

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Budget Proposal	Comments																																																																														
Procurement	I think the Council could save thousands by putting the building cleaning into the hands of the private sector. The workers have become complacent. There must be a cheaper company to do the work.																																																																														
Management and Departmental Restructuring	Why have no staff consultation events been held here at Hundens Depot? We are a large department, and for any of us to attend the events in the town centre means we have to be absent from our posts longer than the town hall staff. Could a more convenient venue be set up?																																																																														
Management and Departmental Restructuring	<p>Alternative suggestions around salaries. Spending Cuts - In order to save jobs, retain as many services as possible whilst drastically cutting costs, may I suggest that you consider reducing your salary bill as per the attached list. Hopefully the majority of your employees will appreciate that it is better to have a lower paid job than no job at all.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Existing Salary</th> <th>% Reduction</th> <th>Revised Salary</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>£150,000</td><td>-25%</td><td>£112,500</td></tr> <tr><td>£145,000</td><td>-24%</td><td>£110,200</td></tr> <tr><td>£140,000</td><td>-23%</td><td>£107,800</td></tr> <tr><td>£135,000</td><td>-22%</td><td>£105,300</td></tr> <tr><td>£130,000</td><td>-21%</td><td>£102,700</td></tr> <tr><td>£125,000</td><td>-20%</td><td>£100,000</td></tr> <tr><td>£120,000</td><td>-19%</td><td>£97,200</td></tr> <tr><td>£115,000</td><td>-18%</td><td>£94,300</td></tr> <tr><td>£110,000</td><td>-17%</td><td>£91,300</td></tr> <tr><td>£105,000</td><td>-16%</td><td>£88,200</td></tr> <tr><td>£100,000</td><td>-15%</td><td>£85,000</td></tr> <tr><td>£95,000</td><td>-14%</td><td>£81,700</td></tr> <tr><td>£90,000</td><td>-13%</td><td>£78,300</td></tr> <tr><td>£85,000</td><td>-12%</td><td>£74,800</td></tr> <tr><td>£80,000</td><td>-11%</td><td>£71,200</td></tr> <tr><td>£75,000</td><td>-10%</td><td>£67,500</td></tr> <tr><td>£70,000</td><td>-9%</td><td>£63,700</td></tr> <tr><td>£65,000</td><td>-8%</td><td>£59,800</td></tr> <tr><td>£60,000</td><td>-7%</td><td>£55,800</td></tr> <tr><td>£55,000</td><td>-6%</td><td>£51,700</td></tr> <tr><td>£50,000</td><td>-5%</td><td>£47,500</td></tr> <tr><td>£45,000</td><td>-4%</td><td>£43,200</td></tr> <tr><td>£40,000</td><td>-3%</td><td>£38,800</td></tr> <tr><td>£35,000</td><td>-2%</td><td>£34,300</td></tr> <tr><td>£30,000</td><td>-1%</td><td>£29,700</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Existing Salary	% Reduction	Revised Salary	£150,000	-25%	£112,500	£145,000	-24%	£110,200	£140,000	-23%	£107,800	£135,000	-22%	£105,300	£130,000	-21%	£102,700	£125,000	-20%	£100,000	£120,000	-19%	£97,200	£115,000	-18%	£94,300	£110,000	-17%	£91,300	£105,000	-16%	£88,200	£100,000	-15%	£85,000	£95,000	-14%	£81,700	£90,000	-13%	£78,300	£85,000	-12%	£74,800	£80,000	-11%	£71,200	£75,000	-10%	£67,500	£70,000	-9%	£63,700	£65,000	-8%	£59,800	£60,000	-7%	£55,800	£55,000	-6%	£51,700	£50,000	-5%	£47,500	£45,000	-4%	£43,200	£40,000	-3%	£38,800	£35,000	-2%	£34,300	£30,000	-1%	£29,700
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Management and Departmental Restructuring	Cuts in a bloated and inefficient workforce should ensure rate cuts or least zero rises every year. Why have savings and zero rates only being considered this year? We want a rates cut year on year or at least zero. This should have been an ongoing process every year. The council seems to consider the ratepayers of Darlington are a milk cow to fund job creation. Jobs for the boys in many cases. It is obvious jobs have go from a bloated, and in many cases, inefficient workforce. At least 30% cut in employees across the board would be a good start. Reckon on 30% over staffing over all departments. Council carrying a lot of dead wood employees. Also many excellent employees I must say. A concerned, poorly paid, crappy pension ratepayer.
Management and Departmental Restructuring	A member of staff of thirty years standing submitted a long email criticising management, refuse, recycling routes and suggesting cuts to management to save money. The message was offensive and personally vindictive so is not provided in full.
Employee Pay Freeze	When looking at premium payments for Bank Holidays please consider the following: If we need to pay staff double time for working a bank holiday, then don't also give them a day in lieu. I understand the reasons for the double time payments for a member of staff who is required to work on a National holiday but why also give them a day in lieu? This equates to triple time, as in a front line service we have to cover lieu days and this make us very uncompetitive and unviable on Bank Holidays.
Library Service	While we consider all the proposals we would like to make a more urgent appeal not to close Cockerton Library. We use the service regularly and would find it very difficult to have to go to the centre of Darlington to borrow books. This is an essential service and provides for all ages in this area of the town, to remove it completely deprives all the residents of a local source of knowledge and accessibility to the wider learning community. We understand that cuts have to be made but perhaps the opening hours could be trimmed rather than close the branch entirely.
Library Service	Before making any decision regarding Darlington Main Library Building, please be aware that this building was bequeathed to the people of Darlington forever as a free library in the will of Edward Pease - as referenced in this online copy of his diary: http://www.archive.org/stream/thediariesofpeas00peasuoft/thediariesofpeas00peasuoft_djvu.txt The library was built with Pease money on the Pease mill land. Edward Pease died on 13th June 1880 aged 45 in Lucerne Switzerland. However his homes were Greencroft Hall Darlington and Summer Manor Bewdley, Worcestershire. His sole heir was his daughter Beatrice Mary Pease. His will be available from: The York Probate Sub-Registry 1st Floor Castle Chambers, Clifford Street, York YO1 9RGTel: 01904 666777.
Library Service	On Tuesday 16 November I attended the TT event at the Dolphin Centre. I am writing to stress how very important I feel it is to the people of Darlington and the Borough to retain the excellent services provided by the Crown Street Library. Babies, school children and adults of all ages, greatly benefit from the wide range of services on offer. The library is one of only a few buildings in Darlington of architectural importance and its extensive local history collection provides a valuable asset to the history of the town and Borough. As a member of the Crown Street Library for over 40 years I hope any budget cuts will not have a detrimental effect on the many and varied services offered there.

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Library Service	Re the future of Darlington meeting 16 November 2010. For the particular group to which I was directed, most of the time was spent discussion the future of the Arts Centre. This left little time to debate the oldest and most valuable "jewel" in Darlington, Budget Proposalsly the Crown Street Library. As a regular user for 45 years I greatly value all its various departments, especially the local history archives as I am sure, do many other people. Whilst I understand the present difficult financial situation I hope that any changes to the function of this library will be minimal.
Library Service	I have lived in Cockerton for nearly twenty six years and have seen it grow in size and numbers. I am mortified to hear rumours that the library in the village may close due to governmental cutbacks. The library is one of the main 'hubs' of Darlington and as such should remain open. It creates a wonderful setting for meetings, learning and creating a community spirit. I take my childminding children and children from a playgroup that I run, regularly – they enjoy every visit and without it we would be lost! I know of people in this area who go in every day, the staff are jovial, helpful and polite – like home from home. People are not going to catch a bus into town to visit Crown Street library. I go there occasionally but not very often, my main use is the one in Cockerton, as it is for a lot of people. There would be bus fare to consider as well as parking charges if travelling by car for some people. I myself tend to walk most places as I am unable to afford the bus, especially since to get across town you have to go via two buses instead of one! (at twice the cost). If you close this library you will be creating a lot of ill feeling between your 'Darlingtonians'. It is a main centre for all members of the public, young and old alike– it is a community hot spot for learning, communicating, reading and socialising. It also is a good contact for schools, playgroups and nurseries, even comfortable enough to hold those important meetings with representatives when there's nowhere else to go. I do hope you reconsider this situation and I am aware that I am ranting on about a 'rumour' but how many times have we put our heads in the sand to a rumour and then regretted not doing anything when it's been too late!!!
Library Services	My wife and I have had the pleasure of using this library for the last sixty years, we were always welcomed and had loads of help. The staff were always nice and kind to us, it was one of our favoured pleasures to come to the library, it made our day. I am speaking on behalf of my wife who recently died, but she would help me in protesting against anything happening to this library. I beg you, leave it alone.
Library Service	This is an essential excellent service which Darlington would be mis-served if it were to be closed. [Library] Friendly, helpful staff always keen to assist with research.
Library Services	I would like to make the following points in connection with the proposed review of the library service and assessment of local needs. Since the library first opened in 1885 it has continually evolved to cater for the needs of the times. In the Town Crier it states that the Council has used impact assessment to help minimise the negative impacts that decisions may have on various groups of people. I believe that the library serves all the members of the community. It is as much a place of learning as any school, with its facilities and knowledgeable, enthusiastic staff. I have often watched groups of schoolchildren being given talks and you can tell they are thoroughly enjoying themselves. Over the years, the library has continued to expand its local collection by people donating their precious family documents in the thought that they would be safe for future generations. There is obviously a great deal of interest in the history of the town which can be judged by Chris Lloyd's' Echo Memories' articles in the Northern Echo. He often acknowledges the help he receives from the library staff in his research. Obviously not everything can be found on the internet. The library has gone through hard times in the past but it has survived and long may it do so.

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<p>Library Service</p>	<p>As an OAP he has to use the toilets several times, if he has to pay every time he is just going to stop coming into the Town and there isn't many other places for him to go. (raised other issues around the culture proposals but these have already been logged). He wanted a breakdown of the cuts to the library is going to be and comparative statistics re: the cuts to other authorities. He is concerned about people made redundant and says he hopes they are treated better than he was when he was made redundant in Cleveland. He is unhappy about the Tourist Information Centre being closed because he says he already can't get information from the train station easily and we have closed the bus station.</p>
<p>Road Safety</p>	<p>Why is there not a full 'Ring Road' around this town? Furthermore, why is the part Ring Road that is there needlessly restricted to single lane in places? Surely vehicles in constant motion produce fewer pollutants than those that are stopping and starting continuously. Secondly, a proven system already in use in some forward thinking towns and cities is to permit motorcycles to use bus lanes. This makes it safer for the motorcyclists and for motorists and pedestrians. It also helps with traffic flow too. I use a car, a motorcycle and a pedal cycle in and around the town and I have to say provision could be better for all modes. I don't use the busses as they are simply too unreliable, expensive and don't operate at a time when I could make use of them for my shift pattern. Taxis are, at best, variable in punctuality, cleanliness and price. If the aim is to attract people to Darlington from outside areas then precedence should be given to making the flow of vehicular traffic as smooth as possible into, out of and through the town centre. To get these people to return time after time there is a very real need to remove the buses from the Pedestrianised area. They cause havoc at the entrance to the Cornmill and are one of the biggest complaints my visitors have had.</p>
<p>Road Safety</p>	<p>I would suggest a cheap and simple method of encouraging lower speeds in the town centre would be to install a small number of speed detectors that would light up when a preset speed has been exceeded. Some ideal sites would be in Crown Street outside of the Public Library, in Priestgate at the exit of the Cornmill Tunnel and perhaps in Tubwell Row are areas where speeding does exist with particular reference to the town centre buses. It would cost very little to implement, meets guidelines and would be effective towards safety in the town. They are already in use at other locations in the borough so why not the town centre? So it's worth a try</p>
<p>Community Safety</p>	<p>Regarding the recent and ongoing budget cuts proposals and the Council's request for resident comments. I would suggest that the CCTV coverage in and around the town could be stepped back as a potential saving. I appreciate that the infrastructure is in place and capital has been spent in the past to set the system up, but I am sure it could be restricted to cut costs. Also whilst walking in the South Park last year we observed a CCTV Vehicle together with Council staff carrying out some form of PR exercise. I would suggest that in these times this type of activity would appear excessive and the Council should not be wasting funds on hiring CCTV vehicles etc. When there is such pressure on budgets and cuts are being made, the public do not want to see expensive CCTV vehicles standing doing nothing proactive. I also have doubts as to the validity of the use of such systems particularly when there is no follow up with prosecutions as a result of the evidence gleaned. Regarding the CCTV coverage around the town, I am sure the public appreciate that there is a monitored system but it could be restricted in use to certain times (which would not be known by the public) thus cutting down on monitoring and servicing costs. I hope that these comments are in some way useful.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>Comments regarding Concessionary Fares. A resident suggested that concessionary pass holders could be charged a flat rate of £1 per journey. He also wanted to know how many concessionary passes are in use in Darlington.</p>

