-directed as both benefit young people that are already doing well. A further suggestion was to contract the service from specialist organisations and another to concentrate on front line staff but reduce management.

### ***Views in favour of reducing and targeting***

Whilst the general response to this question was support for retaining the current service, some respondents were supportive of the proposal to reduce and target the service on areas most in need. Respondents in favour were generally supportive of the proposal to target areas of poverty and unemployment however there was an alternative view that there needs to be a full analysis of all areas and to then target those most in need. There was also a need to consider remote rural communities and consider areas where there may be no alternative organisation to take on and provide the service in place of the Council. It was also noted that any reduction and targeting should consider the changing demography of the area and falling school roles.

Although supportive of the proposal there were still concerns from respondents at the impact of reducing the service and the potential increase in youth crime. The Community Safety Steering Group specifically noted that with the police reducing youth investment any further reduction could compound efforts to reduce youth crime. However, the group reported that problematic areas should be targeted.

### **Alternatives**

Whilst acknowledging a reduction is required, respondents also suggested further areas which could be considered. It was suggested that most youth work activities can and are being offered by other organisations locally. It was proposed that community groups could be encouraged to take on the provision of youth services locally but also that provision should be currently reviewed for duplication.

Further suggestions included exploring the use of joint youth work posts with perhaps the NHS or other agencies or that the youth work, adult education, play group and library services could be pulled together and resources shared across all. It was noted that services need to be delivered more effectively but that there was perhaps a greater need for support at a time of cuts. One respondent suggested that whilst a reduction was required, perhaps 50% was too high.

It was suggested that there needs to be more consultation locally, especially with youth people.

---

## **Can the Adult Education service be reduced?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Panel was asked about adult education:

**“If reducing the number of courses and classes run by Adult Education, should we...”**

– there then followed two options of which respondents were invited to select one. Of the 91% of those surveyed who answered this was how they responded:

- **56%** chose **“target course and classes on people and communities with special needs”**
- **44%** chose **“reduce the service across Highland”**

Analysing the results by the various categories of respondents the following results are notable:

- There was only one category where a majority of people chose “reduce services across Highland” – and that was respondents who are unemployed (51%);
- The level of support for the option to target classes and courses was most strongly supported by people aged 75+ (63%);
- Those respondents who earlier in the Performance Survey had expressed their satisfaction with the Council’s community learning/ adult education services are almost exactly divided in their opinions – 51% chose the targeted option and 49% chose the reduction of the service across Highland. But those who had expressed their dissatisfaction with these services showed a clear preference for the targeted approach (58% chose this option);
- Support for the targeted option (at 62%) is especially strong amongst those respondents who do not own their own house and who also are either unable to work, or are unemployed, or retired, or are looking after the family or home, or in full time education.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Just under 50 separate comments were received on the question of Adult Education and ***Should we run fewer courses and classes and reduce community support, or focus only on communities with specific needs?***

Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums and from meetings with partners through the Environment Forum, Community Safety Steering Group and Youth Voice. Comments were also received from Community Councils and from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire.

### ***Views in favour of reducing or targeting***

Whilst support was strong from respondents to review the provision of Adult Education, respondents were split on whether the approach should be to focus upon communities with specific needs or to reduce the number of courses run by Adult Education. Some respondents reported the importance of the service being available for all individuals but that it could be reduced in areas where the demand is low. Others however preferred targeting the service but noted that it would be important to continue to provide for the elderly and vulnerable and also that remote and rural areas will continue to require a service. It was suggested that a needs analysis of all areas should be undertaken and then the services provided to those most in need.

Some respondents in favour of reducing provision did note that most Adult Education Services are already offered by other organisations notably the colleges, the private sector and the job centre. It was suggested that whilst the Council concentrates on targeted areas, other organisations could provide the service elsewhere. It was also suggested that in the longer term, Youth Work would assist in reducing the need for Adult Education.

Respondents did note that if the Council wishes communities to take over the running of certain services, as proposed elsewhere in the Budget Consultation, support will need to be provided for these communities. However, it was the view that this should be targeted on communities who require this the most.

### ***Views against reducing or targeting***

Whilst there was support for both targeting the Adult Education service and reducing it overall, a number of respondents were also against the proposal. It was noted that there was a need for everyone to be able to access the service, not just those regarded to have specific needs and that there was still a need for basic literacy and numeracy skills generally. One view was that Education for all is sacrosanct not just education for children.

