

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### Respondent 1

People the bus 5 nights a week and this will not be handy for people who rely on public transport to go and visit their (family) and also for food shopping at nights

### Respondent 2

#### NO CUTS WITHOUT PROPOSALS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE NEED AND IMPROVED SERVICES

Fifty years ago Dr Beeching recommended that the railway network should be dismantled. The interconnectivity that allowed the population to travel in relative comfort across Scotland and the rest of the UK was ended. Deregulation of the buses followed and the private car became cheaper and more reliable after 100 years of development. As a result our public transport system is in crisis.

Over 20% of households in Dumfries and Galloway have no access to the car and are reliant on buses. The 79% of car users have no confidence in our across-the-region bus services and don't consider using them. Our Continental neighbours, eg Switzerland, didn't go down the Beeching route and public transport is well supported, even if people drive to a railway station or bus terminus.

The challenge for SWestrans and public transport policy is to make our bus service the very best it can be. It has to be environmentally sustainable, reliable, affordable and comfortable, with well publicised services that give confidence in its use to the public.

Buses may be slower and not door-to-door like the car but, nevertheless, can move us around both in the local area, across Dumfries and Galloway and make that connectivity that is enjoyed by our Continental neighbours.

There was a SWestrans seminar last December regarding the future of our bus services and there has been no follow up. It is therefore incumbent on SWestrans that there should be no cuts without proposals for meeting present and future needs and ideas for improved services.

### Respondent 3

The Save Our Buses campaign group's main concern is that your proposal to end evening (after 6 pm) and Sunday bus services across a number of routes will have an adverse impact on employment in the areas affected.

Although most shops in the region close at 5 pm and are not open on Sundays, a range of businesses including some chemists, hotels, restaurants, fast food outlets, supermarkets and other retail outlets are open after 5 pm and on Sundays.

As you will appreciate, although many of the employees of these businesses either live within walking distance or have access to a car, those who rely on public transport to get to work in the evenings and/or on Sundays will be adversely affected by the loss of evening and Sunday buses. There are concerns that people lose their jobs if they cannot work on Sundays and on evening shifts.

From the perspective of the businesses involved, there is likely to be an effect on staff recruitment and retention. In particular for smaller businesses which rely on younger people without family commitments to cover evenings and Sundays, younger people are less likely to have cars and are therefore more reliant on public transport to access employment.

The loss of evening and Sunday bus services will have the effect of shrinking the pool of available labour for businesses and of reducing employment opportunities across Dumfries and Galloway.

SWestrans will need to consult with major retailers, Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of Commerce and the Dumfries and Galloway Federation of Small Businesses before proceeding with cuts to evening and Sunday bus services.

Respondent 4

Concern was expressed when the local newspaper stated the Stranraer to Dumfries 500 service was about to be altered yet again on 8 May 2016. As a flexirider, day rider & general return bus ticket user on this service, it is shocking to see more changes in store. Not having use of the service on a Friday, Saturday & Sunday to access work, will mean individuals having to hand their notices in, if the last service from Dumfries to Stranraer is cancelled, even if the times during the day remain unchanged as there would be no way of getting back. This follows a recent noticeable changes to the current timetable as well as an amendment to the first journey from east to west after the timetable was printed, so more changes are just extremely frustrating and unthinkable.

Paying customers find these proposals very inconsiderate as it affects people's lives when they are not able to move about our remote area using public transport. It's moves like these that stop people from using the service.

Please note that no complaint is directed at the drivers who are always courteous & friendly, but to the decision makers who aren't considering the bigger picture of their decisions.

Early feedback on these matters is requested.

Respondent 5

It is understood that savings of £305,000 need to be found for 2016/17.

Reducing the frequency of the Summerhill - town centre service, alone, by 1/3 would save around £23,000 (see Appendix 1 on page 11, cost of the Summerhill - Dfs town centre service was £68,235 in 2014-15). Similarly for the following Dumfries and Stranraer daytime routes, in frequency order:

Dfs-Lochside daytime, every 10 minutes from 09:10 to 15:40 - a 2/3 cut might be implemented here.  
 Dfs-Locharbriggs daytime, every 20 minutes from 9:30 to 18:00  
 Dfs-Crichton daytime, every 20 minutes  
 Dfs-Lincluden daytime, every 20 minutes  
 Dfs-Heathall daytime, every 30 minutes  
 Dfs-Lochvale daytime, every 30 minutes  
 Dfs-Georgetown daytime, every 30 minutes  
 Dfs-Summerhill daytime, every 30 minutes  
 Stranraer Town daytime, every 30 minutes

So, subject to a verification of the figures, it seems that if all those were to be cut by 1/3 and their costs are similar to the cost of the Summerhill route, there would be savings of around £207,00.

It is suggested that SWESTRANS urgently explore the savings produced by reducing the frequency of the town services so as to lessen the impact of a blanket cut on Sunday and evening services. That might save a large number of jobs and the income from those jobs, both in the service providers and in the travelling public that uses the Sunday and evening services to commute to and from jobs that they now hold but could not retain if the Sunday and evening services were to be withdrawn entirely.

Respondent 6

There are people who work four 10-hour shifts a week, either from 08:00 – 18:00, or from 09:00 – 19:00, and who share a car and for various logistical reasons,

rely on the bus service to travel between Castle Douglas and Dumfries – usually the 500, the 501 or the 502.

To be honest, it's not ideal. When they are working on a 09:00 – 19:00 shift, they have to catch the 500 bus at 08:05 from Castle Douglas to get into Dumfries for 09:00. After finishing at 19:00, they have to wait until 20:05 to catch the 500 bus home. Inevitably it's almost 21:00 before they get home.

A 10 hour shift could stretch into a 13-hour day which is not ideal for families when there are young children involved..

During 08:00 – 18:00, people would rely on buses that go to Dumfries via Dalbeattie. They would catch the 501 at 06:52 from Castle Douglas, which gets them into Dumfries at about 07:45. After work, they would get the 501A at 18:26, which arrives in Castle Douglas at 19:23. Another long day – 12.5 hours.

HOWEVER if these buses were scrapped, people would really struggle to get to and from work at all.

Alternatives have been tried, including getting lifts from friends, whose shifts may not always coincide..Also, joining the Co-Wheels Car Club to hire a car to get home, rather than get the bus on occasion. however, this works out at about £21 to take a car overnight – that's not something people can afford to do every day.

If the council agrees to cut bus services, people would have to seriously consider borrowing money to buy a car. For financial and environmental reasons, this should not really happen. People living in Castle Douglas may have to consider moving to Dumfries.  
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If these plans go ahead, you are effectively agreeing to cut off Castle Douglas (and many other towns in D&G) from Dumfries. It makes absolutely no sense. It will encourage more people into cars on to already congested roads and car parks which are bursting at the seams.

It cannot be emphasised enough how important it is that the evening and Sunday buses in Dumfries and Galloway are retained, especially to towns along the main A75 Euroroute. Any decision to scrap these services would be a seriously retrograde step.

### Respondent 7

Cutting the last bus from Dumfries to Stranraer and also Sunday services would cause problems to many people living in Wigtownshire for a number of reasons:

This major route service already means that villages and towns in the West are already served less than Stewartry where it is possible to catch a bus from Castle Douglas to Kirkcudbright up to midnight and beyond. The last service to Gatehouse and Newton Stewart leave CD at 20.35. This seriously curtails life for both young and old and poor without the means of personal travel and in some cases puts their at risk.

Cutting the service further would further isolate the area economically , socially and with regard to Tourism development. Cuts should be considered to local town services in preference.

Connectivity is key to the Development Strategy of the region these proposals will further isolate villages and create more deprivation.

It is intended to lobby MPs, MSPs and Councillors regarding objections to these proposals.

### Respondent 8

There are worries about the threatened cuts to the bus services in the region. Seeing the list of bus service cuts are causing people to feel shocked.since they are completely reliant on public transport Bus users of all ages will be affected by the cuts..

Cuts have to be made somewhere, but aiming those cuts at a public service that is a lifeline for so many is low. Not every single bus in the region is full all of the time, but by cutting those services there are many long term implications that are not positive.

A large percentage of the region are elderly and some do drive. However at some stage everyone who drives has to stop. Then for many it is a shock to find out what few bus services there are in the region. Not everyone can afford to get taxis and not everyone has someone who can come and collect them or take them places. The buses provide a social network for the elderly. Some use the

buses in winter to stay out of their houses because they can't afford to heat their own homes.....yes that does happen.....if you travel by bus a lot and speak to enough elderly people you will find out how important the buses are. If people don't get out on the bus and meet others in the long run it will lead to health problems.....putting more pressure on the NHS.

With bus services proposed to be cut from [6pm](#) on weekdays and on Sunday's, this surely is going to have an impact on the NHS staff, patients and visitors. If you want to visit someone in hospital and don't have a car and can't get a lift into Dumfries...how are people supposed to see their loved ones in hospital? For many other jobs, people need to get to work for evening shifts or for Sunday.

When returning on the Glasgow to Dumfries bus on Friday, which was packed, it arrived into Dumfries late, because of traffic problems in Glasgow. But when the bus arrived to the Sands a lot of people were left waiting for connections to other parts of the region. If the bus gets in after [6pm](#) people would have had to get taxis or simply been left stranded. People who were waiting to get to Newton Stewart on Friday had a long wait for the Stranraer bus. It is great to have a frequent bus service to Glasgow, but it leaves people stuck if they want to come back to the region at particular times. The proposed cuts will have an impact on people travelling to the region as well as people travelling out of the region.

Last year there was a cut to the Stranraer to Carlisle service without any public consultation or posters going up. The bus stopped at Dumfries and people now have to take a bus or train to Carlisle. Local people in CD who are frequent bus users, no one knew anything about it. It was a very well used service and a lot of people were very unhappy.

With cutting bus services this also gives a bad impression to those visiting the region and those who want to come to live and work in the region. Property doesn't always sell, not because of the cost, but quite often because of the lack of public transport.

Libraries have reduced and now have daft hours, galleries have come under threat, now the bus services.....what next?

It is hoped that the council and Swestrans can rethink their proposed ideas and talk more with the public rather than just giving statements. It simply looks as though all they can see is pound signs rather than people.

#### Respondent 9

This is to express deepest concerns about the proposed cuts to bus services throughout the region in order to make savings. The proposals to cut all services after 6pm & for the whole day on Sunday are hard to comprehend justifying cutting what to many is an essential service not only for employment reasons but for the growth of the local area & that this is something you wish to maintain.

People regularly use the vast majority of your services throughout the town to get about, in particular the services 5, 5a, 6, 6a & the 501,. Their importance is not only for people to get into out towns to shop, work but more importantly for elderly people to feel inclusive & valued within our community & disabled ex forces and veterans to combat the ruthless feelings of isolation & despair, the good quality bus services that are being provided at current are a much needed lifeline .

It is appreciated that in this current financial climate concessions will have to be made, but to make a cold cut & severe reduction to the public transport services within our region, is not something that would be considered well thought out for the better benefit of people within the Dumfries & Galloway Council area. It should be put on record that SWestrans are thanked for the opportunity offered to the general public to make contact & allow for a proper public consultation before any decisions are made. Retaining vital transport links is vital for the area, not just for the people who live here but for the wider communities, local economy & ultimately for county as whole.

The importance of the aforementioned routes are as follows: -

#### Service 5 & 5a

This service is of a vast importance to people visiting the hospital & for students studying at the local educational establishments nearby, Dumfries & Galloway College is a prime example, if this service is greatly cut, can it not be seen it would be very troublesome for hospital visitors as not every person visiting there has a car so they have to rely on the public transport links to the town & further afield! Obviously after 7pm at night the route also encompasses Kingholm Quay & Castledykes area of the

town & many others rely on this service to get into town & get back home, simply cutting it or withdrawing it on a Sunday would only further isolate the area which would clearly put the local residents at a further expense if they say wanted to get into town & get home via taxi. This does not make sense at all to tamper with this service, the service speaks for itself as people actively use this service we rely on this bus service a great deal in our daily family lives. As the only link to the town centre on a Sunday it is a vital lifeline to the residents in the area, to cut this service completely on a Sunday simply does not make sense & would only make the residents believe that we are being isolated through no fault of our own.

#### Service 6 & 6a

With 7 services a day on the 6 route it is important to residents in the local area as having this service cut would be nothing short of a major injustice as the services are always busy & very well used & having spoken with other residents who feel that they are being directly punished & isolated if the decision was made to tamper with the services that a lot of us really value & make full use of. The use of the 6a service is one which is not so well known, it is used when it goes to further destinations like Glencaple & Caerlaverock. it is very well used by young people going to school in Dumfries early morning. To cut this service at that time would merely hinder them getting to school every day. It does not make sense at all to tamper with this service, the service speaks for itself as people actively use this service & rely on this bus service a great deal in daily family lives.

