
SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director – Richard Alty, Director of Place

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To set out options for implementing the budget proposal to withdraw funding for supported bus services, should it become part of the MTFP budget.

Summary

2. Most bus journeys in Darlington are operated commercially by Arriva North East and GoNorth East. These are complemented by 14 contracts paid for by the Council either for individual journeys or for complete services, where it feels that there is unmet travel need. In addition, the Council contributes towards the costs of contracts issued by Durham (2 contracts) and North Yorkshire County Councils (1 contract) for bus services that operate into the Borough.
3. Cabinet proposed to completely withdraw all funding from supported bus services at their meeting on 22 November 2011. There has been an extensive engagement process for the equality impact assessment (**Appendix 1**). Recorded impacts include loss of independence, travelling less often, social isolation and even having to move house. It seems that bus users in the rural areas of the Borough have less alternative travel options than those living within the town, due in part to the longer average trip distances.
4. Members' attention is drawn to the potential impacts that have been identified through consultation if the proposal is implemented. Members are also advised to consider the impact of any decision within the context of the Council's wider budget strategy.
5. It is currently possible to use two Department for Transport (DfT) grants to fund both an accessible taxi service and an accessible community transport service, should ongoing feasibility studies prove their viability, so that business proposals by organisations such as community groups, taxi operators and others can be prepared. It is essential that such groups have encouragement and support to work up proposals that provide self-sustaining accessible transport to mitigate the loss of supported bus services (either for an accessible taxis and community transport together or separately).

6. Two options have been assessed in detail for the implementation of the budget proposal should it be adopted. The option that best seems to meet the financial proposal, yet provide time for taxi and community transport proposals to be brought forward is the withdrawal of all early morning services from 3 June 2012 and rural services 16-18/20 from 30 December 2012.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that Members agree to withdrawal of all early morning services from 3 June 2012 and rural services (services 16, 17, 18 & 20) from 30 December 2012 if the budget proposal to withdraw funding from supported bus services is agreed by Council as part of the MTFP, after consideration of the potential impacts identified through consultation.

Reasons

8. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To permit business cases for the operation of alternative taxi and community transport services to be brought forward if there is a viable opportunity.
 - (b) To achieve recommended MTFP savings.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	No implications
Health and Well Being	Well being may be affected by the loss of opportunity to travel to facilities. These are set out in the attached Appendix 1 .
Carbon Impact	Provision of supported bus services contributes to the ability of local people to choose to travel more sustainably
Diversity	No implications
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	Bus users, especially young people, older people, disabled people and those living in rural areas
Budget and Policy Framework	The budget savings would be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Supported bus services contribute to the sustainable transport network work strand within the Greener Darlington theme
Efficiency	No new implications

MAIN REPORT

Information & Analysis

9. Most bus journeys in Darlington are operated commercially¹ by Arriva North East and GoNorth East. These are complemented by 14 contracts paid for by the Council either for individual journeys or for complete services, where it feels that there is unmet travel need. In addition, the Council contributes towards the costs of contracts issued by Durham (2 contracts) and North Yorkshire County Councils (1 contract) for bus services that operate into the Borough.
10. Cabinet proposed to completely withdraw all funding from supported bus services on 22 November 2011. There has been an extensive engagement process for the equality impact assessment. Recorded impacts include loss of independence, travelling less often, social isolation and even having to move house (**Appendix 1**). It seems that bus users in the rural areas of the Borough have less alternative travel options than those living within the town, due in part to the longer average trip distances.
11. Members' attention is drawn to the potential impacts that have been identified through consultation if the proposal is implemented. Members are also advised to consider the impact of any decision within the context of the Council's wider budget strategy.
12. There are currently two Department for Transport (DfT) grant programmes that may provide an opportunity to provide start up funding for alternative public transport services, should feasibility studies prove these services to be viable. These programmes are the Community Transport Grant and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. There is also a land receipt from the sale of Sadberge Primary School.

