

General Public Talking Together 08/11/10 & 16/11/10

Management & Departmental Restructuring	<p>Salary costs of the Chief Officer should be reduced as she gets paid more than the suggested limit of the Coalition. Also concern expressed at the payout being received by some members of staff. It was explained that the chief executives is running a multi-million pound business. It was also explained that there had been a review of management and cuts at senior levels with a reduction in the number of directors and deletion of assistant chief executive posts. Salaries had been reviewed and there were plans for a restructure which would make savings. Councillor informed the group that high level salaries were available on the Council website. (http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Democracy/Statistics+and+Surveys/Workforce+Information.htm)</p> <p>Member of staff was asked how many staff the council employed and she responded that a large number of staff were school employees. The Council non school staff was about 2500. Questions were then asked about the number of redundancies. Member of staff explained that 470 redundancies formed part of the current budget proposals and as the council still needed to save over £8m this could mean another 400 jobs could go.</p>
Asset Rationalisation	<p>Can the council utilise the Town Hall and other council buildings and enable people to hire these facilities at a competitive charge?</p>
Library Service	<p>The Library was provided for the town by the Peases and was written down that it would be forever. How can the Council close this building as a library when it has this clause on it? It is not clear enough what the plans for the library service are – where has the figure of £250,000 come from if the Council don't know what will be cut? It needs to be clearer in the consultation what you will be cutting otherwise the Council looks vague and secretive.</p>
Library	<p>Mobile library – does it stay or go?</p>
Libraries	<p>This started from a low point after Darlington became a unitary authority with the legacy of Durham. It has raised its game, to go back to being bottom of the league for library service in the north east per head of population would be awful.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>Do you know what routes are being reduced?</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>People go to work at different times cutting evening services will prevent them from getting to and from work and also attending social and leisure events.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>By cutting bus services will prevent access to Gateway Club at Harrowgate Hill, this will affect disabled people.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>Increase supported bus fares. Table reaction was that bus charges are high already. If prices go up people wont go out and this will affect the local economy.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>People need buses to get to appointments, can't always rely on family to give lifts. The bus gets people with needs out of their home and gives them a lot of self confidence.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>Are evening services more important than day time? Table reaction was that the frequency during the day could be reduced to extend into the evening. All buses are important.</p>
Supported Bus Services	<p>How do we get vulnerable people out of their homes if no bus services?</p>

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Supported Bus Services	Sadberge has a strong sense of village community, although most activities are undertaken outside of the village. Those without a car, i.e. the elderly and young people rely heavily on SBS's. There is a minor ailments clinic held in Sadberge but if this were to cease, there would be more of a need for a link to Middleton St George for Felix House Surgery. The main need is for journeys into town, to Morrison's at Morton Park and to Asda at Whinfield.
Supported Bus Services	Member of Staff - We need to understand the exact need of the people who rely on SBS's. Time of day, day of week and purpose of journey. Can we support the clinic held at Sadberge in some way so that people don't need the PT for this element of journey purpose.
Supported Bus Services	Getting people on buses will help to go greener, but this won't happen if the council are cutting services.
OAP & early morning fare subsidy removal	Comment about OAP early morning subsidy being removed – this is reasonable as older people can wait to travel until after school times to leave more places on buses for children.
Car Parking	Car parking Sunday Parking costs, will this stop people coming into town for shopping?
Cultural Services Arts Centre/Civic	Is this definitely going to happen? Is there no other choice? Tragedy to close our theatre.
Civic Theatre Closure	There will be a cultural void in the town. Businesses close to the theatre will be affected if it is closed. The impact on the 'cultural quarter' of the town centre fringe will be huge and that area will be driven down. Civic is currently underused and could have more youth activities happening during the day.
Arts Centre/Civic	The arts centre and the civic don't work together well enough and work against each other. Are grants available for sustaining the Civic and the Arts Centre?
Arts Centre/Civic	Preserving the building may be a way to get grants to keep the Arts Centre open as there are heritage grants available for this and a voluntary sector organisation or Trust would have to do this. Darlington for Culture is keen in retaining the buildings within the community; however the Council needs to work with the groups to make a go of it. Could the Council lease the building to others rather than selling it?
Arts Centre/Civic	We need to look forward; we don't want to find ourselves without assets in the future that are valuable resources for the town.
Arts Centre/Civic	Are we looking at best practice elsewhere as other places have organisations running their cultural side?
Arts Centre/Civic	How will the Dolphin Centre be able to cater for all the groups and have the arts and sports together – it won't work?

