
SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES – 2011 TO 2014

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 a method of achieving the required reduction in the supported bus service budget and the evidence collected about potential impacts.

Summary

2. Most bus journeys in Darlington are operated commercially¹ by Arriva North East and are complemented by 34 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 6 contracts issued by Durham and North Yorkshire County Councils for bus services that operate into the Borough. At their meeting on 3 March 2011, Council agreed to reduce the budget available for supported bus services by £100,000 per annum, such that the maximum available budget in 2011/12 is £381,000 although a lower value would be desirable. This decision follows a previous saving made through the withdrawal of financial support towards the Sunday train service to Bishop Auckland.
3. Following analysis of evidence & feedback received, it is recommended that members adopt a policy supporting the provision of early morning and daytime (8am to 6pm), Monday to Saturday bus journeys to the town centre. This policy would meet the majority of the need for bus travel to work (an especially significant reason for travel in the early morning), and also allow residents the ability to travel to shops and leisure facilities. In addition, it is recommended that the Council sets an upper limit for subsidy per passenger, to avoid expenditure on travel needs that would be better provided by other means. This would mean that contracts with a high subsidy cost per passenger would also be withdrawn.
4. The proposals set out in this report allow for additional savings of £107,000 in 2012/13 and £116,000 in 2013/14, as well as smaller savings in 2011/12 and 2014/15. These savings are over and above the reductions already set up in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

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.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) The contracts set out in **Appendix 2** to this report are terminated with effect from Sunday, 1 January 2012 and notice is given to Durham County Council concerning payments towards contracts issued by them, as also set out in the Appendix.
 - (b) An upper limit to subsidy per passenger equal to double the current average subsidy per passenger is implemented and subsequently adjusted for inflation.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
 - (a) To achieve the required budget reduction, yet best meet user demand in a way that minimises disruption.
 - (b) To limit the Council's expenditure on supported bus services to those circumstances where buses are the most appropriate method of travel.

Richard Alty
Director of Place

Background Papers

- (i) On bus interviews, March 2011
- (ii) Notes from Talking Together & Workshop events
- (iii) Web & on bus forms
- (iv) Travel Diary Questionnaires

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cc

S17 Crime and Disorder	No implications
Health and Well Being	Well being may be affected by the loss of opportunity to travel to facilities
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	As detailed in this report
Groups Affected	As detailed in this report
Budget and Policy Framework	Additional savings would be achieved due to change in policy.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Contributes to the sustainable transport network work strand within the Greener Darlington theme
Efficiency	No new implications

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Context

7. Most bus services in Darlington are operated commercially² by Arriva North East and are focused on the town centre, following a widespread review of bus routes in 2008. The Council currently chooses to pay for additional bus journeys; either for individual journeys or for complete services, where it feels that there is unmet travel need. There are 34 contracts in place at the time of writing, with an intended expiry date of 2 May 2014. The costs of these contracts is approximately £363,000 per annum. In addition, the Council contributes towards the costs of 6 contracts issued by Durham and North Yorkshire County Councils for bus services that operate into the Borough. The budget is also used to fund fees charged by the Traveline public transport information service and at stop timetable production.
8. At their meeting on 3 March 2011, Council agreed to reduce the budget available for supported bus services by £100,000 per annum when averaged over the lifetime of the current MTFP, such that the maximum available budget in 2011/12 is £381,000. This decision follows a previous saving made through the withdrawal of financial support towards the Sunday train service to Bishop Auckland.

Review process

9. The process to understand community needs and the cost of meeting those needs involved:
 - (a) Two Talking Together events on 8 & 16 November 2010.
 - (b) Feedback opportunities as part of the budget consultations.
 - (c) Invitation of proposals from supported bus service contractors.
 - (d) Three workshops, one with disabled people; one with Parish Councils & Meetings and the third with older people in November 2010.
 - (e) Interviews on bus by NWA, with a sample of 484 users of supported bus services.
 - (f) Self-completion forms for supported bus service users.
 - (g) Self completion travel diary questionnaires as part of a Disability Impact Assessment.
 - (h) Web and Facebook consultation pages.
 - (i) Analysis of ad hoc feedback, including a survey by Sadberge Parish Council.

² 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.

The review also included statistical analysis of how current contracts were performing and assessment of their value for money.

Findings

Talking Together

10. The feedback received at the Talking Together events focused on the following physical locations and accessibility issues:
 - (a) Access to appointments at Doctors' Surgeries and Hospital.
 - (b) Access to adult day care facilities.
 - (c) Access to facilities for vulnerable people (eg elderly people, disabled people & young people), for example access to West Park Hospital.
 - (d) Services to the Glebe Road area.
 - (e) Services to Hurworth and Neasham.
 - (f) Services to Middleton St.George.
 - (g) Services to Sadberge.
 - (h) Services to Brafferton.
 - (i) Services to Great Stainton.
 - (j) Services to the inner west end of Darlington around the Milbank Road area.
11. Respondents were also concerned about the time of day that supported bus services were provided, with those responding wanting buses at the times of day that they used them. However, some accepted the logic of the example about only providing supported bus services during the day, Monday to Saturday, despite support for evening provision. Residents in the north east of the Borough were particularly concerned about the need to keep a viable bus service, since the supported bus service is the only bus serving their community.

