

## Appendix 1 Responses to community engagement

Themes: economic, social, environmental well-being; participation in civic or political activity

Evaluation criteria:

1. Is the proposal something that only central government could do?
2. Does the proposal require any local bodies (council, police, health, others) to have new powers?
3. Will the proposals contribute to environmental, economic or social sustainability, including participation in civic and political activity?
4. Can you describe the overall benefits of your proposal to the local community?
5. Can you provide evidence of local support for the proposal?
6. Do the proposals support One Darlington: Perfectly Placed?
7. Do the proposals support other key Darlington strategies and plans?

| Channel      | Suggestion  | Evaluation criteria ([y]es, [n]o or not clear[?]) |   |   |   |      |   |   | Wider support?  | Summary of comments on implementation?  |
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|              |   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5    | 6 | 7 |   |   |
| Online forum | 1. That government take the necessary steps to pass a new law to enable community pubs to trade on a level playing field by prohibiting irresponsible promotion of alcohol as a loss-leader. That government take the necessary steps to pass a new law to prohibit restrictive covenants that prevent any future use of a property as a 'local service' as defined by the Sustainable Communities Act. | Y   | N | Y | Y | Some | Y | Y | This submission by CAMRA is supported by Cllrs Dunstone and Lawton. Tackling the harm caused by alcohol misuse is a key priority within the SCS, whilst the idea also seeks to sustain local community facilities | Implementation would require national action.   |
|              | 2. Could we get all town centre retailers to sign up to become a plastic bag free town? Some of the larger retailers like Primark are already leading the way by switching to paper bags.   | N   | N | Y | Y | N    | Y | N | There is no specific evidence of wider support although concern for the environment resulted in a new theme of a Greener  | A voluntary scheme could be introduced now without any changes – but a compulsory scheme would require new powers |

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|             |   |   |   |   |   |       |   |   | Darlington within the SCS.  |   |
|             | 3. We need to follow other bold towns by adopting a smoke free and chewing gum free town centre. The mess that they create is disgusting and we should take a stand and set an example for further towns to follow! | Y | N | Y | Y | Some  | Y | N | There is no evidence of public support for a ban on smoking outdoors, however there is wide support for a cleaner town centre and for effective enforcement. Banning smoking outdoors would need new legislation. | Enforcing a ban on these things would be very difficult. There would be civil liberty issues. However support for a stronger focus on enforcement of littering can be acted upon.   |
|             | 4. Implement grants for solar/wind and other environmentally friendly systems and insist on any new builds including them in their designs and builds.  | N | N | Y | Y | N     | Y | Y | Some support evident through consultation processes for other plans and strategies.   | The Council could already decide to introduce incentives/grants if it wished. However, this would require additional resources. The draft LDF design guidelines offer strong encouragement for energy efficiency development.   |
|             | 5. Conservation and restoration of all important historical buildings. Monuments in Darlington should be developed - we don't want to look back in 50 years and think why didn't we save these important places.    | N | N | N | Y | Mixed | Y | N | Various engagement processes have shown significant support for the conservation/restoration agenda. There is no evidence of wider support for developing existing monuments.                                     | Powers are already available to the Council with regard to listed buildings and conservation areas, including (for listed buildings) powers to serve urgent works or repair notices. The Council has no powers to influence the maintenance of scheduled ancient monuments; this lies with English Heritage. If the Council did have this power there would then be the question of sourcing funding. |
| Focus group | 6. Business rates should be set at a local level (with higher business rates for supermarkets).   | Y | Y | Y | Y | N     | Y | N | The level of local support for this idea is not known, although it is unlikely supermarkets would support any differential based on the nature of the   | Implementing this idea would be complicated and contentious. It would require investment in policy services to inform the decision-making process. The idea has already been explored in  |

