

Consultation Draft

Council Plan

2020/21 – 2022/23



**SHAPING OUR FUTURE
THE NEXT THREE YEARS**



Shaping our Council Plan

In 2016 we held a town-wide conversation called “Your Say, Our Future” and what we were told then informed our Council Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20. Three years on we have reflected on what we have achieved and asked our residents, employees and partners to help shape our Council Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23.

In autumn 2019 our residents, employees and partners told us what they thought was going well in Hartlepool and what they loved about the town. They also identified what they felt needed to improve and how the Council, our residents and partners could work together to make a difference.

We have also reviewed a range of key statistics for the town to understand where Hartlepool is in relation to the national and regional picture and this has helped us to identify our strategic needs.

Building on what we have already achieved, what the statistics are telling us and by listening to what our residents, employees and partners have told us we have developed our strategic priorities for the next three years.

We recognise that it is important that we are clear about what we intend to do and by when and that is the purpose of this Council Plan. The following pages set out the clear plans and commitments we have made under each strategic priority.

Our Vision

The Council vision launched in 2016 set us on a journey to make Hartlepool a vibrant, welcoming and inspiring place to live, visit, work, invest and grow up in.

Since embarking on this journey we have achieved well against the significant ambitions we set for ourselves. However, there is still much more to do and taking account of where we are, we have refreshed our approach and propose eight strategic priorities for the next three years.

Our Strategic Priorities

- 1 Growing a diverse economy by supporting businesses, increasing jobs, attracting inward investment and improving skills and aspirations.
- 2 Creating a clean, green, and safe Hartlepool by protecting our environment and improving our neighbourhoods.
- 3 Create an attractive and connected Hartlepool by attracting investment to improve key buildings, derelict land and our transport network.
- 4 Developing a healthy Hartlepool by working with our communities to improve the health and wellbeing of our people.
- 5 Building better beginnings and better futures for our children and young people.
- 6 Improving outcomes for adults with health and social care needs and their carers.
- 7 Building and improving homes that people want to live in.
- 8 Shaping a well-led, safe, high performing and efficient council that is fit for the 21st Century.

1	Growing a diverse economy by supporting businesses, increasing jobs, attracting inward investment and improving skills and aspirations.
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Growing our economy remains a priority for the town and as a Council we have a key role to play in supporting this to happen. Over the last three years we have worked hard to provide the space and opportunity for businesses to flourish in the town through our development of the Innovation and Skills Quarter (ISQ) in and around Church Street, encouragement of new business start-ups and building on the success of the Queens Meadow Enterprise Zone. We secured £3m of external funding to transform the former General Post Office building in Whitby Street into the Bis a new centre for business start-ups in the creative industry sector.

Our new business registration rate, which followed the national trend by reducing in 2018/19, is in line with our near neighbours but remains well below the national average at 43 per 10,000 population aged 16 and over. Supporting new businesses in the town to develop and grow will be key priority for the Council. A key priority in the previous Council Plan was to increase business and jobs and encourage our young people to come back when they've been away to university and following our recent consultation we understand that this remains important to the people of the town.

Creating high value jobs remains a strategic priority for Hartlepool. Our overall employment rate is well below the national average at 64.1% compared to 75.6% nationally (Quarter 2, 2019/20) and our youth unemployment rate is 11.2% (Quarter 1, 2019/20). We will continue to support our residents and young people to ensure that they have the skills and qualifications that they need to move into sustained employment.

We have focussed on improving the town's offer as a tourism destination through our partnership with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the development of an annual events programme including the Waterfront Festival and developing facilities in Seaton Carew including the splash pad and crazy golf. The total number of visitors to the town increased by 6.4% to 3.66 million in 2017/18 and visitor numbers at the National Museum of the Royal Navy alone were up almost 40% in August 2019 compared to the same time the previous year. Holding events and promoting Hartlepool as a place to come and visit remains important to people in the town and many identified that the increasing range of activities, events and things to do were things that were going well and that they loved about Hartlepool.

We recognise that the nature of people's shopping habits are changing and that as a result we need to look at how we can secure the future of our town centre. We also

understand that people are concerned about empty shops and a poor retail offer in the town centre. We will work with local businesses and residents to develop a town centre investment plan and will take action to rejuvenate it funded in part from central government.