Community Transport Grant

13. In March 2009 and December 2011, Government announced grant funding for the development of community transport. The funding comes in two parts – a “kick start” grant for supporting the delivery of community transport worth £37,100 in total and free consultancy advice from the Community Transport Association (CTA). Officers have met with the CTA and are awaiting their forthcoming consultancy into the feasibility of community transport within the Borough, in the context of the wider Tees Valley sub-region. The report of the study is due by April 2012 and is expected to include an assessment of the feasibility for community transport in the Borough, how best it may be provided and who is best placed to provide it. It is intended that the consultancy will include advice & guidance to potential community groups who may wish to operate such services.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund

14. The Council's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) project is funding a feasibility study into accessible taxis and accessible community transport as part of meeting the project

¹ Under the 1985 Transport Act, bus companies may decide to operate bus routes at their own commercial risk, under the regulatory control of the Traffic Commissioner. As businesses, bus companies provide buses to make money, not meet social need. Local Councils may choose to pay for additional bus services where there is unmet travel need, although these cannot compete with commercially provided bus services.

outcomes to promote public transport, better meet the travel needs of disabled people and better meeting the travel needs of those living in rural areas. The study is due to report in April 2012. The LSTF project is based around two objectives;

- (a) The first and paramount objective is to provide an outline business case to meet the evidenced requirement for an accessible taxi to meet the needs of disabled people. It is anticipated that a social enterprise company would operate the taxi, charging commercial rates to ensure that the business was financially viable after the initial pilot period – ie it is a business, not a project.
- (b) The second objective is to understand how community transport can provide accessible transport given the personalisation agenda in social care, the proposal to withdraw funding for supported bus services and the economic recession. It may well be that the best solution is to provide a service that meets both objectives together. Again, any proposal would need to operate in a self-sustainable way.

15. The potential solutions may also include the provision of better information and the use of technology to make travel easier.
16. Given the findings of the equalities impact research (see **Appendix 1**) and the parallel opportunities created by the Government funding and LSTF project, it seems sensible to delay the implementation of the budget proposal if it is adopted, to permit viable business proposals by organisations such as community groups, taxi operators and others to be worked up in mitigation especially in the rural areas of the Borough. It is essential that such groups have encouragement and support to work up proposals that provide self-sustaining accessible transport (either for an accessible taxis and community transport together or separately).

Implementation Options

17. Two options for implementing the proposal have been assessed in detail. They are:-
- (a) Withdrawal of all supported bus services as soon as is possible from 3 June 2012 to save the most money;
 - (b) Withdrawal of all early morning services from 3 June 2012 and rural services² from 30 December 2012 to allow time to develop mitigation proposals especially for rural areas (the accessible taxi proposal covers the whole Borough and a community transport proposal may be of benefit to parts of the urban area as well depending on the precise detail). This option still achieves the financial projection set out in the budget proposal.
18. It is not proposed that the Council uses any funding from the Medium Term Financial Plan to support any solution that is viable. Rather, it is proposed that a combination of external grants and user charges would underpin the financial viability of each service. Whilst business models for community transport vary, it is expected that a sustainable, long term,

² Services 16, 17, 18 & 20 serve the rural areas of the Borough and are the last bus services to Great Stainton, Neasham, Sadberge & School Aycliffe. Service 17 is also the only bus service to Darlington from Bishopton. In total, these services currently cost circa £107,000 per annum.

plan will involve the charging of all users at point of use including concessionary fare passholders, since it is essential that it operates on a business footing.

19. External, ring fenced (except for land receipt), “start up” funding is available for both the accessible taxi service and the accessible community transport service as described below. It is essential that both the taxi and the community transport services are proven to be viable before any funding commitment is made to each service. Currently, the funding sources are
 - (a) DfT grants to the total of £37,100 for the operation of community transport (lump sum for this type of transport).
 - (b) Receipt from the sale of Sadberge School £30,000 for the provision of an enhanced bus service to the village (this receipt is not ring fenced to the project, but would be a lump sum restricted by area if it was so used).
 - (c) DfT LSTF budget for accessible taxis. The budget is £85,400 over the period 2011-14 (includes committed funding of £21,925 for feasibility study in 2011/12 and then £30,200 annually in both 2013/14 and 2014/15).
 - (d) Additional marketing and promotion funding in kind from annual LSTF budgets dedicated to transport marketing and promotion activity until 2015.
20. Potentially, all the existing funding could be combined to support the pilot phase of a combined accessible taxi service and an accessible community transport service if this proves to be the best way of delivering a viable business operated by an organisation yet to be identified. Organisations who deliver either of the two services would have to raise income from external grants, user charges or other sources and be responsible for expenditure with no further financial support from the Council.
21. The funding available provides support for start up costs (vehicle, premises etc) and ongoing revenue support for up to 2 years by 31 March 2014 to a provider or providers. Any accessible taxi service would have first call on the LSTF taxi budgets since this is what these were originally for. As an illustration of the potential costs involved, the LSTF bid assumed that an accessible taxi could be leased at a cost of £5,200 per annum (2011 prices).
22. All costs will need to be more closely defined in the feasibility studies and subsequent detailed business plans prepared by community groups etc to inform their decision making process. Cabinet would also need to subsequently decide whether the business plan(s) were viable before committing the start up funding held by the Council.
23. The indicative timescale **Table 1** for the final reports from both feasibility studies is April 2012. It is then anticipated that the following process will be followed if the studies demonstrate a clear case for implementing accessible taxis and accessible community transport (either separately or together). One outcome may be that the accessible taxi service can be implemented before December 2012, if it is preferable that it is separate to any community transport solution.

