

Young People's Talking Together Event 15.1.11

Proposal	Comment/Impact/Idea
<b>Procurement</b>	Voluntary sector are having to take on the role of the LA in some circumstances – are they able to do this, are they prepared and do they have the skills and resources needed? How realistic is it to think they can support lots of the things the Council is not able to carry on – the Big society can't be run for free.
<b>Supported Bus Services</b>	Officer provided an overview of the proposal. Resident lives in Stillington but attends Darlington College – removing the bus service would make it extremely difficult to continue to attend college. Only alternative option would be a bus to Stockton (No. 7) and then another bus to Darlington (No. x66). Arrival would be later and the cost would increase. Bus drivers are stating that the route will be stopped very soon. Officer explained that a number of options were being explored (reduced key times service, smaller bus/taxi service, car sharing with other students or residents). Further consultation will be undertaken in May and June with Cabinet making a final decision in July. No changes will be implemented until October 2011 at the earliest. Resident accepted that the service may not run often but would be happy to come into town early as long as a service continued which enabled him to attend college. Resident would have real trouble attending the Doctors Surgery in Stillington if the bus service was cancelled. Tried to register at a Doctors surgery in Darlington but unwilling to accept them as a patient as they live too far from town. Willing to use the walk-in centre but this is not suitable for medium to long term medical conditions. Resident realises that the public don't use the bus services as much as they should but there are residents that do need a service, even if it is limited to morning, lunchtime and evening. Happy to be flexible to retain a minimal service. Main criteria is a bus that gets to Darlington before 9am so that daughter can attend college on time. Don't mind if it is only a skeleton service (8am, 1pm and 5pm). Officer explained that the owner of the current bus service has also been asked to put forward suggestions and recommendations as to how the savings could be made with a reduced service. May need to consider using small buses (taxis) for reduced number of passengers. The resident confirmed this would be acceptable as long as the costs remained reasonable.
<b>Supported Bus Services</b>	Officer also explained that Durham are consulting on reducing their bus services which currently operate within Darlington – not clear what implication this may have on other routes in Darlington which would also need to be taken into consideration. Officer suggested that residents may want to consider car-sharing or organising lifts. This could be arranged by the Council, the College (for students) or by local community groups. Resident explained that there isn't a community spirit in the villages as there are lots of big houses with big gates who you never see. Big divide between the classes in villages and removing public transport would make the situation worse as families who can't afford a car will have to move away from village life and back into the town centres. Really don't want to have to leave their home just because of the buses. Feel that the money is available to the Council it just isn't being spent in the right places – need to make sure that Members listen to the public.

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<b>Supported Bus Services</b>	Officer asked if the resident would consider cycling. Resident explained that cycling had been tried before but the country roads are quite dangerous and the weather makes it very difficult to travel at some times (can't rely on cycling). The resident explained that they would be willing to consider all options for accessing shops etc, but the most important concerns are travel to college and access to a Doctors surgery. Could Arriva consider combining a service that operates between Stockton and Darlington and picks up in the villages? The resident will encourage other residents to respond to the consultation and express their need for a bus service.
Bus Services - Young People	Comment- transport for young people already expensive. Teen card only for off peak travel. Cost of travelling to college can be expensive. If EMA withdrawn some YP may not be able to afford cost of travel to college
<b>Early Years Inclusion</b>	Can Schools look to their own budgets to keep this service going in the early year's provision?
Early Years Inclusion	Concerns were raised about the impact for removing the support at early years will reduce the amount of children accessing mainstream education
Early Years Inclusion	Concerns were raised about the cut in funding and how since meeting with Murray in November still no response
Early Years Inclusion	Concerns raised at how more support will be need later in the Childs life and this wont make any savings
<b>Early Years Inclusion</b>	Concerns over the lack of Staff consultation with the Early Year's team they feel that if they were asked to work differently to make savings they would of to reduce the risk of redundancy.
Early Years Inclusion	Concerns raised around the £100k central pot of funds proposal as it is felt it won't be enough
Early Years Inclusion	Issue – Parents of child with visual impairment concerned about impact of cuts on services for their child. Response – Officer explained school forum proposals
Early Years Inclusion	Issue – Parent of autistic child concerned about cuts to Early Years inclusion Service and proposal to reduce staff from 11 to 3. Had 2,000(?) signature petition supporting maintenance of existing service. Response –see point below*.

