

Community Engagement & Cohesion Strategy 2018-2021

Final draft for consultation

Introduction to final consultation draft

Consultation on the first draft of the Community Engagement and Cohesion Strategy took place between 22nd September and 17th November 2017. The views expressed during that consultation have been considered and this is the revised final draft.

A 2 week consultation on this draft will be open until **Friday 26th January 2018** and you can tell us your views by completing our online survey:

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

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



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 Borough. We recognise that one of our key roles as a Council is to work to support and encourage 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 Borough 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. We recognise that our role is to help develop a supportive environment where local people who want to get involved in improving their local area are able to do so.

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 Hartlepool 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 and work to develop an environment where they can make change happen for themselves.

- **strengthen** the bonds between our communities, improve tolerance and understanding and reduce tensions.

The following pages summarise what we see as our role and sets out our commitment to it. We want to be clear about 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 identifies the 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

OUR VISION	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 BOROUGH IS A FRIENDLY, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE PLACE TO LIVE.		
OUR PRIORITIES	WE WILL INVOLVE AND LISTEN TO OUR COMMUNITIES	WE WILL SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION	WE WILL BUILD STRONG AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES
WHAT WILL WE DO?	<p>Working with our communities we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain good relationships and work to build trust in those relationships. • Listen and respond to our communities focussing on developing solutions together. • Involve our communities at an early stage so that they can influence local decisions and help design services that meet local needs. • Work to understand our communities and their needs better. • Promote better communication ensuing that we have a two-way conversation. 	<p>Working with our communities we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen individual, organisational and community capacity. • Build and strengthen opportunities for people to come together in their communities. • Build and develop the existing strengths within communities giving them the opportunities and support needed to develop. • Develop the skills, confidence and understanding of our communities so that they can tackle issues on their own or with our advice and support. • Support communities to take part and deliver improvements. 	<p>Working with our communities we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen understanding and relationships to ensure that people from all different backgrounds get on well together. • Promote better understanding between communities. • Celebrate and value diversity. • Tackle negative behaviour. • Reduce tensions and promote community confidence and tolerance.
HOW WILL WE DO IT?	<p>Our approach will include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Say, Our Future – 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. • Community Forums (North and Coastal and South and Central) – we will continue to develop our two Community Forums as focal points for local consultation on the provision of Council services and neighbourhood issues. • Hartlepool Online Panel – 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. • Community Hubs including the Centre for Independent Living – 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. • Consultation Groups – 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. This will include our Youth Council. • Training – we will provide our elected members and staff training to improve and develop their communication and engagement skills. 	<p>Our approach will include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hubs including the Centre for Independent Living – 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. • Infrastructure support – we will develop a new model for providing support to the voluntary and community sector encouraging communication and collaboration within the sector. • Building community capacity and promoting social action – supporting and promoting opportunities for local people to contribute to their local community. We will work with local organisations, local resource and community centres, ‘friends of’ groups, volunteers and individuals and support them to come together to help improve their lives and their communities through social action. 	<p>Our approach will include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hartlepool in Unity – a programme of positive activities supported by our Cohesion Officers. This will include events bringing people from different backgrounds together. • Better promotion of our Third Party Reporting Centres – to provide safe spaces for the reporting of hate crime so that negative behaviour can be addressed and tackled. • Victim Services Officer – providing support to those who do come forward to report hate crime. • Hartlepool Community Safety Team – 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. • Training – we will develop equality and diversity training. • Promotion – we will promote key events and awareness days for equality and diversity and be a welcoming town for new arrivals. • Commitment to the Tees Valley of Sanctuary – welcoming and providing support to refugees and those seeking sanctuary in the area.
WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	<p>We will know we’re succeeding if...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area. • More people attend our Your Say, Our Future events. • More people sign up to the Hartlepool Online Panel. • More young people are involved in the Youth Council. • More people are turning out to vote at local elections. 	<p>We will know we’re succeeding if...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people are using the Community Hubs. • We have a strong and active voluntary and community sector. • More people are satisfied with their local area. 	<p>We will know we’re succeeding if...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people agree that people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. • More people feel that they belong to their local area. • More people feel part of the local community. • There are more reported incidents of hate crime because people have the confidence to report it. • There are fewer repeat victims of hate crime.

Action Plan

We will involve and listen to our communities

What?	Who?	When?
Agree the annual programme for Your Say, Our Future events.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	April 2018
Develop a regular newsletter to provide feedback on Council consultations undertaken through the Hartlepool Online Panel.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	April 2018
Update map of local groups including Resident's Associations and 'Friend's of' and agree communication approach.	Community Safety and Engagement Manager	April 2018
Widen participation in the Youth Council and strengthen links with other youth groups and school councils.	Development Manager	April 2018
Develop training opportunities for staff and elected members to develop community engagement and communication skills.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	May 2018
Undertake a promotional campaign to encourage membership of the Hartlepool Online Panel.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	June 2018
Review the Council's approach to public involvement and participation.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	July 2018

We will support community action

What?	Who?	When?
Develop a proposal for a staff volunteering scheme for the Council.	Performance and Partnerships Manager	April 2018
Promote opportunities for training such as that available for Community Organisers.	Community Safety and Engagement Manager	May 2018

New model for voluntary and community sector infrastructure support to be presented to Finance & Policy Committee for consideration.	Community Safety and Engagement Manager	March 2018
New model for voluntary and community sector infrastructure support to be implemented.	Economic Regeneration Manager	July 2018
Review the new model for providing support to the voluntary and community sector.	Economic Regeneration Manager	October 2019
Review the Community Hubs model.	Director of Public Health	July 2019

We will build strong and inclusive communities

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



For further information on the final draft of the Community Engagement and Cohesion Strategy please contact Clare Clark or Catherine Grimwood

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