#### Service 501

This is out with the specific area in which some people reside but never the less it is the most important one as it enables them to be an active presence in family life, particularly, where access is important, and it is recognised that such access is amenable right now including Sundays. To completely cut this service on a Sunday is the most ludicrous decision being proposed out of this whole debate as it would SEVERELY hinder some people in maintaining the active part in family life and this could be a cause for disruption to family life This is a vital bus link for the communities within Beeswing, Kirkgunzeon, Dalbeattie, Haugh Of Urr & Castle Douglas who very much rely on this service to travel for employment & for shopping.

#### Respondent 10

Concern is expressed at the planned stopping of bus services across Dumfries and Galloway. This area is deprived and forgotten about enough, this would surely just contribute to making this matter even worse.

People who have businesses in Newton Stewart may have employees living in Stranraer and travelling back and forth by bus. A bus service is a far easier, cheaper and safer means of transport for the employees and for the environment than yet another car (which employees may not be able to afford) on the road. What are your solutions for these employees and should these bus services be stopped? Are they to give up work because they cannot fulfil the hours required? Are they to work part time and therefore not be able to afford their rent, council tax etc? Are businesses to lose valued employees and therefore the businesses allowed to suffer?

Business people fully understand the financial upheaval that has brought this discussion about, but there surely has to be a better solution? Instead of 3 buses in 1 hour as often happens, on the same route, why not 1 every few hours? Instead of 52 seat buses why not run some mini buses on the quieter routes, these surely will be cheaper to run.

It is understood that one of the reasons is that not enough people use the services. But if a good and reliable service is not provided, then it will in return not be used.

It is hoped a reasonable and sensible solution to this problem can be found and that yet again residents and visitors to this beautiful area are not made to suffer...again!

#### Respondent 11

Concern is expressed in respect of the proposed reductions to our local bus services. The view is that we are already poorly served by public transport and further reductions are simply not acceptable. An outline of the specific concerns follows:

- Many local bus users still remain unaware of the proposed changes and the potential impact on their daily activities. There has been little specific publicity locally.
- There is significant local concern about the proposals to cancel the 501 weekday service leaving Dumfries at 6.30pm. Many working people are unable to use the 5.15 service as they do not finish work on time. This is understood to be a busy service and there would be concerns about the impact on residents' ability to continue with their employment should public transport become unavailable. Particularly noting the proposed timescale for the implementation of these changes.
- The potential impact on the elderly who are often reliant on public transport. Conversations with local residents suggest they already face significant barriers to accessing public transport; accessibility for people with mobility issues, poor bus times, too many connections to places visited, etc. It is well known the elderly can become easily isolated and there would be interest in knowing if any impact studies have taken place in respect of this user group.
- young people, who rely on public transport for both work and leisure. Many young people work weekends and evenings to fit it in around studying, or undertake the unpopular shifts at their workplace. In rural areas it is difficult enough to find accessible employment, without creating further barriers. Not being able to get to leisure and recreation facilities in the evenings or at weekends is also a significant social concern in small communities, where you need to travel to access facilities such as sports centres or cinemas.
- The current Sunday service to Dalbeattie is very poor and could well explain the poor usage figures published. If you go anywhere you face a very long wait for a return bus. Local residents are also particularly frustrated that the timetable does not facilitate links with onward travel to outwith the region. Poor planning of service connections seems to be a problem across the region, with buses not linking up with onward buses or trains. Better strategic planning may enable more people to make use of the services running.
- Several residents have expressed concern about being unable to get to DGRI during evenings and Sundays when visiting takes place. Many families have relatives in the hospital and would be unable to visit them without public transport. Concern was also expressed about being unable to access either the Out of Ours medical service or Accident and Emergency during evenings and weekends. A return taxi fare would be around £40 to Dalbeattie, which is simply not affordable.
- The only transport alternative left to local residents in evenings and weekends would be taxi facilities. Taxi provision is already very limited in this area and fares are out of reach of most people, particularly if you are thinking about making regular journeys.

In summary, the feeling is that Dalbeattie is already very poorly served by public transport and further reductions to this service are wholly unacceptable. People already suffer from the complete lack of rail services and a failure of strategic transport planning that makes accessing connecting services very difficult. There has been no consultation with the communities until the last minute, making it difficult to gather information and look at potential impacts. There are concerns that these reductions are going to impact primarily on the most vulnerable members of our community, who already struggle to access their communities.

#### Respondent 12 – Community Council

It has been brought to the Community Council's attention the proposal to cut the after 6.00 p.m. bus service from Carlisle to Dumfries..

The Community Council's and bus users are very concerned at these proposals and wish to lodge their strong objections to them on the following grounds:-

- This will have a severe impact on our community in general, but disproportionately on who use the service for work and social purposes for travel into Dumfries, Carlisle and intervening destinations.
- The routes you are proposing to cut will have an impact on the younger members living in the parish who wish to use the service for travel in both directions and who may not have parents who can transport them.

- The removal has more impact on our community than those who live in Dumfries or Annan as both areas have access to a train service and to other bus routes. The only way members of the parish can reach a rail station is by bus, private car or cab, the latter of which is prohibitive on a cost basis.
- The general policy is to encourage people to use public transport rather than private cars; the proposed cut is in direct conflict with this.
- How also does the removal of this service provide Sustainable Travel, the sole purpose of your department?
- This will severely affect people and their employment, particularly with so many people in the area on “zero hours” contracts where they don’t have regular working hours; many of the same people cannot afford to run a car or use cabs.
- Many visitors to the region use the evening bus services to go to both Dumfries and Carlisle for an evening out how is this going to enhance business in Dumfries which is already suffering. Surely providing additional bus services over the summer months should be considered.
- With the recently reduced “drink drive” limits and increased enforcement, more people now rely on bus services both to attend functions in Dumfries, Annan and Carlisle; for many cabs are not an option as they’re too expensive.
- A large and increasing number of elderly residents rely on the Sunday service to get them into Dumfries or Annan for Church and social events; those who do not drive will no longer be able to attend such functions and will become isolated. How can this be allowed when social cohesion in all our communities is being promoted across the region?
- As the 2030 service starts at DGRI it is an essential service for evening visitors for hospital patients. Not everyone can afford taxis
- These cuts will have a disproportionate impact on rural areas such as ours, where the only alternative to the bus service is the private car.
- There is concern that, if this cut is made, further cuts will be follow until bus services in our rural areas disappear altogether.

It is disappointing that more imagination has not been brought to bear on this problem; what about smaller, cheaper to run, buses; ‘dial-a-ride schemes; community buses; re-establishing ‘Halts’ on the rail network where trains can be ‘hailed’?

It should be remembered that residents in our rural communities pay the same taxes as town dwellers for services that are generally inferior.

#### Respondent 13

On the Dumfries and Galloway Council site there is a Consultation on local bus reductions. "Swestrans are seeking your views on how this can be achieved. If you have any thoughts on which journeys should be reduced/removed please contact us-

Reading the minutes from the Agenda of South West of Scotland Transport Partnership of Friday 11th March it was recommended to agree to reduce local bus service provision by removing all Sunday journeys, all Monday to Saturday journeys after 6pm and the 350 Stranraer to Cairnryan service.

It would appear that the decision has already been made and the consultation appears to be little more than a paper exercise.

The decision to cut all Sunday and evening bus services will be a devastating blow for many low-paid people across Dumfries and Galloway. Shift workers like nurses, care workers and those employed in hospitality and tourism will find themselves unable to get to work and in some cases out of a job.

Given that this is a very rural area, the axing of so many bus services will have a major impact on those without transport.

The proposed cuts to the Dumfries - Stranraer route will also impact on those journeying from Dumfries /Carlisle, and vice versa, by bus, there being no direct rail link between Dumfries - Stranraer.

If this really is a consultation I hope you will listen to the many concerned within Dumfries and Galloway.

### Respondent 14

Concerned is expressed about the proposed cuts to the bus services. The links the buses make are crucial for maintaining social and economical benefits. Additionally there are mothers in, who are very reliant on these services as they are unable to drive, and children who will use these buses too to visit friends and get to and from school and afterschool clubs.

These cuts are poorly thought out and you are urged to reconsider or at the very least carry out a proper impact survey which is well advertised in order to allow people to participate.

### Respondent 15

Complaints are raised about the proposed cuts to bus services in Dumfries and Galloway. There are very limited bus services as it is and cuts to the Sunday and evening service will be devastating for many people in the area. A lot of people rely on these buses to get from rural areas where they live into local towns and to get to work in different towns.

At a time when we are being expected to try and lessen our carbon footprint by leaving our cars at home and using public transport it is really short sighted of Swestrans to propose cutting an already limited service.

### Respondent 16

Regular bus users are concerned at the suggestion of cuts to the bus services, especially for people who do not have any form of transport other than public transport.

It is a difficult position when it comes to getting to places after the usual daytime hours services, People are seriously impeded by the scarcity of buses as it is, and definitely should not be cut even further.

Most vacancies require travelling as there are no jobs in Dalbeattie.

This means if young people are to have any chance of even taking a job stacking shelves at Tescos, they need to be able to travel there and back outwith 9 to 5 hours..on some evenings and weekends including Sundays.

### Respondent 17

The scrapping of Sunday service and all evening services will result in people having to leave their jobs....

### Respondent 18

Whilst the need for the Council to make savings is appreciated, several concerns regarding the bus services, are as follows:

1. Lockerbie is a major train station and Sunday services in particular are necessary for people to be able to access the national rail network. For example, if one uses the Sunday afternoon 383 service from Annan to Lockerbie to link with the train. Please keep at least some of the Sunday afternoon 383 services going.
2. Please keep most of the Sunday and evening Carlisle to Dumfries services going. This route is the main artery linking the major towns in the region. It would be a huge loss to the region in economic, tourism and social terms if these were to be cut.
3. I am very concerned about the impact of the service cuts on those employed on low pay. Many low paid jobs involve working outside the normal 9-5 Monday-Friday pattern. Many of these people don't earn enough to be able to afford a car to travel to and from work, therefore they may lose their jobs.

4. Finally, of course there is the negative environmental impact of forcing bus travellers to travel by car due to the cuts.

#### Respondent 19

Users of the 79/179/379 bus between and Dumfries are concerned. If they work variable self-employed hours, and they offered evening classes to their customers, without transport home, they would be unable to satisfy that commitment, particularly, in situations where the bus users may have some disability which means a total reliance on the bus service.

There are equal concerns to bus users who make social visits to Dumfries, Annan, Gretna and Carlisle. Previous cut backs have already meant that trips to Carlisle and Annan are cut short for fear of missing the last bus home. Not having a service after 6pm could mean that businesses which rely on evening trade will suffer. The local public house gets a great deal of trade from bus travellers, especially since the drink driving laws changed.

From the point of view of business people, many of their customers who may be retired, who do not drive and who do not live locally. removing the ability for them to attend evening classes could devastate their businesses, particularly where these relate to the kind of leisure based business it is often said that Dumfries is crying out for!

There are many people (students, nurses, waiting staff, cleaners etc) who do not work 9-5 hours and often do not earn enough to be able to afford to run a car. They rely heavily on public transport and without it would be unable to work at all. Old age pensioners often rely on the buses entirely and would be left isolated in villages after 6pm and on Sundays. They would be unable to attend church - besides the religious aspect of this, the social effects should be mentioned! Also being able to visit people in hospital would be impossible after 6 and on Sundays. Even now, people are having to catch four buses a day to visit their loved ones when they are in hospital.. Without the service though they would have missed spending time with their loved ones during some final and precious days.

To cut back on our infrastructure will tear the heart out of Dumfries and Galloway. Please, find a way of maintaining the present level of transport.

#### Respondent 20

Concerned is expressed about the impact of a reduction in service 500.

The stopping of services after 6pm- does this mean that the 1750 from Newton Stewart will run or not? This is the only way for children attending the local Douglas Ewart High School to return to Creetown should they attend any after school activities, including afterschool study which they are very strongly advised to do by the teachers. (An earlier service would in fact be preferable as the children would not then have to wait for over an hour).

The stopping of this service also means that people in Creetown become unemployable unless they can afford a car as there is no service suitable for them to get to or from work at normal working hours, and as the area relies heavily on tourism, then places like the holiday parks may as well close as they will not be accessible for either staff or visitors'

#### Respondent 21

##### **Serious Consequences of Rural Bus Cuts**

The proposal to cut evening and Sunday bus services in Dumfries and Galloway has serious and wide ranging consequences for Child Safety, Rural Isolation, Health and the Economy undermining Dumfries and Galloway Council's own Transport Strategy.