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Early Years Inclusion  Cuts to Services for Disabled Children/LEA residual functions	Issue – Parents of child with visual impairment concerned about impact of cuts on services for their child. * Officers responded to this issue and issue below explaining that the money saved from staffing reductions would be used to commission alternative provision which would be more widely available and not just available in limited settings. The proposal is to use specialist staff to provide training to non specialist staff in settings where there is a child with special needs to enable parents/carers to be able to send their child to a setting of their choice. There is a duty to teach all children and currently not all settings are able to provide specialist provision. The council is aiming to improve service through this change in the way in which the service will be delivered and give parents/carers more choice.
<b>Early Years Inclusion</b>  Support for Disabled Children and Young People	The above Issue led on to discussions with YP from DAD young leaders about requirement for specialist provision in schools and need for statements of SEN Response – explained that money now pushed down to schools to deliver provision through School Action and School Action + although some SEN statements still made where appropriate. Discussion took place around the need for early intervention and provision of integrated services. YP wanted to be assured of council's commitment to maintaining disabled children within mainstream provision where possible.
<b>Children's Early Intervention and Prevention</b>	Early intervention and prevention service – big savings are being made in this area. However evidence suggests that early intervention reduces a greater spend later on for other services. Why are the Council not thinking ahead? Report in the Echo about youth services – how does this stack up with protecting the vulnerable – are young people not vulnerable?
Children's Early Intervention and prevention	More families will become vulnerable if you try to concentrate on specific families and reduce a general service. Again it doesn't fit with the ideas behind the proposal and again doesn't look at what will need to happen in 5yrs time. It isn't a holistic and overarching approach to young people.
Children's Early intervention and prevention	Should young people take on a larger volunteering role? They have lots of reasons for volunteering but they need support and training which costs money, many schemes are not being funded past March that help volunteers. You need training to enable people to be up to standards with regulations and to make sure they do an adequate job – is this something the Council can support to reduce costs elsewhere?
Children's Early intervention and prevention	Religious organisations that will end up taking on youth clubs etc to fill in the gaps left by the youth service cuts – is this the best way to do it as they often have an agenda.
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Children's Early Intervention & Prevention  Cuts to chill out cafe	Issue – If services not there young people are more likely to get into trouble. Initiatives to reduce/prevent ASB seem to be being cut. Young people felt they were suffering because of unacceptable behaviour of a minority, this should not affect service provision Response – Had YP considered alternative provisions such as Scouts, Guides and youth services provided by faith groups? The majority of YP said no, although one YP said they went to 2 different church groups at different venues which were run by the churches on church premise, but had no faith basis were just run as youth groups. Other members of the group did not seem keen to consider these alternative options Councillor Hughes suggested that perhaps young people should consider setting up alternatives themselves, that the council needs to be able to empower young people. This was generally thought to be a good idea by the YP
Children's Early Intervention & Prevention  Youth Clubs	Issue – Young People should be given more responsibility in general. Concern re lack of money for youth clubs and impact of staff losses on ability of local authority to be able to continue to run youth clubs. Response – looking at alternative ways to provide youth service provision. Some of the venues currently used for youth groups require capital investment and money not available for necessary maintenance/repairs. Local authority looking at possibility of asset transfer. Some of the services provided currently by the council will become more targeted at vulnerable groups, but options on how to deliver services differently were being considered
<b>Children's Early Intervention &amp; Prevention</b>	Issue raised that some young people would be unhappy with what is currently local authority funded activities being funded by the private sector who would have a profit motive. Response –Local authority currently looking at alternative sources of funding provision for some areas. Embarking on a programme in communities to see if there could be alternative ways of funding/ supporting services which are under threat through community initiatives. Further comment made by young people that they felt private sector inappropriate to fund the areas which may be cut. Comment that there should be no cuts and if there have to be, perhaps the voluntary sector could fill any gaps left

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<b>Street Scene</b>	Ask residents to only use black bin bags for weekly rubbish collection – not other types of bags carrier bags etc. If rubbish was put out for collection in black bags only, this would make the job easier for the bin men when they are collecting the rubbish. They can work faster and more efficiently by picking up bin bags only. Officer explained that black bags are provided by householders themselves and involve a cost – not everyone can afford strong black bags. As long as the rubbish is tied up in bags, it is good for the collection service
<b>Street Scene</b>	Encourage local residents to do more things themselves eg. cut verges outside their houses Ask local residents to get involved in their neighbourhoods eg. through Community Partnerships with local litter picks with young and older people working together to improve their areas, cutting verges, planting flowers etc – this could be part of 'The Big Society' idea
Street Scene	Are DBC maintaining footpaths any more? How is money being saved in street scene when they don't seem to have any capacity to save any more and do a good job? Are the country side staff team being reduced?
<b>Street Scene</b>	Adults who are fined for littering or fly tipping offences should have to pay back with community service sessions as well as paying their fines, as this might be a deterrent to future littering. It would also encourage people to look after their areas more. Officer explained that young people are doing some of this already but adults don't pay back in this way at the moment. His department is now linked to the Restorative Justice system to offer community payback work that benefits local communities
Street Scene	Sharps boxes to be installed in local parks & neighbourhood areas. This could be a possible way to support the safe removal of drug related waste/equipment that is found in neighbourhood areas. Cllr Hughes has raised this issue in the past but thinks it should be visited again as there is an ongoing problem with needles in many local parks.
Street Scene	Advertise youth consultation events in all local schools via assemblies & notice boards not just through the school councils. Both young people on this table had heard about the event through their involvement with the Youth Service but didn't feel it hadn't been widely advertised through their school (Carmel). They suggested announcing events via school assemblies, class announcements and notice boards. Ask young people themselves how to organise and run the best events for young people!!