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<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>Regarding your Talking Together about the future of Darlington. My husband and I were unable to attend the meetings but I wish to let you know of our concerns about the Scarlet Band bus service which go along Cleveland Terrace to the Town Centre and back via Milbank Road. My husband uses this service everyday - into town and back - and I use it also on a regular basis. I am confined to a wheelchair and my husband has serious health problems which restricts the amount of walking he is able to do. This service is a lifeline to us both. We do not own a car and rely on this bus to get shopping, play bills and anything else we need to do in town. This bus has changed our lives for the better. As a wheelchair user, I can now go into town and meet people and feel part of the community. Before this bus started I was confined to the house for weeks and months on end. Isolated and cut off from people. Not only do we think the service is great but Scarlett Band are a wonderful bus company, with fantastic drivers. My wheelchair is rather large, but the drivers are so helpful and never make me feel as if I am a nuisance, offering assistance readily and always with a smile. We know that you need to make savings, but we would urge you to consider the negative impact it would have on our lives if you cut this bus service. I would also add that the majority of passengers that we see using this bus are elderly, so their lives would be similarly affected too.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>Maintain 6A and 6B Services (See petition). The petition contains 231 signatures and is requesting the Council and Arriva to maintain the No. 6A/6B bus service to Mayfair/Laburnam/Glebe Road in Harrowgate Hill.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>I have glanced over the Transport Plan, and congratulate you for the hard work you have put into it. Suggestions such as providing better transport links at places such as Bank Top Station are important, as is pointing out that Darlington's public transport does not link up very well with Teesside and Wynyard. I would urge you to bear in mind that the people in the outlying villages such as Middleton St George, though no fault of their own, often get forgotten about with regard to public transport. People in the villages pay far more for their bus fares than those in the Town boundary, which, I think, is very unreasonable. We have always had a problem with Arriva and their accountability, and when buses do not turn up, especially in the winter, we are stuck with no other service passing by. Likewise, although Northern Rail is very good, with pleasant and helpful staff and reasonable fares, I still cannot understand why every train does not stop at Dinsdale. I brought this up 5 years ago when I first came to live here, and it still hasn't changed. This has a knock on effect for me, as I don't drive, and when I need to travel to Teesside for work appointments I can only travel at certain times, thereby wasting time. The bus and train times do not complement each other. If, for example, the bus from Middleton St George to Darlington does not come in the morning, I would like the option of going to the station to catch the train. However, as these services come at around the same time, I would have missed both. Another issue is wheelchair friendly buses. I have witnessed on several occasions people in wheelchairs having to wait up to an hour or more for a wheelchair access service 12 bus from town. I should be grateful if there is some way you could incorporate into the Transport Plan a way of dealing with Arriva which serves the public better. I know it has been taken over by DeutscheBahn, but have yet to see any improvements on the customer service front. We need Arriva staff on hand whom we can go to for advice and help. Up to now their customer service in Darlington has been nil. The customer helpline is to somewhere where they have no idea about local bus services.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>It would appear that removal of the DBC subsidised bus services will result in the loss of all Sunday and evening services to Hurworth & Neasham. This will mean that the young and elderly in particular will find it impossible to access town centre facilities at those times unless they can afford to use taxis. I find it unfair that these more vulnerable members of our communities should be impacted upon in such a way and would hope that some level of service can be retained to these areas for evenings and Sundays.</p>

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<p>Supported Buses</p>	<p>It would ruin this family's life and they would have to move if there wasn't a bus service in Great Stainton. They rely on the service 17 to get to Darlington Town Centre, and for her son and daughter to get to college. It is the only bus service they have, and is highly valuable.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>Subject: Budget Consultation. Supported Bus Services. Thanks for the opportunity to meet and discuss the needs of our parishioners at Thursday's meeting, I found it most useful and hope that the outcomes will be positive both for the Council and the users of the rural buses. As requested I append below the two most significant points that were raised by Neasham Parish which we trust will be given favourable consideration by your committee: (a) If the eventual option for Neasham's needs is to be a Taxi Bus, then can we be assured that the vehicles will be capable of access to users of wheelchairs? (b) Can due consideration be given to getting Ariva to agree to a diversion of their 12 service so that its run can continue on to Neasham as part of its normal route? We are also acutely aware that the current practice of routes 12 and 20 covering the Hurworth area within minutes of each other is not cost effective and can only work against any needs analysis that may or not be made with regard to numbers needing to use either route. Our proposal in (b) above would obviate this problem and ensure the continued viability of the service which is vital to the needs of certain Neasham residents.</p>
<p>Supported Bus Services</p>	<p>Service 20: Firstly, I am relieved that Neasham is to retain a service. However I feel that the proposed diversion via Neasham Road omitting Hurworth is a retrograde step which will ensure the future demise of the service. To achieve any level of success, the patronage of Hurworth is essential to its future. In addition you may care to consider the following points:passengers from Neasham require a service to Hurworth in order to avail themselves of Post Office, shop and doctor; from Hurworth the service to Matalan and Netto on Neasham Road offering a quick return visit; to soccer matches at the arena; reliable service to railway station on the right side of the road; provision of service for those on Westfields, Friars Pardon and Roundhill Road which is no further to an alternative bus than for residents of Geneva Crescent; through service to the hospital/Sixth Form College. Newbus Grange caravan site would lose its service. Again there is patronage to and from Darlington which would be lost completely and cars used instead.It is reassuring to see the demise of the "green" and "CO2" debates - clearly they have a very low priority. 12 Sunday and Evening services: It is good to see the retention of a Sunday service though reduced. However it is disastrous to see the demise of the evening service which is now achieved after some years of trying due to the operation of the services by FOUR different providers, each with a different timetable & quality of service. There has been a lack of timetable, or difficulty in finding one. Currently THREE different timetables are required to use the Hurworth services. The recent change to Scarlet Band - a very capable operator - resulted in the cessation of the 19.00 service from Darlington, and the non availability of Arriva day, week and monthly tickets has resulted in reduced patronage. Arriva's timetable gives no indication of any service after their service ends around 19.00, nor does the Scarlet Band service 20, and yet the service continues to operate at the same frequency until 23.00, if would be patrons can find it! I have no problem with service reductions in the current economic climate. I can cope with 25% or even 50% but 100% is a little drastic. Could you investigate the possibility of an HOURLY evening service from Hurworth - Middleton one Row ONLY? This could be operated with ONE vehicle with consequent savings to the Council. I commented at a previous meeting that something new was needed as an alternative to a timetabled bus. How could a demand led service cover these routes on an evening? Neasham/Hurworth/Middleton/Sadberge. It might be advantageous to discuss this with users of the service - or those who would use it if available. How would passengers register/book the service? Would passes be valid? I hope this missive will achieve some consideration and success.</p>

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Supported bus service	Can I take it that the Number 1 will continue as present and the number 16 will be withdrawn completely? Is there any service to be provided to the disabled, the infirm & the elderly who may need to access hospitals or shopping etc?
Supported Bus Services	Received proposal for how to save money re contracts with Scarlet Band operate on our behalf.
Supported Bus Services	<p>As we discussed after the DAPC meeting on 18-Nov-2010, I've been doing some thinking about how we can capture what Sadberge residents need from a bus service. I've also talked to some of the Sadberge residents who rely on the bus service. Here are some preliminary thoughts; we need to consider three groups of people:</p> <p>(a) People who rely on the bus service now. Most of these are elderly residents who do not have their own cars.</p> <p>(b) People who do not rely on the bus service at present, but who are likely to do so in the future. These are generally people who currently have their own cars but who foresee a time when they will no longer be able to drive.</p> <p>(c) People who have their own cars but who use the bus service on a 'voluntary' basis. Strictly speaking, these people don't need the bus service, but if they've been using the service on a regular basis then I feel that they've earned a say in its future.</p> <p>Sadberge residents need / want to use the bus service to get to four main destinations:-</p> <p>(a) Darlington Town Centre. Work, college, general shopping (including banks, post office, etc.), library, access to transport links to go further afield, and --- importantly --- simply getting out and about.</p> <p>(b) Middleton St. George. Primarily to get to the Felix House Surgery, but also to get to the post office.</p> <p>(c) Whinfield. Whinfield Primary School, Whinfield Surgery, Asda.</p> <p>(d) Morton Park. Morrison's.</p> <p>Some journeys need to be made at particular times (e.g. to work, college and school), but there is quite a lot of flexibility in the timings of other journeys (e.g. shopping and getting out and about). For example, one person said that she'd like to be able get into Darlington Town Centre for about 2 – 3 hours about once a week, any day except Wednesday, and preferably during a morning rather than an afternoon.</p> <p>I believe that it should be possible to design a taxi-bus service to meet most of the 'core' needs of Sadberge residents. This might involve such things as:-</p> <p>>> Having specific 'work / college / school' trips at the start and end of each weekday.</p> <p>>> Varying the route into Darlington so that the bus would make some trips via Whinfield and other trips via Morton Park.</p> <p>>> Providing a shuttle service between Sadberge and the Felix House Surgery in Middleton St. George during a 'Sadberge session' that would replace the minor ailments clinic in Sadberge Village Hall. (As you're aware, the minor ailments clinic is being discontinued at the end of 2010.)</p> <p>On a related subject, one resident said that she has to use the Ring a Ride service rather than the bus because the bus can't take her mobility scooter. What are the plans for the Ring a Ride service? Should we deal with the bus service and the Ring a Ride service together or separately?</p> <p>Either way, I suggest that the next step should be to collect more detailed information about Sadberge residents' requirements. I've attached an initial draft of a questionnaire that we could use to obtain this data from the approximately 40 – 60 people who are in the three categories (a) – (c) that I described above. Provided that Sadberge Parish Council agrees, I'd be able to start distributing the questionnaires during the week commencing 13-Dec-2010 (after I get back from holiday). Given the distraction of Christmas, however, I don't think that we'd be in a position to collate the results until mid-January.</p>

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<p>Strategic Funding Review of the Third Sector</p>	<p>I have become aware that the council are proposing to cut back on the £120,000 Grant Aid money [for Red Hall Community Centre] How will this affect our £4,500 and is there any news on how the cuts could affect the Community Centre in general?</p>
<p>Strategic Funding of the Third Sector</p>	<p>We produce a funding information bulletin for the third sector across the North East. In our next bulletin, due out next week, we are hoping to inform our readers of their local council's spending plans for the upcoming year – and how they can get involved or feedback. Do you have any documents or information on the Council's plans (draft or otherwise) that you could send me please? Many thanks</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>Prospectus- Darlington for Culture.doc I read with horror the cuts about to take place in terms of the Arts Centre. I lived in Darlington for over seventeen years and consider myself an honorary Darlingtonian and was hoping to move back in the near future. Is there any way I can take part in any protests or petitions to voice the anger we all feel at these events? Looking forward to hearing from you.</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p><u>Prospectus: Darlington for Culture</u> <u>A Community Solution to a Community Need</u> Darlington needs a meeting place for clubs and societies, for arts and recreation, for activities and enjoyment, for celebration and discovery, for new partnerships and creative ideas. That is what we mean by culture. A rich quality of life through shared experience. Darlington needs more cultural activity for everyone. Darlington for Culture proposes setting up a Community Interest Company to run a building within which all strands of cultural activity will be welcome. The building will be the hub of cultural activity throughout the town. We are realistic both about the great qualities and the drawbacks of the buildings for culture we have inherited. We believe the Civic Theatre and its programme will be best secured by a partnership between the Council and an appropriate organisation in the private sector. Darlington for Culture will seek to keep the Arts Centre in operation until a more modern, sustainable and accessible building is available. The immediate need is to ensure continuity of what current users – and potential new users – need. A strong business model will be based on realistic charges to users and a combination of trading and fundraising. Darlington for Culture CIC is a Company Limited by Guarantee which will offer shares to user groups and individuals interested in maintaining a community resource. The shareholders will appoint directors to manage the company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations should hold a £25 share or one per cent of annual income • Individuals should hold a £10 share <p><u>The Cultural Parliament</u> Every Executive body needs a parliament to call it to account, discuss and debate issues, demand and receive information, draft new ideas and advise the Executive, and replace it as necessary. Darlington for Culture will hold regular parliamentary sessions, where representatives of informal groups and formal associations can talk about their needs and aspirations. Some sessions will be open to all residents of Darlington and actively encourage participation by the widest range of voluntary bodies. Ideas from the Cultural Parliament will feed into a programme of activity across the town. It is essential to gain and retain wide public support for Culture. Promotional programmes should be set up to reach out to people who feel excluded socially or financially from participation in activities in the centre of town. Examples might be:</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Cultural Services continued</p>	<p>Cultural Action: a programme to establish arts and cultural activity in neighbourhoods, perhaps linked to issues in their area. Heritage Watch: a programme to celebrate Darlington's great legacy of buildings and townscape and the networks of parks and green spaces. Next Steps? By end of December we must: Prepare a workable Business Plan; Convince Council officers and Councillors we are a credible body; Negotiate with partners to secure funding</p> <p>Paul Harman, Chair of Darlington for Culture</p> <p><u>Darlington for Culture: Sign Up</u> If there is sufficient public interest and support, it is proposed that Darlington for Culture will be registered as a non-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) offering shares to user groups and individuals interested in maintaining Darlington Arts Centre as a community resource. The shareholders will appoint directors to manage the company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associations are invited to hold a £25 share• Individuals are invited to hold a £10 share <p>Expression of Interest Please contact me/us when Darlington for Culture is registered. Name(s): Organisation: Address: Email: £10 Individual share(s): £25 Association share(s):</p> <p><u>Darlington for Culture</u> Dear Supporter The meeting on Thursday 18 November was an overwhelming success with so many people in favour of setting up a Community Interest Company to run the Arts Centre. The Cultural Parliament idea also has support. Many people said that the Council should continue to give financial backing. We think so too. We hope the Council will change its mind. Please make your councillors aware of your opinion. We collected 75 new email addresses to join the 66 from our meeting on October 7th. £142.43p was donated towards our costs – a total to date of £149.75p! If you wish to, and have not already done so, please fill in the attached Sign Up (expression of interest) form and send it to: Darlington for Culture, c/o 16 Victoria Embankment, Darlington, DL1 5JR PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY. We are not yet a properly constituted body and have no way to accept further donations at present. With Many Thanks Paul Harman Chair, Darlington for Culture</p>
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Cultural Services	Feel it should stay staffed as the staff are so pleasant and helpful. A valued resource for booking trips, Civic, etc. Really value the Civic, it's been part of life and Arts Centre and I've been to many shows. Feel as older people we are going backwards rather than forwards.
Cultural Services	I would like to express my disappointment that you are planning to withdraw your subsidy to Darlington Civic Theatre and the Arts Centre. I believe that both these organisations provide a vital service to Darlington and make it a more vibrant place to live and help it to attract visitors from outside of the town to shops/restaurants etc. My family have used these facilities six times in the past month for seeing shows etc. If these facilities close we will have to travel much further to access these services and consequently are much less likely to do so. I also believe that your work on tackling anti-social behaviour should not be reduced. This is still very much a problem in Darlington and scaling back your work in this area will only increase the problem. Please keep me up to date with the development of your proposals.
Cultural Services	Please are you able to provide me with updates as to how you see the budget proposals effecting the operation of the Tourist Information Services in the town and in turn the supplies to the satellite office based in the Travel Centre at Darlington Bank Top Station. Kind regards
Cultural Services	This past weekend, I held a Folk Music event at Darlington Arts Centre. This is a similar event to the one held last year and 120 musicians and 12 tutors had a wonderful time using the facilities in the Arts Centre and the Sixth Form College. Attendees came from all over the British Isles and last year we had musicians from Orkney and the United States. Your staff, ranging from Amanda who booked the event to Doreen on Reception, Sue, Catering Manager, and Andy, Chris and Nina, Duty Managers, treated us with courtesy and respect throughout. As a result of the continued success, today I asked Amanda to book us for a similar weekend in 2011 but she explained that the Arts Centre was to close owing to removal of funding. I realise that Darlington Council is under pressure to cut costs, but would like my comments and support to go on record, as closure and demolition of such a delightful Victorian flagship building, in such a pretty setting, would be a loss for future generations who, in the overall scheme of things, would regard the actions as very short term.
Cultural Services	While realising that you face tough decisions, I am disappointed to read in the Town Crier that all subsidy to the Civic Theatre & the Arts Centre will be cut, very likely leading to their closure. This will reduce the attractiveness Darlington will hold for anyone considering where to settle, should they be moving to the North-East. How will the use of the Dolphin Centre compensate for these closures? Could the Dolphin Centre accommodate the needs, for instance, of the resurgent Operatic Society? I would appeal that one of these venues (the Arts Centre or the Civic Theatre) should be preserved - whichever is cheapest would do. I feel that it would be short-sighted to take Darlington down the least common denominator route. Without culture, what are we? What do we represent? Hoping there is a last chance saloon in Darlington for the arts.
Cultural Services	I am emailing with regards to the notice in the Town Crier last week, reporting the possible closure of the Civic Theatre in Darlington. This would be an enormous loss to the town, as it is a much valued facility that is steeped in history and tradition. The unique experience of going to a beautiful theatre like this is a treasure these days and something to look forward to and take pleasure in...and on the doorstep. I write as someone who does use the theatre regularly and its closure would be a huge shame. I understand that financial cuts need to be made, but am concerned that both the building and the facility would soon run into disrepair in private hands. I really hope that my comments will be taken on board and all other options considered at great length as part of the decision making process.