##### **Child Safety**

Cutting evening and weekend bus services will force children and teenagers under 17 to seek other ways to travel. Children wishing to visit friends or attend activities in the evening or on Sundays may look to find other ways to travel that then leaves them vulnerable or potentially puts them in dangerous situations.

##### **Social Exclusion**

A Crichton Institute survey for D&G Council revealed **Over 20% of households in the region do not have access to private transport. (Ref 1)**

Removing public transport increases social exclusion. One fifth of the population (30,000 people) are left unable to participate in the cultural and social life of the region. If Sunday services are stopped it will make it nearly impossible for people who don't drive to visit family and friends for a weekend. Cutting evening bus services means that it will be impossible for those people to participate in the regions wider events, activities and educational opportunities.

18 months ago Dumfries and Galloway Council announced *“a partnership between SWestrans, Dumfries & Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries & Galloway to roll out of the Rural Transport Solutions project. It aims to create innovative and sustainable rural transport services to reduce social exclusion”*(Ref 4)

The partners clearly understand that public transport services are vital to the reduction of social exclusion, they need to look in detail at the knock on effect that these cuts will have on other budgets.

### **Rural Isolation**

A 2014 survey by Dumfries and Galloway Council revealed that, *“The population of those aged 65 and over is projected to reach 34% of Dumfries and Galloway's projected population by 2037.”* (ref 5)

With the trend continuing towards an aging population and more people in rural locations unable to continue driving, buses become increasingly important. Rural Isolation in Dumfries and Galloway is already a significant issue. Cutting bus services will make it significantly worse. The effect on the mental health of a large number of residents could be significant.

The NHS Strategic Planning in D&G reported last year that *“Transport is regularly quoted as a cause of isolation. The Dumfries and Galloway Community Survey reported that we must recognise that transport problems can have a much bigger impact on people who might already have issues of isolation such as people with a disability and elderly people.”* (NHS Strategic Planning for DG Ref 2)

### **Damage to Business**

Cutting bus services will make it impossible for some people to work shifts or have any flexibility for their employer. It is challenging enough for businesses in an area with a disparate population without axing essential services.

### **Alienating Young**

If young people, the future of the region, are unable to travel, see friends, socialise and work locally, do you think they will stay here? What future is there for a region with a thriving tourist industry and no one to work in it?

### **Undermining Transport Strategy**

D&G Council Regional Economic Strategy states *“Improving the transport infrastructure (to, from and within the region) is a priority for enabling the region to maximise the benefits of connections with other centres of economic activity. (from Ref 1)*

D&G councils own transport strategy priorities improving public transport, these cuts effectively tear up that strategy, and leave the economic activity to find it's own way.

SWestrans own strategy page expands on that:

*“This strategy is about delivering genuine travel choices. It is about providing access to jobs and public services, enabling goods to reach their markets and providing the links that promote social inclusion and support quality of life.*

SWestrans needs to look at full evidence based cost implications of the wide ranging impact the decision to cut these services will have before it goes ahead and dismantles its own policy.

### **Exemplary models**

There must be a look elsewhere to find exemplary models to understand how they are able to deliver key services within budget, for example Highlands and Islands Council (Hitrans) provides services that:

1. *Enable people to participate in everyday life.*
2. *Improve the safety and security of travel.*

3. *Manage the impacts of travel on the area's environmental assets.*
4. *Improve people's health.*

### **Budget and pain points**

The council has a deficit of funding and needs to find savings. What is clear is that cutting public transport has far reaching consequences that will lead to much greater cost to the public purse to repair the damage that those cuts will cause to the region, in particular social welfare, health care and economic development.

Please consider carefully the wide ranging and serious effects that cutting these bus services will have on the region.

**The pain of these public transport cuts will be amplified across the region and have serious and costly implications for all sectors.**

### **Exploring other solutions**

Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil said in Feb 2106:

*Social isolation can damage a person's sense of belonging, empowerment and contribution to society. (Ref 3)*

If it is not possible to find the savings elsewhere the council need to go back to central Government and explain it can't meet the aims of central government policy. And/ or look to the EU to find the funding for dangerous levels of rural deprivation

### References

1. Dumfries & Galloway Regional Economic Strategy 2014 - 2020  
Produced by Crichton Institute for Dumfries and Galloway Council Economic Development Service and Community Planning Executive Group
2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE AGE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION SUBMISSION FROM NHS DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY Vicky Freeman Acting Head of Strategic Planning NHS Dumfries and Galloway 6 March 2015
3. Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil Feb 2106
4. <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4182&item=305>
5. Population Projections Dumfries and Galloway 2012-2037  
<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15081&p=0>
6. The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership  
(HITRANS) [http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional\\_Transport\\_Strategy](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy)

### Respondent 22

The most important focus has to be getting more people to use the bus. People who have recently given up their cars and used the buses, have been delighted with the timetable which has enabled them to get to work when necessary. For those who have zero hours contract, they have to be in when required, therefore the bus is very helpful for them.. Thank you for your good and reliable service.

These early morning bus users are faithful early morning workers, and to cut buses at this time would affect these faithful workers across the region. May I suggest that you do not cut the funding but continue to spend the money. When it comes to people you cannot just cut money. When faithful people are involved you need to take people into consideration with regards the cuts. Someone in your industry needs to stand up and come out from all this austerity talk. Choose to ask for more funding and come out from under all this foolish talk about money, money and money. If you continue to make only monetary austerity cuts you will bruise, hurt and long term alienate good and faithful workers. Sorry for ranting, but here is hoping that the meaning of what's being said is understood..

### Respondent 23

There are concerns regarding the proposed cuts to public transport throughout the region. I Those who use the 501 bus service on a daily basis, this service is quite simply their only means of transport to and from work, and for non-drivers, it is a lifeline.

People's wages over all household bills and the general cost of living,. And they don't have the finances to learn to drive or run a car. Should these proposed cuts be passed people will face the very real possibility of having to look for alternative employment, particularly, when often work colleagues and line managers have already made allowances for them within their work pattern that allow them some flexibility to do certain shifts. They would not be too happy if they were asked to be taken off weekend shifts and any shift beyond 6pm.

Having reviewed the figures for the 501 service from the most recent meeting, there are surprises and shocks. Please follow this link and look at Page 11  
<http://swestrans.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17317&p=0>

The one shocking thing is the percentage of passengers that are subsidised or classed as non-fare, 222 (59%) of the 377 weekly passengers are subsidised. This is a disgracefully large number of passengers per week that don't pay. Senior citizens (over 60's) are provided with bus passes and there are no problems with this. There is a problem, however, with the large numbers of individuals with drug and/or alcohol addictions and the unemployed that use the service with their bus passes that allow them to travel with a companion. The majority of the non-fare payers that use this service are not senior citizens.

Would it not be a better idea to amend the criteria for receiving these passes and bring more paying customers on the buses?

There is a feeling amongst people that they are about to be punished for working hard and needing access to a public service.

#### Respondent 24

Here are two situations that will be directly affected by the proposal to cut evening bus services :

1. The teenagers who use the buses to travel from Newton Stewart and Whithorn to Wigtown to attend Friday night youth club, and to get home again.
2. Mature students who have been taking modules at the University in Paisley one day a week for three years. If they have any severe impairment of vision and therefore can't drive, presently, they would get the evening bus THE NIGHT BEFORE THEIR CLASSES, from Wigtown to Newton Stewart where they would change buses to Stranraer, where they may have to stay overnight before catching the train to Paisley. After their r classes, the journey would be by train to Girvan and then by two buses to Newton Stewart and then Wigtown. This final bus to Wigtown may be unavailable under the proposed cuts - but it wouldn't matter because the very first stage of the students' journeys on the previous night would now also be impossible under the cuts!

Both the above could potentially come true as they would be about real people doing things that are good, and exactly the kind of things that a modern caring society would encourage and make simpler, rather than risk making them impossible.

Please take situations like these into account when making your decision about the service cuts.

#### Respondent 25

It is usually thought that those who look after our services know best how to arrange things for the greater good rather than an individual's desires. This means that if the public are not using buses sufficiently from Dumfries to Moffat and back in the weekday evenings and on Sundays, then there is probably a case for a reduction in service. However because Moffat is out on the northern edge of Dumgal it can be very difficult to get to, before the end of the day, and there is therefore a plea to keep a late service on all evenings for folks returning home to Moffat from all over the country.

#### Respondent 26

The financial predicament that faces Swestrans are appreciated. The proposed savings as reported in the press raise concerns, however. It cannot be that a balanced reduction is as straightforward as cutting everything after 6pm and on Sunday.

There are those use who are fortunate enough not to depend on the bus service, but who however use it for social purposes.

Main concern is with the 501 service: It is questionable as to whether all the day time journeys are well used or necessary, whereas especially on a Friday and Saturday I know the 8.30pm and 11.30pm buses going west are very well used by all ages. That service not only helps social use but also hospital visits, students coming home for the weekend etc.

Respondent 27

Please find attached a list of signatures for the Haud the Bus petition. Please could you forward on to the appropriate person?

The undersigned, ask that Swestrans and Dumfries & Galloway Council reconsider the drastic cuts to buses in D&G and invest appropriately in this lifeline service - 26 signatures attached.

Respondent 28

People who have given up their cars to use the bus service will be concerned that one of the services to be hit is the 500 bus service, especially at evenings and weekends and hardest hit - no Sunday service.

Currently, for bus passengers with bicycles who undertakes a journey to Portsmouth, a good option is to board the 500 bus (the 08:06) with the bicycle and luggage at Castle Douglas, and then to our nearest train station - Dumfries. This is the chosen best option, especially with the bike, (The X75 runs later.)

So, there is a vital interest in the decent service level that people currently enjoy, remaining at least at its present status.

Really, at this stage of a halting progress toward a green economy, the emphasis should be on planning major increases to bus services. At the same time, looking to discourage car usage, due to its very adverse pollution effects.

Finally then, it is surely unarguable that to cut back bus services - however pressed the council is for money - sends the wrong signal. That signal being - It's perfectly o.k. to carry on as you are. Drive your car whenever and wherever you want to. Carry on as you are is a deadly policy. Please find cuts elsewhere, or find additional sources of revenue. Public transport, in our far-flung, sparsely populated region is a must.

Respondent 29

If the [New Abbey] bus service stops in the evenings and a Sunday it will be a devastating blow to our community.

People travel regularly during the week and every Sunday to the coast using the 372 service. It is hard to believe that trying to cut the bus service off after 6pm and a Sunday will benefit anybody??!!

There are so many services in Dumfries town centre eg Lochside loop that run all day every day surely there is no need for this?

Fair enough looking at percentages and usage of different services might not be great but why are we getting cut off completely.

Surely reducing some town services where people can walk or have access to taxis would be more effective than cutting country people off completely.

If necessary reduce services during the day but do not cut us off completely.

We need the service available after 6pm and on a Sunday.

Look at reducing town services where people can walk or use taxis do not cut off country folk that do not have this option.

### Respondent 30

Due to the lack of busses on the 501 Dumfries route just after 6pm it is not acceptable to cancel it, there are a lot of people that have certain work shifts whom rely on busses after that time so it is advised that the cut is somewhere else otherwise there might be a lot of people not liking the outcome and the company may lose money in the wrong section

### Respondent 31

At Penpont Friendship Club (Penpont village, near Thornhill, D&G) on March 17th some of the members expressed grave concern about the possibility of cuts to bus services, specifically because many of the Club members are elderly and live on their own; they don't have cars. Cuts to services to/from Penpont will mean:

1. People being more isolated and lonely; potentially leading to severely detrimental effects on health and wellbeing.
2. People unable to attend medical/dental appointments - at Thornhill and in Dumfries.
3. People being less independent; more reliant on others, including services.

### Respondent 32

Protesting in the strongest possible terms against the plan to reduce or cancel certain Sunday and evening services along and astride the A 75 corridor. This area is largely rural and quite remote and the services are used mainly by the "working poor" who need these services to transit to and from work, those young and elderly who do not possess a vehicle or have no access to one, or are too young to drive. The penalty for any reduction will be paid by the less well off in our community and should be discarded immediately.

### Respondent 33

Suggestions for the bus cuts:

- cut town runs first;

the reason for this is people can use taxis or walk for short journeys.

Town buses go round Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries.

