



16th February 2015
Ref: DSG(2014)C011

Sir Anthony Cleaver
CNSRP Chairman
Through CNSRP Programme Manager

Please respond to:

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Dear Sir Anthony

HIGHLAND COUNCIL BUDGET REDUCTIONS

I am writing to you, on behalf of DSG, to raise our concerns regarding the recent round of proposed budget reductions from the Highland Council. While we appreciate this is a time where funding of all public agencies is being squeezed we felt it was important to put on record our concerns at a time when the Caithness and North Sutherland area needs to ensure that it diversifies into a new economic and vibrant community.

We believe that the CNSRP partners, especially at a local level, are doing a very good job and there have been some positive results in attracting new business to the area. However, part of the package of attracting new business is the 'attractiveness of the area' alongside that of the services that are available within an area.

We have already voiced our concerns regarding the NHS proposals to stop 24/7 surgical provision at Caithness General Hospital and this letter is to highlight our concerns for the third sectors and the possible reduction of funding provided to them. The third sector is primarily groups of people who carry out activities on a voluntary basis but are so valuable to our communities. They are the organisations/people who ensure that the 'attractiveness of the area' continues to develop and makes it far more appealing to people/business to move into the area.

These third sector organisations provide such a wide variety of useful activities and any reduction in budgets will erode the efforts made by these volunteers over years of selfless dedication. There are so many that this will have an impact on and therefore we ask that the Highland Council consider any reductions on a case by case basis rather than a 'one size fits all' criteria.

At a time when the Caithness and North Sutherland area needs to regenerate and grow new business this will have an impact. Given the Highland Council is part of the CNSRP, their commitment to the regeneration of the area we would expect them to consider very seriously the impact reduced funding will have on any organisation within this area.

Yours sincerely

Sent electronically without signature

Derrick Milnes

DSG Vice-Chairman / Socio Economic Sub Group

Copies to:

David Flear, DSG Chairman

DSG members

Eann Sinclair, CNSRP programme manager,

Drew Hendry, CNSRP Advisory Board Chairman

Steve Barron, HC Chief Executive