Respondents noted that the Adult Education service is vital in terms of the benefits it provides to users such as increased confidence and employability skills. It was suggested that given the increase in unemployment, people are likely to rely on the service even more and, as highlighted above, at a time when the Council wishes communities to provide services locally, the community support element is going to be important. One respondent suggested that there should be no change to the current service as the college is currently reducing Adult Education provision.

It was suggested that the level of investment in the current service is already low and requires to be increased and concerns expressed that any reduction to the service could lead to the marginalisation of individuals and generate additional costs for the future.

As an alternative to reducing the service, respondents suggests that charges could be introduced or that the Council should look at developing partnerships with libraries and job centres in order to continue to provide the current level of service. Distance learning was also suggested as an alternative to reducing provision.



## **Review Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to Additional Support Needs.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

55 separate comments were received in response to the question on Reviewing Additional Support Needs provision and specifically:

***Can we reduce our educational psychologist service by 20% and reduce other targeted areas of ASN spending by 50%?***

Most comments were generated from written feedback through letters, emails and the internet questionnaire and were predominantly from individuals and specific interest groups such as School groups, Community Councils and members of the Children's forum. Comments were also generated from face to face meetings and discussions at ward forums and with Highland Youth Voice.

#### ***Views against***

##### **Demand for the service**

In general respondents were not in favour of reducing Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision. It was reported that there is already limited provision with existing resources under pressure and long waiting lists for services. Respondents noted that support from the service needs to be available when required as otherwise problems could be exacerbated. It was reported that any increase in waiting times would not improve the efficiency of service delivery but quite the reverse.

Respondents reported that there is a need to support vulnerable people to enable them to have a positive future and that individuals can only thrive with the right support. It was noted that the right support enables them to participate in school life and that support to enable integration is critical as otherwise young people with ASN can be separated from mainstream classes which is counterproductive in the longer term as they need to be able to support themselves in later life. It was suggested that not providing sufficient ASN support could set back a child's development and result in increased costs for the Council in the longer term.

##### **Impact if not available**

In addition to the needs of the child, a number of respondents highlighted the impact upon the rest of the class should support be reduced. It was noted that if children with ASN are placed in mainstream classes then appropriate support is required as otherwise the entire class is disrupted.

Respondents also reported that there have already been cuts to this service, with a paper to ECS committee on 21-5-09 recognising the impact upon the outcomes for children of these reductions. Given this it was reported that further cuts would not be appropriate. In addition, it was highlighted that the Council has a legal duty to provide this support to pupils and any



reduction could result in parents seeking redress through the courts which would have cost implications.

### ***Views in favour***

There was some support from respondents in favour of reducing ASN provision but concerns were expressed about the level of the proposed reduction and a suggestion that 10% across all areas might be more appropriate and achieve the same outcome. It was reported by some that savings should only be made if absolutely necessary and that there should be a principle that waiting times should not be increased and if anything decreased. An alternative view was that savings require to be made and these proposals should be progressed however there was also concern that this may be difficult given the overspend already within ASN.

### ***Alternative approaches to reducing ASN***

A number of respondents suggested alternative approaches to reducing ASN provision. It was suggested that there should be an audit of current provision to ensure maximum efficiency and a need to evaluate what is the most cost effective way of providing the appropriate support to young people. A further suggestion was that parents could be approached to provide classroom support on a voluntary basis and that a general review of management and general classroom support should be undertaken rather than just focusing on Educational Psychologists. It was also suggested that St Clements school could be closed and pupils sent instead to Tain or Inverness. An alternative suggestion was that better qualified teachers are required rather than support chaperones.

There was also a minority view that there is a need to examine the way in which ASN is provided. It was suggested that some children only need a little support and benefit greatly from being within mainstream classes whilst others are unable to participate and the benefit to these individuals was questioned. It was noted that the desired outcome for pupils should be considered. It was also queried whether it is cost effective for a paid member of staff to be with each pupil with ASN on a one to one basis or whether a small class of pupils with additional needs with one teacher and an assistant would be more cost effective.

