

**Draft**  
**Community**  
**Engagement &**  
**Cohesion**  
**Strategy**  
**2018-2021**

## Introduction to consultation draft

This is the first draft of our new Community Engagement and Cohesion Strategy and we would welcome your views. In developing this Strategy we have aimed to respond to the views expressed last summer through Your Say, Our Future and the recent Voluntary and Community Sector Survey. We have also looked at what works well in Hartlepool and elsewhere and set out to build upon the strong foundations that we already have in place.

An 8 week consultation on this draft will be open until **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017** and there are a number of ways in which you can get involved:

Complete our online survey:

<https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/community-engagement-strategy>

Attend the North and Coastal or South and Central Community Forum on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

Please let us know what you think - we look forward to hearing your views.

Cllr Christopher Akers-Belcher

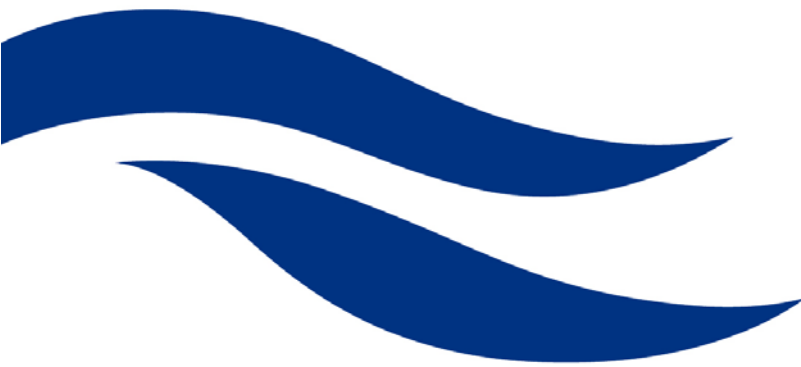
Leader of the Council

Gill Alexander

Chief Executive

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## Introduction

As a Council we appreciate that our society is changing. We live in a time when we have more connected people who are demanding greater participation in shaping the lives of their own communities. We recognise that the Council has a critical role to play in providing strong community leadership which enables our residents to participate in shaping Council priorities, influencing local decisions, designing and transforming services and taking individual or collective action to respond to local priorities.

One of the strengths of Hartlepool is its people and the sense of community that is evident wherever you go in the town. We recognise that one of our key roles as a Council is to harness this community spirit and local pride to improve the Borough and meet local needs. The Council alone cannot do everything that needs to be done to make Hartlepool the best it can be. We recognise that our communities are often better placed to understand what needs to be done in their area and also to put in place their own solutions. We need to join forces with our community and partners to achieve our ambition. As a town we all have a responsibility to look after our community and maximise the limited resources that we have on the right things.

As a Council we want to build upon the success of the Your Say, Our Future programme and roll this approach out across the Council. Our intention is to continue the Council's move towards more collaborative and participatory ways of working where our communities are able to get more involved or lead their own changes. We are keen to ensure that there is an open dialogue between the Council and our communities.

This Community Engagement and Cohesion Strategy sets out how the Council will work to:

- **engage** with our communities so that they can have an active role in shaping the future of our town by influencing local decisions and co-designing services
- **support** our communities to take part and deliver on local priorities by providing them with opportunities to develop their skills, confidence, and local networks
- **strengthen** the bonds between our communities, improve tolerance and understanding and reduce tensions

The following pages summarise what we will do, how we will do it and also how we will know if we have been successful. The final part of the strategy is our action plan which will identify what specific actions we will take in order to ensure the delivery of this strategy.

We will regularly monitor progress against the action plan and the identified measures of success and feed back to both elected members and our communities.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION STRATEGY 2018 – 2021

