



# Council Agenda

6.00 pm, Thursday, 26 March 2026  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

**Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.**

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Council held on 29 January 2025 and 19 February 2026 (Pages 9 - 32)
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 of Resources and Governance.  
(Pages 33 - 36)
8. Cabinet Reports.

- (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 37 - 40)
  - (b) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 41 - 46)
  - (c) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 47 - 50)
  - (d) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 51 - 58)
  - (e) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 59 - 66)
  - (f) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 67 - 74)
  - (g) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; and (Pages 75 - 76)
  - (h) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 77 - 82)
9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-
- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 83 - 84)
  - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 85 - 88)
  - (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 89 - 90)
  - (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 91 - 92)
  - (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 93 - 96)
10. Notice of Motions
- (a) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Toms and seconded by Councillor Roche
- Motion for Darlington to become an Inclusive Recovery City (IRC)**
- Preamble**
- a) Addictions to alcohol, illicit and prescribed drugs and gambling exacts a huge social and emotional toll on the people of Darlington;
  - b) Addiction costs lives, destroys families and communities and undermines neighbourhoods and communities;
  - c) People can and do recover although the real rate of recovery (at around 60%) is not widely known or understood;
  - d) What helps people to recover is being a part of social networks that are supportive of recovery change;

- e) Fundamentally, the secret to addiction recovery can be characterised as Jobs, Friends and Houses or ‘somewhere to live, someone to love and something to do’.

The North-East of England has been at the forefront of innovation in addiction recovery and Darlington has the potential to be at the heart of this movement, based on the supports and services that already exist in the town.

Recovery is increasingly recognised as a peer-driven social movement that is most clearly articulated within a public health model based on social contagion where visibility is essential for the effective transmission of recovery.

Across the UK – and increasingly globally – the Inclusive Recovery Cities movement has articulated the following goals:

- a) To increase the visibility of recovery through public-facing events that showcase the talents of the recovery community;
- b) These events also provide opportunities for volunteering for people in recovery and their families;
- c) They are targeted at the general public as an act of citizenship to challenge stigma and exclusion;
- d) Overall, the goal is to increase social cohesion and improve community involvement inspired by people previously stigmatised and marginalised.

Ultimately the aim of this movement is to increase the capacity of individuals and families in recovery to access education, housing and employment and to increase active citizenship and community participation.

**This Council recognises that:**

- a) Supporting addiction recovery is beneficial not only to people in recovery and their families, but to the whole community;
- b) Darlington has strong foundations for social inclusion and to promote addiction recovery as a social movement;
- c) The commitment to social inclusion will improve active citizenship and community participation right across the community;
- d) There is a need for a strategic and coherent approach to coordinating recovery support across the council area and to build a visible recovery community.

**This Council resolves:**

To endorse Darlington as an Inclusive Recovery City by:

- a) Adopting the Mission, Vision and Values;
  - b) Signing the IRC Charter;
  - c) Championing and supporting co-ordinated visible recovery across Darlington;
  - d) Support the public health team to deliver the full implementation of the IRC model in Darlington;
  - e) Play an active role in the evaluation of IRC implementation in Darlington after one year.
- (b) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Dulston and seconded by Councillor Durham

### **Protection and Long-Term Security of Community Green Spaces**

#### **This Council notes that:**

- a) Bellburn Field, the Triangle of Land off Sparrowhall Drive, and Tommy Crooks Park are valued community green spaces that provide significant environmental, recreational, and social benefits to local residents.
- b) These spaces contribute positively to physical and mental wellbeing, biodiversity, and community cohesion.
- c) Local residents have consistently expressed strong support for the preservation, improvement, and long-term protection of these sites.
- d) Once public green spaces are lost to development or sale, they are rarely replaced, leading to permanent harm to local communities.

#### **This Council believes that:**

- a) Publicly owned green spaces should be protected for current and future generations.
- b) Investment in community parks and open land is essential to improving quality of life and supporting healthier, safer neighbourhoods.
- c) Clear guarantees regarding the future of these sites will provide reassurance to residents and strengthen trust in the Council's stewardship of public assets.

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- a) Formally designate Bellburn Field, the Triangle of Land off Sparrowhall Drive, and Tommy Crooks Park as protected community green spaces.