---

## **Reducing the fostering & adoption budget**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the fostering and adoption budget.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

22 separate responses were received on the proposal to:

***Reduce the fostering and adoption service budget.***

The majority of responses were received from individuals and from Community Councils across the area.

Respondents were divided over the proposal to reduce the fostering and adoption budget. Whilst there was support for the proposal, some respondents noted that this was reluctant support and that any reduction should be minimal.

A number of respondents disagreed with the rationale to reduce the budget; because the service is currently ranked as excellent that some reduction could be tolerated. It was reported that excellence should not be sacrificed, especially given the vulnerability of the client group being supported. The importance of the role of foster carers and the need to support them fully was expressed along with the view that the minimal savings achieved against the loss of service were not justifiable.

---

## **Can we reduce the level of road maintenance?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the level of road maintenance.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

49 separate comments were received on the question

#### ***Can we reduce the level of road maintenance?***

Most comments were generated from discussions at ward forums, from individuals via the blog and email and from Community Councils.

There was no clear response to the general question on '*Can we reduce the level of road maintenance?*' with respondents choosing to respond separately to the different elements within the question. Accordingly, most comments received related either to road maintenance - in terms of surface dressing, repairing potholes, and replacing road markings - or grass cutting and ditch clearing.

### ***Views against reducing road maintenance***

#### **Current conditions**

On the whole respondents were against the proposal to reduce the level of road maintenance. It was noted that conditions were already poor and road surfaces of a low standard. Some believed this was due to the harsh winter, whilst others that it was the result of ineffective repairs and reactive rather than proactive maintenance. It was also noted that with increasing housing developments, traffic on the roads was only likely to increase therefore a reduction in the budget would be inappropriate. There was a general feeling that the road maintenance budget required increasing.

#### **Safety concerns**

There was concern that any reductions could be dangerous for road safety and it was suggested that failure to repair roads could result in increased litigation due to personal injury claims. Some respondents were of the opinion that the poor winter in 2009/10 demonstrated that such conditions may occur again and that any reductions to the roads budget would be counterproductive, resulting in higher costs in years to come.

#### **Alternatives to reducing**

A number of suggestions were put forward as alternatives to reducing the level of road maintenance. It was proposed that putting the service out to tender could maintain the level of maintenance whilst reducing the cost whilst another respondent suggested the service would be improved by purchasing it from another Local Authority. A further proposal was that by improving the quality of materials and the application, costs in the longer term could be reduced. An alternative suggestion was that the Council should concentrate on getting

people off the roads onto public transport and therefore reducing the requirement for road maintenance.

### ***Views on cutting grass verges and ditch clearing***

Although respondents were generally against the proposal to reduce road maintenance, there was support for reducing the cutting of verges. Verge cutting was not regarded as important and more for aesthetic reasons, with some respondents noting that not cutting would have benefits for wildlife. However, it was regarded as important that the implementation of this proposal should have no negative impact upon road safety and this was also noted as a concern by the Joint Community Safety Tasking Group.

There was some support maintaining the cutting of grass verges, with concern expressed at the impact this could have on tourism. However, an alternative view was that if communities were concerned with aesthetics, then they should take responsibility for verge cutting themselves.

There were only a limited number of respondents who commented on the reduction of ditch clearing and whilst there was some support for this, there was also concern about potential flooding and it was noted the influence blocked drains had had in recent years in contributing to flooding.

---

## **Review support for sports development and play**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to sports development and play.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

47 separate comments were received in response to the question on Reviewing support for sports development and play and specifically:

***We are seeking your views as to whether we should continue support in this way and also whether we should continue to support play development?***

Most comments were generated from written feedback through letters, emails and the internet questionnaire and were predominantly from individuals and specific interest groups such as Community Councils, Active School Co-ordinators and the Coaching Highland Board. A number of responses were also received from individuals involved in coaching for different organisations which included:

- Sportscotland institute of Sport
- Highland Rugby Club
- Pentland Canoe club
- Highland and Mora Sailing Club
- South Skye and Lochalsh Kayak club
- Lochcarron Sailing club
- Loch Ness golf club
- Inverness Canoe club
- Jogscotland
- Scottish Canoe Association
- Royal Yachting Association

### ***Views against***

#### **Benefits of the service**

There was a strong response from respondents opposed specifically to the proposal whether to continue to support sports development. This is reflective of the profile of respondents, many of whom were members of different sport clubs and organisations. It was reported that Coaching Highland is an efficient, well organised and award winning organisation providing significant value for money and benefits to sporting development in Highland. It was noted that with many sports clubs relying on volunteers to organise and coach young people, the support provided by Coaching Highland to achieve coaching badges is significant.