- reducing the Lockerbie to Dumfries bus from every 30 mins to every hour is a possibility.

a Glasgow bus has even been seen on the Lockerbie service. Madness.

- cutting buses after 6pm or a Sunday is an option.

### Respondent 34

It is hoped that routes which are poorly served would not be affected further, Milton to Lochfoot to Dumfries has very few buses, and there is an emerging younger generation and elderly people that rely on the service.

### Respondent 34

Concerns are expressed that living in an aging community where buses are relied upon that further cuts in the service from Moniaive to Dumfries will have a detrimental effect on the survival of the community. If the last bus (which leaves Dumfries at around 5.50pm) is cut this will affect those that use it for work. If the one bus on a Sunday is cut then this again would affect those who have folks in hospital, those who use this as it takes them close to a supermarket and allows sufficient time to do a

shop and return back to Moniaive. If a run has to be cut could for example the 10 to 2 and 10 to 4 bus made into a 3.30pm run as with the 11.30 and 1.30 be made into a 12 noon run. To have a last bus at 10 minutes to 4 is ludicrous and no service on a Sunday just not workable. Any one coming home for the weekend for example would not be able to do this as there would be no link to other services

#### Respondent 35

It is felt that the posters about the bus Cuts as seen everywhere are an actual... Ridiculous idea... What about all the people that use late public transport to get to work and from work, those who an't get to a job opportunity that have been offered because they can't drive..... This is sure to leave some people stuck on benefits for a little longer now.

The biggest part of this whole thing that is annoying is the Lochside buses, were not needing one every ten mins, the old routes and the buses were fine though never on time anyway so maybe one every 30 mins would be fine, and maybe less empty... The Lochside buses for 9/10 times have a few people in it... Mostly empty but a cut off at 6 is too harsh, that's crazy, maybe 8 will be more sensible.

#### Respondent 36

It's ridiculous that instead of giving more bus times, mostly at night, you're reducing them. It's shameful, they should be putting more buses on bus timetables passed 6'oclock rather than taken them away

#### Respondent 37

Budgets will end up cutting local bus services but the proposals that have been set out are just too severe.

Is it the case that the postponement of the final outcome has coincided with the local elections, so the announcement has been put on hold so as not to affect current councillors and their positions ?

Well, listening to the passengers on the threatened services has only led people to believe that the service cuts and the final announcement won't be disillusioning local voters on where the blame lies in all this.

Has the new premises for the hospitals been considered enough also ?

How time flies! When a couple of years ago, local councils were trying to promote smarter greener travel and yet we now find these same forms of transport facing wholesale cuts...

An idea of saving budget cuts would be more simpler.....

Namely, put services in Dumfries onto hourly timings, as this would easily solve the financial ramifications of over budgets whilst providing as yet, a regular journey from schemes within Dumfries albeit not quite as frequent but all the same , local folk still have the opportunity to venture into the town centres.

Doing the maths on this proves it's a viable alternative to completely turning off the transport link after 6pm.

#### Respondent 38

Concerns are expressed about the proposed cuts to bus services. To highlight the following:

- 1 The short timescale of the process together with the desultory consultation have meant that statutory bodies such as community councils, let alone bus users and the general public, have had effectively no opportunity to give their view.
- 2 It is understood that SWestrans held a conference on overall bus policy last December and promised feedback. This, has not been forthcoming. How is it defensible to make significant changes to the service in this context?
- 3 Savings from the proposed cuts are unrelated to any strategic analysis; they are a form of salami-slicing. Reductions in service should never take place except in the context of a thought-through strategy for public transport in the region as a whole.
- 4 There is no evidence that the proposals have been subjected to assessment in relation to equalities legislation (how, for example, do you imagine someone with no access to a car would in future make a visit to Dumfries hospital on a Sunday?) or economic well-

being (how do you suppose workers with no access to a car will now get to work on a Sunday or in the evenings, where this is required?).

Look across Europe at regions with flourishing economies and socially healthy communities; invariably they have efficient, well-coordinated, affordable public transport systems. It is not good enough to cry 'there is no money'. You must push back against this orthodoxy, and make the argument that de-investing in public transport is actually counter-productive. As a first step, please put these cuts on hold, and mount a serious consultation on a viable future for bus services in Dumfries and Galloway.

#### Respondent 39

Please find attached the full response of the Scottish Green Party's Dumfries & Galloway branch.

The response is based on discussions with bus service users, our engagement with SWestrans over the last year, including at their event in Castle Douglas in December, and current public transport policy. It focuses on five key concerns: Social exclusion and rural isolation, public safety, business and tourism, demographic challenges and transport connectivity.

22% of households in Dumfries & Galloway are without access to a car, of these 2,500 are in remote rural areas. These individuals have as much right to a reasonable bus service as car owners have a right to maintained public roads. The Scottish Greens oppose all cuts to the already limited bus service in Dumfries & Galloway and believe far greater savings can be made by boosting passenger numbers through investing appropriately in this key public service.

The proposed cuts to Sunday and evening services cannot be allowed to go ahead. They run counter to the stated public transport policy aims of the Council, SWestrans and the Scottish Government. In this context, additional funding should and must be found. The savings amount to just 0.1% of the Council's overall budget. The Council should consider diverting additional funding from money set aside for areas that will be negatively affected by these cuts and approach central government for support.

Scottish Greens wish to work constructively with SWestrans, Dumfries & Galloway Council, the Scottish Government and public and private sector transport providers to establish best practice for rural transport provision. This should include interconnectivity, improved ticketing systems, promotion of public transport and developing a local public transport system fit for today and the next ten years. Some of these investments and alternative solutions are outlined in the report.

We urge the Board to engage in a meaningful consultation with the people of Dumfries & Galloway, Community Councils and other stakeholders to develop a responsive public transport system that serves the needs of its passengers and abandon these ill-considered, unnecessary and potentially disastrous cuts.

The future of Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway relies on an environmentally sustainable and socially accessible public transport system. 25% of Scotland's carbon emissions come from transportation, so reducing the use of private cars and encouraging shared transportation is imperative for the transition to a low-carbon society.

22% of households in Dumfries & Galloway are without access to a car, of these 2,500 live in remote rural areas. These individuals have as much right to a reasonable bus service as car owners have a right to maintained public roads.

The Scottish Greens oppose all cuts to the already limited bus service in Dumfries & Galloway and believe far greater savings can be made by boosting passenger numbers through investing appropriately in this key public service.

The planned cuts to services have been put forward based on a hierarchy of needs developed as part of a 2011 review of the bus network carried out by SWestrans. Unfortunately, this review does not appear to have been made public and certainly is not easy to find in the public domain. Therefore we

have been given no information behind either the way this hierarchy was arrived at, or how they have assessed which journeys are made for which need.

Placing a hierarchy of needs structure on an essential public service such as transport fundamentally misunderstands how the network is used in practice and imposes an unnecessary value judgment on the way users of public transport live their lives. Notwithstanding this reservation, the hierarchy appears to have been applied without any assessment of the wider impact cuts to public transport provision will have, nor meaningful consultation with service users and stakeholders.

SWestrans held a conference in Castle Douglas in December 2015, attended by Green Party activists, community councillors and others to discuss the future of rural public transport. There has been no follow-up or information on the conference that is in the public domain. These cuts were not discussed at that meeting. If the future planning project has been mothballed, SWestrans cannot reasonably maintain their position as gatekeepers of information, yet refuse to engage with the public except to carry out cuts.

During our brief consultation and campaign, Scottish Greens have had the opportunity to speak to numerous bus users about how and why they use public transport and the challenges they face with an already sparse service. Some of their comments are included in this report. Bus users have been clear, vocal and constructive in sharing their experience of a public transport system that is under-funded, patchy and difficult to use.

Scottish Greens wish to work constructively with SWestrans, Dumfries & Galloway Council, the Scottish Government and public and private sector transport providers to establish best practice for rural transport provision. This should include interconnectivity, improved ticketing systems, promotion of public transport and developing a local public transport system fit for today and the next ten years.

The aim of this report is to highlight key areas where the impact of the cuts will far outweigh the value of any savings, to suggest areas where additional funding for bus services could and should be sought before making cuts and to demonstrate areas where the proposals directly contradict the Council's, SWestrans' or the Scottish Government's stated policy for public transport provision.

#### SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND RURAL ISOLATION

The removal of public transport services greatly increases social exclusion and rural isolation for all those who rely on it, in particular the elderly and disabled residents who are unable to drive. Removing bus services after 6pm and on Sunday will leave 30,000 of our most vulnerable residents unable to participate in the cultural and social life of the region, making it nearly impossible for people who don't drive to visit family and friends any distance away for a weekend. Cutting evening bus services means that it will be impossible for those people to attend afternoon and evening events in the region.

According to The Commission for Integrated Transport's 2011 report, *A New Approach to Rural Public Transport*, "Securing fairness in the level of access to transport services is enshrined in disability legislation to ensure disabled people's inclusion in society and a good quality of life. However, outside of this identifiable group, other groups are also at risk of exclusion and disadvantage because of their lack of access to key services (e.g. work, education, healthcare and social activities)."

Social exclusion and poverty exist in both urban and rural areas but, in rural areas, the risk of becoming transport disadvantaged is much greater. Rural areas pose particular problems for public transport as a result of low densities of population and because many key services are time sensitive in their access (e.g. jobs, education and healthcare, for example), which makes conventional public transport expensive to provide. Recognising that rural communities are entitled to a reasonable level of transport access is therefore fundamental to providing a good quality of life and mitigating poverty and social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

It is unreasonable to use user numbers as a pretext for cutting services in rural areas. Just last month, Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil stated that, "Social isolation can damage a person's sense of belonging, empowerment and contribution to society." If it is not possible to find the money to fund

these services from elsewhere in the Council's budget, it must explain why it can't meet the aims of central government policy and pursue them for additional funding.

*"If the evening and Sunday service is cut people will feel trapped within their community. Georgetown/Lochvale always seems to get hit whenever cuts to services are considered. The elderly and young will be hardest hit by this decision, especially in our mainly rural community."*

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

There is no indication in the Board papers that SWestrans has consulted with Police Scotland or public health practitioners for advice on the public safety implications of this decision.

Cutting evening and weekend bus services will force users to seek other ways to travel, particularly young people wishing to visit friends or attend evening activities. Alternative ways to travel can leave them in vulnerable or potentially dangerous situations.

Reducing public transport provision at such an early hour may well encourage drivers to drink and drive where previously they may have taken the bus to enable them to enjoy an evening out. Dumfries & Galloway, in common with many areas of rural Scotland, has an unenviable record on road deaths caused by young and inexperienced drivers on rural roads. This policy will increase the numbers of young people driving, and young people as passengers in those vehicles, particularly in the evenings.

When the Crichton campus was developed, the number 5 bus route was enhanced to alleviate concerns about accessibility and pressure on nearby roads. Reducing this service will have a significant impact on students and hospital staff as well as patients and hospital visitors. With limited ambulance cover, people do use buses to access A&E and out-of-hours services and this will be impossible if the cuts go ahead. This is a betrayal of both SWestrans' stated hierarchy of needs and the promises made by the organisation and the Council.

*"I regularly use the bus services around Dumfries and Galloway and if we cannot afford taxis we are forced to walk or hitch-hike ... Cutting Sunday and evening services entirely will mean people will be dangerously stranded as well as reduced mobility for tourists, youth and elderly who may just want to nip out for shopping, not spend an entire day waiting on one return bus. If workers are forced to get taxis when they already struggle to earn beneath the living wage, we will see a dramatic increase in food bank usage and ultimately malnourishment, just so we can spend our last tenner on transport home instead of food for our children."*

#### BUSINESS & TOURISM

There is no indication in the SWestrans board papers that a cost-benefit analysis has been conducted to examine the impact of these cuts on the wider economy. 88% of businesses in Dumfries and Galloway have less than 10 employees and there are just 15 large employers. Jobs are not concentrated in one area but spread throughout the region, making bus services that connect rural areas together just as vital as those that connect rural areas to our larger towns.

SWestrans has previously acknowledged that employment patterns are changing with an expectation of an earlier start (6am) and a late finish (10pm). This applies in almost all sectors, including the NHS which is increasingly moving to a seven-day-a-week service. Removing evening and Sunday bus services therefore runs counter to SWestrans' and the Council's own forward planning and the priorities in the hierarchy of needs for bus services to enable individuals to access healthcare and work.

Cutting bus services will make it impossible for some people to work shifts or have any flexibility for their employer. It is challenging enough for businesses in an area with a disparate population without axing essential services.