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Cultural Services	I have read the Town Crier which sets out the proposed public spending cuts. I understand that savings need to be made but I feel very strongly that the Council should retain ownership of The Civic Theatre. This is such a fantastic building and facility for the town and surrounding area. It is a very well used facility and a cultural beacon. I know the Council put such a lot of effort into restoring the Theatre and it would be such a shame if it was sold off and turned into something else. My concern is that you sell it off to a private company and then a few years down the line they can't make it pay and they turn it into a Bingo Hall or something equally awful. I am sure that you will receive lots of similar comments and concerns in this regard. I would like to say thank you for inviting comments from residents of the town so that you can hopefully take views into account.
Cultural Services	It appears to be common knowledge that the Arts Centre is under threat of closure. In view of this I, today, viewed the Borough's website seeking confirmation of your intentions and information regarding the reasons/justification for this apparent decision. Needless to say I found nothing on the website to enlighten me. My wife and I, this week alone, attended two paid events at the Arts Centre and both were well patronised. Over past months we have both been to a number of paid events at the Centre all of which had high levels of audience attendance. Should the Arts Centre be closed we, plus our fellow audience members, will be disenfranchised and local culture will sustain a body blow. We agree that economies are needed and, if given the facts, are prepared to accept that the Art Centre cannot remain immune. But we need you to justify your proposals on more than crude financial considerations. We should be told, for example, how many people in total attend paid events of all categories during a given time period, and how the potential impact on this number of Darlington residents is more acceptable than some other economy.
Cultural Services	OK so let's cut arts funding, let's close "Theatres" let's forget about the income to the town of Darlington. Everything has a knock on effect and I feel that the arts does give value for money. Better value than footballers, Bank managers and any one with inflated salaries. We are hard working people who have chosen to work in an area that brings a small glimmer of escape in this time of woe. You must have gone to the Theatre, Outdoor Events, Productions, Firework Display etc and seen the look on people's faces. Please don't pull the dream for so many.....

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>Here is my opinion on some cuts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go back to basics, less chiefs more Indians. 2. Coordinate road works with utility companies so as not to dig up the road 100 times and then it isn't done properly. 3. Now you have the powers re street parking etc, fine those that park on double yellow lines constantly at Dominos Pizza etc Northgate and other fast food outlets. 4. Increase taxes for fast food restaurants, the mess the people leave in the streets in town is disgusting and it's costing you to keep it clean. 5. Basic street cleaning/litter removal give the job to those who are on benefits and it won't cost you or those who are on community service. 6. The fireworks every year, it's not fair to have them free. I don't see them so why should I pay for them. Charge £5 per person to see them (cost of a packet of cigarettes so isn't too much) Thirty years ago all displays you had to pay for. 7. Better usage of your car parks, I am a weekly payer, if you charged £12-13 per 5 working days, more people would park there instead of cluttering the streets, even offer a cheaper monthly ticket one could buy at town hall. The longer you park it should be cheaper. Surely it's better to have a full car park than an empty one. 8. Stop these stupid departments who do studies like dietary requirements at schools etc who cares? Go back to basics. Provide us a service to clean the streets and remove waste etc. 9. No free services to unemployed i.e. internet usage, they are the ones who have new computers etc. Mine is second hand. 10. I never knew you supported the Civic, they charge enough!!! If you have to subsidise then one or the other but not the Arts Centre, it was never supported 10 years ago. 11. Don't subsidise bus routes, that should be down to the supplier, bus fares cost enough.
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>We have just heard about the Council's proposed closure of the Arts Centre and wish to express our concern in the strongest possible terms. Although we do not live in Darlington (nor, therefore, pay Council Tax to Darlington Borough Council), we do use and thoroughly enjoy the Arts Centre and would be devastated if it was to be closed. We frequently go to the cinema there, often to see films that are not on general release and also like to go to see the exhibitions, and music events, particularly the jazz and folk concerts. The programme is varied and always of a very high standard. For many people like us, living in rural South West Durham, the Arts Centre is a cultural oasis and there really is no other reasonably accessible alternative. Without the Arts Centre, we would have to travel to Newcastle or Teesside, which would take longer, cost significantly more and, in the winter, would often be impracticable. We appreciate that the financial situation is extremely difficult and that the Council has to make serious cuts in expenditure. Why, though, does it seem that the arts are always one of the first areas to be hit? Having fairly recently spent considerable amounts refurbishing the Arts Centre and the Civic Theatre, closure now would be even more unjustified. There must other areas of expenditure that could be trimmed in order to save the Arts Centre and we would ask the Council to re-visit this proposal as a matter of urgency. Please scrutinise the budget again to see how this invaluable resource may be rescued from the threat of closure. We would have offered some thoughts on this, but it proved impossible to find the necessary information on your website</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>I am writing to register my disagreement and objection to the possible closing of the Travel Booking Office at the Dolphin Centre. I went in to book by National Express ticket this week and was met by very unhappy staff who are fearing redundancy. I know these are difficult times but to cease this office and possibly the Theatre and Arts Centre would be a tragic backward step by this Council. It would affect the quality of life of so many people who you rely on for votes and support. I so hope you will reconsider.</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>I was at the meeting last night at the Dolphin Centre last night about the cuts. I was very angry as to what took place to put it mildly. It seems as through the council have accepted the cuts without any fight and just intend to "manage" them and this applies to all political parties. I do not know why we have Councillors any more, they are not sticking up for Darlington, they just close places down. Feethams Sports Centre, Feethams Football ground, Larchfield Sports Centre, Archer Street, Gladstone Sports Centre, the Darlington museum, Arts Gallery, Bus Station, Victoria Road Post office among others. The Rates Hall where I used to pay your poll tax and now have to wait hours to pay at the Crown Street Post Office. Now you intend to close the Arts Centre, the Civic Theatre and possibly Darlington Public Library. I had Sports Clubs in Larchfield Street and Gladstone Street Activity Centre and now the clubs have closed. I know of only three clubs still active in Darlington now out of the many that were activities in Larchfield Street. The same is now going to happen to the 40 or so activities in the Arts Centre. What you will do to manage this is to offer the activities cut price to move to the Dolphin Centre. Then in three to four years time the Dolphin will double the hire, the activities will move to schools at the edge of the town where they will die because the buses in Darlington at night are none existent. It is not the job of the Councillors of Darlington to accept about a third cut in the Government grant. They should fight for the grant to be increased not cut. I did not see any fight last night just acceptance. Why are the Civic Theatre and the Arts Centre chosen to be closed, yet the £2 million to the Dolphin Centre to be ring fenced? Who decided on this and why? What right have they to suggest this? For years now the Dolphin Centre can only be used by the wealthy of Darlington because of the high prices they charge. The Dolphin Centre wanted to control Sport in Darlington, closing the Darlington Sports Council for example and now they want to control the Arts. I now learn that the Tourist Information Centre in the Dolphin Centre is to close. The Bus Station information centre was closed on the basis that the bus information would be transferred to the Tourist Information Centre. Where will I be able to buy a ticket to London for example? I am informed that the bus leaflets will still be available, but how long for? There will be no one to look after that and the Dolphin Centre will soon use the space for something else. I lost my job in Margaret Thatcher's cut backs, and never worked in full time employment again. I wonder how many people in these new cut back are in for the same callous treatment. [The council was Cleveland County Council and the way the managed my redundancy was callous.] Not very pleased,</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>My friends and I use the Tourist Information Centre quite often and I find the staff most helpful. We would be happy to see one person behind the counter.</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>1 Reception staff needed at Tourist Information - please think about visitors to the town. X4</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Cultural Services	I am quite shocked by the suggestion that our Arts Centre may be closed in order to save money. Two years ago a huge sum of money was spent on improvements there. Surely, those of us who put up with all the inconveniences during the renovation period are entitled to enjoy the amenities now available? My husband and I retired in 1995 and since then have been members of Darlington Music Society and Darlington Piano Society. We are regulars at the Folk Club, the Jazz Club and the Cinema. We also attend many of the other events booked in the theatre and meet many of our friends while at the Arts Centre. Do you really think that all these elderly people should sit at home watching T.V. until they're incapable of thinking for themselves? The threatened cut backs and redundancies will cause a great deal of misery throughout the town, but an occasional visit to the Arts Centre could help many younger people. It might even curtail the inevitable increase in petty crime. I do hope our Council will consider very carefully the tremendous loss which could be caused by the closure of the Arts Centre.
Cultural services	To do away with the Tourist Office would be a huge mistake, surely the Council need to be encouraging more people to come to Darlington. The tourist industry is a growth industry and should be funded, the knock on effect will be catastrophic. Think of the loss of revenue, unemployment, and damage to Darlington. Far better to cut out a couple of senior executives!!
Cultural Services	The proposal recommending the closure of Darlington Tourist Information Centre, in it's present form, is I feel detrimental to the continued growth and prosperity of Darlington. Tourist information Centres are a vital part of the town in terms of the promotion and service they provide, in many cases they are the first point of contact for a visitor to the town and the main source of information for locals, day trippers and foreign visitors. The new proposal is for an "UNMANNED OFFICE" at the site of the current Tourist Information Centre within the Dolphin Centre foyer will mean that the town loses that welcome and personal service, tourism is a vital part of Darlington's income, tourism covers locals, day trippers and visitors from further afield. Because of the demographics of Darlington it is not immediately apparent as to where the bulk of the independent shops and businesses, that make Darlington unique, are located and without the dedicated staff manning the Tourist Office and guiding the way I would fear for the future of those businesses. The loss of 5 posts will effectively mean the end of a full Tourist Information service in Darlington, there will be no staff to respond to telephone calls, e-mails or other website enquiries. Information regarding attractions, entertainment activities and other pursuits, like walking, cycling etc may not be so easy to access for visitors and customers. Accommodation bookings and referrals will cease, enquiries regarding transport, day excursions, National Express coach services, holidays and theatre bookings will also not be possible once the Tourist Office staff have gone. This proposal will have a major impact on Darlington as a whole and will make the continued survival, future growth and prosperity that much harder to achieve, I urge you to reconsider and keep Darlington Tourist Information open and at the centre of the town's growth and recovery.
Cultural Services	'Don't think we should close Tourist Information or Civic Theatre. Only costs 90k per year to run. Would suggest getting rid of a high paid member of staff instead and stopping Cllr's expenses'. I explained both of those things were proposals and asked if she had any other suggestions. She comments on the Pedestrian Heart which she did not like and the Eastern Transport Corridor which she did like, but she did not have any further suggestions.

