

**Safest People, Safest Places**

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



This matter is being dealt with by: **John Hewitt**  
Ext: **5555**  
Date: **16<sup>th</sup> December 2013**  
Our Ref:  
Your Ref:

Clerk,  
County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority,  
County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Cllr Dixon  
Darlington Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Feethams  
Darlington  
County Durham  
DL1 5QT

Dear Cllr Dixon,

I refer to the budget consultation currently being undertaken by Darlington Borough Council.

The Combined Fire Authority is aware of the pressures facing the Council and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The Authority notes that the Council is proposing to implement a demand reduction strategy for services over the medium term. The Authority would wish to ensure that the implications of changes to front line services are considered in close consultation with partner agencies so that the overall impact on local community can be understood and planned for where possible. As an example, a reduction in the Council's resources to support people could change the risks in local communities which the Fire and Rescue Service will need to consider as part of its Integrated Risk Management Plan and indeed as part of its own planning assumptions when dealing with cuts to fire and rescue funding.

The Combined Fire Authority would request that as options for service change are considered in further detail, that it, and other partner agencies, are involved at an early stage in the assessment of outcomes for local people and local communities. This will ensure the wider implications for partner organisations can be understood and planned for. I know discussions take place on a regular basis between our two organisations and I am reassured that our officers will ensure these issues are considered.

You will be aware that the Combined Fire Authority is facing significant financial pressures itself over the 2014-2017 period and will be consulting with the Council and other partners on its approach to dealing with funding cuts.

If you wish to discuss this response further, please contact me in the first instance.

*M Hodgson*

M Hodgson

Chair, County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority