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Arts Centre	Will the arts council grant need to be given back if the arts centre closes? Can we not use arts centre funding to support the groups in the short term if the funding has to be 'clawed back'?
Dolphin Centre	Why is the Dolphin Centre not being hit at all? Why are the Arts Centre and Civic Theatre taking the brunt – why is the Dolphin Centre more important for the culture of the town? The costs of the subsidy of the arts centre and the theatre is half the cost of the Dolphin Centre. The Quality of life of residents will be reduced drastically.
Cultural Services Arts Centre/Civic	The Arts Centre and Civic are golden nuggets that make Darlington special. Obviously leisure must take a hit within the cuts but why so much? Time is needed for other groups to pull into action to try to work without the subsidy. Can the funding be withdrawn in a phased manner rather than all at once? The Arts Centre is a huge venue and voluntary sector groups will find it hard to carry it alone, Can other groups work in partnership with the council to make this work?
Arts Centre	Can the Arts Centre not be used as a way to cut costs elsewhere by bringing staff to work there – have a council chamber there etc?
Arts Centre	Praise needed for the Arts Centre and the variety of things that are programmed there. The Council have rescued the Arts Centre and given it new life, why is this not being celebrated and shouted about by the Council – why are they not proud of what Darlington has in terms of arts culture. Some people do not want to support the sport agenda and want to support the arts, how can they do this in Darlington now?
Arts Centre/Civic	What is the timescale – are we cutting things too fast to enable other options to emerge?
Arts Centre	The Council is reducing the quality of life for its residents and people in the West End especially. The Arts Centre provides things that no where else does.
Arts centre	Has soft market testing been done for the arts centre as well as for the civic? Is the value of the site if sold pushing the decision to close? Would it be sold for redevelopment?
Arts Centre	Where will the gallery space be for Darlington? Where will the displays of public art be?
Arts Centre	Regularly funded organisation grant that the Arts Centre currently get – are we able to take that in Darlington now? It is a shame that the Council is reducing its influence and direction with the arts in Darlington
Arts Centre	People and groups that use the arts centre now – is there a solution for accommodation and workshop space within the Dolphin Centre? How can you fit them all in?
Arts centre	The closure of other buildings in the town such as Larchfield Street, Gladstone Street and Archer Street has had a huge impact on groups already; closing other buildings will make it equally difficult for the groups. Putting them in other buildings has a negative effect and transport links are not good enough.
Arts Centre	What deeds are there on the building? It was built as an educational establishment by the Bible Society and others as a teacher training college – are you able to sell to just anyone?

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Arts Centre Education	Education that happens in the Arts Centre is added value for young people and lifelong learning – this needs to be accounted for. Adult education and lifelong learning will be affected by the cuts to the library service but by how much?
Arts Centre/Civic Centre	Are sports/leisure/arts good bed partners? Why are you trying to do everything from one building?
Cultural Services Tourism Cuts	Striving to make Darlington a tourist destination seems pointless when you are removing the things that make Darlington a good place to visit. The Arts Centre and the Civic are attractions – what else is there? Is another shopping centre going to be enough to bring people here? No it won't.
Arts Centre Proposals	The Myles Meehan Trust -What will happen to this? The Borough Collection – Where is suitable to put this and it will take a lot of time effort and expense to relocate it? In the short timescale it is not really possible.
Arts Centre	How much will be saved if the Arts Council Grant has to be returned?
Arts Centre	How much will it cost to close the Arts Centre? How will it eat into the saving if it was mothballed?
Arts Centre	Is the 6 th Form interested in the Arts Centre? It relies on them heavily for extra space, what would they do if it closed? The arts centre 'is a gem' for residents and visitors, the cross section of events is enormous and it would be devastating to close a valuable asset.
Arts Centre	Affects the local economy when a service like the arts centre closes as people come in from further afield to get involved in the activities and shows.
Arts Centre	Contribution of the arts is underrated in the town - it is an important part of the community and it supports disadvantaged people as well as those who are immersed in the arts themselves.
Arts Centre	Arts centre and cultural services is the reason that people move here – removing that will make people think again about where to settle. The Town centre Fringe consultation focused on a 'cultural quarter' in the town – why are we now removing the arts first when it a few months ago it was a key objective? Is it short sighted to look at this now and not look forward? It costs more to recreate a service in the future and you will lose the critical mass of people that are engaged and motivated to make it worse.
Arts Centre	Organised a folk weekend over the last 2 yrs at the arts centre – and as a non resident feels he can look at it more objectively. The arts centre 'is a gem', it is on a main line route, B+B's, nice shopping town and flexible. The organisation used lots of space in the building and had lots of options – the arts centre is a valuable building, when it is gone you will miss it.
Arts Centre	Running the rhythm and blues club – realises savings must be made. How much does it all actually costs? How can we generate enough to be able to save it? It is a great thing to want to save it but where is the money coming from? How can we do it? Will the council work with us to look at how we can make money?