Feedback from budget consultation

12. A feedback process was also undertaken as part of the budget consultation in winter 2010. Contact was made by 21 individuals or organisations, either on their own account or on behalf of others. A petition signed by 331 people, was also received concerning the retention of the diversion of service 6a/b around the Glebe Road estate.

Table 1 Feedback received by category

Rural services - impact of loss of service to Bishopton, Brafferton, Great Stainton & Sadberge - impact of withdrawal of evening & Sunday services to Hurworth and Neasham.	13
Daytime services - need for continued bus provision in inner West End. - impact of any reduction in service to High Grange. - impact of any reduction in service to west end & West Park	5
Other - Petition concerning need for diversion of commercial service 6a/b via Glebe Road. - need for context of bus network to be considered. - general social benefits of supported bus services.	333 (331 people signed petition)

Workshop events & survey by Sadberge Parish Council

13. People present at the older people workshop were especially concerned about the impact that a budget reduction could have on them, in terms of getting to services and facilities such as shops, doctors or the Post Office. They were concerned about people without alternative transport, who could become “housebound” possibly creating a greater call on Council resources through Adult Social Care.
14. Representatives at the Parish Council workshop were concerned about the loss of bus services in general in rural areas and social exclusion in particular, for those without access to a private car during the day, evenings and at weekends. Suggestions were made at the meeting about possible alternative solutions that could save the Council money, including the use of Parish precept to subsidise supported bus services. A self-administered survey was carried out by Sadberge Parish Council. The findings were that:-
 - (a) 17 people responded to the survey, of which 10 are dependent on the bus service for their activities.
 - (b) They made a total of 46 trips a week, 23 of which were essential trips for medical appointments, taking children to school, work and shopping.
 - (c) Various impact statements were recorded, including “we would feel trapped and isolated, thus affecting our mental health”.
15. At a workshop held on 16 November 2010, disabled people expressed similar views to those at the older people event, but expressed concern that the budget proposal could exacerbate their lack of mobility given the shortage of accessible taxis in Darlington and the cessation of the Ring a Ride service. They were also concerned about potential changes that

could make getting to hospital more difficult and make transport for personal carers harder.

Interviews

16. Interviews with 484 users were carried out on a sample of supported bus service journeys in March 2011 by market research company, NWA, repeating a similar exercise carried out in 2008. The headline findings are that:
 - (a) People of all ages use the bus, with the highest category being 55 to 64 years of age.
 - (b) Over half (58.5%) of users live in the DL1 postcode – the central, eastern and northern areas of the urban area.
 - (c) Users felt that the most important times for supported bus services to be provided, are before 8am on weekdays (33.2%) and daytimes between 8am and 6pm (45.4%).
 - (d) Approximately one third of users held a bus pass, either by virtue of age or disability,
 - (e) Most users (59.3%) travelled daily during the week and at weekends.
 - (f) The town centre was the most common destination – of those surveyed, 131 (21.7%) getting on in the centre and 202 (41.7%) going to the town centre.
 - (g) The most common reason for travelling was to go to work (44.49%) and the least (0.8%) was to go to a health appointment.
 - (h) In response to the question about alternative means of travel if there was no bus at the time of travel; most would walk or cycle (39.5%) or travel by bus at a different time if it was available (21.7%). However, 11.6% would give up their activity and not travel at all.
17. In the on bus survey, 111 people were interviewed travelling on early morning journeys before 8am. Of these, 103 were travelling to or from work with the balance travelling for leisure (3), visiting friends (2), shopping (2) and education (1). If the bus journey were withdrawn, only 5 people travelling to work would stop their activity, reflecting the importance of employment. The essential nature of this trip purpose is reflected in the fact that many would either walk, cycle or take a taxi to continue to make the journey. Not surprisingly, many users used the bus every day or on most days. Only 7 people surveyed considered that they had a disability; only 1 of these holding a concessionary fare pass.
18. As could be expected, users of daytime journeys from 8am until 6pm were travelling for a wider range of reasons than just to and from work. As an example on route 17, eighteen people were surveyed of whom 44% were travelling to shop, 28% to education and 11% to work. Many would continue to make their journey either by a different type of transport or at a different time; however 28% had no alternative which is a characteristic of rural area bus routes where trip lengths are too long to walk or cycle. Two people considered themselves to have a disability. No users had a concessionary fare pass on the grounds of disability.
19. Evening bus services are typified by larger number of trips being made for leisure purposes, although some of those surveyed were travelling for work and education purposes. Twenty-

one (9%) considered themselves to have a disability, with 10 of these holding a bus pass. Many felt that they could complete their journey by other means if there was no bus, for example 60% of those using service 13 would walk.

20. Sunday services reveal a mix of trip purposes, with several people travelling for work or education. A quarter of people surveyed on service 2 were travelling to work, with another 50% travelling to see friends or use facilities such as a bank. This mix of journey types is reflected in the response given by many users that they would use another means of transport, travel at a different time or not travel at all if there was no supported bus service. Eleven of the 61 people surveyed considered that they had a disability, with 4 of these holding a concessionary fare pass.
21. While 59% (281) of all those surveyed at all times of day would make their trip by another means if the bus journey was withdrawn (in a car, taxi, on foot or by bike), 12% would have to cease their activity. Most users would either walk or cycle to complete their journey or use the bus at a different time and reschedule their activities.