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Cultural Services	As a frequent user of both the Arts Centre and the Civic Theatre, I feel that the simultaneous loss of both these facilities to the town is a shameful proposal. I note that, apart from the loss of three bowling greens, hardly a major expense and a surprising decision in view of the constant emphasis on exercise for the town's over 50s, there is no cutback on sporting facilities. Is this fair? Mental stimulus is as important as physical exercise. Incidentally, there is no provision in town for my chosen form of exercise which is, in any case, self-funding. As for making the Dolphin Centre (no ancillary parking, with such as there is being several hundred yards away and in the dark in the evening for much of the year) the hub for culture, it's a non-starter. There simply isn't room to accommodate full-scale theatre, never mind the events and the 40 or so organisations which use the Arts Centre. It might also be noted that, owing to the lack of late-night public transport, visits to performances in other towns will be possible only for those able to run a car.
Cultural Services	I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed closure of the Darlington Arts Centre. For the last few years my whole family and a number of friends have derived a great amount of pleasure from the Centre. My son and my friend's daughter have been attending Clay Play every Friday evening since September 2 and the 2 people who run these classes are wonderful with the children and are an absolute credit to Arts Centre. Both of our children have also taken part for the last 2 years in a great number of the summer holiday events that you run. We have also arranged birthday parties there, visited the theatre on quite a few occasions and attended concerts. We live in a small village and to have something like the Arts Centre available in such close proximity has been wonderful. It is a great way for children to develop social skills through meeting and making other friends outside of their normal social group. It is also a lovely place to meet friends, have lunch or a leisurely drink. The Council should really take pride in having the Arts Centre and need to be committed to preserving it. It really is a priceless asset and its loss would be felt greatly by a number of people.
Cultural Services	I would like my objections to the proposed closure of the Tourist Information Service which provides a service unavailable anywhere else. Not only can bus and coach services, holiday and accommodations be booked, but also tickets and reservations for local amenities and entertainments, as well as tickets for national concerts and events be purchased here. I have planned many business trips through the Tourist Information Service. The assistants have always been able to find the right accommodations meeting my specifications. I have even organised a national arts event through one visit to the Darlington Tourist Information Service. Without this invaluable local asset the buying and selling of tourist services and entertainments will be so limited that the economic ramifications will be far reaching.
Cultural Services	I've just read the Town Crier online. I understand cuts will be made but this specific one is a bridge too far: " We need to find new ways to shape and deliver a cultural offer in Darlington that is both affordable and responsive to the interests and aspirations of people across the community. We are preparing to withdraw the subsidy from the Civic Theatre and Arts Centre, this may lead to their closure." I have lived in Darlington for over 18 years and one of the key factors in moving to the town back then was partly due to the Arts provision available. I am now married and have two daughters who were both born in Darlington and attend local schools. We all currently enjoy attending events at both venues. To close BOTH these venues is a huge mistake. The range of plays and activities Darlington offers (not to mention the pantomime) is a great asset for Darlington and makes it unique in the area for a town of this size (~ 100,000). Surely one of these can be saved? Have all options been explored? Once shut I doubt they will ever open again. If this does proceed it is a very dark day for Darlington. RSVP only if it is not couched in management terminology.

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Cultural Services	Dear Ms Burns I am writing to urge that the cutting of the grant to the Arts Centre be reconsidered. As a member of Darlington Music Society I enjoy the facilities there and really appreciate the contribution they make to community activities. The redevelopment in recent years has given us an excellent arts venue which would not easily be replaced if it is lost.
Cultural Services	We are writing to express our dismay at the possible loss of these two iconic institutions. We feel it is very short sighted to close these two arts facilities. Indeed, when there is an economic upturn they will never be retrieved for the people of Darlington, making this town the poorer for their loss. Darlington will become yet another northern town with little to offer its residents and tourists. We urge you to think again and consider less draconian cuts. We understand that the Civic Theatre may be sold but the Arts Centre seems to be unlikely to be bought by any organization. It offers accommodation for many groups, fringe theatre, all types of music and festivals and enriches the lives of many Darlington residents. It is particularly significant in its promotion of activities – drama, music and dance – for the young people of Darlington. We believe that without adequate cultural facilities for the young, Darlington will not only be culturally impoverished but will be storing up problems for the future. We have been attending meetings headed by Paul Harmon, Darlington for Culture, and, leading on from the meeting of 18 November we will be signing up to support a Community Interest Company. However, we believe that the Council should continue to provide some financial backing towards this effort to save the future of the arts in Darlington.
Cultural Services	I am writing in support of Darlington Arts Centre. I was sad to hear that Darlington Borough Council has decided to remove the subsidy from its two arts venues. The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) has worked in successful partnership with Darlington Arts Centre for many years. Our Regional Theatres Programme reaches out to a very wide demographic and inspires our audiences to learn more about our world. Recent speakers have included: George McGavin on the amazing insect world, explorer and adventurer Mark Kalch on his journey around the globe and meteorologist Helen Young. I do hope that a way can be found to support the Darlington Arts Centre and its wonderful team into the future. With Best wishes.
Cultural Services	Having recently attended the public meeting in The Dolphin Centre called to discuss the proposed budget cuts I wish to let my feelings be known about the proposed ceasing of funding regards the Civic Theatre & Arts Centre. I write to you not just as a customer of both the Civic Theatre & Arts Centre but also as a professional performer. I am a professional actor, entertainer, storyteller and creative writer, member of the actors union EQUITY and I include below the feelings of my union's General Secretary Christine Payne and myself. I am writing to you concerning reports we have received that Darlington Borough Council is planning to cease its funding for the arts and has launched a public consultation on its proposals. Equity is a trade union representing 36,500 performers, stage managers and creative's working across the nations and regions of the UK in a range of sectors including theatre, broadcasting, film and dance. We understand that the Council is currently facing yearly cuts of £22m in its funding up to 2014. However, we are most distressed to hear that you are preparing to withdraw subsidy from the Civic Theatre and the Arts Centre which, as you acknowledge in your press statements, may lead to their closure and the estimated loss of 400 jobs. The £1.7m reduction in funding for arts and cultural activity is the second largest cut proposed in the Council's statement. This suggests that arts and culture are perceived to be 'soft' targets for cuts. Public investment is essential for the UK's creative industries. Indeed, many sectors of the arts are not commercially viable without public investment. Given the Arts Council only funds 15% of theatres in England, local investment is all the more important for the creative economy. Local arts and cultural activity is also a significant provider of employment and can stimulate growth, regeneration and further investment in communities. NALGAO (the National Association of Local Government Arts Officers) estimates that for every £1 being spent on arts services; a return of £1.67 is realised in additional funding from other organisations and services.

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	<p>Culture is also popular among tax and council tax payers. Recent survey evidence has found that 79% of the population agrees that the arts should receive public funding. Furthermore, 77% of all adults in England, 90% of adults in Scotland, 76% of adults in Wales and 76% of adults in Northern Ireland attended or took part in an arts or cultural event in 2007. Investment in arts and culture at all levels is also essential in ensuring that high quality work for a diverse range of audiences can continue to be produced. Support from local government also allows more theatres to do work with schools, colleges and in local communities. Theatre can empower children and young people, providing them with life skills, confidence and creativity, as well as opportunities to enjoy themselves and achieve recognition they may not otherwise receive. Darlington is home to a number of arts and culture projects which bring great benefits to the community. The Arts Centre currently houses the National Association of Youth Theatres, seven theatre companies including children's theatre company Theatre Hullabaloo and is recognised Arts Council England as a Centre of Excellence for young people's theatre. The Civic Theatre presents a very successful pantomime annually and in recent years has featured a number of high quality productions including The Tempest and Henry IV. Cuts of the magnitude proposed will inevitably mean significant damage to the creative sector in Darlington and these two key cultural assets will struggle to survive. We ask you and your colleagues to give very careful consideration to what you propose to do and the potential damage that could be inflicted on the local economy, employment and creativity in the North East. If you would like to discuss any of these issues further please contact Equity's Organiser in the North East region.</p>
Cultural Services	<p>Dear Ada Burns, I visited Darlington last week for the excellent Takeoff festival at Darlington Arts Centre. I was shocked to learn that the Arts Centre will close next year as the Council is withdrawing funding. This will be a bitter loss for the community, particularly the hundreds of young people that use it regularly, as well as for the businesses that it houses, including Theatre Hullabaloo who play such an important role in children's lives not only in Darlington but also in the cities such as Leicester when they tour. It is also a sad loss for the regular attendees at Takeoff from the UK theatre sector and beyond - venue managers, artists and producers. The festival is a key annual date in the national calendar, and has been a pioneer in raising the standards and status of theatre for children in this country, so that it is now tours all over the world. Coming to Takeoff eight years ago directly inspired me to set up a children's festival here in Leicester, which has given nearly 80,000 children access to theatre over the years, created jobs and brought inward investment into the city. Other Takeoff delegates will have other such stories to tell of the impact coming to Darlington has made on their work and their lives. I understand that in the face of such deep cuts imposed on local authorities by the Coalition, the option to close non-statutory facilities such as the Arts Centre and the Civic Theatre seems inevitable. But I believe this must be challenged too. The arts are ultimately what make life worth living for millions of people in this country (leaving aside their contribution to the economy); to close the cherished spaces where that collective enjoyment and exchange of ideas can happen is to sow real trouble for the future. The Coalition needs to be put under strong pressure from local government to slow down the pace of deficit reduction and look at new ways of achieving it, and I hope Darlington Borough Council will add its voice to resisting the cuts and continue to protect a wonderful facility that bring people together, and inspires the rest of the country.</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>Re Proposal to withdraw funding from Darlington Arts Centre. I fully understand the need to make drastic budget cuts and being a worker in children and young people's services in a neighbouring council, the need to prioritise the protection for the vulnerable. However, I cannot imagine the prospect of an authority totally withdrawing its subsidy from an Arts Centre of major importance, knowing this is likely to lead to its closure. Having an outreach worker, or workers, based in the Dolphin Centre is a pathetic proposal. Darlington has a reputation for being an important, vibrant cultural hub and your proposals will result in it having a reputation as a cultural graveyard. The proposals by Darlington for Culture are all very well and should be supported, but I think this should be the very last resort. It is the Council's responsibility to provide a place for the arts in the Borough. I understand this is a major aspect of the core strategy, as it should be. The Arts Centre provides an admirable range of activities, it is one of the reasons many people, myself included, are attracted to Darlington to shop, work and live. People come to the Arts Centre from all over the region, bringing in money to the local economy. It provides jobs which are vital at this time. The Council should be looking at how it can improve the running of the Arts Centre. If Darlington for Culture can come up with a strategy, why not the Council? Craft workshops, micro brewery, antiques centre, specialist shops etc - there are many users that could contribute to making the centre more profitable. I understand the local college are very much interested in continuing and paying for the use of areas of the Arts Centre. Developing the catering would help and ensuring that during a break in a concert, people can actually get a drink would be a start - the service is so slow. Why put a member of staff on the bar at the folk club, it's not that far to walk to the main bar? I am very much against the Council making such a massive withdrawal of the subsidy. Work with local people by all means in order to find a solution but do not rely on this. The Council should take the lead. If the Arts Centre closes altogether it may never reopen. Better to prune the tree than cut it down altogether. With 120,000 users each year, adding just £1 to each ticket will instantly raise a contribution. Be imaginative, like at Richmond Station.</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>I join many others in urging you not to support withdrawing the Council grant from the Arts Centre, thus leading to its closure. Especially in its new refurbished form, the Arts Centre is a jewel that many other towns, such as Stockton for example, would love to have. I have lost count of the number of films, plays, jazz, classical and world music concerts which my family, friends and I have enjoyed at the centre. It is far from elitist, with its provision for artistic work with children and young teenagers, stand-up comedy, blues bands, the CAMRA festival and so on. What a tremendous local facility! Though I would hate to see the beautiful Civic Theatre in private hands, it seems that could be a possibility, but the Arts Centre really does need council funding. Surely this venue is a tremendous point of pride with Darlington; indeed the two theatres should be. My family in Canada are always amazed at the quality of performers I see in our town - artists who overseas are only seen in such huge cities as Toronto and Vancouver. I sincerely hope you will avoid closing the Arts Centre. Surely the Council staff car park or some such could be sold instead - it's hardly a very green advertisement in a Local Motion town, is it? There is simply no comparison. Thank you for your attention.</p>
<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>I was reading the November "Town Crier" and I noticed that one of the Council's Budget Proposals is to convert the Tourist Information Centre to an unstaffed Information Point. I would like to suggest combining the Tourist Information Centre with the Dolphin Centre. It is very useful for visitors to the town to be able to phone ahead and book accommodation for their visit. In this way, Darlington could keep its place on the telephone network of Tourist Information Centres throughout the country, encouraging visitors.</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, it has been brought to my attention that due to budget proposals by Darlington Borough Council, "the TIC will be converted to an unstaffed information point" The TIC provides a comprehensive and informative service to visitors and residents of Darlington. I would like to offer my support to the campaign to keep the office staffed and open for business as it is at present. X 103
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, extra comments very good service, don't shut them down.
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, last week I came for a leaflet, which the TIC no longer had, but one of the staff most helpful found all the information I needed on the web, the replacement leaflets had not yet arrived if a staffed TIC can run out of leaflets, how on earth do you expect an unstaffed information point will manage to keep an adequately stocked supply of information?
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, An un-manned service is completely useless for blind and other disabled people.
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, This sort of service enables you to see what your Council Tax contributes towards. One would think, with all the recent modernisations to the town centre to get people to visit Darlington, the service that provides information would be considered important as everybody likes to talk to a face.
Cultural Services	If Darlington is to maintain its status as a tourist destination, we must do our best to make tourists welcome,daft decision, reverse it.
Cultural Services	This cannot be acceptable, it would not be the same or give the same excellent service
Cultural Services	I would like to give my support as a customer (for the TIC) which provides a service to book tickets and it is such a needed service here in Darlington.
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre, I am 75 years young, disabled and the personal help given in this office by excellent staff is irreplaceable, thank you *** especially Mrs x
Cultural Services	I visit the Information Centre regularly and I always have to wait to be served because of queues, I can't believe that such a useful facility is being closed, the staff are always so helpful, please don't close the manned TIC down.
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre. We need this service
Cultural Services	I find this place invaluable and the staff knowledgeable, please keep this facility
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre This is an essential service to the town - tourism is a growth market and should be made more of in this town