Many businesses in Dumfries operate on Sundays and 40% of high-street shoppers come by bus. Dumfries & Galloway Council has been investing in regenerating Dumfries town centre. Partly owing to the online shopping boom, footfall to retail shops in town centres like Dumfries is down by 20%.

During our consultation, we spoke to the manager of a large store in the centre of Dumfries who told us he had three members of staff who would be unable to get to work if the cuts went ahead. Research by Transform Scotland has shown that 11% of those who rely on the bus to get to work would have to leave their job if their bus service was reduced.

*"I rely on bus services after 6pm to get back home to Castle Douglas, after a 10 hour shift in Dumfries. I can't understand the logic of scrapping these vital services."*

*"I am a small business owner in Dumfries town centre..., ..... Cutting evening services will mean that a huge part of my business will be affected, .... For people, like my elderly neighbour, who cannot drive the buses are an essential life line. These people still need to get to work and to the hospital. Cutting this service is effectively a discrimination against anyone who does not own a car!"*

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

By 2037, 34% of Dumfries & Galloway's population is expected to be aged 65 and over. In order to provide our ageing population with the level of care elderly residents currently rely on, every child currently in Dumfries & Galloway's primary schools would have to work in the care sector. Care work is low-paid, geographically dispersed and relies on 24-hour working. The public transport system needs to react to these needs.

Several older residents, who make full use of their bus pass, expressed a willingness to contribute to the cost of travel, perhaps through a voluntary subscription fee. This could be combined with perks, for example reduced prices for occasional excursion bus trips or discounted entry to museums when they travel by bus.

Young people need a public transport system that encourages them to stay in the area and does not act as a deterrent to those planning to move here. During our consultation we met several people who had moved here from outside the region, or moved to towns from elsewhere in the region, in order to have access to reliable public transport. In some cases, these cuts could force families to move home or out of the region altogether.

Young people are the backbone of our tourism industry, providing the flexible, casual labour seasonal businesses rely on. How can our tourist industry thrive if there are no young people able to travel to work in it?, Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival was asked by Dumfries & Galloway Life what the one thing he would change about the region was. His answer? "Better rural transport."

Dumfries & Galloway Council recently announced a £10 million investment in the region's tourist industry. A small proportion of this money could perfectly justifiably be invested in improving the public transport network and avoid the need for these cuts entirely.

*"My children would have been totally isolated if these services hadn't been available in what is a very cut off rural community." "With an already very limited bus service, this would be catastrophic for our community. We strive to retain our young people, with such limited public transport service that can only get worse!"*

#### CONNECTING PEOPLE

The primary purpose of any public transport system is to connect people and places. With a limited rail network, particularly in the 70 miles between the region's two largest settlements, bus travel is the only way for many people living in rural areas to access work, education, healthcare and the wider world.

The extremely limited existing service has numerous timetabling anomalies where the first or last bus fails to connect with onward bus and rail services or leaves an unacceptably long time between services. These cuts will further exacerbate this issue. Just two examples from the current timetable: *London to Newton Stewart by Train*

Train leaves Euston 15.30 arrives Carlisle 18.46, connects with train at Carlisle 19.17 arrives Dumfries 19.55. The last 500 bus to Newton Stewart leaves Dumfries at 20.10 and arrives at 21.35. Quite simply, if there is no 500 after 6pm, it's a long way to Newton Stewart to get home.

*Edinburgh to Dumfries & Galloway*

Bus leaves Edinburgh at 15.30, arrives Whitesands 18.30. Currently travelers to the west connect with the 20.10 500. If there is no service after 6pm, this is impossible.

The consequences are that it is really difficult to travel elsewhere in the UK to and from this region.

*"We already have too few buses and poor connections between buses and trains. Don't make it worse!" "People coming home for the weekend won't be able to return to their homes to get to work for the Monday. This idea is totally unpractical. Please reconsider this proposal seriously."*

## TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Council's current Regional Economic Strategy states "Improving the transport infrastructure (to, from and within the region) is a priority for enabling the region to maximise the benefits of connections with other centres of economic activity" In other words, the Council's plan for the economic future of the region makes public transport a priority. The planned cuts make a mockery of this, effectively taking the Council back to square one and appears to assume economic activity will spontaneously regenerate itself.

SWestrans claims that its strategy "is about delivering genuine travel choices. It is about providing access to jobs and public services, enabling goods to reach their markets and providing the links that promote social inclusion and support quality of life." These are laudable aims but there is no indication that SWestrans has made any attempt to look at the cost implications these cuts will have on jobs, public services, economic activity, social inclusion and quality of life.

*"We are continuing the downward spiral where reduced services lead to reduced passenger numbers. leads to reduced services and so on until there is no service at all. These cuts run against all those policies on economic development, environmental development, improved employment, reduced rural deprivation etc "*

## ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

An alternative way to tackle the issue of high subsidies per passenger is not to cut services but to ensure that more people use buses. SWestrans has struggled to display the vision, innovation and confidence to make this possible. This is a real missed opportunity as Dumfries & Galloway has great potential, thanks to its location, existing infrastructure and tourist industry, to lead the way in showing that rural public transport can be simple to use, integrated, popular and affordable.

Demand-responsive or flexible transport services could be part of a co-ordinated approach to improving rural transport in Dumfries & Galloway. Many of the buses currently operating on rural routes are larger than necessary. Investing in cheaper-to run 17-seater minibuses could significantly reduce operating costs.

Road-based public transport services should be designed to connect with each other and with train services. Ideally, passengers would be able to purchase one ticket (or use a smartcard) for their entire journey. This co-ordinated public transport network would be supplemented by initiatives such as car-sharing schemes (to match people for regular car trips, such as the trip to work, enabling a saving in driving costs), and car clubs (which provide access to a car for short-term hire).

Transform Scotland's Bus Fair campaign is currently advocating for Scotland-wide Smart ticketing, accepted across all modes of transport, which can transform the convenience of bus travel. Bus fares are prohibitively expensive for families and young people, especially over longer distances. For example, for a family of two adults and two primary-school-aged children a return journey from Gatehouse-of-Fleet to Dumfries costs £22, three times what it would cost to drive the same distance. Family and young-person discount cards should be developed and promoted to increase usage.

Opportunities to encourage more bus travel are repeatedly missed. Large rural music festivals such as Wickerman, Eden and the World Ceilidh would benefit hugely from the provision of dedicated bus services to connect festival-goers with rail and bus hubs. Such services could be profitable, take traffic off the roads at these busy times and boost the area's sustainability credentials.

On a smaller scale, occasional extra bus services during the summer could make more of community events. Every Thursday evening in the Summer, Kirkcudbright hosts a Scottish Night in the Harbour Square car park. A local bus that took people from surrounding villages to and from Kirkcudbright for this event would reduce pressure on car parking elsewhere in the town and enable residents to use local bars and restaurants without drinking and driving.

Taxi-plus and community transport projects have been pursued in other rural areas, such as Stirlingshire, with great success. Innovative ideas like these could be rolled out quickly in Dumfries & Galloway.

#### KEY FACTS

- SWestrans' overall budget represents 1% of Dumfries & Galloway Council's overall budget. The proposed cuts are a meagre 0.1% of spending.
- The average cost per journey in Dumfries & Galloway is £3.10. In Wigtownshire, which accounts for 58% of provision, it is £4.20
- The average fare is £2.25. Bus operators get 57% of that from concessionary fares, which is £1.38.
- 62% of rural bus services are subsidised.
- It typically costs a private company £25 an hour to run their service. This includes bus, fuel and driver. Consequently, to break even without subsidy requires 20 passengers per hour.
- Average earnings per week in Dumfries & Galloway are £463 which can be compared with £527 in the central belt of Scotland.
- There are 73,000 licenced cars in Dumfries & Galloway; 590 per 1,000 people.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Dumfries & Galloway Green Party strongly recommends that SWestrans does not cancel any Sunday or evening bus services. In the short-term, the Board should ask the Council to maintain existing funding levels, diverting funds from tourism, health and social care integration and economic development budgets if necessary to do so. All those areas will be negatively affected by the planned loss of bus provision.

We urge the Board to engage in a meaningful consultation with the people of Dumfries & Galloway, Community Councils and other stakeholders to develop a responsive public transport system that serves the needs of its passengers.

Finally, SWestrans should seek out sources of central government or EU funding to invest in and improve public transport in the region and effectively promote the service to residents and visitors.

#### Respondent 40

There is disappointment at the proposed bus cuts across Dumfries and Galloway. Families rely on public buses for travelling to work and also for visiting friends and to access other areas of the region for leisure purposes. Not all people have access to a car and for them, using buses is a necessity. Promoting and developing the use of public transport should be the emphasis not cutting services.

It is frustrating that so much money from the council has been poorly utilised over the years - for instance the orange bikes for hire and DG One to mention only a couple of poor council decisions. As a result the feeling is bus users are being punished and targeted which is not fair when the council should be stepping in to support and invest in local bus services.

There is opinion that the people of Dumfries and Galloway (and visitors/tourists) will be negatively impacted by the proposed cuts and the committee in charge of making decisions should think again about the implications of the cuts and consider other methods of making the savings.

While it is recognised that in this time of austerity cuts may have to be made, it is hoped these decisions will be based on evidence collected from the service users and also data gathered on the needs and demands of different services.

Respondent 41

Written in response to the short consultation on the future of local bus services: it is recognised that every part of the public sector is under significant financial strain and that not only did every budget proposal tabled by political groups on Dumfries & Galloway Council contain a reduction to Swestrans' funding, the successful proposal which has given rise to this situation included the smallest reduction.

Having said that, it is not believed that anyone who supported that budget expected the proposal subsequently produced by Swestrans, which has caused such a significant degree of concern. In response to the proposal itself the following observations are made:

- The removal of the services in question after 6pm and on Sundays will have a disproportionate impact on the most rural parts of Dumfries & Galloway, since these areas are most likely to rely on subsidised bus services to start with;
- The removal of services after 6pm and on Sundays cannot be assumed, as is acknowledged in the report, not to have any affect on employment or accessing health services. People have expressed concerns that their ability to work would be negatively impacted by the changes if they go ahead, and others are concerned that they might not be able to return home from visiting relatives in hospital;
- It is not clear whether the proposal has been impact assessed but is concerning that it would be likely to have a disproportionately negative impact on the elderly and disabled;
- Finally there must be significant concerns over the impact of this proposal on young people either those younger than 17 or those who may be older but who cannot afford a car. This proposal is bound to have a negative impact on a group who may have the fewest alternative options available to them if they cannot rely on family for transport.

It is hoped that you will be prepared to give further consideration to the alternatives, which as far as can be seen would be two broad options. The first would be to attempt to realise the same level of savings by reducing the frequency of some services rather than their wholesale removal after 6pm and on Sundays.

If, however, it is not possible to do this, It is urged that you consider using the powers available under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, Section 3:

“(2) The share of expenses to be paid by a constituent Council shall be -

(a) such as the Transport Partnership, having regard to its transport strategy, thinks fit”

It is argued that Dumfries & Galloway's Regional Transport Strategy does not make provision for any such reduction in services and the significant negative implications they would have for the region. Accepting this would be a difficult, possibly unprecedented, decision but it's trusted that you will give it due consideration.

Respondent 42

Reference your request for user comments re possible reduction in services It's suggested that the 379 Annan to Gretna Outlet Village be discontinued.

Although this service offers a slightly speedier journey this route is more than adequately covered by the 79 & 179. From experience the 379 would appear to be little used. On the occasions it has been travelled on, there is almost always only one passenger.

Hope these comments are helpful.

Respondent 43

Written with regards to the planned cuts to your 500 service. There are a number of workers who use and depend on the bus services to get them to and from work and if the planned cuts go ahead then it is likely that some of them will effectively have to give up their jobs.

There's also a large number of people who use the 500 service to get to the area's places of interest. In this rural area people depend on such services not only for work but to explore our beautiful region.

Respondent 44

Re Service 415- Newton Stewart to Machars. Comments re Service Reductions

- ? necessary to have 14.31 bus and 14.25 bus on school days from Newton Stewart to Whithorn/Isle Whithorn
- ? necessary to have 17.40 and 18.11 bus from Isle of Whithorn to Newton Stewart. ? remove 18.11. The 17.40 enables access to events/activities that commence in Newton Stewart at 19.00 .
- ? miss out 11.05 from Newton Stewart to Whithorn/Isle of Whithorn if there is one at 10.00 and 12.05
- ? miss out 13.25 from Newton Stewart to Whithorn/Isle of Whithorn if there is one at 12.05 and 14.15
- ? Move 16.00 from Newton Stewart to Whithorn /Isle of Whithorn to later time. If children attending Douglas Ewart High School attend after school lessons they are usually finished by 16.15/16.30 but there is no bus home until 17.30
  
- Currently there is a bus leaves Whithorn at 6.40 arriving in Newton Stewart at 07.25. For students of Dumfries and Galloway college or any of the university campuses in Dumfries, the bus to Dumfries College leaves Newton Stewart at 07.05. The current services exclude students from the Machars being able to access this 'college' bus and excludes students from the Isle of Whithorn because the bus only commences service in Whithorn.