24.

Table 1 Timescale for potential implementation of accessible taxi and community transport services (either separately or together)

Activity	Timescale
Study reports received	April 2012
Analysis of study reports	end April 2012
Presentation to and informal discussions with stakeholders who are interested in operating a service	May 2012
Development of business case(s) by stakeholders (with Council support as required)	June – August 2012
Cabinet decision on use of start up funding	September 2012
Implementation of proposal – obtaining vehicles, premises, recruiting staff & volunteers etc	Autumn 2012
Start date	31 December 2012 or 2 January 2013 to be decided

Community Involvement

25. The realisation of both services if they are feasible, rests entirely on the response from communities, the voluntary sector and transport operators in terms of their willingness to operate the services. It also relies on local people supporting any proposal since they will be instrumental in making the proposal work in the longer term by using the service.
26. It is highly likely that the most viable financial model will need the involvement of volunteers for part, or for all, of the staff requirement. It is also much better if communities came together to deal with common issues and needs, so as to accrue economies of scale in meeting them. Therefore, there is a potential role for the Association of Parish Councils & Meetings or other representative groups to drive the implementation process forward in partnership with the Council.

Financial Impact

27. If Council does proceed with the budget proposal, then both the implementation options would reduce expenditure during 2012/13 as set out below in paragraph 25, compared to the projected reduction of £44,000 for 2012/13 in the draft MTFP. Both options include an ongoing budget expenditure to £15,000 per annum from 2013/14 onwards – this sum being for the provision of bus timetables at bus stops and to cover the Council's commitment to the Traveline public transport information service.
28. The financial impact of both options are the:
- (a) Withdrawal of all supported bus services from 3 June 2012 saving a projected £115,000 in 2012/13,
 - (b) Withdrawal of all early morning urban area services from 3 June 2012 and rural services from 30 December 2012 saving a projected £46,000 in 2012/13,

29. It is recommended that option (b) is implemented should a decision be made to proceed with the budget proposal. **Table 2** summarises the projected financial impact which is virtually identical to that set out in the proposed MTFP for 2012/16 – there is an additional £2,000 saving in 2012/13.

Table 2 Projected budget for recommended implementation option

000s	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Budget	211	251	340	360
DBC contracts	93	0	0	0
Other payments	72	15	15	15
Total	165	15	15	15
Balance (saving)	46	236	325	345

Outcome of Consultation

30. There has been an extensive engagement process as part of the equalities impact assessment for the budget proposal and results from this are set out in a separate report. Recorded impacts include loss of independence, travelling less often, social isolation and even having to move house. Whilst the datasets are inconclusive, it seems that bus users in the rural areas of the Borough have less alternative travel options than those living within the town. A record of the evidence recorded is contained in the equalities & impact assessment which is also being presented at this meeting.

SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Information and Analysis**Context**

1. Most bus services in Darlington are operated commercially³ by Arriva North East and Go North East focused on the town centre. In the case of Arriva, this follows a widespread review of bus routes in 2008 when they analysed where and when bus users travelled. The Council currently chooses to pay for additional bus journeys where it feels that there is unmet travel need, either on the basis of individual journeys or for complete services. There are 14 contracts in place at the time of writing, with an intended expiry date of 2 May 2014. The cost of these contracts is approximately £140,000 per annum. In addition, the Council contributes towards the cost of contracts let by Durham County Council (two contracts) and North Yorkshire County Council (one contract) for bus services that operate into the Borough. The budget is also used to fund the Council's commitment to the Traveline public transport information service and at stop bus timetables.
2. Cabinet proposed to completely withdraw all funding from supported bus services on 22 November 2011. An equalities impact assessment is included in this report for Members' attention prior to making a decision on this proposal.

Review process

3. The process to understand the impact of the proposal involved:
 - (a) Talking Together events during November 2011 to January 2012.
 - (b) Budget consultation meetings with protected characteristic groups.
 - (c) Interviews on bus by market research specialists, NWA, sampling 1,047 users.
 - (d) Meetings with the Association of Parish Councils & Parish Meetings, Stillington & Whitton Parish Council.
 - (e) Telephone interviews with residents of Sadberge, following on from a survey carried out by the Parish Council in 2010.
 - (f) Other Budget feedback.
 - (g) Sample patronage information.

³ Under the 1985 Transport Act, bus companies may decide to operate bus routes at their own commercial risk, under the regulatory control of the Traffic Commissioner. As businesses, bus companies provide buses to make money, not meet social need. Local Councils may choose to pay for additional bus services where there is unmet travel need, although these cannot compete with commercially provided bus services.

Findings

Talking Together

4. The Council held several Talking Together Events over the period November 2011 to December 2012. This gave people the opportunity to talk with Cabinet members directly, hear about all the budget proposals and make comments. Recorded comments were as follows:
 - (a) The loss of service 20 in the inner west end will cause real difficulty for those without access to a car in this area, since the next available bus services are along Coniscliffe or Woodland Roads.
 - (b) The loss of a link between the Mowden area and Cockerton due to the withdrawal of the commercially provided service 77 and proposed withdrawal of service 16. This loss prevents direct travel by bus to Cockerton for shopping and to the Memorial Hospital.

Budget Consultation Meetings with Protected Characteristic Groups

5. Meetings with local people in protected characteristic groups were held during December 2011 and January 2012. Whilst most of those attending the events made comments including about the consequences of changes to commercially operated bus services such as service X66, some impacts were recorded. The following impacts were recorded at the Community Partnership meeting:
 - (a) Some people may not be able to get to work if the proposal is implemented. The example of access by bus for staff at Morrisons, North Road was quoted following on from the loss of evening bus services in the 2011 budget decision.
 - (b) The proposed change in school transport causing a multiple impact if the alternative public bus service was withdrawn under this proposal.

Interviews on Bus

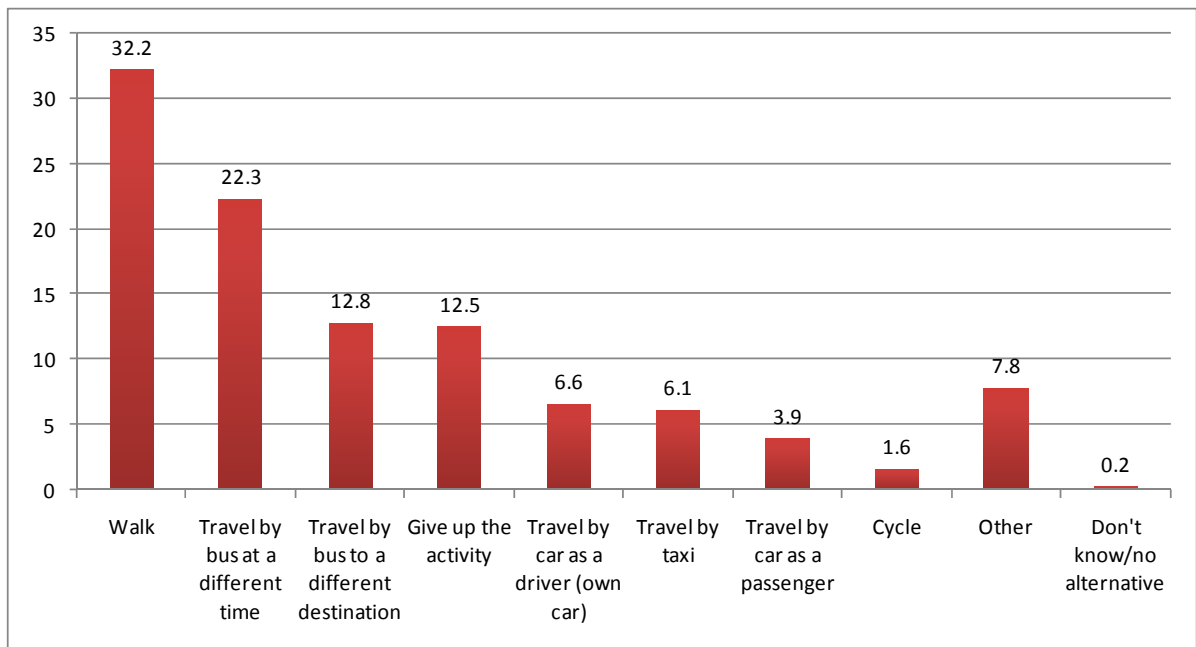
6. A total of 1,047 interviews were completed by market research company NWA on a sample of bus journeys affected by the budget proposal during December 2011 and January 2012. This process involved over 198 hours of interviews being carried out in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. In addition, a small number of completed questionnaires were handed in directly to the Council and these have been included in the analysis. The journeys interviewed included the replacement minibus journeys on service 20 that were operated due to the closure of Kent Bridge and on the now withdrawn commercially operated service 77 around Mowden (to better understand travel patterns in the west end of Darlington).
7. In terms of a characteristic supported bus service user, most:
 - (a) Lived in the DL1 and DL3 postcode areas (78%) which encompass the urban area. A further 9% lived in the DL2 postcode area (the rural east, south & west of the

Borough);

- (b) Were aged over 55 (62%) – 44% were over 65;
- (c) Had a bus pass by reason of age (54%) with a further 4% having a pass due to disability;
- (d) Used the bus often – 32% said daily and 10% daily during the week. A further 41% said between two to four times per week;
- (e) Travelled because of a need to go shopping, to the bank, the hairdresser or similar personal business (51%). A further 25% used a supported bus service to get to work; and
- (f) Would walk (32%) or find another bus assuming there was one (22%) if the journey was not available. This overall pattern changes in rural areas where the distances are greater and there a fewer alternative travel choices. Overall, 13% would give up the activity they were doing through the use of the bus as illustrated in the graph below.

What would you do if there were changes to Services – All Services

(Q10: % response – total sample – 1050 respondents)



8. The graph shows the total recorded responses in answer to the question “what would you do if there were changes to the bus service, so that it no longer ran to your usual destination at the time you normally use it?” Additional analysis of the home postcodes of bus users seems to imply that the alternative to rural bus services (numbers 16,17,18, 20 & replacement minibus) is less likely to be walking or cycling due to the average travel distances involved (although it should be noted that people living in the town itself also use these services). An example of this is service 17 to Bishopton, where 9% would walk and 3% cycle compared to urban area service 4 (46% & 15%). Equally, residents of rural areas

seem to be more likely to give up an activity (especially those recorded on service 17) although this also applies to the Blackwell area (service 29).

Other Meetings

9. Officers attended a meeting of Stillington & Whitton Parish Council (within the area of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council) at which the budget proposal was discussed. Local people use Darlington supported bus service 17 to get to work and education in the town. Subsequently, the Parish Council have written a letter setting out the importance of the bus service for work, education, shops and other services – Darlington is preferred to other towns by some residents due to its physical layout. The Parish Council requested help about community transport (advice on operation & grant applications; also perhaps some funding) if funding for the bus service is withdrawn. They also ask for the merit of a through service to Stockton to be explored, thus sharing the costs with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
10. Impacts recorded at the meeting were as follows:
 - (a) Three people without access to a car rely on service 17 to get to work in Darlington, one of whom has been told by her employer that she would be dismissed if she could no longer get to work on time.
 - (b) Potentially others would give up their activity (shopping, visiting friends) and would face real difficulty in attending doctor and hospital appointments.
 - (c) Residents of the village also would have to reconsider where they currently go to College, or potentially go to College, if there was no direct bus service to Darlington.
 - (d) Those impacted would feel isolated and abandoned.
11. At a coffee afternoon at Heighington Parish Church, local people spoke about their use of service 16 from Heighington, School Aycliffe to Newton Aycliffe to reach the local doctors’ surgery, Post Office & supermarket. Residents of School Aycliffe also spoke about their need to get to Darlington for hospital appointments, shops and meeting friends. Many bus users could not see a way around not using the bus; some thought they would have to walk up to two miles each way to either Heighington or Newton Aycliffe – along part unlit roads in both cases. Impact interviews were carried out with 35 residents and a summary of the impacts recorded is given in **Table A**. Most people interviewed only provided comments about what they used the bus for and did not identify any impacts.