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Cultural Services Arts Centre	Why don't you get involved with the public and ask for support from them – electricians and plumbers to sort out the heating, there would be plenty of people that will be keen to help voluntarily
Arts Centre	Darlington Society of Art. There has been talk of closing for 2 yrs – selling bits off the 6 th Form etc. Now the new arrangement with the 6 th form has meant this hasn't happened and the education has been retained. Why not shut off the old building at the back which is bleeding the building dry through inefficient heating etc. The Covenant on the building is finished after next yr. Bishop Auckland has something similar to the Myles Meehan Gallery but they use the floor space for other things as well – we could follow suit, we should have done this years ago. The Arts Centre and the Civic are very separate things and shouldn't be put together. Need to make it a workable proposition, the sale of the arts centre buildings wouldn't go back into the rest of the centre, it would go into the pot – why not use that money in the arts?
Arts Centre	Where will extra young people having to stay on in education until they are 18 go? 6 th Form will need more space to accommodate the young people entering so they will need the arts centre. There has been a lack of investment over the years and the Council should have looked at this so now it would be sustainable – why does it not make a profit?
Arts Centre	Are the council wanting to sell the building to realise the spend – Is that within their future budgets?
Arts Centre	Do the Council want to work with others to keep the building open?
Civic	Has the decision been made that the Civic will be sold as a going concern? Is there potential for the Council to continue ownership of the buildings at all?
Arts Centre	Meeting of the Darlington for Culture Group on Thursday 18 th Nov at the Arts Centre 7pm to look at taking an organisation forward to support the arts in Darlington.
TIC	How can the TIC be left unmanned and have no telephone operation? How can tourism thrive where there is no TIC? There is a difference between service and bureaucracy – reduce the bureaucracy not the service. 28% across the board would be one thing but not just in certain area that is all affecting similar people.
Arts Centre	Lots of people feel that it would be a travesty to close the arts centre – will the savings not be offset by lack of people coming into Darlington because there will be less reason to.
Arts Centre	What will the costs of the outreach at the Dolphin Centre be? – This must be offset against the savings. You will lose the impact of having a cultural hub when people come together if everything is done via outreach.
Arts Centre	Council has done a good job on the arts/culture offer in Darlington and many people make use of this. Sad that the importance of arts/culture in the town hasn't been given the time and energy to find opportunities to keep it going. The Civic may close if a suitable and sustainable organisation isn't found to take it on. The Arts Centre needs lots of support for people to look at taking it on. Retaining a strategic arts function to allow investment in the arts would be beneficial and had this been done over the years now we would have had a sustainable and growing arts scene. Arts will have 1 person; complaints have 2 so complaints are double the capacity of the arts

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	team. It is a shame for families to have no arts scene for their children to enjoy
Cultural Services General	No-one underestimates the problem the Council has. Why have you not seen this coming? The private sector has seen it coming for a long time. How are you not running at a profit? Surely there is more income to be made?
Arts Centre	Attended a Darlington for Culture meeting and most people like d Darlington for its arts offer. Seems to be hasty to be making cuts in this place.
General	In hindsight the Council should not have cut 15% over the last few years as now they are not standing in the best position to reduce costs further. They shouldn't have frozen council tax either so that there was more money in the pot.
Arts Centre	Better to not criticise the past, the good things we have and want to keep have come from that good management previously. Is the long term plan to sell or mothball – as mothballing with still cost the council money.
Arts Centre	Why do you not want to continue to invest in the arts after so long of making it a priority? The Council is not looking at the bigger picture and is cutting its nose off the spite its face. We need to fight these proposals – they are hard decisions but we need to look elsewhere as well. The public want you to relook at the decision – we don't accept them and want to influence you in making a different decision.
General	Councillors will fight the decisions in a political format to support the arts. The cuts are something which everyone feels strongly about.
Arts Centre	Worked for Newcastle Council – officers take a lot of stick but they have to work within the confines of a budget and specific restrictions. No one seems interested in the Civic – if the Arts centre is what is important then use the money from its sale to save the Arts Centre.
Arts Centre	Darlington for Culture group – can't provide what people have now but the arts centre has more scope than the Civic which is quite specific. Want to have a creative home for businesses – there is great potential such as making art, making business etc. the Civic will find a commercial partner to keep it going as they are part of a national network.
Arts Centre	Is there a list of other subsidised facilities in the town – why is the high profile ones concentrated on? Can other facilities support the arts? Can Stressholme be mentioned?
Civic Theatre	Tragedy to close our theatre.
General	All political parties should be working together on this issue
Culture	Q Darlington Operatic Society helped last time the Arts Centre was in financial trouble. Have they been approached this time? A Yes they have been very vocal.
Culture	Prefer Arts Centre to Theatre. It is well used and adds value to Darlington as a town. It is an excellent example of sociability and culture etc. A locally focussed and quality establishment, which brings together different local

