

Council Agenda



**6.00 pm Thursday, 16 July 2020
via Microsoft Teams**

In accordance with Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held on a virtual basis. Members of the Public can view a live stream of the meeting at:

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/livemeetings>

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Council held on 30 January, 20 February and 25 June 2020 (Pages 7 - 28)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Order of Sealing Documents
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
 - (a) The Public;
 - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
 - (c) Members to the Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington.
7. Council Reports.
 - (a) Managing Director's Appraisal –
Report of the Assistant Director - Resources
(Pages 29 - 32)
8. Cabinet Reports.
 - (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 33 - 34)

- (b) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 35 - 40)
 - (c) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 41 - 50)
 - (d) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 51 - 56)
 - (e) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 57 - 66)
 - (f) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 67 - 74)
 - (g) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; and (Pages 75 - 82)
 - (h) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 83 - 90)
9. Notice of Motion - To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor C. L. B. Hughes, and seconded by Councillor Ali –

Protecting Children and Young People during the pandemic

‘This Council notes:

1. Today, many children are living in families where parents are newly unemployed and reliant on universal credit. The working age population in Darlington currently claiming Universal Credit (UC) is 6.6% some 4,653 people; nationally it is 4.5%.
2. There were over 3 million new claims for UC since mid-March nationally and more workers are at risk of losing their jobs. The number of people on UC in Darlington has risen by 1,598 within just the past two months. Whilst the government has increased the UC standard allowance, working age benefits are still at their lowest level relative to average wages in several decades
3. There are currently 9,900 furloughed workers in Darlington. Changes to the furlough system and further business collapse and redundancy will inevitably lead to many furloughed workers joining those on UC over the next few months. Furloughed workers have been receiving 80% of their pre-crisis wage but- if they are made redundant- UC will only cover 53% of their previous wage.
4. Before the pandemic, there were estimated to be 8,705 children in Darlington (35%) living in poverty with this number anticipated before the pandemic to increase to 39% by 2020-21. Economists believe that number will be much higher now. Many families where jobs have been lost, where someone has been furloughed or where working hours have been reduced are likely to experience a drop in income, some a significant drop. Rising unemployment more generally risks a higher incidence of indebtedness, destitution and child poverty. Shoring up UC to help avoid increases in child poverty and economic insecurity must now be an urgent priority for government.

Council notes with concern:

5. The impact that the two-child limit is having in Darlington according to the latest national official statistics for the first two years of this policy (to April 2019):--
 - 156,540 households had been affected by the two-child limit, equivalent to 18% of all households claiming tax credit or UC with three or more children,
 - For the families affected, this translates to an average annual loss of approximately £2,780 per child,
 - The majority of those affected were working families (59%), the majority were couples (61%) and the majority had three children (58%),
 - Extrapolating these figures to the beginning of April 2020, before the pandemic and the unprecedented rise in UC claims, it was estimated that 1,200 Darlington families and 3,900 Darlington children were being hit by the two-child limit.
6. That many parents whose hours have been cut as a result of the lockdown and/or social distancing measures can no longer reach the earnings threshold at which they are exempted from the benefit cap for families;
7. The difficulties faced by a small number of families in Darlington who are currently denied recourse to public funds as a result of their immigration status;
8. The families who find themselves in need of UC not receiving their first payment for 5 weeks by which time many have built-up substantial debt;
9. The problems faced by those families just above the UC thresholds who are having difficulty buying food, paying utility bills and meeting many of their family's basic needs.

Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to request-
 - a) The suspension of the two-child limit on Universal Credit and tax credits affecting more than 3,900 children in Darlington,
 - b) The suspension of the benefit cap for all families in light of the fact that many have had their working hours cut during the pandemic,
 - c) The suspension of No Recourse to Public Funds conditions so that all vulnerable individuals are entitled to receive support during the coronavirus crisis,
 - d) That families who find themselves in need of Universal Credit receive

their first payment straightaway rather than going deeper into debt,

- e) A £10 per child weekly uplift in child benefit to help all families meet the additional costs of raising a family during the crisis.
 - (2) Write to the Children's Commissioner enclosing a copy of this resolution to request her continued support for the calls we are making to address child poverty in Darlington.
 - (3) Write to the MP for Darlington and the MP for Sedgefield enclosing a copy of this resolution and requesting support and assistance in securing these urgent actions to protect the welfare of children and young people in the Borough of Darlington.
 - (4) Instruct the Managing Director to commission an on-going Child/Young Person Poverty Needs Assessment to gather key data for policy focus and effective strategic action to meet the Darlington Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022 stated ambitions articulated by Darlington Borough Council and partners (Education Providers, Mental Health/ Health Providers, Police, Businesses, Voluntary Sector, Community Groups, Faith Communities and others) and to provide the first such report to full Council as a matter of urgency.'
10. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 8 July 2020

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, Howarth, Howell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Paul Dalton, Elections Officer, Resources Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays Email: paul.dalton@darlington.gov.uk or Telephone 01325 405805