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Cultural Services	I would like my objections to the proposed closure of the Tourist Information Service to be taken into account. The Tourist Information Service provides a service unavailable anywhere else. Not only can bus, and coach services, holidays, and accommodations be booked, but also tickets and reservations for local amenities and entertainments, as well as tickets for national concerts and events be purchased there. I have planned many business trips through the Tourist Information Service. The assistants have always been able to find the right accommodation meeting my specifications. I have even organised a national arts event through one visit to the Darlington Tourist Information Service. Without this valuable local asset, the buying and selling of Tourist Services and entertainments will be so limited that the economic ramifications will be far reaching.
Cultural Services	Save Darlington Tourist Information Centre - It certainly is needed, I lived in Darlington and worked there for ten years and continue to visit the town and the local area. I have always found the staff very helpful and always able to help my "problems" for example, today having travelled from York I am looking for an optician having the need to make an urgent problem with my spectacles (response time was one minute!!) This request was very quickly dealt with and I was delighted at the warmth of attention. I use buses from Darlington to many routes to B/Castle/Bishop Auckland, Durham etc and they always have current time tables available, the staff are excellent - nothing seems to "beat my questions"! It's obvious that the costs are high, but as a traveller to many town/cities such as Darlington I place your Tourist Information office as an excellent jewel in the Darlington crown. Living in York, I am aware of the expensive demands that Tourist Information can cost - but, after careful consideration of the total situation, the fact is that the cost of the existing information centre provides a "good front" to the splendid business, shopping, tourism, etc. To conclude!! –it maybe expensive to staff, but I always find up -to-date bus timetables and very helpful staff who have a very good local knowledge. Further more, the centre is a gem in the continuing improvements to the Town Centre and surrounding area. The obvious presence of staff must avoid wasteful pocketing of time tables, brochures etc. In conclusion the location, site, staff content and assistance given to visitors is excellent and few towns/cities I visit on both business and recreation hold a candle to the existing excellent centre, so well located to bus/train/car packs etc. I find the centre (as now) is a splendid jewel in Darlington which is evolving into a quite fine and smart place to visit.
Cultural Services	I would like my objections to the proposed closure of the Tourist Information Service to be taken into account. The Tourist Information Service provides a service unavailable anywhere else. Not only can bus, and coach services, holidays, and accommodations be booked, but also tickets and reservations for local amenities and entertainments, as well as tickets for national concerts and events be purchased there. I have planned many business trips through the Tourist Information Service. The assistants have always been able to find the right accommodation meeting my specifications. I have even organised a national arts event through one visit to the Darlington Tourist Information Service. Without this valuable local asset, the buying and selling of Tourist Services and entertainments will be so limited that the economic ramifications will be far reaching.
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Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Cultural Services</p>	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal to withdraw all Council funding for the Arts Centre. Whilst I understand the need to reduce Council spending over the next four years, due to significant reductions in the funding received from central government, I cannot accept that one of the consequences of this situation will be the withdrawal of all Council subsidy from the Arts Centre. This is one of the most valued facilities in the Borough, which has significant benefits for a wide range of residents, and I therefore urge you to reconsider this proposal.</p>
<p>Street Scene</p>	<p>See below. (in addition to what is set out below a fixture list was supplied)</p> <p>RE: Closure of Council Bowling Greens</p> <p>Follow up from my letter dated 23 November</p> <p>I did attend a meeting on Wednesday 24 November at the Rolling Mills and have since been issued with some figures that the Council have produced.</p> <p>173 paid leisure cards for 7 greens.</p> <p>Green maintenance cost £8,000 per year. For 7 greens equates to £56,000 per year. With an income of only £3,000 per year.</p> <p>Reducing from 7 greens to 3. Equates to 58 bowlers per green.</p> <p>Information will be prepared by a group from the bowling section; however, I consider it important to advise you of the numbers of bowlers that use the green. It is not only the 173 leisure card holders that use the green.</p> <p>I enclose a copy of the fixture programme that Darlington Woodland Bowling Club produced for the 2010 season.</p> <p>I have highlighted the affects the proposals will have on Darlington Woodland Bowling Club which can then be multiplied by the number of other clubs using the council greens and the general public on a casual basis.</p> <p>Malcolm Cundick who is Secretary of the Darlington District Bowling Association and President of the Sherwood League may have already communicated with you, on this point.</p> <p>From an organisational viewpoint. The closure of the greens at East Park, Brinkburn Dene, North Park and North Lodge Park would remove venues for some 18 to 20 teams and severely impact on 5 different leagues, together with Club competitions, tournaments, visiting teams etc</p> <p>Closure of these greens would effectively determine the future of Bowls in the town as the amount of players, fixtures etc cannot be accommodated on the remaining greens, under the present system. There is a need to review our options</p> <p>As an example: the Vets League play on a Tuesday afternoon. Reducing the number of greens will require a rethink on this league. Introducing an additional day may be an option but bowlers would need time to reorganise their activities and decide on the feasibility.</p> <p>I trust that the newly formed bowling working party will be eager to exchange information in the future.</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Street Scene</p>	<p>I am a member of a Private Bowling Club in Darlington and the proposals only indirectly affect me but I would like to comment on behalf of anyone using the council greens. Firstly, I would like to make reference to a Statement from Darlington Together Budget Proposals and Alasdair MacConachie's reference to Darlington as a great place to live, work and play. I have limited information on how this decision was arrived at and the affects this will have on the wider community in Darlington. There are a number of questions I would like to ask before I could give any constructive comment, I did request any information regarding the cost of providing a Bowling Green facility and was issued with the attached. Hopefully there is more information that substantiates the decision to close 4 greens. To see if savings could be made, it would be necessary to critically examine the current situation and obtain facts of: work patterns, including travelling between sites, hours assigned to greens work, time allocated to each green, hourly rate, If there a supervisory element, machinery costs, machinery utilisation, material costs, potential savings in this area. The main concern that members who use the green have is the vague timing of this exercise. The new playing sessions starts in April 2011 and league fixtures need preparing. Has the Council made this decision knowing the number of people this will affect? Could consideration be given to defer the closure until 2012 and this will allow the club secretaries time to give their input? Contact Bowls England to see if they could facilitate a loan to support the greens being kept open until a proper review has been exercised? Empower employees to be more active in managing the greens. Offer incentives to employees who demonstrate cost savings. I attended [Talking Together consultation events] on Monday 8 November and Tuesday 16 November. There does not seem to be an inadequate control system on green usage and therefore lack of income could be questioned. My thoughts would be to decide if the Council wishes to provide this facility and list the advantages and disadvantages. It would be no good encouraging more people to use the green and involving schools to participate in the sport if the Council has a blinkered view. As a short term exercise, it would be interesting to list who has purchased leisure cards and who is regularly playing in leagues etc. It may be that leisure card fees should be increased. Exchange and compare information with other Councils. Make available information to establish where savings in other areas could be made to offset against the bowling green cost i.e. reduce frequency of street cleaning with a mechanical sweeper etc. Prepare a green utilisation chart to establish green usage which may support the decision to close a green (copy attached). Give consideration to the needs of bowlers. It may be argued that green users do not wish to contribute to the budget for schools etc. Examine vehicle usage and contract hire and the type of vehicle put into operation. I consider this exercise has been badly communicated. The logic put forward for closure does not instil confidence in the system. Having said that I am sure that savings can be made and changes made to benefit all concerned.</p>
<p>Street Scene</p>	<p>Would like to comment regarding the charge for the bulky waste collection as she feels it is unreasonable.</p>
<p>Street Scene</p>	<p>Last summer, a CCTV van was parked in the South Park with several Street Scene staff handing out free dog foul bags. The lady felt the money could be better spent as there will be a cost involved in hiring a CCTV van - she feels it is excessive spending when CCTV wasn't required.</p>
<p>Street Scene</p>	<p>Main issue is they are keeping the South Park and Hundens Open but shutting four other bowling greens. South Park has one team who play on the green and Hundens has two teams, however Brinkburn Dene have 8 teams who use the green who all have membership. Mr X feels that Brinkburn Dene green is more viable than the other greens. Grants were received to look at the Denes, can this money not be used to enable the bowling green to remain open? Representing Brinkburn Dene Bowls Club</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Street Scene	I admire the way the council is tackling the cuts. I hope that in future years that the environmental disaster that the council stages every year in the form of enjoyment will be the first cut back. [Fireworks Display]. As residents we are encouraged to recycle and look after the environment only to see a large amount of money go up in smoke creating pollution as it happens.
Street Scene	I am writing, in particular, on behalf of the members of North Park Outdoor Bowls Club, but also on behalf of the many members of the other clubs marked for closure. We have spoken to many of these people, and they feel just as strongly as we do about what is about to happen and intend to be at the meeting you have advertised. In the meantime, I wish to make some points as to the fairness of your decision. Most of our members are senior citizens. I use this description as I think 'pensioners' is a word which takes away our importance as members of society. We have worked all our lives and paid our dues in full and to take away four and half months of an activity which can be played by us for many years to come is an absolute disgrace. While we fully understand that cuts have to be made, we do not feel that enough thought has been given to finding a way around the problem. It's easy to wield the axe with one fell swipe and put the matter to one side, but we do feel that we should be given more of a chance to try and find a way around the situation. I know that many members would not mind giving a helping hand to keep the greens playable but would still need to the help of the Council to help them achieve this. We are all holding our individual meetings and eventually we will all meet up to try and help you solve the situation. Bearing in mind some of these bowls clubs are over 100 years old, you can understand the strong feelings which abound. The closure of so many clubs in the town could have a knock-on effect to the clubs which remain open, one of which is a privately owned club. The Outdoor League covers a large area of the county and touches also on South Yorkshire – the closures could well affect the league causing further problems. Please think again – remember Sir Walter Raleigh at Plymouth. He went on to beat the Spanish Armada. Our goal may not be quite so big but our aims are the same.
Adult Social Care	I am supporting the Age UK 'cut cake not care' campaign calling on all local councils to not cut social care funding for older people. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review allocated an additional £2 billion to support the local delivery of social care, and stated to all councils that adult social care must be protected from any cuts. It is your responsibility to ensure this money is spent on care. We know tough decisions have to be made, but we need to make sure you are protecting the most vulnerable by not cutting care. Please can you ensure that the care budget in our area is protected.
Adult Social Care – Reducing the level of Disregard	I am writing with regard to the article in November's edition of the 'Town Crier', concerning the budget proposals 2011-2015. As parents of a 22 year old young lady with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and severe learning difficulties, we are naturally concerned with the impact budget cuts will have for adult social care. Our daughter accesses a day care service which is not only essential for her needs, but also for us as carers. We read with reassurance that one of your key principles is to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable people in the community are protected. We totally support this pledge, as to lose the day care would be a massive body blow to our family. Other cut backs may be inconvenient or irritating to some people, but to our daughter her day care is her way of life and we could not imagine how we would cope without it. Nobody can be looking forward to the budget cutbacks and they will impact to some extent on everybody. We hope that you will not lose sight of your aim to look after vulnerable people in our community and we broadly support your aims to try and make the cuts as fair as possible.
Adult Social Care Personalised Budgets	If someone meets low criteria for benefits at the moment, if this is withdrawn will he still get a personal budget?