Table 2 Alternative travel choice if no bus available

Response	Number (%) – users could give more than one response so replies total 525.
Travel by own car as the driver	18 (3.7)
Travel by car as a passenger	17 (3.5)
Walk or cycle	191 (39.5)
Travel by bus at a different time	105 (21.7)
Travel by bus to another destination	22 (4.5)
Travel by taxi	59 (12.2)
Give up the activity	56 (11.6)
Other responses	21 (4.3)
No reply or don't know	36 (7.4)

22. Forty one young people aged between 14 & 17 years were interviewed by NWA. The most common journey purpose was travelling to school or college (23 people), of whom 2 did not have an alternative means of travel available to them. Over half of those travelling for education were doing so from Newton Aycliffe by service 5a to the town centre, which was also the primary destination for all trips made by young people (21 people). Three young people were recorded as travelling for leisure during the evening, all of whom said that they would walk or cycle if there were no bus journey at the time they needed it. The predominance of daytime travel by young people is reflected in their preference for daytime services to be provided (21 people or 50%), with the second ranked preference being for early morning services (10 people or 24%).

Self-completion forms

23. In addition to the interviews with supported bus service users, a follow up exercise was undertaken in May 2011 to provide additional information about users' preferences for the

future. Three hundred and eleven people responded, as summarised below (some replies had joint first choices, so the preferences don't sum to 311):

- (a) 271 chose daytime services as their first choice for how the Council should support bus services.
 - (b) 40 chose early morning services.
 - (c) 20 chose Sunday services, and
 - (d) 13 chose evening services.
24. In parallel, a web based form was available via the Council's Facebook page and its website. Twenty one people completed this form, with the following preferences:
- (a) 14 chose daytime services as their first choice for how the Council should support bus services.
 - (b) 5 chose evening services.
 - (c) 1 chose early morning services, and
 - (d) 1 chose Sunday services.
25. Feedback received from users of supported bus services, shows that they appreciate having them when they are aware that the journey they are using is financially supported by the Council. Analysis of bus patronage shows that more people are using Scarlet Band operated supported bus service contracts in 2010/11, than in 2009/10. The increase is 22% and is contrary to the overall trend for all bus services which is declining (-5%).

Impact Assessment

26. The Equalities Impact Assessment attached as **Appendix 1** highlighted a range of transport related issues and barriers that are typically experienced by older and disabled people, and to a lesser extent children and young people, but the specific impacts identified in the assessment arising from the proposals set out in this report are limited to concerns about reduced options for travelling to the Deaf Association Club (Eldon Street) for social purposes. Officers have assumed that similar concerns would arise in relation to the Gateway Club, but have been unable to engage directly with members. The impact assessment findings fall into three broad strands.
- (a) Disabled people are under-represented in bus patronage figures, in proportion to the number of disabled people in the population. For many, the primary concern is the barriers to bus and taxi use, particularly for wheelchair users. . Cultural, attitudinal and detailed operational issues are as important as problems of infrastructure. The barriers to use of bus services in general are thus of greater significance for disabled people in particular than the loss of some supported services as proposed in this report.
 - (b) Affordability of transport is an issue for older people, children and young people, and disabled people. Thus, withdrawal of supported bus service journeys may cause financial issues for those who then need to use a taxi instead. However, following on

from (a) above, the principal issue is the general one that some people have to use taxis because they are unable to access buses. The data collected for the impact assessment indicates that the additional number of people with protected characteristics who would turn to using taxis as a result of the proposed reduction in supported services would be very limited.

- (c) Specific impacts arising from the detailed proposals set out in this report have been identified in **Appendix 1** and relate to the use of evening services by disabled people, especially for social trip purposes, with particular reference to the Deaf Association Club (Eldon Street) and the Gateway Club (Harrowgate Hill).