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Street Scene	Cuts to current youth service provision won't help to improve what is offered to young people. What is happening about the standard of what is offered by the Youth Service – negative report about this issue was seen in The Northern Echo on 15/1/11? – Officer explained that the report in the paper didn't explain that not all the services mentioned in the report were council-run, some were private but that cuts to the Youth Service wouldn't help with the increases and improvements asked for by young people themselves or by Ofsted
<b>Culture Services</b>	Cut both leisure and arts and at least it will be equitable. It would be fairer because everyone would feel like they are suffering. Why has leisure not been affected?
<b>Car Parking Charges</b>  Congestion charge	Congestion charges - reduce cars in town?
<b>Public Toilets closure and introduction of charging</b>	Public toilets – what is being closed? East Row toilets – it would be awful to think that people had to pay for that service when they are so awful to go in. Should they not be closed and signpost people to use the Dolphin Centre instead?
<b>Cycle and pedestrian training funding</b>	Are we cutting the cycle/pedestrian training completely?
<b>Employee Pay Freeze</b>	Are the Council considering reducing the hours of staff instead of making them redundant? Is this not better for staff and services, keeping both jobs and services even if they are at a reduced rate would be preferable to a lot of people? Does the pay freeze include the chief exec and senior officers?
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<b>General</b>  Council tax levels	Are we discussing council tax rises? Other councils have had referendums on rising council tax – would we be able to do that here? Could we raise it and keep services?
General	Are the Council's Talking Together events going to be taken into account? Are the Council seriously taking people's views on board? How are they feeding into the process and how are they going to have an impact?

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<b>General</b>	If there is a clear way forward to a budget cut and people can get behind an idea such as Darlington For Culture it is possible to move forward if you make a consistent nuisance of yourself and try not to offend people. But many times there are so many different views it is impossible to get a consensus to move an idea forward to oppose the cut. It is important that the Council discusses issues constructively with those that want to make a difference.
General	Question re requirements about child protection Response – this is a statutory duty no cuts proposed in this area Community safety was briefly mention but this topic was not pursued
General	Issue – are cuts really needed or are they over the top Response – Council has to make cuts as they are receiving reduced funding from central government. Proposed cuts have to be delivered next financial year Council will maintain infrastructure for time being as things may change/improve at some time in the future
General	Comment – Young people feel they have no lobbying power
General	What basis are the proposals made from? – What makes Darlington a good place to live – why is that all being removed?
General	Cllr Hughes said that the Council are trying to protect the vulnerable within the cuts, however Stressholme Golf Course is not being cut and yet golfers are not very vulnerable people. Does the rhetoric match the proposals put forward?
General	Are the Council listening to residents? Why do people have to work so hard to change things, it is not easy to get the Council to change their thinking. Is the process as transparent as it should be?
General	Issue – Young people will come off worst in the cuts both at a local and national level. General discussion then took place around national issues about reductions in EMA and also proposed increases in university tuition fees. Young People generally feel that they are not being treated unfairly and are suffering disproportionately
<b>General</b>	A debate is needed about what we want Darlington to be in 5 yrs time. Are the Council looking at this properly or just short term?
General	The Council have a choice to close things or not as there is a cost attached to closing things big or small. IT is up to the Council which they choose to close, the cost of closure is not a reason to not close something as there will be costs attached to everything. – What is the rationale for making decisions – this seems to be missing from the information
<b>Changes to the School transport</b>	Issue – would school transport still be provided for children with SEN? Response – Proposal round this area is being withdrawn due to central government announcing a proposed national

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	review of this area, however original proposal would not have affected transport for YP with SEN who had to attend specialist units or where there were issues of safety on walking routes Comment made that Head at Hurworth School gave the impression that the students in the Autism unit were more trouble than they were worth