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Early Years Inclusion</p>	<p>I would like to "Thank You" for facilitating the open forum in relation to the EYIPS and your candid and honest feedback and answers. I would like to request written confirmation to the following questions which have arisen from the highly emotive and somewhat heated exchange of views: Firstly, why was the questionnaire NOT sent to ALL interested stakeholders, although, as revealed on the night it was "allegedly" sent to families who had received the services of Portage over the last 3 years, however, this fact has now been called in to doubt as we have evidence of at least 3 families who had just completed receiving the services of Portage and did not receive the questionnaire? Secondly, is it acceptable in any forum to "belittle" a proud and loyal workforce by using the word "delete" to describe the future of their service? Thirdly, if the questionnaire was not sent to ALL stakeholders does that invalidate and contradict the legitimacy of the recommendations and conclusions of the review. Finally, WHY were the Early Years Practitioners not consulted over providing a more "flexible" service which would accommodate your vision to extend the service provision over a 52 week period? I hope you will find time in your busy schedule to answer these important questions!!!</p>
<p>Early Years Inclusion</p>	<p>Dear Sir/Madam LETTER OF PROTEST AGAINST THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE EARLY YEARS INCLUSION SERVICE Our daughter attends X School within the Lower Foundation. She has issues concerning her development which include social communication difficulties/disorder as well as hyper mobility. Over the past year and a half, regular meetings with our Consultant Community Paediatrician, Dr Ruth Carpenter, have been held concerning her progress. It was during this period that the services of speech therapist. Sheila Walton were engaged on an advisory basis. Once she became eligible to attend school, meetings with School representatives i.e. Mrs X (School SENCO), Mrs X (School's Educational Psychologist) and Mrs X (Head Teacher) concluded that although she was getting some assistance, the Early Years Inclusion Service was essential for her, not only to help her settle into the school environment but also to provide her with the valuable specialist care and expertise which would help her to progress to the level expected for her age and to give her the best possible start in life. In September, she commenced school and was fortunate enough to be assigned Early Year Inclusion worker. She instantly bonded with her and during this short space of time improvements were clearly evident and my husband and I are delighted with her progress to date. Imagine our utter dismay and disappointment however to learn that the services of the Early Years Inclusion Unit will soon be discontinued due to the financial cuts proposed by the Government. The view shared by ourselves and the Educational Psychologist are that these early years are absolutely critical to her future development and the specialist care provided could make the difference between Her attending mainstream school as opposed to a specialist school, the cost of any future specialist school far outweighing the cost of the service currently being provided. We can't over emphasise the importance of the work undertaken by the Early Years Inclusion Service and the professionalism of staff. It has certainly made a massive difference to our little girl's interaction and behaviour with her family and peers. Removal of this service at this stage in her life will be a major setback to her development. We therefore totally oppose the decision to make the Early Years Inclusion Service obsolete and strongly urge you to reconsider the decision made in order to maintain the services and enable her to continue putting her skills, experience and expertise to good use, not only for our daughter's sake but for any other children who could benefit in the future.</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

<p>Early Years Inclusion</p>	<p>Dear Sir, With the proposal to get rid of the Inclusion Team and do away with inclusion for children with disabilities, could you tell me what will happen to the children already in main stream education? I am concerned, as I have four children with special needs in my group, two of which are severe enough to warrant SEN support staff. These two children need constant supervision and educational input. One of whom also needs physiotherapy requiring two members of staff. Bearing in mind that I do talking time play box with the children in nursery who need help with their communication skills and speech in line with "Every Child is a Talker", the SEN Support Team used to run this programme, but because of the severity of the disabilities, the children in their care had preventing them being left for twenty minutes or so they had to pass this job on. There are children with special needs in the other groups and we only have a staff of four, two being inside and two outside in line with the curriculum. All the children in nursery have a right to learn and need the educational input of trained staff to enable and enhance this and also to ensure their wellbeing. Remember, these are three to four year olds, some of whom are still learning how to share and need support with toilet training. I only have one pair of hands and much as I want to be there for all the children, I can only be in one place at a time. Any advice that enables me to be in more than one place will be much appreciated. Yours faithfully</p>
<p>Early Years Inclusion</p>	<p>Dear Sir, EARLY YEARS INCLUSION SERVICE I have had a meeting with staff of the Early Years Inclusion Service who are concerned about future provision and the systems that the Council intends to put in place to deliver it. They are concerned about the commissioning budget and what services it will cover, who will make decisions about applications and what will happen if need exceeds funding. I would be grateful for an update on the current position and your thoughts. Yours sincerely</p>
<p>Early Years Inclusion</p>	<p>Dear Madom, We are writing following notification that the Council proposes to cut the Sensory Support Service delivery as part of its cost reduction plans. As the parents of a child with a hearing impairment, we are astounded that the Council would consider reducing such a vital service. As such, we would be interested to learn the Council's justification for this cut. Mrs Ford has been invaluable in helping us following our daughter's diagnosis in 2008. She provided our family with much needed support at a very challenging time. The information and assistance which she continues to provide Holly and her teachers is priceless. In the event that the Sensory Support Service is reduced, who will provide this essential support to teaching staff? Given that Education Budgets are to be further stripped, does the Council expect the burden of supporting children with additional educational needs to fall upon teachers whose responsibilities are already overwhelming? We are sure that the teachers at Holy Family School would agree that Mrs X advice has helped them enormously in providing my daughter with the education to which she is entitled. It is of great concern to us that, in addition to this unpublicised cut, three further proposals directly affect our children; abolishing the cycling and pedestrian training, reducing road safety education and increasing the minimum distance for free school transport. We appreciate that some cuts are necessary but we fail to see why children should be made to suffer for the ineptitude of those who have forced the economy to its knees. We note that throughout the Council's announcements of their proposed cuts, they do not appear to have given any serious thought to increasing revenue in order to continue to provide much needed services. Darlington Borough Council has made much of the fact that it has the lowest council tax in the region recently. Perhaps now is the time for the Council to consider whether raising council tax by 2-3% might go some way to maintaining essential services. In light of this, we strongly urge the council to reconsider its unreasonable suggestion to reduce the Sensory Support Service delivery. The price of the previous government's incompetence must not be paid by a little girl with hearing aids. Yours sincerely</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Early Years Inclusion	<p>Dear Madom, REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS INCLUSION SERVICE The Council has been keen to receive comments on the proposed reorganization of the above service. The original proposal was to replace the existing service with the appointment of 3 Early Years Area Inclusion Practitioners with retained central funding to meet individual needs. This proposal provoked a considerable response from parents, head teachers, staff, and other interested parties. It would appear that any consideration given to the responses has been ignored, or considered to be of no value, as the re-published proposal by the Council contains virtually the original recommendation - the appointment of 3 Area Co-ordinators and £100,000 Commissioning budget for personalised support. As you know in recent years there has been much debate over the provision of services for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and among the many issues raised I would like to draw your attention to the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The right support must be available when and where it is needed- Early intervention is beneficial to SEN children- Best learning occurred where staff had a thorough and detailed knowledge of the children- Support for SEN's must be appropriate to their needs and as their needs vary enormously their needs can be best met by staff with the appropriate training. <p>Ed Balls, in his foreword to Improving Parental Confidence in the Special Educational Needs System, commented "I am immensely grateful for the thorough way in which Brian Lamb's Inquiry consulted a wide range of experts and practitioners ... the inquiry listened to the views of parents ... "He went on to say that every parent should feel confident that their child's needs are being met and that they are in a partnership to deliver better outcomes for their child. As part of the current Consultation Process, parents have clearly made their views known to you, and as a consequence Murray Rose acknowledged in a recent meeting that the EYIS provided a "highly-valued service." It is difficult to see how the proposal to appoint 3 Area Co-ordinators, plus associated Commissioning budget, will adequately meet the needs of children with hearing difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders; speech, language and communication needs; and physical difficulties. The Council has invested considerable resources in training and equipping the current members of the Early Years Inclusion Team to deal with children with Special Educational Needs. The team members have acquired considerable expertise in the main areas of SEN outlined above which Teachers and Teaching Assistants do not necessarily have. Nor do the latter have the time to devote to these particularly vulnerable children, many of whom require one-to-one attention, without detriment to the many other children in their classes. The Council has stated that the proposed re-organisation is not about losing expertise and that they intend to support vulnerable children as far as possible. The disbanding of the current Early Year Inclusion Team will certainly result in loss of expertise and as a consequence will result in reduced support for children who have been identified as having special educational needs. It would be useful for Council officials handling the proposed re-organisation to visit settings where the Inclusion Team are working to see at first hand the work that is being done with SEN children. This would provide a more informed basis for decision making. Consequently I am asking the Council to reconsider the proposals set out in the undated document "Review (Redevelopment) of Early Years Inclusion Services" and to stand by their commitment to children with special educational needs. Yours sincerely</p>
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Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

Early Years Inclusion	<p>Dear Madam</p> <p>As a family with a learning-impaired child, we were most concerned to discover that the Sensory Support Service is threatened by so-called "government efficiencies". While our son has only a moderate hearing loss, the support given to him/us by this service has been invaluable, from the time of his diagnosis at the age of three, and on through his school life. We appreciate the Council's restricted budget, but we feel very strongly that curtailment of support for children with hearing-difficulties will have long-term effects on them and their families. We therefore ask that you please consider this issue carefully, and do all you can to protect the scope of the SSS. Please remember, these children need all the help they can get during their formative years to reach their full potential and face the challenges of the future with confidence. Yours sincerely</p>
Early Years Inclusion	<p>I am writing to you about the proposed changes to the Early Years Inclusion Team in Darlington. My son is 3 years old and is severely disabled, he suffers from cerebral palsy, epilepsy and is totally blind, if it wasn't for the hard work and one to one care and support he receives on a daily basis whilst attending nursery he would be overlooked and left on his own for the majority of his time at nursery. The close support he has been getting has brought him on leaps and bounds, as the staff there are giving him an education as well as helping with his physio etc. Thomas is a complex little boy with lots of problems, but since starting Nursery between us as parents and the Early Inclusion Team he has started to adapt to his disabilities and is starting to move forward in his development and it's a joy to see. I just hope that in making your decision, you consider the needs of Thomas and a lot of other children that rely on the service in its current form, taking this away from the children that need it will affect their lives for ever. Regards</p>
Early Years Inclusion	<p>On Tuesday 16th November I attended the above forum to discuss my concerns about the "deleting" of the Early Years Inclusion Service. I would like to request "How" Children's Services intend in "protecting and looking after our most vulnerable children and young people and in supporting Darlington's schools in our shared aim of delivering high quality education for all" by reducing the number of Early Years Practitioners from 11 to 3? I would also like to ask why the questionnaire, which the reviews proposals, findings and conclusions was devised from, was NOT sent to all stakeholders which effectively invalidates its legitimacy? I would appreciate feedback/answers to these concerns.</p>
Early Years Inclusion	<p>Disagrees with proposal to cut special needs teachers.</p>
Early Years Inclusion	<p>To whom it may concern: I am writing to provide input into the budget proposals for Darlington Borough Council. I write as the North East Regional Director for the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) and to express my concern at the proposal to cut both the hours of the one Teacher of the Deaf as well as the provision for 0 – 2 years education because it sits outside of the statutory requirements for education. I fully understand at this time that cuts are necessary and reviews are also necessary to ensure that cuts take place in the right areas, but this proposal is likely to cost the council more in the long term. NDCS has long campaigned for the rights of deaf children and we recognise that educational achievement is the single most important aspect of a deaf child's early life in order to ensure that they achieve as an adult. Deaf children are among the most vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged children in England today and we believe that at a time when public services are being asked to make savings, that deaf children are already being treated unfairly. Deafness is not a learning disability and with the right help there is no reason why deaf children can't do as well as other children. However, this requires specialist help from Teachers of the Deaf as well as other professionals, working together for the benefit of the deaf child. Teachers of the Deaf support parents of deaf babies and pre-school children, in the home and in early years settings, advising and supporting them on communication, speech and language so that deaf children start school with age</p>

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<p>appropriate speech and language. The 0 – 2 age group is the most important time for any deaf child and their parents and the proposal to cut this area of work will only serve to develop problems at school age and further on. This may very well result in more statements for deaf children. Our recent campaign 'Hands up for Help' http://ndcs.org.uk/search_clicks.rm?id=5235&destinationtype=2&instanceid=191667 which is about help for deaf children in the classroom, has used results from an education survey undertaken across 150 local authorities last year. In this survey Darlington was identified as having 55 deaf children to 1 Teacher of the Deaf. This is well above the average of 30:1 that some of the best local authorities have. If the proposal to cut the hours of the 1 Teacher of the Deaf goes ahead, then you will in effect have a ratio of 110:1, this would put you within the very worst in the country and a situation that I am sure parents would complain about. NDCS is already concerned that Darlington has not invested in more than 1 Teacher of the Deaf and this would only add to the issue. The Newborn Hearing Screening Programme which ensures that all babies are screened for deafness at birth and therefore diagnosed as early as possible remains the one health screening programme that brings together health, education and social care to work together to achieve better outcomes for deaf children. Within this programme there is a Quality Assurance system which is inspected on a regular basis. There are 28 standards which very much have early intervention at the heart of them all and in particular Standards 21 and 24 identify education as being the lead role in ensuring the support of deaf children</p>				
21)	Availability of early support	All families of babies with confirmed PCHI are provided with an explanation of the full range of support available and are given the Early Support publications: 'Helping you choose: making informed choices for you and your child' and 'Information for Parents: Deafness'	To ensure families have information of the full range of support available both locally and on a national basis.	The Teacher of the Deaf/Early Intervention support * professional is responsible for offering support for the family including a wide range of information and contacts and by undertaking appropriate assessment of child and family needs. * Early Intervention team should include a Teacher of the Deaf qualified in early years and a specialist Speech & Language therapist skilled with deaf children
*A)	Support networks	All families of babies with PCHI are given the opportunity to meet other families of deaf children and also contact with older deaf children and adults.	To ensure provision of peer support and increase understanding of deafness	The Teacher of the Deaf / Support professional should ensure families are aware of all opportunities.