27. In detail, 41 people out of the 484 interviewed on supported bus service journeys considered themselves to be a disabled person (8.5%). In terms of the impact if the bus journey they were using was withdrawn, 8 would walk, 6 would travel at a different time, 2 would go to a different place served by bus, 4 would use a taxi and 7 did not provide a response. However, 14 would give up their activity.
28. The majority of these 14 people were over 60 years of age, with the rest being over 55 – 11 out of the 14 held a bus pass. They were making trips for a variety of reasons (8 for leisure, 3 to go shopping, 2 to visit friends and one to go to work). Most (9) travelled daily on the bus, with another four travelling between 2 to 4 times each week. Locationally, the larger number (10) lived within the DL1 postcode area, with the balance (2 each) in DL2 and DL3. All 14 made trips split evenly between travelling to the town centre and travelling between points elsewhere in the Borough.
29. Comparative analysis with users who did not consider themselves to be disabled, shows that a higher proportion of disabled people state that they would give up their activity if the bus journey was withdrawn (14 people (34%) compared to 35 people (8%)). In terms of the other factors, the disabled people interviewed were more likely to live in the DL1 postcode area and use a bus pass. The trips of the disabled people interviewed were also less focused on the town centre 50% (7) of trips compared to 71% (25) had a town centre origin or destination).
30. A self-administered travel diary was completed by 11 people attending the Blind Social Club and the Deaf Forum. In these diaries, they describe how they used buses for a sample week. In total, 106 trips by bus are described, of which 17 are supported bus service journeys, the rest being commercially operated. The journeys by supported buses were mainly on daytime routes 16 & 19, with 4 being on service 26 during the evening. Trip purposes recorded include shopping, going to work, meeting friends and attending medical appointments. Most respondents would find other means of travel if the bus journey they used was not available, although some trips would not be made - out of the 17 trips using supported buses, 6 may not happen if support for the bus was withdrawn. Two of these trips were on evening service 26, the balance on daytime service 16. The trip purposes were going shopping, visiting friends and attending the Blind Club.
31. The survey of supported bus users shows that disabled people are under represented on supported bus services in proportion to the population as a whole. This is possibly because commercial bus service journeys provide for most of the travel needs of disabled people, or because of the attitudinal, operational and infrastructural barriers to bus use. However, as indicated in paragraphs 26 and 27a above, disabled people report that they regularly experience these kinds of barriers. Five strands of work are proposed or in progress that

should bring improvements in the general transport impacts identified in the assessment, namely:

- (a) a proposal by Arriva to provide refurbished low floor buses on services 2 & 11 in 2011, thus making all town area routes low floor operated 4 years ahead of legal requirement.
 - (b) a proposal by Arriva to introduce a low floor guarantee, whereby if the wheelchair space on a bus is already occupied, Arriva will telephone for a taxi for the intending passenger.
 - (c) a bid to Government by Council to fund an accessible taxi (subject to a satisfactory feasibility study), enhanced bus driver training, better travel information and Travel Rangers to help all bus users.
 - (d) work in progress to use major scheme funding already secured to provide more raised kerbs at bus stops and dropped kerbs at crossing points to help disabled people to get to their nearest bus stop.
 - (e) the proposed use of major scheme funding already secured to further improve bus timetable designs at bus stops, so that they are easier to understand and use.
32. It is important to emphasise that the above measures are seeking to improve transport provision generally for older and disabled people. They do not constitute mitigation for the impact of the supported bus proposals.
33. The principal impacts from the proposals relate to reduced transport choices for people travelling to the Deaf Association Club and Gateway Club for social purposes. In mitigation, it is proposed that information is provided to members of both clubs, so that they are clear about the bus services that will remain in place to serve these locations during the evening. This will support disabled people using these facilities to access nearby bus services that will continue to be available.

Cost per passenger

34. More detailed analysis of the use of each supported bus service contract shows that there is a range of between 7p and £8.16 in the subsidy paid to the bus operator for each passenger per day. This subsidy is in addition to the fare paid by the passenger (or the Council in respect of concessionary fare journeys). The analysis uses the daily cost of each contract and the recorded average daily patronage for the contract, so should be taken as an indication of the costs rather than an absolute value.
35. The current average subsidy per passenger is £1.93 and 11 contracts cost more than this per passenger. These 11 contracts are a mixture of early Saturday morning contracts (6), evening contracts (2), an early morning weekday contract (1), a Sunday contract (1) and the diversion of an otherwise commercially operated route through Brafferton (1).

36.

Table 3 - Cost per passenger

Contract No	Times of Operation	Route	Cost £ per passenger trip
DBC0901f-13a/b	Sunday morning	Town Centre-Firthmoor	£0.07
DBC0901b-13a/b	Monday - Thursday evening (PH)	Town Centre-Firthmoor	£0.22
DBC0911e-12	Sunday	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham	£0.30
DBC0904a-4	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Minors Crescent	£0.40
DBC0908a-11	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Red Hall	£0.45
DBC0916a-16	Monday - Friday	Newton Aycliffe - Mowden - Town Centre	£0.47
DBC0901d-13a/b	Sunday -Thursday evening	Town Centre-Firthmoor	£0.52
DBC0903b-9	Monday - Thursday evening (PH)	Town Centre - Springfield	£0.57
DBC0915a-19	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - West Park	£0.60
DBC0905a-14	Monday - Friday early morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park	£0.63
DBC0914a-20	Monday - Saturday (PH)	Town Centre - Neasham	£0.70
DBC0907b-2	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Branksome	£0.72
DBC0902b-10	Sunday -Thursday evening	Town Centre - Whinbush	£0.78
DBC0917a-17/18	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - Sadberge	£0.83
DBC0916a-16	Saturday	Newton Aycliffe - Mowden - Town Centre	£0.90
DBC0901a-13a/b	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor	£0.96
DBC0913b-30/31a	Sunday	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars	£1.23
DBC0913a-30/31a	Monday - Saturday evening (PH)	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars	£1.24
DBC0918-6a/b	Daily evening (PH)	Town Centre - Harrowgate Hill - Whinfield	£1.48
DBC0919-23	Daily	Glebe Road - Town Centre- The Broadway	£1.53
DBC0911b-12	Monday - Saturday evening (PH)	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham	£1.61
DBC0909c-6a/b	Monday - Saturday evening (PH)	Town Centre - Whinfield	£1.72
DBC0909a-6a/b	Daily late eve (PH)	Town Centre - Whinfield	£1.88
Average subsidy per passenger £1.93			
DBC0905b-14	Saturday morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park	£2.35
DBC0904b-4	Saturday morning	Town Centre-Minors Crescent	£2.40
DBC0906b-7	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Harrowgate Hill	£2.42
DBC0902a-10	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Whinbush	£2.50
DBC0907a-2	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Branksome	£3.36
DBC0911d-12	Saturday morning	Town Centre - DTVA	£3.42
DBC0915b-19	Sunday	Town Centre - West Park	£4.06
DBC0910-3	Monday - Saturday evening (PH)	Town Centre - Mowden	£4.85
DBC0911a-12	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - DTVA	£5.33
DBC0912 - 5A	Monday - Saturday	Brafferton diversion	£7.12
DBC0903c-9	Sunday -Thursday evening	Town Centre - Springfield	£8.16