Respondents reported that many would have been unable to access training in terms of time and money without the support of Coaching Highland for training and financial assistance to travel and achieve the qualifications. This is especially significant given the geographical distance of the Highlands from centres of excellence. Without Coaching Highland, many

reported that their organisations would not have been able to take on and support young people.

Respondents also noted that enabling organisations to function and coach young people brings specific benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. The ability of clubs to provide access for young people assists to increase physical activity. It was noted that this is especially important given the current obesity crisis and that the costs of this provision will have a longer term impact upon reducing the health costs of obesity. A further benefit highlighted by respondents was that Coaching Highland has enabled organisations to operate especially in rural areas where provision of activities is limited.

#### Impact of removing provision

Concern was expressed that should the financial support provided by Coaching Highland not be available, clubs would need to become more exclusive i.e. have paid membership, whereas at present the majority are free at point of use. Concern was also expressed by one of the Active School Co-ordinators who highlighted that a core component of their job is to promote out of school activities but that they rely on volunteers to assist in running clubs, who receive support and assistance from Coaching Highland. It was reported that there would be a detrimental impact upon young people if the funding support stops, disproportionate to the level of funding received.

#### Specific response

A response to the consultation was also received from the Coaching Highland Board which highlighted the additional financial benefits the current funding achieves and the benefits of the organisation:

- From Highland Council funding, Coaching Highland managing to secure a further 120k per annum from other trusts. If the funding is cut then this will be lost to the Highlands as there would be no staff to secure it. This would be a big loss when trying to increase healthy lifestyles.
- Coaching Highland has:
  - funded more than 2,500 coaches at all levels and across most sports;
  - qualified over 2,000 sports leaders in schools;
  - qualified over 1,500 parents, pupils & volunteers for the Active School Co-ordinators in Highland Schools;
  - organised countless courses for Child Protection, First Aid, Diet & Nutrition, Sports Psychology, Injury Prevention, and many others;
  - as well as provide a range of other coach education and support resources including this website which has over 1,500 registered members.
- It is also worth noting that Coaching Highland won the title of 'UK's Leading Agency in the Support of Coaching' at the UK Coaching Awards in December 2008 and finished Runner Up again in December 2009.

Respondents highlighted that it is not just financial benefits that Coaching Highland provides but the benefits of opportunity to the local area.

#### **Views in favour**

#### Play development

There was some support from respondents regarding the proposal to stop supporting sports and play development. Of those in favour, this was generally for stopping support for play development. It was noted that this is a parent's job, that it does not directly reach everyone and that there are sufficient alternatives such as nurseries and playgroups. However an alternative view was that supporting play is forward thinking.

#### Sports development

There was less conviction regarding stopping sports development. It was suggested that there could be a reduction in the level of financial support, with perhaps more being provided by Sportscotland or that local businesses could be asked to sponsor the organisation. It was noted however that it is not a statutory service, that there is other funding such as lottery funding available and that the responsibility for the service should sit with the lead agency Sportscotland.

Further views were that sports clubs used to be able to provide coaching facilities and so should still be able to do so. There was also concern that this service is aimed at people at the top of their sport and not those who are not yet engaged. An alternative view from a volunteer coach was that Coaching Highland spends too much on unnecessary courses and events and that in the current climate, this resource is not as important as others.

A number of respondents noted that they were not against stopping support as long as children with disabilities are not negatively impacted.

An alternative suggestion was that as there is a need for more sporting opportunities for young people, the service should be contracted out rather than stopping it altogether.

---

## **Should the Council cease to support culture and sporting events and festivals?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to Cultural and Sporting Events and Festivals.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

33 separate comments were received in response to the question on Reviewing Financial Support for Cultural and Sporting Events and Festivals and specifically:

#### ***Should the Council cease to support events?***

Most comments were generated from written feedback through letters, emails and the internet questionnaire and were predominantly from individuals and specific interest groups such as Community Councils. Comments were also generated from face to face meetings and discussions at ward forums, with the Community Safety Steering Group and the Compact Partnership.