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	24) Developing early communicatio n	All families of babies with PCHI to be given information about the full range of communication approaches and supported in their choices, in accordance with the principles of Informed Choice.	To ensure that families can make and review decisions about early communication in a supportive framework	Early Intervention professional.
<p>It is difficult to understand how Darlington will be able to achieve these standards without the 0 – 2 education service and a drop in the hours currently worked. Under section 331 of the Education Act 1996 (see also 4:47 of the SEN Code of Practice) a local authority must make an assessment of a child under two if a parent requests it and the local authority believe the child may have special educational needs for which the local authority should determine special education provision. Section 4:48 of the SEN Code of Practice encourages local authorities to consider meeting special educational needs of very young children with home based programmes. If a statement is required it should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All available information about the child, with a clear specification of a child’s special educational needs • A record of the views of the parents and any relevant professionals • A clear account of the services being offered, including the contribution of the education service and the educational objectives to be secured and the contribution of any statutory and voluntary agencies • A description of the arrangements for monitoring and review. (see SEN Code of Practice 4:49) <p>In areas where local authorities are considering the withdrawal services for deaf children under 2 years, NDCS will therefore be advising parents of their entitlement to request a statutory assessment and will support them in this process including any Tribunal hearings. As Regional Director, I am supportive of reviews that are carried out in the interests of vulnerable children, and want to see services delivered in innovative ways, but services which are cut purely because of the lack of funding without looking at future outcomes for children such as deaf children and how these can be better achieved would appear to be adding more to your budget in the longer term, a situation which I am sure, neither the council or NDCS would wish to see. I am happy to help you in whatever way I can, but would ask you at this time to review the current proposals urgently to ensure that deaf children in Darlington continue to achieve to a high standard.</p>				
Democratic Engagement	Can understand the need to reduce the services to the Parishes of Democratic Services and supports the recharging of elections in respect of Parish Councils			
Democratic Engagement	There should be a 25% reduction in Members of the Council the same as the proposed cuts to staff			

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<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>Dear Councillors. I would like to register my opposition to the proposed changes to the Local Authority's home school transport arrangements, as I believe that they discriminate disproportionately against parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds, neither do they give due regard to the safety of children. I am concerned that a judgement on what is regarded as having due regard for children's safety has the potential of being an arbitrary judgement based on a cost cutting exercise rather than adhering to paragraph 26 of the home to school transport guidance which states that ... "personal safety should take account of perceptions of pupils, parents in relation to traffic speed on roads near schools, lack of safe crossing points, unlit footpaths, lack of cycle routes, bus routes that fail to pass within a reasonable distance of schools, the lack of affordable public transport options". If allowances are given for transport to other schools on the grounds of safety then I would like an allowance to be given for the safe transport of my child (children) as they have the right to attend the only Catholic secondary school available to them in the town. I would request that you represent my views during any consultation process or meeting in respect of this issue and that you keep me informed of any outcomes, Yours sincerely</p>
<p>Home to school Transport</p>	<p>Dear Councillors. I would like to register my opposition to the proposed changes to the Local Authority's home school transport arrangements, as I believe that they discriminate disproportionately against parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds, neither do they give due regard to the safety of children. I am concerned that a judgement on what is regarded as having due regard for children's safety has the potential of being an arbitrary judgement based on a cost cutting exercise rather than adhering to paragraph 26 of the home to school transport guidance which states that ... "personal safety should take account of perceptions of pupils, parents in relation to traffic speed on roads near schools, lack of safe crossing points, unlit footpaths, lack of cycle routes, bus routes that fail to pass within a reasonable distance of schools, the lack of affordable public transport options". If allowances are given for transport to other schools on the grounds of safety then I would like an allowance to be given for the safe transport of my child (children) as they have the right to attend the only Catholic secondary school available to them in the town. I would request that you represent my views during any consultation process or meeting in respect of this issue and that you keep me informed of any outcomes, Yours sincerely</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>I would like to register my opposition to the proposed changes to the Local Authority's home school transport arrangements, as I believe that they discriminate disproportionately against parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds, neither do they give due regard to the safety of children. I am concerned that a judgement on what is regarded as having due regard for children's safety has the potential of being an arbitrary judgement based on a cost cutting exercise rather than adhering to paragraph 26 of the home to school transport guidance which states that ... "personal safety should take account of perceptions of pupils, parents in relation to traffic speed on roads near schools, lack of safe crossing points, unlit footpaths, lack of cycle routes, bus routes that fail to pass within a reasonable distance of schools, the lack of affordable public transport options". It allowances are given for transport to other schools on the grounds of safety then I would like an allowance to be given for the safe transport of my child (children) as they have the right to attend the only Catholic secondary school available to them in the town. I would request that you represent my views during any consultation process or meeting in respect of this issue and that you keep me informed of any outcomes.</p>
<p>Home to School Transport</p>	<p>Please find attached a paper I have drawn up in response to the Council's proposed home to school transport changes. The paper sets out the case for maintaining the status quo and I have had a meeting with Murray in relation to this. Added to the contents of the paper, I am also concerned that a judgement on what is regarded as having due regard for children's safety has the potential of being an arbitrary judgement based on a cost cutting exercise rather than adhering to paragraph 26 of the home to school transport guidance which states that... "personal safety should take account of perceptions of pupils and parents in relation to traffic speed on roads near schools, lack of safe crossing points, unlit footpaths, lack of cycle routes, bus routes that fail to pass within a reasonable</p>

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Home to
School
Transport

distance of schools, the lack of affordable public transport options”. I am keenly aware of the challenges and difficulties facing the Council at this time and know that you face an impossible task trying to make cuts in an Authority that was already efficient in its services. Please be assured of my continued support Paper set out below.

**Paper in respect of school transport
(Carmel RC College)**

“Good schools are the key to unlocking social mobility in our country ... If schools are to enhance social mobility, empowering parents to choose good schools is key”. (Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Oct 2010). This paper sets out why I believe that a good education should not be determined by socio-economic means but by parental choice and part of that parental choice is on the basis of religious belief. Carmel College strives to serve parents from a wide ranging socio-economic background and so contributes to social mobility. I believe that the proposed changes to home school transport arrangements discriminates **disproportionately** against parents on both religion and socio-economic grounds.

General

Carmel RC College is an outstanding school with a record of high performance especially in relation to a CVA of 1034 2009/10 Which puts Carmel into the 95 percentile nationally.

CVA in respect of Darlington Schools			
2008-9	CVA KS2-4	2009-10	CVA KS2-4
% 5 A* to C including English and maths		% 5 A* to C including English and maths	
38	982	34	
80	1025	80	1034-1044
42	1009	42	
60	990	62	
73	1045	77	
34	1012	51	
39	994	33	



CARMEL RC COLLEGE

Official data (Raise online / FFT) indicates that this year we are the top school locally and in the **top 5% nationally**.

Discrimination

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Many would try to argue that these figures are because of our location but approximately 30% of Carmel students come from the most deprived wards in the authority and the IDACI indicators confirm that the profile of the college makes us one of the most comprehensive schools in the town. Any shift of the accepted current practice would be direct discrimination towards parents and school age children that live between 2 and 3 miles from a faith school. The proposed shift in transport policy will potentially change the comprehensive profile of our pupil intake as the most affected parents will be those of low income families whose incomes are **just above the free school meal threshold**. Successive government policy has repeatedly emphasised that transport costs should not be a barrier to accessing schools thereby ensuring diversity of choice by parents. Catholic schools do not operate on locality but on parish links. Therefore Catholic schools serve a much greater area than community schools reflecting a commitment to serving all wards equally including the poorest and most vulnerable in society. The parents who will be most heavily hit in Catholic schools are likely to be those just over the income thresholds and may well find expression of their preferences a financial impossibility particularly if they have several children of school age. This discriminates **disproportionately** against such parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds.

Free school meals indicators confirm that we have a comprehensive profile when compared with other schools. The table below shows students that attend Carmel from the Super Output Areas.

Carmel Pupils living in the lowest Super Output Area (SOA)		In lowest 30% SOA	
NCY	On Roll	SOA	SOA %
Y07	187	61	32.6%
Y08	191	50	26.2%
Y09	180	46	25.6%
Y10	179	57	31.8%
Y11	180	45	25.0%
Total	917	259	28.2%

To reduce the number of students accessing free transport will affect the students from these deprived wards.

Community Cohesion

Catholic schools attract families from all wards in Darlington and thereby enhance and promote community cohesion and social inclusion. Carmel welcomes applications, when places are available, from parents from all faiths or none, We have always accepted parents from non-catholic backgrounds who select the college on grounds of a faith preference. Any shift in transport support will reduce the wide ranging social spread of parents at Carmel.

Sustainable Travel

Para 128/129 of the Home School Travel and Transport Guidance 2007 clearly states the Local Authority has a duty to promote sustainable travel for pupils attending schools. Currently a significant level of the rush hour traffic is attributable to the school run and government policy is to generate a modal shift from car to bus. For children entering

denominational schools in the future and lacking transport support to those schools the outcome could be an unacceptable increase in car use, presenting risks to the environment and subsequently to children's' health and well being

While I accept that in these times of financial austerity that parents that elect to send children not of the Catholic faith may not receive concessionary travel we do believe that Catholic children should not be discriminated against in attending a school of their choice.

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	<p>Given that the demographic spread of Catholic families is so wide, Catholic children will be disproportionally disadvantaged. Due to the nature of the town being a small authority mostly contained with a 3 mile radius a high proportion of families will be affected. If allowances are given for transport to other schools on the grounds of safety then I would like an allowance given for the safe transport of pupils to Carmel for parents of pupil who select Carmel on the grounds of faith. I accept that Darlington Authority have been forward thinking in the past offering transport support beyond two miles but I have yet to be convinced that any potential saving and cost effectiveness is sufficient to offset any threat to stability of admissions and freedom of parental choice and I would seek clarity as to how the Local Authority intends to meet its obligation to 509AD of the Education Act 1996 where the duty is placed on Local Authorities to have regard to religion or belief in exercising their school travel functions.</p>
Home to School Transport	<p>I would like to register my opposition to the proposed changes to the Local Authority's home school transport arrangements, as I believe that they discriminate disproportionately against parents on both religious and socio-economic grounds, neither do they give due regard to the safety of children. I am concerned that a judgement on what is regarded as having due regard for children's safety has the potential of being an arbitrary judgement based on a cost cutting exercise rather than adhering to paragraph 26 of the home to school transport guidance which states that ... "personal safety should take account of perceptions of pupils, parents in relation to traffic speed on roads near schools, lack of safe crossing points, unlit footpaths, lack of cycle routes, bus routes that fail to pass within a reasonable distance of schools, the lack of affordable public transport options". If allowances are given for transport to other schools on the grounds of safety then I would like an allowance to be given for the safe transport of my child (children) as they have the right to attend the only Catholic secondary school available to them in the town. I would request that you represent my views during any consultation process or meeting in respect of this issue and that you keep me informed of any outcomes.</p>
General	<p>He would like to speak to someone as he has some questions he would like answered before he makes a reasoned comment or suggestion on the proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) He would like to know how the 25 proposals relate to the net 8 controllable budget sections. 2) He believes DBC need to make a £10,000,000 saving in the first year, why then are the proposals adding up to £13,800,000? 3) Is there money set aside for contingencies? For example, redundancy money or contingencies for projects currently underway. If so, where does this money sit? 4) Will there be a freeze on Councillors pay and expenses? 5) With regard to Culture, which items are not going to be cut, i.e. is the money earmarked for the Dolphin Centre safeguarded? 6) Darlington Partnership - where does this sit within the net controllable budget? <p>Mr Smith cannot make the meeting on 8 November, however would like to have answers to his questions before the 16 November to allow him to attend. He doesn't feel sufficient information has been provided to make a reasoned judgement on the proposals.</p>
General	<p>I have just read the Town Crier and the lengthy article on the proposed spending cuts for 2011, you have asked for the views of the town's residents on this matter: therefore I feel it necessary to raise these points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Before cutting back on front line services, the level of bureaucracy needs to be attended to, you propose to cut only 6 of the 16 assistant managerial posts in the council- are the other ten posts absolutely necessary and can they be done without?. 2) There should be absolutely NO increase in the council tax, it is crippling enough as it is, all that money seems not to have been spent wisely: the paths are still covered in dog dirt, paving stones are cracked and the state of some of the road ways is a cause for concern, especially that of Coleridge Gardens, the road is badly cracked after the waves of heavy lorries servicing the building of the new estate beyond Arkle Crescent and needs resurfacing very badly.