Options

37. Five options were considered as possible responses to the need to save £100,000 per annum from the budget. These were:

- (a) The provision of new contracts based on evidenced need.

- (b) The selection of existing contracts, also based on need.
- (c) A proposal by Arriva North East and
- (d) A proposal by Scarlet Band Motor Services Ltd.
- (e) The amendment of existing contracts.

New contracts

38. As part of the consultation process, an illustration was used to explain how daytime bus services only could be provided in future, using three vehicles at a budget cost of £220,000 per annum. This illustration was based on the assumption that daytime needs were the most important and that all other contracts were not required. However, given the evidence from the subsequent evidence collection, including the on bus interviews, about the use of early morning journeys for travelling to work, it became apparent that the case for new contracts was poor compared to the existing contracts, which are provided throughout the week at a lower cost. New contracts are also expected to cost more than the existing ones, due to the cost inflation being experienced in the bus industry. Thus, this option is not recommended.

Selection of existing contracts

39. The evidence set out above demonstrates that the majority of users consider that early morning and daytime, Monday to Saturday services should be a priority for the Council. This feeling is supported by the evidence that most bus travel, especially for work, happens during these time periods. The evidence also shows that many users rely on the bus for their trip making, including their travel to employment.
40. The existing contracts can still meet these needs at 2009 contract prices adjusted for inflation. The existing contracts are in place until 2 May 2014, so there is no time pressure at the moment to replace the contracts prematurely, thus avoiding the cost and delay associated with the procurement process. Choosing to retain existing contracts where possible would minimise instability in the local bus network, so making the promotion of bus use through the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative and potentially, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund more effective.
41. The introduction of this option to support early morning and daytime, Monday to Saturday, journeys only, would mean that the Council would not pay for bus journeys after about 6:30pm Mondays to Saturdays depending on the specific timetable details for each route. It would also not pay for bus journeys on Sunday. The impact of this option (**Figures 1 - 3**) would be as follows:
- (a) No bus service 19 to West Park and High Grange on Sunday (intending passengers would need to use the commercially operated service 1 journeys along West Auckland Road).
 - (b) No bus service 30a/31a serving Mowden, Skerne Park and Albert Hill on Sunday. However, commercially operated journeys on service 14 run from the town centre to Skerne Park.

- (c) No supported bus service journeys on service 12 on Sundays serving Neasham, Hurworth and Middleton St. George, leaving only the commercially operated journeys in place from Hurworth to Morton Park only.
- (d) No supported bus service journeys on services 2 (Branksome) and 13a/b (Firthmoor) on Sundays, so intending passengers would need to travel during the period of commercial Sunday operation.
- (e) No supported bus journeys on some evenings to Springfield and Whinbush
- (f) No supported bus journeys every evening to Albert Hill, Glebe Road, Harrowgate Farm, Hurworth, Mowden, Neasham & Rise Carr.
- (g) A reduction in evening service frequency in Firthmoor, with the additional evening bus journeys paid for by the Council until 9pm being removed, leaving the commercially operated hourly service in place. There would be no supported bus service journeys after 9pm (currently the last bus journey is commercially operated).

The following journeys would also be withdrawn if recommendation b) concerning cost per passenger was approved and are shown here for completeness.

- (h) There would be also be no diversion of bus service 5 through Brafferton and no early morning service 12 to Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Proposal by Arriva

- 42. Arriva North East made a proposal to merge a supported bus service with a commercial one at a lower frequency. However, this proposal would depend upon Arriva retaining all their existing supported bus service contracts. The projected savings of this proposal alone are insufficient to meet the budget reduction required and only consider Arriva operated contracts. Arriva have subsequently been asked to respond to the proposed recommendation and their response is being awaited.

Proposal by Scarlet Band

- 43. A proposal was made by Scarlet Band Motor Services Ltd. about the operation of their own contracts. The proposal for their contracts centres around the deletion of underused journeys, primarily those in the evening and on Sunday the deletion of service 18 and a reduction in service frequency. This proposal offers a reduced level of service across the whole operating day, rather than focusing provision on the times when supported buses are most needed. Subsequently, Scarlet Band have responded to the proposal with alternative options for some existing evening contracts, although these would require a tendering process prior to implementation and would be at additional cost to the recommended proposal. A tender exercise could also create consequent changes in the commercial bus network, so creating a period of instability for bus users.

