

## Response to Item 7

County Councillor Weighell's response:

This as you say is the third successive Council meeting that it has been suggested that the PFI project be abandoned in favour of an alternative solution but the answer remains the same.

It has been made clear in previous responses that alternative solutions such as Darlington are not directly comparable. It is easy to claim cheaper solutions exist, but the real costs only emerge through competition where alternatives are compared on a like to like basis. The PFI procurement was just that - a like for like comparison that has delivered the best solution for our needs. It has never been claimed that it was the cheapest solution, but it will help save over £280million over the course of the contract, over a do nothing option it is financially, and most importantly, environmentally sustainable for 25 years. There are simply in my view no grounds to justify examining the PFI contract. And it will I believe shortly become a planning matter and that will examine the environmental impacts of that particular scheme.