



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Council Agenda

6.00 pm, Thursday, 28 November 2024

Central Hall, Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington, DL1 5RP

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Council held on 26 September 2024 (Pages 9 - 18)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given):-
 - (a) The Public;
 - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
7. Council Reports.
 - (a) Gambling Act Policy Review – Report of the Chief Executive (Pages 19 - 78)
 - (b) Constitution Update – Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 79 - 108)
 - (c) Review of Political Balance - Changes to Committee Membership – Report of the

Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 109 - 116)

8. Cabinet Reports.

- (a) Council Tax Support - Scheme Approval 2025-26 – Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 117 - 168)
- (b) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 169 - 172)
- (c) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 173 - 178)
- (d) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 179 - 182)
- (e) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 183 - 190)
- (f) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 191 - 196)
- (g) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 197 - 202)
- (h) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; (Pages 203 - 206)
- (i) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; and (Pages 207 - 210)
- (j) Cabinet Urgent Decisions – Report of the Chief Officers Executive (Pages 211 - 214)

9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-

- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 215 - 218)
- (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 219 - 222)
- (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 223 - 226)
- (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 227 - 230)
- (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 231 - 234)

10. Notice of Motion

- (a) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Harker and seconded by Councillor Dulston –

Promoting Civility in Politics

This Council notes:

- a) That over recent years, political discourse in the UK has become increasingly uncivil, between politicians of different parties and between the public and politicians.

- b) There have been instances within the Borough of Darlington, both in meetings and online, where language and social media exchanges have become excessively uncivil.
- c) That in 2020, Darlington Borough Council adopted the United Darlington Charter, proposed by Cllr Harker and seconded by Cllr Mrs. Scott.

This Council believes:

- a) The majority of the public expects local Councillors to engage civilly with one another, in order to work together for the benefit of the whole Borough.
- b) Officers of Darlington Borough Council should be treated with respect in meetings, without fear of personal remarks or inappropriate questioning.
- c) Careless language and personal attacks can have serious consequences, as highlighted by the tragic murders of Sir David Amess and Jo Cox in recent years.
- d) Councillors and the public have the right to challenge policies and decisions in a civil and respectful manner.

That this Council resolves:

- a) To reaffirm the adoption of the United Darlington Charter.
- b) That all Darlington Borough Councillors should adopt the following Civility Pledge, put together by the Jo Cox Foundation, and hold each other accountable to keep it:

“As an elected representative, I pledge to:

1. Use a civil and constructive tone in political debate.
2. Act with integrity, honesty and compassion
3. Behave respectfully towards others, including those I disagree with”

- c) To promote civility in politics amongst Councillors, candidates and the public.

Supporting documents – [United Darlington Charter](#)

- (b) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Dulston and seconded by Councillor Bartch –

Failure to Support Local Businesses Over Christmas

This Council notes:

- a) the critical role small businesses play in sustaining the local economy and the need to commit to policies that prioritise their survival and growth;

- b) that this Labour-controlled Council has failed to consider introducing free parking during the Christmas period, a time when local businesses rely heavily on increased footfall to boost their sales and secure their livelihoods;
- c) that small businesses, already struggling under the national Labour Government's punitive National Insurance tax hikes, are further disadvantaged by this Council's failure to consider alleviating parking costs for potential shoppers;
- d) that other councils across the UK have recognised the importance of supporting their local economies during this festive season by implementing free or reduced parking, making this Council's inaction even more glaring; and
- e) the harmful effects of the Labour Government's National Insurance tax hike.

This Council believes:

- a) that the needs of the community and the businesses that form its backbone, particularly during the festive season when the cost of living crisis and government-imposed financial burdens already weigh heavily on everyone, should not be ignored;
- b) that free parking during the Christmas period would provide a much-needed lifeline to small businesses, encouraging greater footfall and boosting the local economy at a critical time;
- c) that the combination of increased operational costs, higher taxes, and this Council's indifference, places an undue burden on local entrepreneurs, many of whom are on the brink of closure;
- d) that its inaction demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of, or care for, the struggles faced by small business owners and residents in the borough;
- e) that this failure also discourages residents from shopping locally, driving them to online retailers or larger shopping centres with more affordable or subsidised parking options.

Council therefore resolves to:

- a) acknowledge the detrimental impact on local businesses of its failure to consider offering free parking during the Christmas period and agrees to introduce free parking within the Town Centre during the months of December 2024 and January 2025; and
 - b) undertake a marketing campaign promoting the above offer with a view to increasing footfall and boosting the local economy at a critical time.
- (c) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Snedker and seconded by Councillor Henderson –

Ending local government austerity and investing in local public services

This Council notes that:

- a) Government grants to local authorities were cut by 40% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20, from £46.5bn to £28.0bn;
- b) as a result, between 2010 and 2019, more than £30 billion in spending reductions (often termed austerity measures) were made to welfare payments, housing subsidies and social services in the UK;
- c) research shows these austerity measures have contributed to 335,000 excess deaths, resulted in a fall in the UK life expectancy, and culminated in UK workers being £11,000 worse off a year after years of wage stagnation;
- d) at the same time, there has been a huge surge in demand for vital services provided by local authorities, such as adult social care, which takes up about three-quarters of Local Authority budgets. While the cost of delivering these services per capita has seen above inflation cost rises;
- e) spending on social care grew by an average of 2.6% a year in real terms between 2014/15 and 2021/22;
- f) this is less than the 3.4% a year increase in spending that the Health Foundation has calculated will be needed between 2024/25 and 2032/33 to meet future demand. This is equal to £8.3 billion overall;
- g) The National Audit Office has recognised that the pressure on local authority finances “impacts on the funding available for adult social care”;
- h) as a result of decreased funding and increased demand for services, since 2021 six local authorities have declared themselves effectively bankrupt, with many half of all councils warning they may have to do the same in the next five years; and
- i) The Labour Party has not committed to increasing funding for local authorities, leaving the estimated £6bn black hole in council budgets unaddressed.

This Council believes that:

- a) cuts to the government grants provided to local authorities must be reversed by the new government, in order to sufficiently fund growing demand for key services such as adult social care;
- b) without adequate funding, the increased financial pressure from increased demand for these services is likely to have serious negative financial implications for local authorities and Darlington Borough Council; and
- c) as well as increased funding, the UK government and local authorities must commit to improving the working conditions of social workers.

This Council resolves to:

- a) Write to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, and relevant Ministers of State to call for an end to local government austerity, and a significant and substantial investment in local government and public services. This will include a call for a

sustained uplift to local authority funding to cover shortfalls in adult social care, education, homelessness, and other key services. It will also include an ask to provide multi-year funding settlements.

- b) Work with providers, local NHS, and UNISON reps to explore the Ethical Care Charter within the term of current contracts, and report back to this council within six months on the practicalities of adopting stage 1 of the charter by the end of this Municipal Year, and proposals for adopting stages 2 and 3 of the charter.
- c) Ask the government to revive the Fair Funding Review for Adult Social Care, which was put on hold by the Conservative government, for which Darlington Borough Council and its care providers had already done significant preparatory work.

11. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 20 November 2024

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Kane, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Lee, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Renton, Dr. Riley, Robinson, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Wallis and Walters.

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Paul Dalton, Democratic and Elections Officer, Operations 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