Amendment of existing contracts

44. The fifth option to amend existing contracts based on need was centred around ideas of reducing frequency, revising operating hours and possibly, making slight alterations to routes. However, this option was not pursued after initial consideration, due to a concern that the scale of the amendments required could require a procurement process to be followed. This would potentially create increased financial pressures, both by increasing contract costs and through the delay in implementing any change making the budget reduction harder to achieve within the MTFP period. Again, a tender exercise could also create consequent change in the commercial bus network, so creating a period of instability for bus users.

Recommended Method of Achieving Budget Saving

45. It is recommended that members support the continued provision of contracts that operate in the early morning and daytime Monday to Saturday. This decision would mean the withdrawal of all Darlington Borough Council contracts for evening and Sunday supported bus services in the Borough. The contracts for these services can be withdrawn on 12 weeks notice and it is recommended that the decision is made to do this with effect from Sunday, 1 January 2012. The decision would also mean that financial support is continued for 3 contracts issued by Durham County Council and 1 by North Yorkshire County Council, with notice being given concerning the withdrawal of financial support for the remaining contracts issued by Durham County Council.
46. The recommendation to proceed with option b) is based on the following factors:
- (a) That early morning and daytime journeys best meet travel needs, especially for access to work.
 - (b) The existing contracts are cheaper than the projected costs of new ones.
 - (c) The option means that most affected areas of the Borough would have no, or a reduced frequency, bus service at a particular time of day or on Sundays, rather than no bus service at all.
 - (d) The continuation of complete contracts in the early morning and daytime is an easy message to communicate, thus minimising any potential confusion and uncertainty.
 - (e) The option should minimise any subsequent changes to the commercial bus network, so assisting the Council in its work to promote bus use as part of the delivery of the Community Strategy.
 - (f) The budget reduction can be realised as quickly as is possible, so minimising uncertainty and the need to seek further savings – indeed, it is likely that additional savings would be made.
47. In making any decision, members should be aware of the effect of any subsequent decisions by Arriva North East concerning the commercially operated bus network. This happened during the 2009 tender round and meant that contracts had to be altered in response. However, Arriva North East have not made any changes subsequent to contract decisions made by both Durham and North Yorkshire County Councils this year and it is currently

expected that any subsequent commercial changes would be slight – indeed it is possible that Arriva may choose to operate more journeys to replace some of those withdrawn by the Council where it makes sense on a commercial basis to meet expected passenger demand.

Limit for Financial Support

48. In addition, it is recommended that a limit of financial support per passenger is adopted to avoid expenditure on travel needs that would be better provided by other means. The proposed level is double the current average price per passenger supported by the Council. Currently the average value is £1.93 per passenger so the limit would be £3.86. It is envisaged that this principle would be used during any review process; normally when contracts are being re-tendered and that the value would be adjusted for inflation in contract prices in subsequent years. The additional contracts that would not be supported under this recommendation are shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Contracts terminated if a subsidy limit per passenger is introduced (in addition to those contracts terminated by virtue of time of operation)

Contract number	Time of operation	Route	Cost per passenger
DBC0911a-12	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - DTVA	£5.33
DBC0912 - 5A	Monday - Saturday	Brafferton diversion	£7.12

Evening & Sunday contracts would also be terminated by virtue of their time of operation if recommendation a) is approved.

49. The impact of this recommendation upon current services in Darlington is tabled below in **Table 5**. In reading the table members need to be aware that the precise definitions of early morning, daytime and evenings vary depending upon the individual route since there is no physical break in service between the time periods. However, as a guide, the following times may be used:

- (a) Early mornings describe journeys before 8am.
- (b) Daytime describe journeys between 8am and 6pm.
- (c) Evening describe journeys from 6pm.

Table 5 – Impact upon current bus services in Darlington if the recommendation is implemented

a) No change

Area	Current bus service	Route description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Minors Crescent Hopetown	4	Minors Crescent – Brinkburn Road – Corporation Road – Town Centre	No change	Monday to Saturday early morning, twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour. Monday to Saturday evenings, twice hourly & Sunday, twice hourly
Harrowgate Hill Harrowgate Village North Road	7/7a	Darlington – Aycliffe - Newton Aycliffe – Chilton – Ferryhill - Durham	No change	Monday to Saturday early morning, twice hourly & daytime, four times per hour. Monday to Saturday evening, twice hourly. Sunday, twice hourly.
Yarm Road McMullen Road Red Hall	11	Town Centre – Yarm Road – McMullen Road – Red Hall	No change	Monday to Saturday early morning twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour. Monday to Saturday evenings & Sunday, twice hourly.
Yarm Road Hundens Lane Albert Hill North Road Morrisons Clifton Road Skerne Park	14	North Road Morrisons – Hundens Lane – Yarm Road - Town Centre – Clifton Road - Skerne Park	No change	Monday to Saturday early morning, four times per hour to Skerne Park only & daytime, six times per hour to Skerne Park and twice hourly to North Road Morrisons. Route does not operate in the evening after 7:20pm. Nearest buses on North Road (twice hourly), Yarm Road & Houghton Road (Friday to Sunday nights).