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	<p>3) I note the changes to the town centre public conveniences, introducing a charge for them is a bad idea- the men's toilets do not even have toilet seats, only two plastic strips which cannot be said to be the best of ideas, please take into consideration that when the toilets in the Cornmill are closed yet again due to vandalism, West Row will be the ONLY public conveniences that will be available. It is essential that they be kept open as long as possible and kept well equipped.</p> <p>4) While the Civic Theatre is a noted historical landmark in Darlington, it is only used by a select few that can afford the ticket prices. It may be the best idea to sell it to a private concern (with help from and the permission of the Arts Council).</p> <p>5)The bus service in Darlington has long been a matter of concern, the buses rarely run to time and many are in varying states of maintenance, I and many others have waited for long periods in the town centre for a bus to come especially for Skerne Park, it seems that only one out of every ten buses is for that destination while the other estates have a much more regular service, please realise that reducing the subsidy will only result in a increase in the fares and that will then lead to more people walking as they can no longer afford the fares and that will inevitably lead to the collapse of the towns bus service. I for one find it easier to walk to and from the town as affording bus fares out of unemployment benefit is not possible.</p> <p>6) You propose cutting the grounds maintenance; does this include the charges in council rents? Will these also be reduced since the council has been noticeably absent in grass cutting this year?</p> <p>7) The Town centre is of concern too, yes it has been pedestrianised and still businesses close down on a regular basis and a full third of the shops are now empty, those that remain struggle to retain their customer base, and with such levels of house building going on the out skirts of the town why has so little been done about the town centre? The building of a new mall behind Crown Street should be suspended until the shops we have now are more secure and better used.</p> <p>8) Despite this being the twenty first century, the town seems to changed very little in the last thirty years that I have lived here. I have had the pleasure of visiting other towns over the years and their facilities and town centres are much more up to date than ours is, I get the impression that Darlington is still stuck in the Victorian era and there seems much resistance to change from the 'City Fathers', In order to make this a town to be proud of it needs to be dragged into the modern era and the old forces of the status quo need to be side lined for the good of us all.</p> <p>A perfect example of this is the Cattle Market, it needs to be removed from its place on Clifton Road and relocated out of town as soon as possible and the land reused for something that will benefit the town. It is a fact that roads like Clifton Road were not built with articulated lorries in mind, the area around the cattle market is cramped and on many occasions gridlocked. While these points may seem to suggest that there should be no reductions in public spending, I suggest that money spent on the myriad levels of bureaucracy be properly re-directed to more worthy causes and front line staff should not be sacrificed at the expense of the top tiers who could be done without. Thank you for your attention</p>
General	<p>Hello, I have just returned from a meeting of the information and transparency Group of the CDCD (Carers of Disabled Children in Darlington). The group were concerned that the times of the Talking Together sessions to discuss the proposed budget cuts were on an evening. Many of the members of the group have childcare responsibilities and are unable to attend the evening sessions. I did mention that there were other ways of communication on this issue but the group felt more comfortable in an open forum situation. They asked me to convey their concerns to you Family Information Service: Carers of disabled children in Darlington</p>
General	<p>This will be reproduced on the Town Liar site. Reduced Expenditure by improved procurement and limited spending (Expected annual saving of £1.5 million) - How will this be achieved, the words look good how can you demonstrate or how have you demonstrated you can save this figure quoted, where was the figure pulled from. Better utilisation and management of buildings</p>

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(Expected annual saving of £800,000) -Would this be less loans to places like the forum? If you cant afford them get rid of them, stop spending the town's money on pet projects. Review of the library service and assessment of local needs (Expected annual saving of £250,000) Ok - the only thing you need in libraries need is books and someone to manage it, where does the other cost come from, how many staff do you employ? Cancel the internet unless someone provides it free. Reduction of Countryside, Rights of Way and Allotments to a minimum statutory requirement. Limited support to the Friends of Parks groups (Expected annual saving of £100,000) Get the locals involved in keeping the countryside clean, you provide high vis vests and bags - we supply the muscle. Cycle and Pedestrian training courses to no longer be provided (Expected annual saving of £80,000) Never had it in my day so why provide such luxuries, parents should teach their kids how to safely ride a bike. Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity activity will be reduced to a minimum level of service (Expected annual saving of £50,000) No need for it ever, parents need to take more responsibility for looking after and educating their own offspring. Reduction of the Anti-Social behaviour team with the remaining team focusing on the more serious cases (Expected annual saving of £110,000). SPARTA security need I say more? They do a better job than the police. The partnership working to support the Community Safety agenda will be reduced to a statutory minimum, with a reduction in staff and projects (Expected annual saving of £230,000). Sorry what is this, never heard of it but it uses money like its going out fashion. £230,000 what is this for? Supporting People administration will be funded from the core grant and will not affect service provision (Expected annual saving of £170,000). Fewer bus services will be supported by the Council; the majority of bus services which are run commercially by Arriva will not be affected by this (Expected annual saving of £100,000) Stop paying bus companies extortionate fees for extra bus services, buy a few of your own buses and employ drivers on a competitive salary, where are these buses needed. Introduce a £1 daily car parking charge on Sundays; remove the 3 hours for 2 offer; convert East Street to Pay and Display; introduce a contract parking scheme for Town Centre businesses that have travel plans (Expected annual saving of £140,000) Listen how many spaces do you have and how much do you make a year on these charges, where does this money go? The town is becoming a disgrace and a haven for chavs and scroats to hang around through the day drinking the benefit money my tax provides. Remove discretionary services within Environmental Health, Building Control and Trading Standards (Expected annual saving of £90,000) Excellent. Full review of voluntary sector funding; introduction of a competitive bidding process for strategic grants; cessation of the Community Grants pot; changes to discretionary rate relief and phasing the removal of rate relief (Expected annual saving of £120,000) If they want money raise it themselves. Reduce Town Centre management costs (Expected annual saving of £40,000) I don't think the town is managed now so to cut this is not a good idea, maybe I should send a few pictures in of the overflowing bins in side streets. Non residential support and Fairer Contributions policy - Adult Social Services (Expected annual saving of £1m) -Not a good idea if these people need care. Revised Cultural offer (Expected annual saving of £1.7m) Sorry could you explain Cultural offer, why so much money and what is it for, if its to support people illegally entering this country then get rid of it Street Scene reduction in floral displays, grass cutting and other grounds maintenance; reduction of four bowling greens; reduction to street cleaning standards; limited community engagement; staffing restructure as well as increasing fees and charges (Expected annual saving of £700,000) if you provide a few lawnmowers and petrol hedge trimmers I would do the whole of Hurworth myself and I know a few guys who would be happy to help. I waited 5 month for the bushes in Hurworth to be cut after my son was whipped in the face by an overhanging hedge and we had to walk on the road. Ask local farmers to do the country lane hedges. Also Ministry of Justice can provide free labour litter picking etc, criminals need to pay their debt so make them work for it. Reduction in opening hours of East Row toilets and introduction of a 20p charge per visit; closure of toilets in West Cemetery (Expected annual saving of £50,000) I don't know where these are so I can't comment. The Council will reduce the number of departments from 4 to 3 and amalgamate senior management roles (Expected annual saving of £1m) Good idea but seriously reduce the senior managers, its not

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	<p>a gravy train anymore, and reduce the fat cat salaries and keep a few frontline staff on. Departmental Restructures - as part of the move from 4 departments to 3, further efficiencies will be achieved (Expected annual saving of £500,000) 3 departments, 3 senior managers then ops managers then team managers then staff. That good business sense, too many cooks and all of that. Also too many Chiefs means a lack of downwards communication. Increasing the distance at which free school transport is provided from 2 miles to the legal limit of 3 miles (Expected annual saving of £110,000) Make them walk and kids would not be so obese. Reducing the Local Education support role to schools to a minimum (Expected annual saving of £1.6m) What support do schools need further with, they are teachers it their job to educate they don't need further support, books writing materials and brains that's the recipe. This all looks like words to me and a way to spend money, I have never seen so many quangos. Review of the Council's provision of early intervention and prevention spending for Children and Families (Expected annual saving of £1.4m) Recipe for disaster bearing in mind the amount of under privileged kids we have in Darlington due to the amount of benefit claiming parents stuck in the loop from the last generation who don't want to work. Review of Early Years inclusion service (Expected annual saving of £60,000) I have to pay daily for my child's nursery even at 5 months old because I and my partner work for a living. I pay out £303 per month, stop handing money out. Two year pay freeze for all staff (Expected annual saving of £1.9m) I don't think you should pay freeze the frontline staff they do a valuable job and deserve recognition for that, some of them anyway. I have had a few run ins worth really bad staff on your customer services front desk who have no pride in their job so why they are there I don't know. There again, a nice lady is an asset and should be recognised, again Alan Glew a great asset to DBC and again should be promoted to maybe have an affect on other departments who don't really care about the town. Ask him, I am sure he will explain about a certain heating issue in a pensioner's house.</p>
General	<p>I use an electric wheelchair permanently and am hoisted in and out of this chair. I have been using Ring a Ride ever since it started and once it goes I will be stuck in the house. Taxis would cost £11 more than Ring a Ride and that makes a huge difference. I go shopping and to church once a fortnight and I won't be going to any of these places if I don't have Ring a Ride. The drivers have become friends of mine and they have a lift which I just go on and I don't believe or have not discovered whether any taxi services have this facility.</p>
General	<p>Committee reaction to the proposals was positive: the Leader was congratulated on managing a very difficult situation so well. Specific comments: Sunday car parking charges: £1 very reasonable; 3 for 2 car parking offer: it's existed for a long time: reasonable to end; East St car park: whilst prefer pay and display, sensible to save costs on this; Toilet 20p: not an issue. Cornmill: would charge for ours if we could; No reaction to cut in town centre project budget; Some raised eyebrows at cut in town centre management staffing, but no verbal response; Culture proposals and floral displays: understood that difficult decisions have to be made; General comment that all towns are going to be facing the same issues and that this package was reasonable and would still allow Darlington town centre to compete; No comments on other issues: just questions for clarification; The Leader indicated that events like the markets spectacular could continue since it nearly broke even, that the important town centre events like Darlington by the Sea and the Tea Dance should be able to continue, but that expensive events like the Fireworks display would probably have to go. [Ian - that wasn't my understanding, re continuing events?]</p>

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General	<p>I think the cut backs in Darlington are disgraceful. You've already hit the pensioners by not letting them on the buses until 9.30. All other Boroughs don't do that. The leaves are terrible. I know its hard keeping on top of them, but there doesn't seem to be much clearing up of them. They just seem to be left where they fall and are a danger to people walking. If Darlington Council has to make cuts then get rid of some of the councillors as you never see them but for election time. Also, did they really all need a laptop? Darlington used to be one of the best Market Towns but the Council put the stall prices up too much – result we have a few stalls not really worth a look at. Shops stand empty. What happened to the pedestrian only in the High Street? We badly need a bus station, other towns have them. It was supposed to be a temporary measure buses going down Crown Street. I think it's time Darlington Council listened to the public. It's them who put them where they are. Don't forget elections will come again. An angry pensioner.</p>
General	<p>Unfortunately I am unable to attend the meeting scheduled for tomorrow evening which was published in the "Town Crier". However, I welcome the opportunity to express my views and to make any helpful suggestions. In order to give this important matter proper and serious consideration I should be obliged if you would provide me with the following information:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total spending for the year 2000 and estimate for 2010. 2. Total payments to all councillors for the year 2000 and estimate for 2010. 3. The total cost of all council employees for the year 2000 and estimate for 2010. 4. The positions and salaries of all council employees currently earning more than £50,000 per annum. <p>I would like to consider your suggested savings in the light of this information.</p>
General	<p>My partner has a stall on the indoor market and I am curious to know why the Council:</p> <p>A) Needs five people, one manager, two officers and two manual workers to manage/operate the indoor market? This surely is excessive given the fact that some other teams dealing with businesses within the council i.e. economic regeneration, business engagement and environmental health are smaller than this and quite frankly more helpful in my experience. Couldn't the business engagement team, town centre management team of economic regeneration team absorb this work?</p> <p>B) Why many, many businesses on the indoor market owe the Council £100,000's of pounds and yet they are not chased for it ?????????????? Is this not a sign that the Markets team are wholly ineffective anyway? Instead of getting rid of services why are you not looking to people who owe you money?? In my opinion the indoor market would fare far better as a private enterprise. Many, many indoor markets in the UK operate in this manner these days.</p> <p>That way you would get money for the sale, although I accept maybe not as much as you like, it would secure the markets future, the private owner would give it the new investment it badly needs i.e. a new roof, a lift that actually works, new stalls and be able to attract more modern and competitive businesses to the market and hence the town. There is also the added bonus of saving what I estimate to be in the region of: £42,000 + £24,000 + £24,000 + £16,000 + £16,000 = £122,000 in salaries alone. Without on costs!!!!!!! I am also giving serious consideration to submitting a formal request to find out the sum due to the Council from stall holders and releasing it to the Echo. We always paid our bills and why shouldn't they, and more to the point it is a disgrace to cut services when you are owed thousands, not from individuals unable to pay but from businesses who can afford it. You only need to look at the cars driven by [stallholders Budget Proposals here] and the like, to see they can afford it. The Council talks of hard choices when it hasn't even considered the easy ones it has in front of its face. Frankly it's an insult to the people of Darlington affected by the cuts, for you not to chase, not small, but LARGE debts. It won't cure the problem but if it saves the job of even 5 workers surely that's worth it. I also hear on the grapevine that the cattle market is no better run and also owes thousands although I cannot corroborate this. Look forward to hearing some comments on this</p>

Budget First Round Consultation (excluding events)

General	In response to the council's spending cut proposals, I would be grateful if you all could read the following article which I have written. Please then could you contact me, directly addressing the points I raise in the article. http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/review/issues/8673953.Why_the_Youth_Service_must_be_spared_the_Spending_Cuts/
General	All essential services should be maintained and all top positions & salaries should be reviewed because that is where the overspending is!!! Not just in Darlington but Countryside.