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|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | retailer   | the Lyons Review of Local Government   |
| 7. Powers to be introduced to ensure that local producers receive a fair rate for produce sold to supermarkets.                                    | Y | N | N | Y | N | N | N |  | The level of local support for this idea is not known.   | These powers would be contentious and particularly complex because they require direct intervention into the market for food.  |
| 8. Employers should be funded to give employment/apprenticeships to young people currently not in education, training or other employment.         | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |  | The level of local support for this idea is not known.   | This idea doesn't require a change to make it happen and Darlington Partnership is already working to increase apprenticeship opportunities.   |
| 9. Introduce incentives or sanctions from central or local government to ensure that the Equality Bill is fully enacted.                           | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |  | At the focus group, support for under-represented groups was strong.                                     | This role is already undertaken by the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights.   |
| 10. Schools should be accountable for engaging with local communities; there should be a locally based means of challenging schools and governors. | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |  | The level of local support for this idea is not known.   | The Education White Paper outlines Government proposals for enhancing parental involvement and rights.   |
| 11. There should be better financial support for those parents or adults who are receiving training.   | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | N |  | The level of local support for this idea is not known.   | This is likely to be an idea best dealt with by the Department of Work and Pensions, currently responsible for benefits and social support to those in training and seeking work. This idea is strongly linked to the more specific idea no. 29. |
| 12. Councils should be allowed to build affordable rented housing.   | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |  | The Council's Housing Needs Survey identified the need for a range of more affordable housing provision. | The new Housing Minister, John Healey, has recently announced his support for councils to provide new build housing for rent and the Council is actively pursuing this option.   |
| 13. There should be the provision of language  | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |  | The level of local support   | This idea does not require any   |

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|                 | support for 16-18 year old migrant workers' children to learn English.   |   |   |   |   |       |   |   | for this idea is not known.  | central government action and there are already opportunities to learn in English in Darlington.   |
|                 | 14. Enable the Council to better support: under-represented groups; young people into activities such as sport; local traders; the building of social housing                      | N | N | Y | Y | Y     | Y | Y | The focus group were supportive of these principles. The groups' view are echoes of similar views heard in recent years during other consultation. | These ideas don't require a change to make them happen and can all be directed into the relevant themed groups of the Partnership for consideration.   |
| Elected members | 15. Enabling licensing committees to take account of representations about local views on "sufficiency" in relation to the provision of premises from which alcohol can be bought. | Y | Y | Y | Y | So-me | Y | Y | Some councillors and police officers have informally expressed support for this idea.  | This would require changes to licensing law.   |
|                 | 16. Giving the Council more autonomy over spatial planning matters.  | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y     | Y | Y | Without clarity on what this would involve it is difficult to gauge the degree of support.   | This idea could theoretically help the delivery of the spatial strategy and could remove external scrutiny of our plans for local development but needs more work to scope what it proposed.   |
|                 | 17. Ban alcohol in streets and public spaces.  | N | N | Y | Y | Y     | Y | Y | This was suggested at member training and engagement sessions on 22nd June   | Local authorities can already apply for Designated Place Public Orders (although this can be a demanding and costly process) to deal with anti-social drinking.  |
|                 | 18. Enable Darlington to be a pilot for renewable energy sources by feeding in excess capacity back to the national grid.  | N | N | Y | Y | so me | Y | Y | This idea received some support at the member training and engagement session at which it was raised.  | This idea doesn't require a change in legislation to make it happen. A feasibility study to explore this is underway already, based on the Feetham's development brief. It is also on the agenda in respect of the Town Centre Fringe Project. |
|                 | 19. Put in place minimum unit pricing for alcohol.   | Y | Y | Y | Y | N     | Y | Y | Some local public sector agencies would be supportive of this; some private sector ones would  | There is currently a national debate on this issue and action here would need to be led by central not local government.   |

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|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | not.   | There is evidence that it could reduce alcohol consumption but would only work as part of a holistic approach (as there may be other effects: for example, an increase in crime to pay for alcohol)  |
|  | 20. Charge those with alcohol-related illness for their hospital treatment.     | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | N | Y | The level of local support for this idea is not known.                                 | This idea challenges the principle that the NHS is free at the point of use.   |
|  | 21. Give the Council the power to enforce “no ball games”.                      | ? | ? | ? | ? | Y | N | N | It is known that some adults may support this idea; children and young people may not. | If this power was available then PCSOs may be able to enforce without too much difficulty. However, nuisance caused by inappropriate ball games can already be tackled without the need for a sign.  |
|  | 22. Allow the Council to have more control over landlords’ selection of tenants | N | Y | ? | ? | N | N | Y | The level of local support for this idea is not known.                                 | There is tension here with equalities law. Fair housing laws specify clearly illegal reasons to refuse to rent to a tenant, such as rejecting an applicant because of her race, religion, ethnic background, sex, age or because she has children or is a disabled person. It is illegal to have a blanket ban even where there have been previous breaches in tenancy. The Council can introduce local lettings policies to create more sustainable communities, for example, by limiting the number of very large families in a particular area to ensure we have an appropriate |