Area	Current bus service	Route description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Hummersknott Mowden Cockerton Faverdale West Park High Grange Heighington Newton Aycliffe	16	Town Centre – Mowden – Cockerton – Faverdale – Heighington – Newton Aycliffe	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime service only; hourly.
Haughton Road Whinfield Great Burdon Sadberge Great Stainton Little Stainton Bishopton Stillington	17	Town Centre – Whinfield – Sadberge – Little Stainton – Bishopton – Stillington – Great Stainton	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime service only; two hourly.
Yarm Road The Broadway Morton Park Dinsdale Sadberge	18	Town Centre – Yarm Road – The Broadway – Morton Park – Dinsdale Station - Sadberge	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime service only; two hourly.
Woodland Road Pierremont Faverdale High Grange West Park Memorial Hospital	19	Town Centre – Woodland Road – Hollyhurst Road – Willow Road – Faverdale – High Grange – West Park Hospital	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime service only; hourly.

Area	Current bus service	Route description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Neasham Road Geneva Crescent Roundhill Road Hurworth-on-Tees Neasham	20	Town Centre – Parkgate – Neasham Road – Geneva Crescent – Roundhill Road – Hurworth-on-Tees – Neasham	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime service only; hourly.
Coniscliffe Road Blackwell Village Manfield	29	Town Centre – Coniscliffe Road – Carmel Road South – Blackwell – Manfield – North Yorkshire	No change.	Monday to Saturday daytime; two hourly.
Coniscliffe Road Mowden Pierremont Memorial Hospital	77	Town Centre - Coniscliffe Road – Mowden – Cockerton – Brinkburn Road – Hollyhurst Road	No change	Monday to Saturday daytime; hourly.

b) Existing services affected by the proposals

Area	Current bus service	Description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Redworth Heighington Faverdale Cockerton Pierremont Memorial Hospital	1/1b	Darlington to Tow Law via West Auckland Road and Heighington Monday to Saturday daytime journeys, twice hourly & evenings once an hour until 10:10pm, with an additional inbound journey. . Sunday journeys, once an hour.	To withdraw one additional evening inbound journey to Darlington at 9:06pm.	Monday to Saturday daytime journeys, twice hourly & evenings once an hour until 10:10pm. Sunday journeys, once an hour.
Branksome Cockerton Pierremont Memorial Hospital	2	Darlington to Branksome via Cockerton Monday to Saturday early morning journeys, twice hourly & daytimes, seven times per hour. Monday to Saturday evenings, twice hourly & Sundays from 9:16am, twice hourly.	To withdraw Sunday morning journeys before 9:50am.	Monday to Saturday early morning journeys, twice hourly & daytimes, seven times per hour. Monday to Saturday evenings, twice hourly & Sundays after 9:50am, twice hourly.
Mowden Hummersknott Pierremont Memorial Hospital	3	Darlington to Mowden via Nunnery Lane Monday to Saturday daytime journeys, three times per hour until 6:45pm. Route does not operate in the evening or on Sundays.	To withdraw one return journey at 6:16pm.	Monday to Saturday daytime journeys, three times per hour until 6pm. Route does not operate in the evening or on Sundays. The nearest buses would be on Woodland Road (service 2 and others) and on Coniscliffe Road until 6:54pm.

Area	Current bus service	Description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Harrowgate Hill Harrowgate Village Brafferton North Road	5a	Darlington to Bishop Auckland via Newton Aycliffe Monday to Saturday daytime – hourly (service 5 also operates hourly, giving a twice hourly combined frequency).	To withdraw the diversion of service 5a through Brafferton Village.	Nearest buses on North Road. Daytime frequencies of over 4 per hour.
Whinfield Houghton Springfield Harrowgate Hill North Road	6a/b	Darlington to Whinfield via North Road Monday to Saturday early morning & daytime, four times per hour (combined frequency). Monday to Saturday evenings; twice hourly. Sunday daytime; twice hourly (combined frequency)	To withdraw evening journeys from 6:30pm	Monday to Saturday early morning & daytime, twice hourly. Monday to Saturday evenings: nearest buses on North Road (twice hourly) or Houghton Road (twice hourly Fridays & Saturday). Sunday daytime; hourly.
Houghton Road Springfield	9	Darlington to Springfield via Houghton Road Monday to Saturday early morning, twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour. Evenings, twice hourly. Sunday, twice hourly.	To withdraw evening journeys, Monday to Thursday and one return journey on Sunday night at 11:15pm	Monday to Saturday early morning, twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour. Monday to Thursday evening, two return trips after 9pm; otherwise nearest bus on North Road (twice hourly). Friday to Sunday evening, twice hourly. Sunday, twice hourly until 10:45pm.