- b) Commit to increased and sustained investment in the maintenance, improvement, and accessibility of these sites.
  - c) Give a clear and binding commitment that Darlington Borough Council will not sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of these pieces of land for development or private ownership.
  - d) Ensure that any future decisions relating to these sites involve meaningful consultation with local residents.
  - e) Request that officers explore appropriate legal or policy mechanisms to secure long-term protection of these spaces within council policy and planning frameworks.
- (c) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Dulston and seconded by Councillor Walker

### **Women's Privacy, Dignity, and Safety Across Darlington**

#### **Preamble:**

The Supreme Court has reaffirmed the legal authority of single-sex spaces under the Equality Act 2010, recognising sex as a biological and an objective fact.

Women - because of their biological sex - face unique vulnerabilities and risks that necessitate protected female-only spaces. This need is not contingent on requiring a certain volume or veracity of requests or complaints. Women's voices have historically been undervalued, ignored and, at times, silenced.

Countless women rely on single-sex provision for their privacy, dignity, personal safety, trauma recovery, and ability to participate fully in public life without distraction or fear.

Council provision and services, such as changing rooms, toilets and care settings, depend on coherent and objective criteria to operate according to best practice, including safeguarding.

#### **This Council recognises that:**

1. Women have the right to safety, dignity, and privacy based on their sex, a right grounded in both law and lived experience.
2. Recognising biological sex is not discriminatory. That women should never be made to apologise for requiring female-only spaces, nor should their legitimate concerns be dismissed as prejudice.
3. All individuals remain protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

**This Council resolves:**

1. To fully implement with immediate effect, the Supreme Court ruling across all Darlington Borough Council buildings, services, policies and commissioned activities, to ensure that the council complies with the law. In preparation, the council will urgently engage legal expertise and establish an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group of councillors, staff, stakeholders and legal expertise.
2. That the EDI Working Group will set a timescale with milestones and objectives to:
  - a) Review all policies to ensure that all provision covers the following:
    - i) the lawful use of single sex services under the Equality Act 2010;
    - ii) that the dignity, privacy, safety and equality of opportunity of women is protected;
    - iii) that all individuals with protected characteristics are treated lawfully, respectfully and fairly; and
    - iv) that staff have clear, workable procedures and impartial, lawful training.
  - b) Provide clear written guidance, for staff, service users, and the public detailing the following:
    - i) how single sex spaces will be managed;
    - ii) the legal basis for any single sex provision;
    - iii) how the safety and dignity of women will be protected;
    - iv) how the council continues to uphold the right of all protected groups; and
    - v) this guidance will be published ensuring transparency, accuracy and legal compliance.
  - c) Ensure all staff and councillors receive training on:
    - i) the legal definition of sex and Equality Act 2010 eg the interaction with the other Protected Characteristics and the Councils' Public Sector Equality Duty;
    - ii) the reality of discrimination and violence faced by women on account of their sex; and
    - iii) the lawful basis for single-sex provision (separate & single sex exceptions).
3. To reaffirm the Council's commitment to women's rights as foundational. Protecting women safety and respecting the rights of others are not mutually exclusive; the Council will continue to uphold both in line with the law and our public sector duties.
4. To support the government's national 'Violence Against Women And Girls

Strategy' and work in partnership towards halving violence against women and girls by 2030 with a focus on prevention and support for survivors through a whole systems approach by the following:

- a) championing women's safety;
  - b) thereby promoting respectful and inclusive public spaces;
  - c) working collaboratively with partners; and
  - d) supporting early intervention and prevention.
5. That any cost implications will be met from existing resources, subject to normal, financial governance processes and clarity of requirements.
6. To act responsibly and lawfully to achieve these aims, ensuring that the dignity, privacy and safety of women is restored and safeguarding the rights of all individuals we serve. We will move forward with clarity, compassion and a firm commitment to equality, ensuring our approach is compliant with the law and informed by best practice.

**Note:** This Council use 'woman', as per the Equality Act 2010, meaning a female of any age.

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



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

**Wednesday, 18 March 2026**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Lee, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Renton, Robinson, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Michael Walker, 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 James McAllister, Democratic Officer, 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: [james.mcallister@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:james.mcallister@darlington.gov.uk) or Telephone 01325 403122