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|          |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | balance.  |
|          | 23. Develop a proposal to help nature/the environment, for example, around promoting bee colonies                | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | The level of local support for this idea is not known.   | This idea doesn't require a change to make it happen.   |
|          | 24. Grant the Council more flexibility to deal with trees (for example in relation to Tree Preservation orders). | N | N | ? | Y | Y | ? | N | Feedback from planning applications etc suggests some support for this idea from members of the public. Maintaining support for a policy that would probably lead to fewer trees in Darlington may be difficult. | The Council already has substantial flexibility. Very difficult to determine consistent application of policies that if they resulted in the destruction of more trees than at present, could be perceived as damaging to the environment.  |
|          | 25. Facilitate more and better dog control.  | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | A Talking Together event in recent months suggests that dog control is a local issue that affects many people.   | Dog control legislation already provides for Councils to take up quite far-reaching powers. There will be more engagement with the public on this matter in September.  |
|          | 26. Base future licensing decisions on morality/ethics.  | Y | Y | N | ? | N | ? | ? | Only one elected member at training and engagement session 2 on 22nd June 2009 proposed this.  | Justifying decisions made on the basis of personal morality would be extremely challenging on an issue like this.   |
| Officers | 27. Allow the Council to opt for bus franchising as in London.   | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Past consultation has shown that many members of the public would welcome the Council having more control of buses   | In a difficult economic climate the significant management and revenue implications of this option are a major factor for consideration. The freedom to run a franchise would need to be matched by funding not only to set it up but to run it year-on-year. This idea would allow much tighter local authority control of all aspects of bus transport provision. |

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| 28. Allow councils with housing stock to opt out of the HRA subsidy system and keep “right to buy” receipts, and to charge RSL level rents, in order to accelerate new affordable house building by local authorities.                                    | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | This proposal received general support from those members present at training and engagement session 2 on 22nd June 2009.   | Housing Minister, John Healey, has recently announced there will be a consultation paper relating to this for discussion this summer.                                   |
| 29. Facilitate access to benefits for those in low paid work and/or those who are volunteering.   | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | This proposal received general support from those members present at training and engagement session 1 on 22nd June 2009. It was the most popular of the ideas tabled in advance at the focus group.                                | This idea supports the emerging financial inclusion strategy and the broader One Darlington priority. Tapering benefits payments to eligible individuals may be useful. |
| 30. Making Darlington eligible for Working Neighbourhoods Funding by arguing for the introduction of a sliding scale for eligibility rather than a single cut-off point (which Darlington just misses). This may include changes to eligibility criteria. | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | This proposal received general support from those members present at training and engagement session 1 on 22nd June 2009. It is likely to be supported by individuals and organisations from Darlington’s most disadvantaged wards. | This idea seems practicable and could provide the key to unlock doors to other funding.   |
| 31. Persuading food outlets to help manage the litter that their customers leave behind.  | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | The wording of this proposal as originally articulated on the website was improved by members present at training and engagement session 1 on 22nd June 2009.   | Detailed liaison work with many small retailers would be required. This idea doesn’t require a change to make it happen.  |
| 32. Modernising the Council’s powers in relation to setting allotment size in order to reduce the amount of wasted allotment space, by varying  | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Growing allotment waiting lists are a proxy indicator of local support for this   | Implementation would be relatively straightforward – but new powers would not be needed.  |

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|                                 | allotment size and meeting the demand for a greater number of smaller plots.                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | idea.  | Darlington's Allotments Strategy is in development at the moment and will include engagement with stakeholders on issues around allotment size and the sharing of plots. Currently a Darlington standard allotment is the size of roughly half a tennis court (and by law cannot exceed one thousand square metres) and half-sized allotments are offered where there is demand. It is anticipated that in future there may be demand for even smaller plots. |
| Face-to-face (member of public) | 33. Permit the Council to support the development of more green spaces, including roof gardens | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | The Open Spaces Strategy consultation recognises the inequality of provision of open spaces in different areas of the borough. | New powers would not be needed.   |