Table A: Impacts recorded at Heighington Parish Church

Impact (comments received not included in this table)	Count
Give up activity	5
Give up activity (implied)	2
Social isolation	1
Loss of independence	1
Loss of confidence	1
Move house	1
Poor health	1

12. Three respondents included a comment that a minibus service from Heighington to Newton Aycliffe could be an alternative solution. Such a link would permit interchange with other bus services in Newton Aycliffe as well as providing public transport access to the local doctor, supermarket, Post Office, leisure centre and other facilities.
13. An email objecting to the proposal has been received from Heighington Parish Council on the grounds that the withdrawal of service 16 would prevent elderly people and those without access to a car from travelling from School Aycliffe or Heighington. (This journey matters because, as noted above, the local doctor, Post Office and nearest supermarket are located in Newton Aycliffe.)
14. At a meeting of the Association of Parish Councils & Parish Meetings held on 5 January 2012, representatives attending the meeting expressed concern about the impact on workers needing to access jobs, students travelling to College and people without access to a car. Some of those present were willing to explore any mitigation measures such as a lower frequency or higher fares to offset the cost of providing supported bus services although they made the point that they felt that the tax receipts from rural areas more than outweigh the value of services received, with this proposal creating a disproportionate impact on rural areas.

Telephone Interviews

15. In 2010, a survey of residents living in Sadberge was carried out by the Parish Council (findings previously reported to members on 13 September 2011). The survey evidenced the need for services 17 & 18 demonstrating that there is a group of residents who rely on the bus in order to live their lives – 17 residents responded to the survey detailing journeys for shopping, Doctors appointments, taking children to school and visiting friends. Various impact statements were recorded in the survey, including “we would feel trapped and isolated, thus affecting our mental health”.
16. A series of detailed telephone interviews was carried out with some of the respondents to the 2011 survey who had agreed to be contacted about the impact of the current proposal. The information is presented in full in **Table B** to demonstrate the sort of impacts being recorded.

Table B: Summary of impacts recorded from telephone conversations with residents of Sadberge

Individual	Bus pass	Access to a car	Current bus use	Impact
1	No	No	Once a fortnight to get to shops, Doctor & other services	Would reduce frequency of trips, since have to walk. Has a disability affecting travel choices.
2	Yes	Yes	Several times each week to get to work, library, shops & Arts Centre	Would reduce frequency of trips and have to drive.
3	Yes	No	Every two days to get to shops, bank, Post Office & Doctor	Would have to move house since dependent on the bus. Has a disability affecting travel choices.

4	Yes	No	Uses bus at least weekly to go to Doctor, shops, family & friends	Would need to rely on family, but frequency of trips significantly reduce since they live outside of the area. Would become socially isolated and less independent.
5	Yes	Yes	Once a week to go shopping and visit friends. Car not always available.	Would have to move house to carry on independent life since would have to travel less often if no bus and give up some activities. Has a disability affecting travel choices.
6	Yes	No	Two or three times a week to go shopping, bank, health appointments & friends	Would need to walk or use a taxi to undertake essential journeys as a carer, but taxis expensive and would give up seeing friends. Would become socially isolated. May need to move house.
7	No	No	Relies on bus for all journeys if timings work for work, shopping, Doctor & friends.	Would need to walk, cycle or use a taxi to undertake essential journeys. Taxis are expensive so would give up unessential journeys and rely on others, thus losing independence.
8	Yes	No	Twice a week for journeys to the shops, Doctor, Hospital & family.	Would give up activity – loss of family contact would cause social isolation & “devastation”. Need to rely on others so loss of independence.