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	community groups in a building which has a nice feel to it.
Cultural Services Events	<p>Q People need leisure and if Arts Centre and Civic go they will not be able to be brought back. Fireworks should break even – why don't they? A. Originally they were sponsored but sponsors have pulled out. Looking at the fireworks event you can argue that it is preventing risk as it reduces the number of small bonfires. It is hoped that the Rotary Club will take it on. There are costs to charging for fireworks in terms of staffing costs and this reduces the funding that can go to charity. It was mutually agreed that the event must break even. Terribly sad about the loss of the Fireworks. 'Isn't this a gold mine whenever I go it is packed'.</p> <p>Discussion then took place about how the Council could use private sector funding effectively. They need to charge prices that make it viable for arts and leisure to continue. Partnership with the Queen Elizabeth 6th Form College to hire out rooms from the Art Centre. The Civic Centre is basically hired out to touring companies and they then charge ticket prices as they see fit. Discussions are ongoing with a couple of private companies in relation to the Civic. The Voluntary Sector is also able to take up some activity that will help reduce the impact of the budget cuts. One of the difficulties is that these new models of delivery take time to develop and the cuts need to start shortly. The challenge is how we as a Council can do this at the same time to prevent a gap in provision.</p>
Cultural Services discussion/general	Economic development – what can the Council do? Street cleansing – fine offenders. Culture – how much is the value of culture to attracting business to the Borough? Increase Council Tax. Generate more income from culture facilities. What do you mean by "fair". Use of contractors – isn't it often cheaper to use in-house?
Street Scene	Comment/impact/idea
Bowling greens Keep three open	Keep bowling green in North Park as the 3 rd as is has the most clubs and players using it and has a women's league.
Bowling greens hiring the DBC maintenance kit	Idea was to either pay DBC to come and maintain or hire the equipment what are the requirements? Bowlers are older and not able to volunteer to maintain the ground but would be willing to help where possible.
Bowling greens Become self managing	To enable the bowling grounds to still operate and be maintained. The following is needed; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. costing of maintenance 2. health and safety requirements 3. Insurance 4. organisational structure 5. governing body arrangements 6. funding available <p>fundraising (membership etc)</p>
Bowling green	Bowling offers exercise for the older generation male and female and is in some case their only means of exercise. Bowling is also a valuable social gathering and improves the mental wellbeing of the bowlers and keeps them fit and active.

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Street Scene	To make the impact feel more real to residents. And the impact on staff.
Street Scene	It was raised as a cost cutting exercise to find out if vehicles are where they are supposed to be.
Street Scene	Please do not do 2 weekly refuse collections. It was raised as a concern people felt strongly that this would cause more problems socially and damage health.
Street Scene	To reduce the flower bed planting It was felt that this could be reduced with a low impact on the community.
Street Scene	To maintain street cleaning and refuse collection to current levels It was brought up that these items should not be cut in the best interests for communities, as they would rather see flower beds go and keep street cleaning for hygiene and good living standards kept.
Street Scene	To not cut residential street lighting It was felt strongly that this should be kept and Ada assured that here have been no plans to cut this.
Street Scene	To reduce the lighting on the new road (Haughton road bypass) This was made as a cost cutting suggestion
Street Scene	To continue with meadow cutting of the grass It was felt it looks nice but can lead to other issues e.g. dog fouling.
Bowling Greens	Closure four bowling greens; timescale – a decision in March is too late to plan the league fixtures to start in April.
Bowling Greens	A view that the Council funds very little for people of this age group and therefore £20k is a small amount to ask for.
Bowling Greens	Breakdown of budget – it was agreed that you would forward a detailed breakdown of the costs included in the £20k.
Bowling Greens	A view that the Bowls activity does prevent many older people needing access to ASC services and therefore saves the Council money.
Bowling Greens	A view that the Bowls Clubs would work with the Council to become self sufficient but that this would take longer than March/April next year.
Bowling Greens	The proposal has much wider impact than simply on bowlers in Darlington, it has the potential to impact on 20 clubs, five leagues and neighbouring bowls associations.
Bowling Greens	The Bowls presence in parks reduces ASB and helps to retain the condition of the parks.
Bowling Greens	Questioning the ticket sales and how increasing charges could help. This too thought has a monitoring cost implication.
Bowling Greens	Have cost saving efficiencies been looked at in other areas to prevent the closure.
Bowling Greens	To turn the 2 nd green at S Park in to a MAZE for children to play in, by planting Box hedge.
Street Scene	The tip in Darlington is very well organised with helpful staff who keep the tip clean and tidy. However there have been issues in street cleaning and Dere Street is a particular issue as it does not appear to be on the map. Because it is in boundary with Teesdale and Darlington often two sets of cleaning teams turn up within minutes of each other. Couldn't the Councils agree an arrangement to save money?

