

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY CONNECTED TO THE BUDGET PROPOSALS

1st – 30th November 2010

- Supporters of the Arts Centre are interested in creating a community group to manage the site and look at ways to generate more income.
- Parents are worried about the changes to home to school transport (proposed change of free transport from 2 miles to 3 miles) and families attending Carmel College feel disproportionately hit.
- Parents of children who receive services from Early Years Inclusion are worried that their children's progress will falter.
- Bowling is a valuable social gathering and improves mental and physical well-being. The proposals have an impact on 20 clubs, five leagues and neighbouring associations. Some of the bowlers are interested in self-managing the greens themselves.
- Rural bus services are life-lines to many people in the outlying villages. Cutting services will affect older people and families without cars. How does cutting services fit in with the "green" agenda?
- The removal of taxi vouchers and the Dial-a-Ride services means older and disabled people are running out of travel options.
- The proposal to have concessionary fares only available between 9.30am and 11pm will impact on disabled people who travel to work on the bus.
- An increase in car park charging will encourage people to shop elsewhere for example Teesside Park where parking is free.
- Concerns for people with low/moderate needs who will not receive Adult Social Care under proposals. People are worried about the substantial impact on elderly carers.
- The Mobile library service is very important to people who can't get into town. If taken away it would impact on their social life and independence. Cockerton Library is very important to Cockerton residents and means that people don't need to come into town to access library services.
- Clean streets, street lighting and weekly bin collections are very important to residents.
- Residents are in favour of the staff restructuring but feel that the front-line workers should not suffer the worst of the cuts.
- Long term energy solutions for council buildings and better use of space will improve efficiency.
- People feel that the Tourist Information Centre provides a valuable service and an unmanned centre would not give a quality service like now.
- People wouldn't mind paying a small charge to use the toilets in West Row if they are kept clean and serviceable.

10th January- 11th February 2011

Feedback from the Consultation (as of 1 Feb 2011)

In round two of the budget consultation, 84 people have contacted us, including 35 people who came to the Talking Together event in January and 49 people who telephoned, wrote or contacted us via the Council's website.

The Darlington Together team with the Youth Engagement Officers also did some targeted consultation with members of five youth groups.

Some of the proposals have generated more comments and discussion than others, particularly the proposals around Early Years Inclusion Services, transport, library services and Children's Early Intervention and Prevention Services. Here is a summary of the feedback;

- Parents of children who receive services from Early Years Inclusion are worried that the cut in services could reduce the number of disabled children accessing mainstream education.
- Rural bus services are life-lines to many people in the outlying villages. Residents in rural areas are worried about getting to college, work and doctors' surgeries.
- Cockerton residents and Cockerton library users are worried that their local library will close. They like the fact that there is free parking and easy access. Books are the most valued part of the library service. To create income, people suggested sharing space with other services and introducing coffee shops.
- Young people said that the youth clubs gave them confidence and enabled them to socialise in a safe environment. They said that if there wasn't a youth club more young people would hang around the streets and residents would complain.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme equips young people for college, work and later life.
- The community centres are valued and well used hubs where a range of activities happen.
- People who are fined for dropping litter could be made to pick up litter as part of community payback. Let's use restorative justice more for cutting grass and litter picking.
- Reduce the floral displays and make roundabouts low maintenance.
- Suggestions that parents and volunteers could deliver the cycle and pedestrian training.
- Senior Management salaries are too high. Find out if staff would be willing to cut hours rather than make posts redundant.
- The extra time given to look at options for the Darlington Theatre and Arts centre has been well received.