It would be obliged if some of the above could be considered in the proposed cuts to services.

Respondent 45

Protest is made to the proposed reduction of services between Dumfries and Newton Stewart. People in Whithorn are dependent upon these services – requiring regular access to bus transport during the evening as well as during the day. For older people, life opportunities will be severely curtailed by any reduction in services. The closure of the X75 has already caused much inconvenience and an additional travel time of 4 hours per day for journeys to England. Without a late service from at least Dumfries it will be difficult to undertake such journeys in one day. Please reconsider.

Respondent 46

Regular users of the bus services both to Dumfries and Castle Douglas would be dismayed at the discontinuation of the services after 6 pm if these rumours are true. It provides a lifeline to the elderly for visiting family and friends in homes and hospitals, and as a survey revealed recently it is also helping to provide a better quality of life to lots of retired people, which ultimately reduces stress etc and thus leads to onward benefits to the health services. Perhaps a way to reduce the finance bill in local bus services would be to cut the round the town housing scheme service, as these buses appear quiet. It is hoped the main line services are not cut as a 6 pm final service would be drastic for lots of pensioners, commuters, holiday makers and very importantly the working population who have no other choice.

Respondent 47

There are concerns regarding the proposed cuts to public transport throughout Dumfries and Galloway; that the removal of services for rural areas of the region will only serve to leave many individuals isolated and without any form of transportation.

Non-drivers use the Dalbeattie to Dumfries bus service (501) on a daily basis to travel to and from work and by making the proposed cuts to this service they may no longer be able to carry out their current jobs. Employers have already shown a great deal of flexibility in accommodating some shift times to match public transport and it is very much doubt that they will accept that employees can't work weekends or after 6pm at night during the week.

Taking access to this service away will force some to seek alternate employment. They will struggle to get to work and face being left stranded in Dumfries late in the evening after finishing. For those whose wage is the only one in the home, their wages cover all household bills and the cost of living, and also have to provide for family members. They may not have the finances to learn to drive or run a car so the bus service is a lifeline, just as it is for many hundreds of people throughout the region.

Reviewing the figures for the 501 service from the most recent meeting is shocking. If you don't have the figures close at hand, please follow this link and look at Page 11 (<http://swestrans.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17317&p=0>)

The most shocking thing is the percentage of passengers that are subsidised or classed as non-fare, 222 (59%) of the 377 weekly passengers are subsidised. This is a disgracefully large number of passengers per week that don't pay. It's known that senior citizens (over 60's) are provided with bus passes and there are not problems with this. However there is a problem with the large numbers of individuals with various other issues such as unemployment and drug or alcohol addiction that are given bus passes that allow them and a companion to travel for free. People in possession of such a pass often get on the bus with a companion. This is 6 passengers that are all subsidised at a cost of £5.07, that is £30.42 lost on one journey alone and on this bus route that is sadly a regular occurrence.

Would it not be a better idea to amend the criteria for receiving these passes and bring more paying customers on the buses? With the exception of seniors why not give a reduced fee of £1 per journey if they are in possession of such passes? Remove the need for a subsidy that is higher than the cost of most journeys on this service. Regular users pay on average between £20 to £25 per week, contributing to the service and at times scraping together a bus fare but facing being punished. .

The following quote is straight from your website - "As part of a balanced transport strategy the provision of good, reasonably priced public transport services is essential". Removal of these services will see you fail on many of these philosophies.

### Respondent 48

The following is a response on behalf of Kelton Community Council which covers the villages of Gelston, Rhonehouse and Kelton.

There is considerable concern about bus services. The 516 service is a vital lifeline for many people who do not have their own transport – it is essential for not only shopping but also Doctor's appointments etc. The service was increased last year and if savings on the service have to be made then a slight reduction would probably not cause too many problems although it would be more straightforward if the service was the same each day. Rhonehouse has the ring and ride service and again that is an essential service for many on the village.

### Respondent 49

The following are objections to proposed service cuts. . Should the Summerhill No.9 evening service be stopped then that would present certain difficulties particularly during the winter months in inclement weather especially for elderly passengers. Also of pressing concern is the fact that someone who works in Dalbeattie and whose employment dictates that they do NOT finish at 5pm instead working on until around 8.30pm. Should the evening Dalbeattie to Dumfries service be axed then they would have to relinquish their job as they have no car. They cannot find similar employment in Dumfries. It is hoped that you receive many objections to these proposed cuts which will affect people both socially and economically with employment they found so hard to gain probably being taken from them through no fault of their own.

Respondent 50

Feed back was requested from bus users.

For those who live in Castle Douglas and rely on bus services after 18-00 HRS. They have precisely 4 buses after 18-00HRS.

(501) at 18-30

(500) at 20-05

(501) at 20-30

(501) at 23-30

Shift workers use these services, also people travelling to Stranraer (via rail services from Carlisle). Before cutting any of these services it's suggested that you review local bus services IE the frequent buses to Lockerbie.81/381

Respondent 51

There is objection to the cuts in the buses through Glenluce. Cuts were made last year now more are planned; this could force pensioners to move Those who attend hospital on a regular basis in Stranraer and Dumfries could be affected now cuts in the service will reduce the window for making appointments as usual people in towns won't suffer a great deal only them in the sticks.

Respondent 52

There are grave worries and deep concerns about the proposed reduction to certain bus routes in Dumfries and Galloway.

Frequent users of the number 9 would find life very difficult without this service.

Someone who does not drive, works in Dalbeattie and relies on the 20.56 bus number 501 to get home to Dumfries.

Without this service they would be unable to continue in their job.

It's understood that funding is difficult but cutting these services is unacceptable.

Respondent 53

Please don't cancel the 382 from Lockerbie to Carlisle! The 382 service is relied on from Eaglesfield to Gretna and the 382 from Carlisle to Eaglesfield for work and without the service livelihoods could be lost.. The amazing bus drivers on the route who really go the extra mile and make the journey for everyone would also be missed.

Respondent 54

- The attempt initially to sneak these drastic cuts through without proper consultation was inexcusable. The new reduced bus timetables already published on the D&G website suggest SWestrans may not be taking the belated consultation seriously.
- The new timetable for buses connecting to New Galloway and the Glenkens shows a skeleton service that condemns many people to further rural isolation and social exclusion. This runs counter to earlier promises of transport that responds to needs, improves the quality of rural life and ensures access to jobs and public services. Are you now proposing that shops and businesses close early so that staff can catch the last bus home.... and stay home?
- Your chairman told the press that if we didn't like the under-funding we should take it up with the Scottish Government. But that's SWestrans' job. It's urged that SWestrans send a top-level delegation hotfoot to see the minister Keith Brown and brief the press. The minister remains in post during the election. Now might be a very good time.

Respondent 55

Disabled users are on the 372 bus frequently and ask that you please do not cut this service ....they only get 2 buses a day on Sunday which restricts access to church and shops....likewise if you take the last bus the 8.15 which allows for hospital visits and later outpatients appointments.... many elderly and disabled people rely on the 372 bus service and people who work in Dumfries..the 372 only runs every 2 hours an on many occasions is standing room only ..please do not reduce this service.

Maybe if the 10 and 12 bus service was reduced from every 10 minutes to 15 minutes and the 500/501/502...from every 30 minutes to forty minutes it might make some savings

Respondent 56

The following has been suggested based on knowledge of the services, during the day, in order to leave the threatened evening and weekend services unaffected by most of the proposed cuts.

- Some daytime town services are too frequent eg 10 minute Loop Lochside and Lincluden buses often travelling together up or down Glasgow Street.
- Number 9 - Summerhill could easily be hourly instead of half hourly during the day.
- Use smaller buses at night to reduce vehicle costs.
- Change Dumfries/Lockerbie 81/381 bus times to be a less frequent service but to actually coincide with train arrivals in Lockerbie particularly from Edinburgh. This has recently been an issue.

If evening rural bus services are withdrawn, it could threaten the viability of local committees.

Respondent 57

There are strong objections to the proposed bus service reductions throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

As 24% of residents of Dumfries and Galloway does not currently have access to a car, the proposal to have an almost blanket ban on travelling on Sundays and all evenings will impact heavily on their ability to travel throughout the region.

It will impact on their ability to look for more remunerative work, and will impact on visits to family in rural areas. None of these places are directly served by train from Dumfries, which will mean there will be no public transport option at the times when people are not working.

It will deny the opportunity to look for any work involving shift options outside Dumfries (and in some cases even within Dumfries).

Council tax payers should have the same right to access the region's roads as Council tax payers who drive. This will now become impossible after 6pm every evening and on Sundays.

The effects of this on the region will undoubtedly be felt in loss of working hours, loss of trade in Dumfries town centre on Sundays, with many people now unable to access facilities, loss of the ability for hospital visits on Sundays and general loss of economic activity across the region.

Please reconsider this decision. The amount of money involved, £315,000 is a tiny proportion of the Council's £352 million budget, yet will result in reduced mobility and a loss of income to the region many times more than the tiny saving produced.

Respondent 58

Families who choose not to use a car for health and economic reasons feel this decision could along with many in the region force them to think about having to move. They chose to live in rural Dumfries and Galloway for many reasons and a really important one was the availability of the 500 service, A service that could be improved if it was more regular and actually made connections with the trains that leave from Dumfries and Barrhill.

If the service is removed after 6pm it will impact on returning from jobs away from the region and also frequent visitors, many who return on Sundays so they can be back for their work and schools on the Monday.

Time and again people are told by politicians, health practitioners to use the car less, sadly this decision will go against people trying to make that a reality.

In two weeks you will be aware petitions have been gathered and hopefully you will have heard first hand and read the hundreds of people who will be affected by this. So many enjoy the social aspect of travelling on public transport while going to their work, the hospital, college, shopping etc, but are frustrated that so many see the current service as second rate.

It is very clear the savings you hope to make with these cuts will be nowhere near the money that will not be generated around the region if so much movement is restricted.

Look at the positive options available to you and engage as many of us have in the last two weeks personally with the wonderful people of this region on how we can improve the service

### Respondent 59

Proposed cuts to bus services in Dumfries and Galloway are alarming.

These cuts may save the council £300k, but they are bound to take a lot more than that out of the local economy.

For example, Stagecoach are planning to cut the jobs of 15 drivers should the cuts go ahead. Bus drivers earn £10.20 per hour, so this will mean approx £270K per year being taken out of the local economy in lost wages alone.

Then there are all the indirect costs, such as employees not being able to travel to their work, and businesses losing customers.

These cuts will disproportionately affect pensioners, the sick, the poor and the disabled. They will also be detrimental to tourism in the region.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing a lot of cuts to its budget, but it's not thought that cutting bus services is a good way to save money.

Swestrans are urged to reconsider these plans

### Respondent 60

Against removal of evening services in the Stewartry in particular the 2005 from Dumfries to Stranraer

Elderly people who can't drive need buses for hospital appointments and social trips.

### Respondent 61

390 service is a vital service to Newbie

123 Kirkpatrick to Annan is a vital service to visit family.

Services should be kept after 6pm and on Sundays.

### Respondent 62

Evening and Sunday services are essential for non car users, for social purposes and for the poorest people, concern for the economy of the region, social isolation, tourism and events.

Respondent 63

Account should be taken of the need for early evening bus connections from Dumfries and Lockerbie for passengers returning by train after visits to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Respondent 64

There are objections to the proposed cuts to buses. Buses are used in order to access supermarkets, leisure activities and visit elderly relatives. There are fears that people who are older and cannot drive in rural areas will become completely isolated without a good bus service.

At present they contribute to the local events because they can travel by bus. Cinema and concerts and theatre trips as well as shopping is available to them just now, but will stop if there are no buses after 6pm.

Other people will also have problems getting to their work on Sundays and evenings for shift work.

This cut is hitting the poorest and most vulnerable who do not have access to cars.

This cut is against the aim of trying to make Scotland a greener country.

Cutting these SERVICES would be a disaster for many.

Alternative cuts could be made to salaries and expenses of heads of departments in the council.

Respondent 65

Proposed Bus cuts

Closeburn Community Council ask that

- You avoid complete cuts to bus services but instead reduce frequency
- You avoid cuts to country buses and instead concentrate on urban areas

Country buses are proportionally more important to the population of Dumfries and Galloway as their withdrawal increases isolation for many members of the community especially those without access to cars or taxis.

The solution is to reduce frequency of urban buses especially out-with rush hours. A 15 minute service can easily replace a 10 minute service!

Respondent 66

Following reports about the review of the bus services in the Stewartry, Carsphairn Community Council would like to express its concern about the possibility that the bus service to Carsphairn may be cut.

Carsphairn values its bus service and would not like to see it reduced further. The community council believes that small and vulnerable communities need a bus service and hopes you will bear this in mind when considering future provision.

Respondent 67

There are concerns over proposed cuts to the 500/X75 Stranraer to Dumfries via Castle Douglas, Gatehouse of Fleet and Newton Stewart bus after 6pm and all day on Sundays.

Summary

1. The 500 bus is a lifeline for local people accessing shops and facilities in towns along its route.
2. The 500 bus is more than just a local bus; it is a major transport link connecting DG with the rest of the country.
3. Instead of making cutbacks, please consider generating income by improving the 500 service to encourage more passengers, which in turn will generate more income.

Connecting most of the largest towns in the region, along the major road in the region, many people rely on public transport along the 500 route to get out of the house. Accessing shops and facilities in the towns mentioned above is important to individuals and also to the economy of those towns.

A good bus service along this route is invaluable to people who do not have a car - whether for health or financial reasons or who wish to take care of the environment and be 'green'. It particularly affects the elderly, disabled, and those no longer able to drive for health reasons.

The 500 is a local bus but it is more than that. It is also a major transport link for visitors coming to the region - both tourists and people coming to stay with family and friends - and residents travelling to visit their children and grandchildren who have moved away, all of whom use the 500-bus service.

The 500/X75 route has already been seriously curtailed recently, most significantly by the axing of the only viable bus to Carlisle - which ran only once a day but was invaluable for interconnectivity from the Creetown/ Newton Stewart areas with public transport routes both north towards Glasgow and Edinburgh and south to England. Now that the X75 no longer runs to Carlisle, the only route home means it's necessary to get the train to Dumfries railway station and catch the last 500 home, which leaves at 20.05. How can people see family if the buses are axed after 6pm?

People understand that cuts have to be made, but transport is fundamental to be able to take part in community life, which is vital to health and happiness. People no longer able to drive are very reliant on buses. Cutting the X75/500 service further would have a huge negative impact on my quality of life, and it is feared that this will happen.

PS I suggest that more people might use buses, and greater income be generated, if they linked up with and connected to trains at Dumfries railway station.

Very few 500 buses arrive and depart at a convenient time for those travelling to and from Carlisle on the train. This is especially important now that the X75 no longer runs to Carlisle.

At first glance, two buses appear to link up with the train but the fact is that 9 minutes is not enough time to get over Dumfries station Railway Bridge. Nor does it allow leeway for the 500 to be late or delayed on its long journey from Stranraer.

E.g., the 500 bus is timetabled to arrive at Dumfries railway station at 14.48 for the train to Carlisle departing at 14.57. The next 500 is due at 16.58 for the train departing at 17.07. This leaves just 9 minutes - not enough to get over the railway bridge and be sure of catching the train to Carlisle.

### Respondent 68

#### **Local Bus Service Funding 2016/17**

There is a lack of clarity for the general public regarding which bus services are being cut.

Item 8.4 recommends removing all Sunday journeys, all Monday to Saturday journeys after 6pm and the 350 Stranraer to Cairnryan service.

Item 5.5 lists routes that would be subject to the planned cuts but omits 7, Troqueer, which later appears in the appendix.

The information presented suggests that SWestrans is planning to maintain the existing level of service on routes 1, 2, 3 and 10 within Dumfries town as well as the 246 service from Dumfries to Sanquhar and Kirkconnel. If all bus services in Dumfries & Galloway are not being subject to these cuts then SWestrans and their partners, Dumfries & Galloway Council, need to offer an explanation to avoid accusations of discrimination.

Much of the data on "Journeys removed per year" in the appendix differs from the numbers of annual journeys that can be found in the published timetables. Were board members being asked to make a decision on cutting bus services at the meeting on 11th March with flawed data?

### **Hierarchy of Needs**

The SWestrans hierarchy of needs does not take into account the importance of transport connectivity for bus users. How does somebody living west of Dumfries get to or from work in Annan, Lockerbie or Carlisle? How do young people access higher education opportunities in Carlisle? How do people access specialist health services in Edinburgh?

A recurring theme for a bus user is that services do not connect. For someone who lives in the Stewartry you would regularly have to wait an hour in Dumfries for a bus or train to complete the journey as you miss the onward connection by minutes. The 18:13 train from Edinburgh arrives in Lockerbie one minute after the bus to Dumfries has departed. This is just one example of poor transport connectivity in our region that could easily be corrected by an organisation having an active oversight of the local public transport network. Is it acceptable for the bus journey from Lockerbie to Dalbeattie to take five hours or a return trip using bus and train from Dalbeattie to Carlisle taking nearly six hours?

SWestrans has actively supported projects based on transport connectivity for rail and road users yet at the same time has neglected the needs of those using the bus. Growth in rail use at Lockerbie has been dependent upon passengers being able to arrive at stations by car due to lack of connectivity with local bus services. There is no evidence that the hierarchy of needs adopted by SWestrans is applicable to other modes of transport. Support for projects such as increased parking at Lockerbie Station rather than prioritising integrated public transport suggests that SWestrans is ignoring its role in reducing transport emissions. People who prefer to use bus services rather than a private car are being disadvantaged by public sector policy in Dumfries & Galloway.

### Suggestions

1. There is a need to actively engage with bus service users and potential service users rather than using a top down patriarchal approach to transport planning based on models that were relevant in the previous century.
2. Reject the cut in funding imposed by Dumfries & Galloway Council. Put pressure on the Council to apportion cuts in transport subsidy on an equitable basis across all users, not just those making use of bus services. Dumfries & Galloway Council could just as easily introduce charges for car parking but the option not to pursue this is a political rather than economic choice.
3. Re-imagine bus services for the region, not just Dumfries town. The railway station in Dumfries could be a transport hub linking Lockerbie, as well as other towns in the north and east, with the west of the region. Bus services could be reduced along the rail route between Gretna - Annan - Dumfries - Sanquhar - Kirkconnel because there is an alternative form of public transport. Local services along this route could be redesigned to provide greater connectivity between the villages and towns that might better serve local communities.
4. The frequency of bus services in Dumfries town could be significantly reduced based on the hierarchy of needs. Dumfries has alternatives such as taxi services and cycle paths, options not readily available to rural communities.
5. Scrap the Priority Intervention Package on improving key bus routes in Dumfries. This should no longer be a priority based on your hierarchy of needs.
6. Review under used bus services to look at alternatives such as combining routes or community based transport.
7. Consider having an active oversight of bus timetables to ensure that services run when needed by users not planners. This could create opportunities to increase passenger numbers as well as reducing the number of journeys that are little used.

### Respondent 69

There are objections to the proposed removal of evening and Sunday services in Dumfries and Galloway. Whilst it scarcely affects the 202 service, which has no evening services and only one bus each way on a Sunday which almost unusable, it is concerning that the effect is more serious in other areas. A few general points:

- It is questioned in what way cutting bus services meets Regional Transport Strategy policy objectives, for example to “provide travel choices that promote equality, social inclusion and support quality of life; enhance the quality and integration of public transport; Contribute to improved economic growth and social inclusion in the region whilst minimising the environmental impacts of transport; Support the national transport target of road traffic stabilisation;”. Policies without resources are if anything worse than useless, as they help policy makers to believe that they are doing something when they are not.
- Wholesale removal of specific service sectors are crude and unintelligent ways of going about cutting costs and improving service efficiency. Reduction in daytime services may in many cases be better, as any given run can be substituted by another run earlier or later provided that a level of service is maintained. People often use and depend on evening services in a part of England visited regularly, and find that the 2315 bus up the valley is amongst the best used runs of the day! In this area it is also proposed to axe all evening and Sunday services, which will make it more or less impossible for me to use public transport so bus users shall travel by car where possible in future. Great result for sustainable transport and combating climate change!!
- Local authorities subsidise bus services to meet social needs: [if it was deemed socially necessary to subsidise a bus what has changed to deem it unnecessary?](#)
- More thought should be given to ways of increasing revenue instead of accepting that budget cuts have to happen. there is a view that it is a scandal, comparable with the recent budget stushie over cuts to disability benefits alongside tax breaks to the rich, that Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing cuts to support funding for buses, which disproportionately affect the old, the young, and those on low incomes, whilst continuing to subsidise car users through lavish free town centre parking in Dumfries.
- Also, whilst it is not something that can be done unilaterally it is a good idea to have a small annual charge for bus passes, ring-fenced to support bus services: very few people disagree with paying £10 or so a year provided it feeds through to maintenance or improvement of services, and it's calculated that in England this would raise in the region of £100 million per annum. In large parts of rural Britain we are rapidly heading for the absurd situation in which older people can have free passes for free bus travel, but no buses! SWestrans cannot act alone to do this, but could be proactive in making it happen at a national level.

Thinking is that cutting services is contributing to the downward spiral in bus usage, in part directly by forcing people to stop using them and thereby losing the travel choice that is supposed to be at the heart of the RTS; but also by creating a climate of failure that reinforces the negative perceptions of users and non-users alike. You should be looking at ways of enhancing and promoting services, especially for the sector of the population, generally put at about 20%, that use cars as the default travel option but are actively interested in using them less. Better timetable integration of buses and trains is an obvious target, but progress on it is painfully slow even though it should be easy. Evening services are not only an essential service for some people, but also a significant opportunity to grow the market, enabling people to leave the car at home on an evening out. There is a Council in England that has had the courage to fund a trial of a tailored service that will show what can be achieved (this in the midst of general large scale service cuts). It's suspected that SWestrans feel to be between a rock and a hard place, executing cuts under the false prospectus of a bogus Westminster government 'austerity' programme that is clearly nothing of the sort when billions of pounds are being strewn around on 'infrastructure' vanity projects: but SWestrans need to be a bit more creative and a lot less defeatist.

#### Respondent 70

There is a plea to maintain the bus service from Thornhill to Edinburgh in its present (or improved) provision. The role of this service could be further enhanced if it were possible to transfer sensibly to the Dumfries - Glasgow bus service at Crawford or Abington  
The Thornhill - Edinburgh bus stops in both these places but the Glasgow service is express between Moffat and Lesmahagow and cannot be boarded anywhere between.

Respondent 71

Generally agree with the proposals being put to the meeting on 1st April - Swestrans have done a good job of protecting as much as possible, so that Dumfries and Galloway continues to have a better bus service than many other parts of rural Scotland

Of the savings recommended for approval, all seem justifiable.

Of those asked to be considered it's suggested the following be looked at for additional savings:

6a - Due to low usage

114/115 - since commercial service X74 gives cover for most of the route.

221- since some commercial service on 246 - possibly a partial reduction?

501 - since high saving and 500 service provides cover for part of the route for the 2020 departure from Dumfries

For service 359, would it be possible to consider retaining a Sunday service as far as Glentool, but not to run the service fully onto Girvan?

Other services which are not mentioned in the proposed savings, but which appear to offer poor value for money are 503/504, which are costing £111,000 per annum primarily to serve Lochfoot and Kirkpatrick Durham, since other communities on the route (such as Springholm and Crocketford) are served by services along the A75, such as the 500 service. There is perhaps also some reworking of the timetable for 503/504 to incorporate changes to 373, the Shawhead service, which adds another £31,000 to the costings.

Respondent 72

It's asked that you pass on what is written to our councillors.

It is understood that the council has decided to cut buses, that the plan was to cut all Sunday and evening buses on the three main routes south and west of Dumfries, and that we're being asked for our thoughts on which buses to cut, not if buses should be cut. The consultation time is too short and there's too little information given out to enable people to make an informed response. People using the buses have no idea that their route is about to be cut.

More women than men rely on the buses and many bus users on my route are young adults with low incomes, adolescents, retired people, and people with disabilities - people who are generally on the lowest incomes and are the most marginalised, and also are the least well represented amongst our councillors. That's not the fault of our councillors, but it means it's important that they listen hard to the experiences of people whose lives are different from theirs about what it will mean to cut buses.

There's no accounting system that will calculate the cost to council of cutting the bus service, let alone the cost to individuals and communities.