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Street Scene	Group suggested that more litter pick groups could be developed. Heighington had won the Best kept small village but nothing had been made of it by the Borough Council. The group agreed that it is better to stop people dropping litter rather than clean up. Concern was expressed at the time it may take to clear rubbish if there are cuts in the service. Group agreed that there was no need to cut some areas as often as now and that meadow with paths was acceptable.
Street Scene	Community groups will help and support. Railings in the town particularly around the station are appalling. A member of the community had already offered to help but no one had taken up the offer. The community will do things but their offers need to be taken on board. Member of Staff responded that there was a strategy to work with community groups to do things currently done by the Council. Some community and voluntary groups were not yet ready to do this. Work was already going on with Bowling Clubs for example to look at how they can manage the greens themselves. The Council was also working with a number of Friends Groups.
Children's Early Intervention & Prevention Service Youth Service	What are the statutory duties for youth work? How will the savings be made? How will the savings be made?
After School	Using schools may not be the best option as pupils have had enough of school during the day. Possibility of opening up green spaces e.g. school fields.
Youth Service	T3 membership is very diverse; there are young people from all backgrounds e.g. affluent areas, LAC etc. However, there are young people from deprived areas who will not get involved.
General	Can I have the dates of the committee meetings for Children and Young People Scrutiny?
Youth Service	LA needs to remain the facilitator for youth work, but can parents do more?
Youth Service	Youth clubs are not popular as they tend to be too regimented. The new BOX service which opens soon is not targeted at vulnerable groups but will attract young people who wouldn't go to 'Youth Clubs'. What can schools provide? We need to audit facilities and expand services into the community from schools.
Early Years Inclusion	Sent questionnaires to settings but not parents. Questionnaire validity questioned if it didn't go to every family No-one asked if they would work all year e.g. through a rota system/flexible holidays. How can 8 staff reduced to three provide the same level of service?
Early Years Inclusion	How can 8 staff reduced to three provide the same level of service? Disabled Children don't have a voice – savings are so small. How can the £100k buy enough experienced staff? Who will teach Hearing Impaired children if 2 staff made redundant in March 31 st . It's not fair if all parents hadn't been asked?

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Early Years Inclusion	Explained: Child needs 1:1 if worker goes who will do this in future? Setting have high turnover so the methodology of up skilling staff will not work. Noted support given to child at Borough Road Nursery.
Early Years Inclusion	Recited quote re protecting vulnerable children. Is this your belief?
Early Years Inclusion	It is offensive to the use of term deleted.
Early Years Inclusion	Budget cuts in education with transfer of budgets to schools/settings. Union wants the LEA to co-ordinate and market services to schools. He suggested staff should be kept together.
Early Years Inclusion	Raised query about a vacancy at George Dent nursery.
Early Years Inclusion	Raising settings to deal with hearing impaired children takes at least a year to reach Level One – this means some children will be left without support in the interim.
Early Years Inclusion	Current proposal doesn't refer to increasing levels of demand.
Early Years Inclusion	Gutted that child will go quickly backwards if 1:1 support removed. Will there be a gap between 1:1 support being withdrawn and trained staff in settings coming on stream. Extremely worried about child's safety (life and limb).
Early Years Inclusion	Which families are not receiving inclusion services – suggested that parents should be directed to those existing settings with inclusion support.
Early Years Inclusion	Will Councillor and or member of staff attend a setting to observe a 1:1 provision? Please can we have another meeting in the day time?
Democratic Services	Concern was raised about the proposed trimming of support & funding offered to Parish Councils. This is usually quite small but important for the rural communities involved. What will happen with the cuts?
General	What is the council planning post 2015? What are they planning to take on with the new freedom that government funding will give in the next few years? Are they going to take advantage of the new ways of working? Are we looking forward enough for Darlington? The Council subsidises things that the private sector don't want to invest in because it costs too much money or it doesn't make sense for them – why will they want to do it now?