#### ***Views in favour***

##### **Benefits of events**

Respondents to the question on ceasing support to cultural and sporting events were divided. A number of respondents were against the proposal to stop supporting these events citing the benefits many of these bring to business, the local economy and the increase in tourism that such events generate. It was noted that stopping support to such events would be short sighted.

##### **Alternatives to ceasing support**

Alternative suggestions to ceasing support completely included reviewing current support and providing only where there is clear benefit for tourism, demonstrable community development or opportunities for income generation. Respondents also suggested that events and festivals should have a charge attached to them or that sponsorship should be sought. A further suggestion was that the Council should look to raising funds from private investment so that the Council facilitates support but does not provide it directly.

#### ***Views against***

Although there was support in favour of retaining support to sporting and cultural events, there was equal support amongst respondents for ceasing support. It was noted that cultural events should be funded by an appropriate private or community organisation and also that there was alternative funding out there for such events. One respondent reported that community groups could run local arts festivals, as many already do, without financial support from the Council.



Some respondents had noted that such events generate income for the local economy and therefore should be retained e.g. Fort William Mountain Bike Championships however an alternative view was expressed that such events do not generate sufficient income, e.g. Highland 2007, and also that successful events such as the Mountain Bike Championship should be self-sustaining. It was noted that such events are a luxury in hard times and that promoters should be making festivals self-sustaining and promoting them themselves.

---

## **Should we stop providing long-term care at The Orchard, Inverness**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

The Citizens' Panel were not asked any particular questions regarding the future of long term care at the Orchard.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

16 separate responses were received regarding the proposal to cease providing long-term care at the Orchard in Inverness and focus upon respite care. Responses were received from individuals and Community Councils across Highland.

Respondents were divided in views on the proposal to cease the provision of long-term care at the Orchard. Some respondents noted that on principle services for children with disabilities should not be reduced whilst others that all alternatives should be explored prior to ceasing service provision.

It was suggested that the service should not be stopped if this resulted in no alternative provision being available in Highland and children having to leave the area for care. An alternative view was that there should be greater focus in maintaining individuals within their own homes. One respondent queried whether the service could be combined with the provision at Staffin.

---

## **Should we stop providing Out of Eden drama provision including the Highland wide Higher Drama course**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to Out of Eden drama provision.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

48 separate comments were received in response to the question on Out of Eden drama provision and Higher Drama course provision and specifically:

***We are seeking your views on removing this provision.***

Most comments were generated from written feedback through letters, emails, the blog and the internet questionnaire and were predominantly from individuals and specific interest groups such as School groups, Community Councils, University of the Third Age and Eden Court. Comments were also generated from face to face meetings and discussions with Highland Youth Voice and the Compact Partnership.

### ***Views supporting retention***

#### **Benefits of provision**

There was a strong response from respondents to this question opposed to the proposal to remove drama provision in Highland. Respondents focused upon the benefits of the course and the out of Eden provision to young people. It was noted that drama is just as important as academic subjects such as French or English and that it contributed to health and emotional wellbeing in addition to developing confidence and life skills amongst young people. Respondents reported that there would be a negative impact upon the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence if drama provision is removed.

In addition to the general benefits highlighted of drama courses, some respondents also noted the additional opportunities from undertaking this course through Eden Court. It was reported that undertaking the course within a theatre environment provided considerable additional benefits to young people giving them the opportunity to work within a theatre and meet with professionals from across Scotland. It was noted that this was not an experience that could be replicated within a school environment.

#### **Impact on young people if removed**

A further area of concern was the impact upon young people and their futures should this provision no longer be available. One young person noted that they were currently doing the Higher Drama course and needed this to be able to study drama after school. This was echoed by other respondents who felt that the removal of this provision would limit the career opportunities of young people. It was noted that people in the Highlands should have access to the same opportunities as young people in the cities, and the result may lead to more people leaving the area if the courses were not available.

Along with concerns about the potential loss of higher drama course, concern was also noted about the loss of the Out of Eden Provision. Youth Voice noted that if there was no drama worker from Eden Court then there would be no youth drama provision within communities as this had been tried before but didn't work. It was noted that this could leave young people without things to do and that the Council should not be removing an activity which engages and motivates young people.

