



# Summary Report

**Impact assessment on the removal of the evening bus services to & from Hurworth**



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## Impact of the removal of evening bus services to & from Hurworth

January 2012 saw the implementation of Darlington Borough Council's cuts to its subsidised rural bus services.

The result is the removal of **all** evening bus services to and from Hurworth/Neasham after 6.30pm

Working together with DBC Cllr J Kelley, Hurworth Parish Council wished to determine the outcome of these cuts and the impact upon the wider community.

This can be summarised as follows;

- Work/Business related; lack of evening service to get to/from places of employment, resulting in significant additional travel costs.
- Social exclusion; example: house with three young people with mental health issues run by two volunteers from Mencap. Young people are without independent transport and are now isolated in Hurworth in the evening.
- Leisure; all ages impacted, leading to social disconnection and many unable to access facilities centred in the urban areas.
- Health; inability to have access to town based health services on an evening.
- Education; evening classes at colleges and schools no longer accessible.
- Safety; no safe walking/cycling route to/from town. Concerns over increased pedestrian use of unlit roads at night ( no pavements)
- Sustainability; total reliance on the car (taxi or private) to access town based evening facilities/events.
- Cost; with no alternative public transport, those without access to private transport have no safe option other than taking a taxi. At £8-10 each way per journey, for many this is not an affordable option.

Following is a summary of responses to date highlighting the numbers and manner in which the local communities have been affected by the service cuts.

	Hurworth	Croft	Dinsdale	MSG	Darlington	Total
<b><u>Work</u></b>						
Rockcliffe Hall					15	15
Croft Hotel					4	4
Other					1	1
Work in Darlington	11	3				14
<b><u>Colleges</u></b>						
Getting to or back from College	6					6
QE evening classes	8					8
QE next year	6					6
<b><u>Hurworth School</u></b>						
After School Activities People outside Hurworth			1	1	5	7
Total Isolation			1			1
Early Bus to School					2	2
Wrong time for after school bus					4	4
Visiting Friends	14	1		3	1	19
Parents Work	1					1
General Complaints	4					4
<b><u>Mental Health Issues</u></b>						
Mencap	3					3
<b><u>Senior Citizens</u></b>						
Senior Citizens	14					14
Getting to or back from the Croft Club	16					16
Old People going to Croft Club in the village	3					3
Hospital visits on an evening	22					22
Miscellaneous Issues/complaints	148					148

**Total 296**

Whilst a very significant number of people have obviously been impacted, it is also understandable that the half-hourly service enjoyed previously was not sustainable in the long term. There were simply too few people using each bus on a regular basis.

However it is clear that these cuts have had an impact across our community, young and old.

Whether it results in significant and damaging commuting costs for those in work, access to further education, or leisure, the result has been entirely negative for a significant number of people.

Therefore consideration must be given to re-providing some level of service in the evenings.

## **Possible Future Provision**

### **Commercial Service**

Correspondence to date suggests there is little appetite from commercial operators to run an evening service.

Further consideration could however be given to ascertain whether a limited service could in fact be operated on a profitable basis. If those impacted were able to coordinate their journey times this may be a possibility.

For consideration (but not limited to)

- Hourly service
- Two hourly service
- Limited evenings (not 7 days)
- Smaller vehicles

These could be the basis of wide ranging discussions with bus operators and DBC.

### **Community based option**

Consideration should also be given to a community based local service. It is probable that a mini-bus would offer sufficient accommodation on a day to day basis. Further research into the associated costs and the possibility of grant availability will be required (some on-going) but this may provide the only realistic option.

Hurworth Parish Council wishes to thank all those who contributed information for this report.

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