

Town Hall  
Darlington  
DL1 5QT  
13.02.16

Dear Sir,

Like so many Darlington residents I am outraged at the proposed cuts the borough council says it will have to make.

I fear the devastating cuts will damage the very fabric of our town. The council can't possibly contemplate closing either or both of the libraries nor the covered market in order to fund an apparent shortfall in the theatre restoration fund. A balance must be found to keep the facilities mentioned above open along with the theatre. Maybe the said restoration is a step too far and should be pared down somewhat.

I both use, visit and volunteer at Cockerton branch library on a weekly basis and I am always amazed at how popular and busy it is. The closure would tear the very heart out of the village affecting so many diverse groups ie. young mums, toddlers, school children, the elderly and the unemployed to name but a few.

The council had several opportunities to work with the community in the recent past over the future of Cockerton library but failed to take advantage of them. I was part of the group that tried to engage in conversation with the council and can recall the frustration we felt throughout the discussions. The council seem to lack the understanding of how deep the feelings go over the potential loss of such services.

As a retired teacher I am passionate about literature and children learning to read. Public libraries are one of the last bastions of equal opportunity when it comes to access to literature. I can't comprehend how as a council we can go on about improving literacy levels across the borough but then remove one of the major tools that would allow that to happen for those less able to buy books for themselves.

With regards to the covered market how could we possibly contemplate the town without this iconic building. The Victorian railings were removed but hands off this building. It is at the very heart of the town and needs looking after not ignoring. The market traders are some of the hardest working people I know and deserve better than this. Where else could such long standing businesses go to trade?


Maybe the council should consider moving back into the old Town Hall and save vast sums of money on the current eyesore that is unfit for purpose.

It is my understanding that the council are quick to resort to using consultants when services are found wanting so why not invest some money in finding ways to make more of the market and develop it rather than consider its demise. You found the desire to develop the old bus station site with a so called much needed cinema and unnecessary cafes. So why not invest the same energies into saving more important services for the people of Darlington. A cinema isn't one of them.

Once these services are gone they can never be replaced and the very thought of trying to replicate a library service of sorts from the Dolphin Centre is deplorable.

I would urge the council to respect what so many people in the town want and leave services alone as they benefit so many diverse groups in our society. Surely this is not the time to lose services and further alienate vulnerable pockets of our community.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature. A faint, light-colored scribble or mark is visible to the left and right of the box.

Copies: Mr I.Thompson Assis. Dir.

Mr P.Wildsmith Dir. Neighbour Hood Services

Mr. B. Dixon Council Leader

Complaints & Information Governance Team

File