

Appendix 4 – Summary of alternative proposals

People were invited to submit alternative proposals that would achieve the same overall MTFP savings. All comments and alternative proposals can be accessed via the budget website (www.darlington.gov.uk/budget). The following is a summarised list of alternative proposals submitted via the budget website, email, or at the public meetings on 16 March 2016.

Alternative proposal	Related proposal(s)
Dolphin Centre / Head of Steam / Register Office / The Bridge	
1. Move the Register Office to the Head of Steam. This will provide free parking for office users as well as give the Head of Steam more profile. Also, a room could be decorated to use as a ceremony room.	FF52b LLE1 LLE2 W08 FF52i
2. Move the registrars to the Crown Street library. A much better facility for Births, Deaths and particularly Marriages. Saving money on alterations to the Town Hall. (the Registrars make money for the council).	FF52b LLE2
3. Could theatre companies take over the running of the Civic Theatre as previous offers have been made in the past? The money could be used to save the indoor market.	LLE4 W01
4. Increase Dolphin Centre fees, or charging more for use of facilities, reducing availability of services rather than cutting them would surely save money?	FF52b
5. Put a small museum into the Dolphin centre and charge for entry.	FF52b W08 FF52i
6. Convert the Gyms into a facility Darlington does not offer already. There are many gyms in the town competing for Dolphin income. Roller skating discos and derby's are becoming popular for instance, (Leeds, Bury St Edmunds), or other sports like table tennis which could build up a following and draw people from outside town too.	FF52b
7. Reduce running costs for the Dolphin Centre by installing solar panels.	FF52b
8. We believe that The Bridge can be saved by the Council working with the steering group that has been set up, on the basis of some form of peppercorn rent or transfer, meaning the Council is not stuck with the liabilities for repairs and maintenance. To help mitigate the risks an established third sector organisation or a community trust could be involved. The sustainability of the building would seem promising based on the rental income that is achieved at the moment, so we do believe this proposal is very realistic and again are happy to lend our support. [Submitted by Darlington for Culture]	S05
Markets / retail	
9. Organise a co-operative, giving market holders control and giving the opportunity to other to become involved.	LLE12
10. Sell the Covered Market into private ownership.	LLE12

Alternative proposal	Related proposal(s)
11. Free town centre parking to increase footfall and the challenges that online shopping creates for retailers.	MC2 FF52a
Parks / open spaces / grass cutting	
12. Groundwork could manage the towns parks through volunteering, corporate sponsors, healthy initiatives, and income generation, building on the work in South Park – possibly spearhead a wider 'Parks for People' offer.	W12 FF52c FF52d
13. Work with other local authorities to create a Parks Trust, similar to a wildlife Trust model with a membership base, managing parks for communities rather than parks for wildlife. This would allow the savings to be made, perhaps to a lesser extent, but maintain a network of beautiful and well used community resources across the borough.	W12 FF52c FF52d
14. Reduce the frequency of cutting the grass as opposed to stopping it all together.	W12 FF52c
15. All Parks to be put to Lawns, Meadow, & Cut Grass. All Roundabouts to use spring flowering bulbs and summer flowering small shrubs, NOT bedding plants.	W12 FF52c FF52d
16. Cut down on agency spending in street scene services.	W12 W13
Environmental enforcement services	
17. Lobby the government to increase the amount the councils receives from a successful prosecution to help cover costs.	W13
18. Reduce the amount of middle management in this area in order to enable the enforcement roles to remain.	W12 W13
Children's services	
19. Could school crossing patrols attract some commercial sponsorship?	W14 FF52e
20. Stop using Barristers in Care Proceedings - use the qualified Legal Team instead.	Hu4
21. Close the youth clubs and use the schools halls and gyms for youth club events.	Hu1
Adults services	
22. Charge people who able to pay for the services that are currently free of charge or subsidised (within the legal requirements) in order to gain more revenue.	AH3
23. Reablement should only be for those likely to improve.	AH3

Alternative proposal	Related proposal(s)
24. Openarts should be saved (albeit perhaps focused on working with those with most in need) through a combination of the 2015/16 underspend for Openarts and some of the money that might have been directed for Festival of Thrift. This amount of funding would also enable us to go to the CCG with an offer of match funding, given the hugely significant health outcomes and cost savings to the health budget Openarts can deliver. There are fantastic examples of CCGs working with the third sector on social prescribing, including referral to therapeutic arts projects e.g. Ways to Wellness in Newcastle and Gateshead and a partnership between Voluntary Action Rotherham and Rotherham CCG, which is having fantastic results. We are more than happy to advise on and support a solution for Openarts. [Submitted by Darlington for Culture]	S05
Roads	
25. Reduce the frequency of roads being gritted.	N/A
Street lights	
26. Replace 'dusk to dawn' lights in council flats with PIR sensors to save electricity costs.	N/A
27. Turn off the street lights at midnight - research has shown that this does not increase crime or road accidents.	LLE19
Christmas lights	
28. Explore whether Queen Elizabeth College and Darlington College students could create Christmas displays as part of their study portfolios.	Mc2 Mc10 FF52h
Staff and councillors	
29. Remove any senior management earning over £60k.	H1 EFFR19
30. Review the number of senior managers.	H1 EFFR19
31. Senior management take a pay cut – proportionate with the size of the town.	H1 EFFR19
32. Members should allocate a % of their allowances for things like Christmas lights.	Mc2 Mc10 FF52h EFFR5
33. Reduce the number of councillors.	N/A
34. Reduce councillor salaries and expenses by ¼.	EFFR5
35. Remove free parking from all council employees.	N/A
36. Give all staff 2 unpaid days of leave per year. This could save around £135k (based on 1,000 staff).	N/A
37. Reduce working hours to 35 hours per week. This could save £900k per year (based on 1,000 staff).	N/A
38. Don't pay more than the minimum wage or equivalent public sector jobs	N/A
39. Instead of paying the union contribution, this should be fulfilled voluntarily or be paid for directly by the union.	H3
Administration costs	

Alternative proposal	Related proposal(s)
40. Streamline / reduce back office administration costs.	H8 EFFR16 H7
41. Move the council back into the old town hall.	N/A
42. Reduce the number council tax letters sent to someone's estate once they have died.	N/A
43. Instead of subscribing to North East Regional Employers Organisation (NEREO), senior officers should already have the relevant skill sets, and knowledge should be enhanced through personal development.	H2
44. End the LGA subscription and gather information from free sources on the internet.	D02 FF52o
Reserves	
45. Use your reserves to cover the shortfall in income.	N/A
Outsourcing	
46. Outsource some or all of the council services to save money.	N/A
47. Use students to design posters and adverts.	H8
48. Use students to develop software.	EFFR18
Income generation	
49. Make more use of the market square to generate income.	LLE12
50. Sell council owned land fields (green spaces) to private enterprise for developments such as sports facilities.	W12
51. Increase council tax levels.	N/A
52. Decommission council chambers and committee rooms and rent out to another public sector body as office space, and have council meetings in the Dolphin Centre	N/A
Merge with other local authorities	
53. Merge with another local authority.	N/A
54. Merge services with other local authorities where possible.	EFFR18
Voluntary sector	
55. Develop a Darlington community enterprise: a charity with not for profit subsidiary companies limited by guarantee!	FF53t
56. Could Citizens Advice move into Crown Street to generate income and enable Bennet House to be freed for reuse/resale.	FF52k
57. Engagement Team activities and responsibilities should be absorbed into senior officer's role and Darlington Partnership.	S11