



# Council Agenda

6.00 pm, Thursday, 15 May 2025

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 27 March 2025 (Pages 7 - 8)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
  - (a) The Public;
  - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
7. Council Reports.
  - (a) Constitution Update – Report of the Executive Director, Resources and Governance (Pages 9 - 14)
8. Cabinet Reports.
  - (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 15 - 18)

- (b) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 19 - 24)
  - (c) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 25 - 28)
  - (d) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 29 - 36)
  - (e) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 37 - 42)
  - (f) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 43 - 50)
  - (g) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; and (Pages 51 - 54)
  - (h) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 55 - 60)
9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-
- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 61 - 64)
  - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 65 - 66)
  - (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 67 - 72)
  - (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 73 - 76)
  - (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 77 - 80)
10. Notice of Motion
- (a) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor McEwan and seconded by Councillor Mammolotti –

**Nature Restoration Motion**

That this Council notes:

- i) The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Since the Industrial Revolution, we have already lost half of all animals, plants and birds because of intensive agriculture, habitat depletion and climate change.
- ii) Pollination is one of the most important mechanisms in the maintenance and conservation of biodiversity, and in general, life on earth. Bees and other pollinating insects such as the hoverfly are vital in this process. Two thirds of the world's 3000 species of agricultural crops require agents for and are reliant on pollination.
- iii) 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, reducing an important food source for pollinating insects. Estimates suggest it would

cost UK farmers £1.8 billion a year to manually pollinate their crops.

- iv) The State of Nature 2023 report shows that since 1970, UK species populations have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species are now threatened with extinction.
- v) A report published by UN agencies on Climate Change and Biodiversity, states that the destruction of forests and other ecosystems is undermining nature's ability to absorb and store greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is the single biggest driver of global warming. The report concluded that climate change and biodiversity loss should be tackled together.
- vi) Nature is vital for the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink. But nature is in free-fall.
- vii) The covid 19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature. Faced with isolation during this time, being outdoors in nature offered many benefits and served, and continues to serve, as a reminder of the profound consequences to our wellbeing that can result from continued degradation of nature. There are many studies identifying clear links between robust mental health and access to green spaces and nature.
- viii) However, reports provided by the world's governments, as well as other sources of evidence, reveal examples of progress, which, if greatly scaled up, could support the transformative changes necessary to achieve the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.
- ix) The government states that local authorities are perfectly placed to lead by example, working with local communities, landowners and other partners in the development of local plans and strategies which support biodiversity.

That this Council believes:

- i) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society, and it is our duty and responsibility to support a Nature Restoration Plan to work together with the Climate Change Emergency already adopted, since they are inextricably linked.
- ii) Just like climate change, the loss of species and degradation of our natural environment is an existential threat, and the action needed is both urgent and transformative.
- iii) As well as improvements in the innate value people place in biodiversity, tackling its decline can deliver wider benefits to the environment, economy and society.

That this Council resolves:

- i) To declare a Nature Restoration Plan which, together with the Climate Change Emergency, will underpin all the Council's considerations, proposals

and decisions.

- ii) To develop a Nature Restoration Action Plan, informed by consultation with officers, councillors, experts (specifically our Ecologist and Climate Change Officer), community and environmental groups and residents. The Plan should be subject to annual review by the Climate Change and Nature Restoration groups within the council to maintain its efficacy.
- iii) To lead by example by including targeted and site-appropriate measures on council owned land and communal areas and commit to ongoing monitoring to inform further action.
- iv) To effect borough-wide measures which will include, but not be limited to:
  - (a) Ensuring the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our planning policy and development, embedding nature recovery in all strategies, plans, including the Local Plan, and all policy areas.
  - (b) Establishing a Darlington Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Charter and Recognition Scheme, calling on all organisations, businesses, schools, groups and individuals to contribute towards net gain.
  - (c) Designing all new council housing with opportunities for net gain e.g. swift boxes, hedgehog highways (where viable) etc.
  - (d) Identifying how the town's open spaces can create net increases, with community engagement in habitat development, such as flowering meadows for pollinating insects, bee banks and ponds, and wherever possible make better links between areas as recommended in the Lawton Review.
  - (e) Providing a range of public engagement and awareness campaigns to give advice to residents, groups and businesses on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhood, and to work more closely with already established ecological and environmentally engaged groups.
  - (f) Providing training and resources for councillors and council employees about the ecological emergency.
  - (g) Integrating the targets, objectives and outcomes of this Motion, i.e. the Nature Restoration Action Plan, with those outlined in the Climate Change Plan, to ensure measures to tackle climate issues do not contravene the principles of enhancing biodiversity, and wherever possible the Council will invest in nature-based solutions to climate change, to confront the climate and nature emergencies together.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A. Wennington', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Amy Wennington**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Wednesday, 7 May 2025**

**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 Manager, Resources and Governance 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](mailto:paul.dalton@darlington.gov.uk) or Telephone 01325 405805