#### Specific response from Eden Court

A response on this issue was also received directly from Eden Court theatre. The response echoes a number of the points outlined above and included:

- Higher drama is only available in one school and none deliver higher dance. If the provision is cut then number of students entering tertiary level education for performance other than music would drop to almost none.
  - An alternative would be to continue to deliver all three courses but that a travel subsidy is no longer offered – Eden Court could use a bequest it has received in place of the travel subsidy and this would last 2-3 years.
  - An alternative would be to drop providing intermediate drama as it is provided for in a number of schools.
  
- Out of Eden is delivering in schools and supporting teachers to deliver curriculum for excellence. Will a decrease in the SLA lead to a saving or will teachers still require more support to deliver Curriculum for Excellence? There is also a potential social cost as drama leads to confident and socially able individuals helping to avoid social issues and prevent youth crime.
  - An alternative could be to bring in more income by charging for some of the after school activities – currently the SLA doesn't allow this.
  - An alternative could be to deliver to different groupings and ages and there may be possibilities to be able to attract external funding but this will take time.

#### Alternatives to removal

A number of respondents suggested alternative ways in which to save money than removing drama provision altogether. It was suggested that staffing levels could be reduced whilst retaining the provision, or that the provision could continue but be provided within school facilities.

#### **Views supporting withdrawal**

##### Principle

Some respondents were supportive of the proposal to remove drama provision. On principle it was reported that drama provision is a luxury in current times and that instead schools should be encouraged to provide in-house provision perhaps shared between schools. It was felt use of Eden Court could not be continued. Another respondent noted that young people have managed without drama provision before and would do so again whilst another respondent reported that other services were more important, for example rural schools.

#### Alternatives to removal

A number of alternative proposals were suggested by respondents in terms of how to provide the service in future. It was suggested that the college should be providing drama provision, perhaps through a partnership between the college and Eden Court whilst another respondent proposed investigating accessing support from other Councils who also benefit

from this provision. It was noted that cultural events should be funded by an appropriate community or private organisation or that specialist provision such as this should be returned to Eden Court to fund and provide or removed. A further suggestion was to remove the provision from primary schools but retain on a reduced basis at secondary level for those wishing to study highers. It was noted that parents should be asked to pay for their children to access this provision.

---

## **Can we stop providing a Pest Control service?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to the pest control service.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

27 separate comments were received on the question of:

***Reviewing pest control function with a view to the Council stopping providing the service.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils and the Compact Partnership.

There was strong support for the Council ceasing to provide a pest control service. Respondents reported that it was currently unfair that the service is not uniform across the Highland area. The main concern associated with any change however was how people on low incomes would access such a service in the future. Whilst not against the Council stopping the service, it was suggested that some form of grant or financial support be provided or perhaps a limited service for these individuals should remain.

It was noted that the Council should continue to monitor service standards.

There were a small number against the proposal and an alternative suggestion of reducing the current service to a minimum uniform level across the Highlands rather than ceasing to provide the service completely.

---

## **Can we remove the budget for unadopted roads?**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

No questions were asked of the Citizens' Panel in relation to the budget for unadopted roads.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

24 separate comments were received on the question of:

***Can we remove the budget for unadopted roads.***

Most comments were generated from individuals via the blog, email and on-line questionnaire. Comments were also received from specific groups including Community Councils.

The views of respondents on the issue of the budget for unadopted roads were split. There was concern from a number of respondents at the impact upon vulnerable people should the budget for unadopted roads be removed. It was noted that a relatively small number will require this service and that it is in reality a small amount of money. Respondents noted that it was ultimately essential on medical grounds as medical staff should not be put at risk.

It was suggested that if the budget was not available then the alternative for these individuals may be to go into a residential home or hospital which will inevitably cost more in the longer term. It was noted however that any new builds must ensure roads are of an appropriate standard for adoption and the budget should only be available for people who have developed a condition after moving to an inaccessible property.

An alternative view however was that this budget should be removed. The view from some individuals, including two individuals who currently live on unadopted roads, was that the upkeep of these roads is the households responsibility and not the Council's. A suggestion was that the budget could perhaps be reduced by half or even down to £10k as this is unlikely to be required regularly.

---