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General	Thanks to Members of Staff for the support they have given to the groups in the arts centre so far. Quick decisions need to be made to empower local people to work together and put things in place before the cuts start to bite. Darlington for Culture is meeting on Thursday 18 th Nov at the Arts Centre to look at how they can pursue ideas for the Arts Centre. They sympathise that the task is not easy and that other measures will have to be put in place.
General	Look at mid to long term aspirations not just what is happening in the short term, as it will be a shame to have lost things which in 5 years everyone wants back and we cant have them.
General	Are politicians just lying down to these cuts and not fighting them? Why are you just managing the cuts instead of campaigning against them? The LA has influence why are you not using it? The Political leadership needs to take a stand and the arts centre will stand a chance – the Council needs to support the soul of the arts in Darlington.
General	The recent Planning for Real consultations did not show a bus station. The Council do not seem to want to discuss this. Member of staff explained that Arriva will not build a bus station and therefore the costs would fall on the Council. In original plans for the Pedestrian Heart buses were to go around the outside of the town centre but in response to public objections it was changed to the current arrangements. Concern was expressed about the safety of the current arrangements.
General	None of the other proposals would have a direct impact upon Parish Council representative personally or to Sadberge Village. Other than, delays to responses/works would increase further is staff cuts were made. Sadberge is already taking the 'self help' route, introducing a Community Speed Watch Scheme through Durham constabulary and setting up a recycling facility instead of using Whessoe Road site.
General budget proposals	Why are we front loading the cuts? Other venues in the NE are offering non LA controlled options but it has taken time for them to emerge to take things on – can we not do this here?
General Community Partnership support	Removal of the community worker support from the 11 Community Partnerships: 1. The lack of a decent period of notice for this change has been a shock – no chance to adjust or get ready for it 2. How will Community Partnerships find out information about funding & help to fill in application forms? 3. Community workers hold information & have developed the relationships with partners, groups & local forums – how will community partnerships do this without time to pass on information & contacts? 4. How will Community Partnerships decide their future actions & priorities with no worker support? 5. Who will help Community Partnerships see their ideas grow into reality?
General Pedestrian Heart	Pedestrian Heart – ongoing deterioration including poor quality re-instatement following works – why aren't people who dig-up areas forced to put them back in proper condition?
General	Concern was expressed about the way that BME groups would have their say. There were going to be special events for older people, disabled people and young people but nothing was advertised for these groups. Resident informed the group that Mental Health Matters had had an initial meeting about setting up a BME Network group, Officer said that it would be good to put groups in international day in touch with this group.

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General	Community groups will help and support. Railings in the town particularly around the station are appalling. A member of the community had already offered to help but no one had taken up the offer. The community will do things but their offers need to be taken on board. Member of Staff responded that there was a strategy to work with community groups to do things currently done by the Council. Some community and voluntary groups were not yet ready to do this. Work was already going on with Bowling Clubs for example to look at how they can manage the greens themselves. The Council was also working with a number of Friends Groups.
General	Information on the budget proposals could have been made clearer and simpler. Currently there wasn't enough detail to make choices. Member of staff asked how this could be improved. The group agreed that more events like this would be good so that questions can be answered in small groups. Promotion could be better and the website needs to be improved and an acknowledgement that not everyone has access to the website. The group agreed that the timing of information was important and use local people to deliver publicity in localities. Councillor said that Talking Together now tended to be issue based and sometimes events were still held and no-one attended.
General Town Centre	It was stated that people didn't see the Pedestrian Heart as good value as it had once been a real market town and now had no historical character and the current cobbles in the market place are dangerous. Councillor explained that Darlington town centre businesses were thriving compared to those in other areas. Discussion then took place about the new Oval development and the need to improve Queen Street.
General	Wasting money on Highway schemes i.e. DETC, Through about.
General	Why do we need a mayor?
General	Can staff take a pay cut to prevent other losing their jobs?
General	Is the council making use of all available resources?
General	Is procurement process correct across all division? Money is wasted on blackberries, lap tops.
General	Turn water feature on High Row off, it is a waste of money.
General	Council is a big employer – people are going to lose their jobs. There are social implications for the town. How will you look at redundancy? The impact is huge so why are you reducing redundancy payments for staff. Why not get people to work part time instead of losing their jobs completely?
General	'I've noticed the Christmas lights are switched on – perhaps that could be looked at being stopped'
General Transport and Road Safety/ Efficiency and Resources	Resources could be better used – for example why is so much being spent on cycle lanes some of which seem to be in ridiculous places. Surely this money could be used for Arts and Culture. Councillor explained that this is external funding that the Council bids for and it is ring-fenced for particular activity so can't be used for Arts Centre. Dilemma is does the council bid for the funding or not? What were the Sustrain criteria? Why had bus shelters in Edgecombe Drive been moved and work at Bensham Road. Surely moving bus shelters is a waste of money.