<b>OUR VISION</b>	<b>HARTLEPOOL HAS A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT WHERE PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS GET ALONG AND WORK TOGETHER TO INFLUENCE LOCAL DECISIONS, RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS AND ENSURE THAT THE TOWN IS A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE PLACE TO LIVE.</b>		
<b>OUR PRIORITIES</b>	<b>WE WILL INVOLVE AND LISTEN TO OUR COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>WE WILL SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION</b>	<b>WE WILL BUILD STRONG AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>WHAT WILL WE DO?</b>	<p><b>Working with our communities we will...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and maintain good relationships and work to rebuild trust in those relationships that might have broken down.</li> <li>• Listen and respond to our communities focussing on developing solutions together.</li> <li>• Involve our communities at an early stage so that they can influence local decisions and help design services that meet local needs.</li> <li>• Work to understand our communities and their needs better.</li> <li>• Promote better communication between us ensuring that we have a two-way conversation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working with our communities we will...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen individual, organisational and community capacity.</li> <li>• Build and strengthen opportunities for people to come together in their communities.</li> <li>• Build and develop the existing strengths within communities giving them the opportunities and support needed to develop.</li> <li>• Develop the skills, confidence and understanding of our communities so that they can tackle issues on their own or with our advice and support.</li> <li>• Support communities to take part and deliver improvements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working with our communities we will...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen understanding and relationships to ensure that people from different backgrounds get on well together.</li> <li>• Promote better understanding between communities.</li> <li>• Celebrate and value diversity.</li> <li>• Tackle negative behaviour.</li> <li>• Reduce tensions and promote community confidence and tolerance.</li> </ul>
<b>HOW WILL WE DO IT?</b>	<p><b>Our approach will include...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Your Say, Our Future</b> – we will hold a programme of roundtable events across the town and invite our communities to come along and discuss issues of town-wide importance.</li> <li>• <b>Community Forums (North and Coastal and South and Central)</b> – we will continue to develop our two Community Forums as focal points for local consultation on the provision of Council services and neighbourhood issues.</li> <li>• <b>Hartlepool Online Panel</b> – we will work to develop the online panel to promote our consultations to our community and we will improve our online presence through social media and the Council’s website.</li> <li>• <b>Community Hubs</b> – these will provide face to face access to the Council across the town and will be the base for key consultation activities and outreach into our most vulnerable communities.</li> <li>• <b>Consultation Groups</b> – we will focus on reaching out to our communities through existing groups and channels and establish and strengthen relationships to ensure that dialogue is two-way.</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> – we will provide our elected members and staff training to improve and develop their communication and engagement skills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our approach will include...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Hubs</b> – One the roles of Community Hubs will be to develop and foster links with local community groups and provide space for communities to come together.</li> <li>• <b>Infrastructure support</b> – we will develop a new model for providing support to the voluntary and community sector.</li> <li>• <b>Building community capacity and promoting social action</b> – supporting and promoting opportunities for local people to contribute to their local community. We will work with local organisations, ‘friends of’ groups, volunteers and individuals and support them to come together to help improve their lives and their communities through social action.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our approach will include...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hartlepool in Unity</b> – a programme of positive activities supported by our Cohesion Officers. This will include events bringing people from different backgrounds together.</li> <li>• <b>Better promotion of our Third Party Reporting Centres</b> – to provide safe spaces for the reporting of hate crime so that negative behaviour can be addressed and tackled.</li> <li>• <b>Victim Services Officer</b> – providing support to those who do come forward to report hate crime.</li> <li>• <b>Hartlepool Community Safety Team</b> – development of a joint team involving the Council, Police and Fire Service who will work together to build safer communities. Focusing on vulnerable communities the team will intervene early to prevent problems from getting worse.</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> – we will develop equality and diversity training.</li> <li>• <b>Promotion</b> – we will promote key events and awareness days for equality and diversity and be a welcoming town for new arrivals.</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?</b>	<p><b>We will know we’re succeeding if...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area.</li> <li>• More people attend our Your Say, Our Future events.</li> <li>• More people sign up to the Hartlepool Online Panel.</li> <li>• More people are turning out to vote at local elections.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will know we’re succeeding if...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people are using the Community Hubs.</li> <li>• We have a strong and active voluntary and community sector.</li> <li>• More people are satisfied with their local area.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We will know we’re succeeding if...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people agree that people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together.</li> <li>• More people feel that they belong to their local area.</li> <li>• More people feel part of the local community.</li> <li>• There are more reported incidents of hate crime because people have the confidence to report it.</li> <li>• There are fewer repeat victims of hate crime.</li> </ul>

**Action Plan** – this will be completed following the 8 week consultation but some examples of what might be included are set out below:

### Engage

What?	Who?	When?
Agree the annual programme for Your Say, Our Future roundtable events	Performance & Partnerships Manager	April 2018
Review the Council's approach to public involvement and participation	Performance & Partnerships Manager	July 2018

### Develop

What?	Who?	When?
Review the new model for providing support to the voluntary and community sector	Community Safety & Engagement Manager	October 2018

### Strengthen

What?	Who?	When?
Agree the annual Hartlepool in Unity programme of activity	Community Safety & Engagement Manager	May 2018
Undertake a promotion campaign against hate crime and promoting the Third Party Reporting Centres	PR Manager	June 2018

**For further information about the draft  
Community Engagement and Cohesion  
Strategy please contact Clare Clark or  
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