Area	Current bus service	Description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Houghton Road Whinfield	10	<p>Darlington to Whinfield via Houghton Road</p> <p>Monday to Saturday early morning twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour Evenings, twice hourly. Sunday daytime. Half hourly</p>	To withdraw evening journeys, Sunday to Thursday after 8:30pm..	<p>Monday to Saturday early morning twice hourly & daytime, six times per hour Sunday to Thursday evenings, twice hourly until 8pm & Friday & Saturday evenings, twice hourly. Sunday daytime. Half hourly.</p> <p>If no service 10 running, then the nearest bus on Sunday evening is service 9 to Springfield, otherwise twice hourly bus service on North Road.</p>
Yarm Road Morton Park/Palms Hurworth Place Hurworth-On-Tees Neasham (Eve & Sunday) Middleton St George Middleton One Row	12	<p>Neasham to Durham Tees Valley Airport via Hurworth, Darlington & Middleton St. George.</p> <p>Monday to Friday early morning; twice hourly from 5:35am & Monday to Saturday journeys, twice hourly. Monday to Saturday evenings; nearest buses on Grange Road and Yarm Road to McMullen Road.</p> <p>Sunday daytime journeys from Airport to Neasham; hourly.</p>	To withdraw first two journeys Monday to Friday early morning inbound journeys, Monday to Saturday evening journeys & Sunday journeys.	<p>Monday to Friday early morning; twice hourly from 6:15am & Monday to Saturday journeys, twice hourly. Monday to Saturday evenings; nearest buses on Grange Road and Yarm Road to McMullen Road.</p> <p>Sunday daytime journeys from Morton Park to Hurworth only; hourly.</p>

Area	Current bus service	Description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Neasham Road Firthmoor	13a/b	<p>Darlington to Firthmoor via Neasham Road</p> <p>Monday to Saturday early morning, four times per hour (combined frequency) & daytime, twelve times per hour (combined frequency). Monday to Saturday evenings, half hourly (combined frequency). Sunday, four times per hour (combined frequency) until 8pm, then twice hourly.</p>	<p>To withdraw Monday to Thursday evening journeys after 9pm on service 13a (clockwise around Firthmoor) and 6:30pm on service 13b (anti-clockwise around Firthmoor).</p> <p>Also to withdraw Sunday morning journeys before 11am on service 13a & evening journeys.</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday early morning, four times per hour (combined frequency) & daytime, twelve times per hour (combined frequency). Nearest bus on Monday to Thursday evenings after 9pm is service 11 on Yarm Road. Friday & Saturday evenings, half hourly (combined frequency). Sunday, four times per hour after 11am until 8:30pm. After 8:30pm, the nearest bus is service 11 on Yarm Road.</p>
North Road Rise Carr Harrowgate Farm	26	<p>Darlington to Harrowgate Farm via Rise Carr</p> <p>Monday to Saturday early morning & daytime journeys; twice hourly.</p> <p>Monday to Saturday evening & Sunday; hourly.</p>	<p>To withdraw Monday to Sunday evening journeys and Sunday daytime journeys.</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday early morning & daytime journeys; twice hourly</p> <p>Nearest buses in the evening and on Sunday on North Road (twice hourly).</p>
Skerne Park (Evenings Monday to Saturday only) Mowden Albert Hill Morrisons North Road Memorial Hospital	30a/31a	<p>Three looped circular route serving Skerne Park, Darlington, Cockerton, Mowden, Hummersknott, Hundens Lane, Albert Hill & Skerne Park</p> <p>Evening & Sunday – half hourly (combined frequency), except to Skerne Park during the day on Sunday.</p>	<p>To withdraw complete service.</p> <p>Monday to Sunday evening journeys, and Sunday daytime journeys to Albert Hill & Mowden (not to Skerne Park since this is served by service 14).</p>	<p>Monday to Sunday evening: nearest buses on Grange Road, Haughton Road (Friday to Sunday nights), Woodland Road and Yarm Road.</p> <p>Skerne Park served by service 14 during the day on Sunday.</p>

Area	Current bus service	Description	Recommendation	Remaining journeys subject to commercial decision making
Coniscliffe Road Low Coniscliffe High Coniscliffe Carlbury Piercebridge	75/76	Darlington to Bishop Auckland via Coniscliffe Road & Piercebridge. Monday to Saturday daytime; twice hourly & evenings, hourly until 8pm. Sunday daytime; hourly	To withdraw one journey at 8pm. Monday to Saturday.	Monday to Saturday daytime; twice hourly & evenings, hourly until 7pm. Sunday daytime; hourly.

Conclusions and Financial Implications

50. The recommendations to focus the Council's resources on supporting early morning and daytime services that have a reasonable projected subsidy per passenger would result in:
- (a) contracts set out in **Appendix 2** being terminated, and
 - (b) contracts set out in **Appendix 3** being retained.
51. Spatially, the impact of these recommendations is shown in **Figures 1 - 3**. To help provide some context, the current commercially operated route network is attached at **Figure 4**.
52. **Table 6** shows that these recommendations would allow for additional savings to be achieved over the period up to March 2015. These would be over and above the reductions already set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Table 6 - Projected Budget

000s	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Budget	381	331	354	369
DBC contracts	322	139	149	233*
Other payments	83	85	89	94*
Total	405	224	238	327
Balance	(24)	107	116	42*

** based on assumptions about increased contract costs*