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<p>General background to all proposals</p>	<p>Direct provision of services? Who are “the vulnerable”? Services interact/inter-relate e.g. transport (e.g. buses) and social care. What measurement / metrics of who is affected? Livelihoods – redundancies, wider knock-on effects on lives and the local economy. 3 Departments – how structured? Partnership working?(Public, Private, Voluntary Sectors). Strategies for managing staff reductions? Challenge ahead - further savings - where can they come from? Who will step in to deliver services (Voluntary, Private Sectors?). Where does £22million figure come from? What is the process for developing options / proposals? How does central Government decide grant shares?</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>This proposal is part of a package, what alternatives have been explored and how will you assess the impact? The proposals are to make cuts. What are the levels of cuts?</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>Is the Council aware of the agreement that was made between the Council and Carmel in 1974 when the school was first built? The agreement said that all children would get free transport to the school forever. How does this agreement affect the current proposal? This same debate had taken place in early 2000 when the Council had tried, unsuccessfully, to change the arrangements then. There was full coverage in the Northern Echo of the original agreement.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>Darlington hasn't been alone in providing the 2 mile transport provision. If other authorities can continue to provide this service, why can't Darlington? Do other authorities who operate at 3 miles have just one Catholic Secondary school, like Darlington?</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>As a catholic we're forced to send our children to only one Secondary School. We don't have a choice. Each Primary School should be a feeder school and they should be entitled to transport unless they choose another school which isn't the feeder school.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>What is the difference between an Associated School and a Feeder School? Feel discriminated against as a Catholic Parent choosing a Catholic School.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>Great concern raised for families who are just above the low income target and who may have more than one child. If these families live between 2 and 3 miles from the school they would find it extremely difficult to afford the charges for bus fare.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>If these concessionary seats are taken up then it would be extremely expensive to run half empty buses and you wouldn't manage to achieve the savings you are expecting. If you are charging for the bus fare then the cost of administering the payment from parents would be more expensive than keeping the buses running.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>We work and pay our taxes but we are only just above the level of income support needed to get free travel. If you start introducing charges for Concessionary travel then the costs will increase year on year and it will end up being too expensive for parents to afford. This is not an option.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>If you go to Hurworth, will you continue to receive free buses because of the safe walking routes? Also will Hummersknott get free transport?</p>

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Home to School Transport	Feel that to maintain free transport to Hurworth and Hummersknott is wrong and it is discriminating against Catholics.
Home to School Transport	If a family has more than one child they will just not be able to afford the transport costs and then their choice of a Catholic education will be taken away from them. Carmel is currently a fully comprehensive school which draws from some of the most disadvantaged wards. Parents will end up moving across town to the 'West End' to ensure that can walk to Carmel or the intake of Carmel will change making it a 'West End' catchment school.
LEA Statutory Functions	What are the statutory duties? Will statutory functions change with a new Education White Paper? When will we know what will be retained in each area of statutory service?
Home to School Transport	As a parent living in Brankin Road the new arrangements would mean that my child would have to walk right across town, along unlit streets and through South Park which must be classed as an unsafe route. The public buses are only once an hour so they would not be suitable. I could not afford to pay for the concessionary travel if it was available. I work so could not walk my child to school or collect her from school. Who will take responsibility for her safety?
Home to School Transport	When the Government originally introduced the 3 mile policy the issues of safety were not the same as they are now. In today's society it is unreasonable to expect children to walk 3 miles. Feeder schools should be introduced across the town which incorporate transport links. We could have a neighbour whose child goes to Hurworth or Hummersknott and they will continue to get free transport to protect their children but we're not entitled to it because we're Catholic? Don't understand the difference between Associated Schools and Feeder School and why the Associated Schools in Darlington aren't also affected by these budget cuts.
Home to School Transport	Don't understand why Darlington doesn't have catchment areas in place. We all know that Darlington's pupils are reducing in numbers. If you got rid of Associated transport and brought in catchment areas it would make it fairer for parents and clearer to know what's going to happen. It should be about fairness across the board.
Home to School Transport	What do the Council see as a fair amount of time to walk to school? As parents we think anything over 35mins is unreasonable. Are the Council prepared to be held responsible for the children's safety? There was a policy in place that has been taken away from them. What about when children want to do extra activities after school. It will be even later and darker for them to have to walk home. This is a safety issue.
Home to School Transport	If you keep Associated transport then people could be getting free transport to Hurworth when their nearest school is St Aidan's. How is this fair?
Home to School Transport	If St Aidan's is full then it won't be able to take the Catholic children who can't afford to travel to Carmel. Will they all end up going to Branksome instead?
Home to School Transport	Children whose Parents who are on the edge of the benefit level will be paying to travel on the same buses as rich children who are getting free transport – how can this be fare?