17. The telephone interviews demonstrate that bus users in Sadberge are often older people, people who do not have access to a car and who need the bus to undertake essential trips to the shops, Doctors, family and friends. Several respondents identified the potential for social isolation and a loss of independence. Three even felt that they would need to move house to protect their independence and ability to live, with consequential impacts on personal finances and local community. Sadberge Parish Council have previously made representations concerning the importance to the community of a bus service in preventing the creation of a dormitory village open only to those with access to a car. They feel that this causes a threat to their community which is made up of a range of ages and occupations, since the lack of public transport would inevitably result in a village centred around travelling elsewhere with a loss of community.
18. Telephone interviews were also carried out with residents of other rural areas. An example impact is from a regular bus user with no access to a private car for much of the time. They use the bus three or four times a week to go shopping, go to the bank, hairdresser and other facilities in the town centre as well as visit friends. The impact for them is that the proposal would mean that they effectively would have to give up all the activities they undertake by bus and consequently that they would need to move house to be able to eat. They would lose their independence, since they have no family or friends who are able to help easily.

They are also a carer for a family member and the loss of the bus would make it very hard to continue to care for the individual concerned.

Other Budget Feedback

19. Thirteen responses were recorded by email, telephone and through comments boxes. Four recorded impacts were given; the other responses being comments on the proposal.
 - (a) A loss of independence and extra cost of having to pay for a carer to accompany him.
 - (b) Give up activity.
 - (c) Loss of independence and increased reliance on friends.
 - (d) Loss of independence causing eventual depression and being housebound.
20. The comments received included requests for additional bus services, the merit of planning a contingency fund and a request to cross-subsidise supported bus services from commercially operated daytime routes. The latter is not possible in law.

Patronage Information

21. The patronage information provided below in **Table C** is from a representative sample period in October/November 2011. The information for service 16 is now slightly out of date since an extra journey previously operated as service 19 is included in this contract. This change follows the operation of urban area service 19 journeys commercially by Arriva from 2 January 2012.
22. The patronage information reflects the fact that services 16 to 20 operate all day, Monday to Saturday, whilst the early morning contracts typically equate to a handful of journeys used by people travelling to work or other essential business.

Table C - Patronage information

Contract No	Times of Operation	Route	Operator	16/10/11-12/11/11	
				4 Weekly	Days
DBC0901a-13a/b	Monday – Friday early morning	Town Centre – Firthmoor	Arriva	68	20
DBC0902a-10	Saturday morning	Town Centre – Whinbush	Arriva	56	4
DBC0904a-4	Monday – Friday early morning	Town Centre – Minors Crescent	Arriva	97	20
DBC0904b-4	Saturday morning	Town Centre – Minors Crescent	Arriva	88	4
DBC0905a-14	Monday – Friday early morning	Morrisons – Town Centre – Skerne Park	Arriva	138	20
DBC0905b-14	Saturday morning	Morrisons – Town Centre – Skerne Park	Arriva	125	4
DBC0906b-7	Saturday morning	Town Centre – Harrowgate Hill	Arriva	83	4
DBC0907a-2	Saturday morning	Town Centre – Branksome	Arriva	30	4
DBC0908a-11	Saturday morning	Town Centre – Red Hall	Arriva	122	4
DBC0914a-20	Monday – Saturday (PH)	Town Centre – Neasham	Scarlet Band	3,974	24
DBC0916a-16	Monday – Friday	Newton Aycliffe – Mowden – Town Centre	Scarlet Band	5,325	20
DBC0916a-16	Saturday	Newton Aycliffe – Mowden – Town Centre	Scarlet Band	948	4
DBC0917a-17/18	Monday – Saturday	Town Centre – Sadberge	Scarlet Band	2,618	24
DBC0919-23	Monday to Saturday	Glebe Road – Town Centre – The Broadway	Arriva	1,000	28

23. Services 16, 17, 18 & 20 serve the rural areas of the Borough and are the last bus services to Great Stainton, Neasham, Sadberge & School Aycliffe. Service 17 is also the only bus service to Darlington from Bishopton. These services currently cost circa £107,000 per annum in total.

Conclusion

24. Most bus journeys in Darlington are operated commercially by Arriva North East and Go North East. The majority of travel needs by bus in the Borough are met through these commercial operations. These journeys are complemented by those provided through 14 contracts paid for by the Council and a contribution towards the costs of contracts issued by both Durham and North Yorkshire County Councils.
25. There has been an extensive engagement process. Recorded impacts include loss of independence, travelling less often, social isolation and even having to move house. Whilst the datasets need more analysis, it seems that bus users in the rural areas of the Borough have less alternative travel options than those living within the town.