If we have to choose services to be cut, Stranraer, Wigtown and Whithorn are all far from Dumfries transport connections and also have many people living on low insecure incomes. Cuts to the 500 service would be damaging.

Dalbeattie also has many people on low and insecure incomes and though it's much closer to Dumfries services and transport links, it's too far for the majority of bus users to afford a taxi. Dalbeattie has many less services than other towns in the region of its size, and no lower cost food shops. Dalbeattie, (like Stranraer), has lost jobs and has a high rate of substance abuse problems. Cutting the buses increases social exclusion in so many ways that it will worsen this. Cutting the 501 service would harm a lot of people and bring down the town.

Cut a bus service and even less people who need to use buses will be able to live in that area, or work or get involved in anything outside of that area, so less people use the service, so it gets cut again. People use it less and so on. Without investment to increase frequency and connectivity of bus services to the point where they become a reasonable alternative to people who can afford a car, they will remain very expensive to run. Hundreds, maybe thousands of cars, many with just one person in them, go past my window everyday. Many of them will struggle to afford to run a car and would use a bus if it was frequent enough.

Lots of people, including car drivers, who would use the evening service often if there was a 9.30 or 10.30 501 bus leaving Dumfries. It's necessary to leave any evening event in Dumfries in time to get the 8.30pm bus, unless you want to wait till the 11.30pm bus. This makes it near impossible to go to anything in the evening in Dumfries. This is a big part of why the evening and Sunday buses are so underused.

If you live in Dumfries or if you have a car, please write a list of everything you've done in the last year in the evening or on a Sunday when you used your car, a bus, walked or cycled to get to it, to get to it. Imagine other people decided you could never do most of things again. That's what poor bus services do to others.

### **Employment**

A more frequent evening 501 service would mean more people from Dalbeattie could apply for and take on a wider range of jobs in Dumfries or Castle Douglas.

Without Sunday and evening buses, many people will be unable to do the unpaid childcare that enables their relatives to stay in work.

How can people from Dalbeattie take on lower paid jobs with late or flexible hours anywhere outside of Dalbeattie? Not everyone **can** just choose to move away for work. You often need a decent secure income before you can move. Some people have caring responsibilities or partners who work in the town etc.

The opening of the new hospital could have been a good thing for Dalbeattie because it's within reasonable travelling distance by public transport for people to work there. The loss of evening and Sunday buses makes this impossible. Many of the jobs at the hospital will not be Monday to Friday 9-5 and will not pay well enough for people to be able to run a car. It's hoped that the opening of the hospital would mean the 501 bus service Sunday and evening service would improve and Dalbeattie would benefit.

**Segregated communities** In our region it's increasingly difficult for people with low incomes to afford housing outside of towns. It's damaging for individuals and for communities that we live increasingly segregated lives as our rural areas become middle and upper class only areas. Cutting the bus service worsens this division. A poor bus service makes it even harder to live in the country on a low income. As an area in the country gets more segregated/middle class, house prices and rents rise, buses become increasingly underused, then cut. It's a vicious spiral that leaves us living in separate communities that don't understand each other. It creates a sense that the country and the natural world is only for the comfortably off. It leaves people in towns like Stranraer and Dalbeattie stranded.

**Access to the countryside** For many people Sunday is the only day they can go out with partners, friends and family for the day into the countryside for a walk or to take their kids to the beach. This has huge effects on people's physical and mental health and children's development.

**Tourism** There will be a cost to tourism spending.

**Social isolation** Evenings and Sundays is the time lots of families and friends can meet up. The bus cuts will make this impossible for many of the most isolated and socially excluded people. This will have costs to people's physical and mental health. This costs the council money. People working and studying outside the area won't be able to visit family at weekends if they can't travel back on a Friday night and return on the Sunday. No cinema, no live music events, no arts festival events, no going for a drink or a meal with colleagues or friends in Dumfries or CD after work, no support groups for the

most vulnerable e.g. no access to young carers groups, addiction recovery groups, LGBT youth groups. Pages could be filled with all the things that people with no access to a car will not be able to do.

**Access to Edinburgh and Glasgow** Because the buses south and west from Dumfries are already infrequent in the evening and because of the timetabling, it's already hard to travel home from Glasgow or Edinburgh after a day in the city. These cuts to evening buses will make it impossible to have a day in Edinburgh or Glasgow.

**The right to use a publicly funded service – roads** There's agreement with the Green party that people on low incomes also have a right to the use of roads that are publicly paid for. And to access events that are funded through their council.

**Political exclusion** – many political events and meetings in Dumfries are in the evenings. It would be impossible to go to political meetings in Glasgow or Edinburgh because you wouldn't get home again.

**Hospital visiting** will become impossible for many people who don't drive but only have Sundays and evenings free. Imagine your loved one is very ill in hospital and you can't be with them.

**Getting home from late afternoon hospital appointments in Dumfries will be impossible**

**The cost of preventing people from being unpaid carers – more council funded services needed**

Without Sunday and evening buses, unpaid carers will be unable to travel to and from the houses of the person they are caring for. The work that unpaid carers saves huge amounts of money in social care as well as keeping people well enough to stay out of hospitals and nursing homes and lets people go home sooner, and with less social care. Even if we only think about money, and not the suffering caused, has anyone tried to estimate the money that will be lost to the council by making it impossible for unpaid carers without cars, a great many of them women on low incomes, to travel on Sundays or in the evenings on all the main routes south and west of Dumfries? For those who rely on buses to be able to care for relatives, on this issue alone, the bus cuts will cost the council a lot of money.

**Overall Health costs** People need some sense of security, belonging, meaning and control over their own lives in order to be able to have a good chance of staying physically and mentally healthy. The bus cuts will fall hardest on those already living under the most pressures. Bus cuts will decrease people's control over their own lives and lower horizons. It's harmful to kids to grow up in communities without good access to transport. In Stranraer and Dalbeattie there are high rates of substance abuse. Cutting buses always increases financial and social exclusion and it's inevitable that this increases the rate of substance abuse problems and all the ripple effects of harm to a whole community that come from that. The impact of the bus cuts on people's physical and mental health, on whole communities and their need for other council funded services, could well cost more than the cost of running an adequate bus service.

Council accounts can't include any assessment of the harm to physical and mental health caused by having reduced access to transport, or of the knock on costs of this to the council, but from the kinds of projects that the council funds that there must be some councillors who think this way and it's hoped there is somewhere cuts can be made that will not have such a bad effect on people already marginalised and excluded.

Lastly **Climate change. We have to be grown ups and face it.** Getting people out of their cars and into using and valuing public transport is not an optional extra we can defer until funding improves. Improving public transport to the point where people use it by choice is a priority.

#### Respondent 73

There is great concern about the proposed cuts to bus services on routes 500, 501, and 502 i.e. no buses at all on Sundays and no buses after 6pm on Monday to Saturday. For pensioners who are unable to drive, buses are vital to move about in this area and beyond.

For those to travel to Dumfries to catch connecting trains in evenings or on a Sunday, cutting these services would mean a significant taxi fare each time. No evening buses would mean that they could no longer attend community events, arts events or cinema without a significant taxi fare. The proposed changes also impact badly on rail and coach travel to Glasgow and Carlisle. While accepting that the financial situation requires savings to be made, we urge you to reconsider these particular proposals.

### Respondent 74

People are totally opposed to the simplistic, uncaring and isolating nature of these proposals, in particular as they affect nearly half the population of Dumfries living in Georgetown.

#### Overall Objections

Totally fails to provide the service required by the community Swestrans is there to deliver. Makes life even worse for the poor, vulnerable & aged members of our community – those who cannot afford taxis or a car.

Goes totally against the concept of enabling the community to be inclusive & vibrant – for many packing them up in their home after a 6pm 'curfew'

Has a severe detrimental, or perhaps fatal, effect on the businesses and clubs of Dumfries & elsewhere due to fewer folk going out.

The mental & physical health of people affected is at risk by being isolated even more.

#### Thinking Smarter

Do not use the simplistic approach.

There must be evening services continued on the routes between Dumfries Town Centre & where folk live – especially Georgetown.

If changes have to be considered:

For Georgetown – maintain a 2330 last service off the town on Fridays & Saturdays; perhaps 2215 other evenings. Have some Sunday services to join up with other routes to enable folk to visit each other.

Ensure all public services are co-ordinated – to encourage more use & revenue. Examples from Lockerbie in the evening that leave after the trains arrive from Edinburgh; and in Dumfries after the X74 arrives from Glasgow.

Dovetail routes to make them more efficient.

Reduce frequency of evening services on some routes to support others, Example – why don't the proposals reduce the Lochaber/Heathhall and thereby enable services to Georgetown to continue.

Introduce a £1 flat fare for "bus pass" holders in the evenings after a certain time – Lothian buses do this on their Night bus services.

For "out of town" communities (e.g. Glencaple) provide/support more "self-help" transport – like the Annandale Transport Initiative.

#### Summary

SWestrans purpose it to provide a "Transport Partnership" co-ordinating all public transport services – buses, trains, ferries, community transport etc that meets the needs of ALL the community. Please do this a smarter way and DO NOT just be a body that fails to do this by just looking at the cost.

The cost to the community of these proposals is measured by much more than "pounds, shillings and pence"

### Respondent 75

Our rural communities depend on frequent and reliable service availability. Therefore note with great concern the proposed alterations to these services on Sundays and weekdays after 6pm. Firmly believe this is not the road we should be going down, and urge the Partnership to seriously rethink how these proposals would affect constituents across Dumfries & Galloway.

A particular concern is the weighted disadvantage such proposals would place on the west of the constituency. Links between the West and the East are vital in allowing constituents to access key services and keep the economy moving in our region. Please consider the impact these cuts would have on this link.

Having received many communications from people who are rightly worried about whether their bus route will even exist in the coming months. This response is submitted on their behalf and again, the partnership is urged to urgently review these proposals.

Fully understand the need to review spending in the public sector as a result of across the board reductions in our block grant, we welcome and encourage any opportunity for local services to prove how cost effective they can be. These proposals go too far.

Hopefully submissions received by Swestrans are carefully considered and I look forward to welcoming a rethink on how these headline cuts can be best managed to not disadvantage communities across Dumfries & Galloway

Please do not cut evening and weekend services in this vast region -it would be like cutting the lifeline of many who otherwise would simply not be able to get around to undertake the most basic of activities. People use these services to shop, travel for medical care and perform other essential functions people living in conurbations take for granted.

#### Respondent 76

Petition received and signed by 1600 people

#### Respondent 77

The 415 service newton stewart to wigtown could come round by st couans place also 430 service and 500 some routes on town service could be then be withdrawn

#### Respondent 78

Residents in the Borgue area are regular users of local bus services and will be badly inconvenienced by the proposed cuts to services after 6 p.m. and on Sundays, specifically on the routes 500 (Stranraer to Dumfries) and 501 (Kirkcudbright to Dumfries). Cuts to essential public services on this scale are going to have knock-on effects for the rural economy in terms of access to employment, hospitals, tourism and public safety. There does not seem to have been much consultation with our local communities on these proposals

#### Respondent 79

Crossmichael Community Council is not at all happy about the proposed cuts. As it is, the last bus to the village is 5.10 p.m. and this is absolutely hopeless for villages who work.

Any further cuts to services, such as removing Sunday services, would leave some people in the village totally unable to get to work if needed, on a Sunday and it would also prevent people travelling anywhere on a Sunday.

Not everybody has a car and a bus service is essential to rural communities like ours. We would ask that you reconsider any cuts to bus services for communities – they are a vital lifeline for a great many people in our community who will otherwise experience even more difficulty with travel than they are experiencing at the moment.

#### Respondent 80

It is Important to keep the evening and weekend bus services in the region.. Some people are unable to afford the upkeep of a car, and in some cases have relied upon the evening and weekend buses for around a decade. Losing these would be a devastating blow to many who rely entirely upon these buses to enable their commutes, their leisure, their access to services and amenities and their ability to visit family. Please consider the lives which will be affected by this proposal.

#### Respondent 81

so few opportunities exist for young people. Getting rid of these busses will mean that many more leave too, if they can't even get up the road on a Sunday to their job.

This is the case for so many people within Dumfries and Galloway. Without good public transport, many people's lives will be severely affected - and those affected will be those who are most

vulnerable. The poorest, who cannot afford cars and who must commute by bus for work. Disabled people, who may be unable to drive some or all of the time and who rely upon buses for their day to day lives. People who can only visit their loved ones in hospital or care homes after a full day or week of work.

Please consider how the loss of these buses will have a very real impact upon the lives of individuals and communities.

If these cuts went ahead, without a car and with a full time job in the city, won't even be able to visit.