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Home to School Transport	How much money will this proposal actually save? That % is so small against the total spend for Children Services. How can it be a good idea to go ahead? £110,000 is less than 0.6% of the total budget. How can you save money when the same buses will be running every day but with less children on them?
Home to School Transport	Do feel penalised compared with the families who will still be getting Associated Transport. Would it not be cheaper to put a footpath into Hurworth? Why do people from Skerne Park get associated transport to Hummersknott?
Home to School Transport	Is the Council going to loose any staff in the budget proposals? Need to look closely at what services are being affected and challenge every bit of spending. Could the Council not look to reduced older people's housing or social care rather than review the home to school transport policy?
Home to School Transport	How much does the Town Crier cost? Can that not be stopped? Need to make better use of the Council's web-site and get someone to make it work. It's useless.
General	The Council have a policy of never putting anything in the Town Crier about Carmel.
Home to School Transport	Under Human Rights the Courts would side with parents who have had this provision taken away from them.
Home to School Transport	Some people felt very strongly that Associated transport should be included in the budget proposals and this would be the only fair way of making changes to the transport provision.
Home to School Transport	It feels as if a full review hasn't been undertaken and all options for savings haven't yet been considered. It's not fair if you are not reviewing Associated Transport.
Home to School Transport	Teachers in Carmel work hard to maintain excellent standards with the socio economic mix that is currently present. The school has always welcomed other faiths and denominations. There is a risk that all this will be altered if the proposals are taken forward. Parents already pay an extra 10% to attend Carmel and now you are penalising the Catholics even further. Feel that the decision has already been made.
Home to School Transport	More children on public transport will take up all the seats on the service buses and will scare the elderly who already use these services. Could we review the inequality for associated transport?
Transport Issue raised as AOB	School Transport Issue. Many children attending Carmel School & Hummersknott live across the town & have no access to a bus service to get to school, which then means a long early morning walk. Can there be a bus service set up that families can pay for to help with this problem, which will be worse in the winter months? Cllr Scott explained that this issue is known about already & will be looked at.
Home to School Transport	A letter objecting to the proposals was handed over from 2 residents

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Home to School Transport	There must be other ways of saving money across the Council. Have you not considered turning off every other lamp post on a night? Equally unhappy about other costs savings that are being put forward. But most concerned that Children need to get an excellent level of education. Should review what currently happens. Stop protecting and supporting children who misbehave and abuse the system. Save the money as they can't be helped anyway and we shouldn't waste money on them. If we change the transport arrangements the Council will have to spend more money on Police as there will still be bullying in the town for Catholic children.
Home to school transport	Paying for transport is unfair for pupils who fall just outside the 3 mile limit. It is important to protect and invest in the future of young people.
Home to school transport	Will these changes affect the choice of school made by families? For Catholic Families Carmel College is the only choice. 30% of pupils are non Catholic which we welcome. The postcode assessment of deprivation is no longer accurate as postcodes have been allocated on availability so the previous DL1/DL3 split is no longer valid.
Home to school transport	What is the definition of a deprived family? How is the 2 miles/3 miles calculated? GIS measures the middle of the road rather than the footpath? Can parents access GIS information?
Home to school transport	Economic impact of charging not only transport costs but school meals as well. Some families would be able to afford it.
Home to school transport	What are the numbers of pupils affected by these proposals? Surely parents who live within the urban area will utilise their own transport it will be those in the outlying rural locations who may take up chargeable transport?
Home to school transport	Why is there Associated Transport – Heighington's nearest school is Branksome? Why do we need to save all this money? Can we work with parents/the schools to look at helping them to develop self-help transport sharing scheme? What will be the impact on increased use of public cars?
Home to school transport	Pupils living in Darlington Borough who attend Newton Aycliffe schools have to get on Darlington bus when a Durham County Council bus is going to the same location. What possible options for reciprocal arrangements have been explored? Will DBC talk to DCC about options for developing reciprocal arrangements.
Home to school transport	Durham County Council Sixth Formers attending Carmel College already pay for travelling on DBC buses. Also, issue of faith transport – strongly disagree with the move from 2 -3 miles. This is a disproportionate hit on a small number of schools. What is the definition of a safe route?
Home to school transport	No choice of secondary school for Catholic families – will force some parents to send children to nearest school and therefore deprive children of their Catholic education. Will concessionary transport be available? Aren't the most vulnerable the youngest children – opposed to those that live furthest away. How much would a concessionary place be on a bus if available? Can we provide more information to parents on what is included? How will the proposal impact on schools?