What success will look like:

- Increased jobs and growth in the local economy.
- Increased number of inward investment projects.
- Business growth.
- Strengthened reputation of Hartlepool as a place to invest particularly in the energy, advanced manufacturing and creative and cultural sectors.
- A skilled workforce.
- Reduction in the jobless figures.
- Increased visitor numbers in our tourist industry.
- Increased public sector expenditure in the local economy.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Promote Hartlepool as an excellent location for inward investment particularly in the energy, advanced manufacturing and creative and cultural sectors.
- Deliver a strategy for reshaping and developing our town centre as a safe and exciting place to shop, live, visit and work.
- Provide secure, effective support and investment to enable new and emerging businesses to be sustained and to thrive.
- Establish a fast track system for planning consents and other regulatory permissions.
- Increase the number of businesses who can benefit from high quality business and incubator space.
- Increase the availability of intermediate and higher level skills pathways in key sectors in partnership with local further and higher education providers.
- Deliver a partnership approach to increasing employment and skill development programmes which provide pathways for adults into employment.
- Market the culture and tourism offer within the town regionally and nationally which highlights our unique maritime history and assets.
- Deliver a first class events and festivals programme that attracts visitors from across the region and country.
- Deliver improvements to key cultural venues in the town including the Borough Hall, Town Hall Theatre, Headland Bandstand and Christchurch Art Gallery.
- Work with our partners to increase the level of public sector expenditure in the local economy.

2	Creating a clean, green, and safe Hartlepool by protecting our environment and improving our neighbourhoods.
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Our residents have told us that they want Hartlepool to be a place that is clean, green and where they feel safe. Over 95% told us that having a clean and attractive environment remains a priority. Living by the sea and being surrounded by green open spaces are things that people love about Hartlepool and our communities recognise the need to protect our environment for future generations. Over the last three years we have focused on improving our parks and open spaces and supporting residents to reduce litter across the town. Our wildflower schemes are highly regarded and we have expanded this into new areas. We have invested £4m in neighbourhood and highway improvements. Schemes we have delivered include King Owsy shopping parade, improvements to local and strategic cycleways, improved play facilities provided at the Town Moor, Burn Valley Gardens and Ward Jackson Park and a new play facility at Coronation Drive.

The overall crime rate has increased in recent years to 131.7 per 1,000 population in 2018/19, which remains well above the national average and we understand why crime and anti-social behaviour remain concerns for people in the town. Through the last Council Plan we launched a new integrated Hartlepool Community Safety Team bringing together our community safety staff with those from the Police and Fire Brigade to coordinate efforts to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. This new Team has held a series of days of action across the town in response to information received from residents and businesses. These have resulted in the closure of properties used for drug dealing and the seizure of drugs and cash. Several hundred victims of crime and anti-social behaviour have also been supported by the Victim Care and Advice Services Officer in the Team. We understand that more needs to be done and we are committed to reviewing our approach and working in partnership with other agencies and our residents to ensure that our communities feel protected and safe.

We know that our residents continue to identify litter as a problem in the town. Through the Council Plan consultation exercise residents told us that we need to take more enforcement action and improve our recycling education and offer. However, people also told us that the sense of community and people pulling together to make the town better was something that was going well in Hartlepool and examples included beach cleans and the Big Town Tidy Up.

What success will look like:

- People have access to quality public space, green space and playspaces.
- Strong neighbourhood retail offer.

- Reduction in littering, fly tipping and dog fouling.
- Communities are protected and feel safe.
- Reduced landfill and increased levels of recycling.
- Reduced carbon footprint.

What will we do to make this happen:

- Strengthen our approach to enforcement action on litter, dog fouling and illegal car parking.
- Deliver a play sites investment programme.
- Invest in our neighbourhoods and strengthen the local retail offer.
- Deliver a joined up and targeted response to tackling anti-social behaviour and improving community safety.
- Take action to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and mitigate the impact of climate change locally.

3	Create an attractive and connected Hartlepool by attracting investment to improve key buildings, derelict land and our transport network.
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In order to make Hartlepool an attractive place for new businesses to invest, for people to want to come and live here and to support the development of our town as a tourist destination we need to invest in the infrastructure of our town. We have worked hard to deliver regeneration schemes across the town and brought £10.5m of external funding into the town that would have gone elsewhere. The improvements at Seaton Carew and Church Street and our partnership work with the Northern School of Art were all given through recent consultation as examples of what was going well in Hartlepool. We have also secured £42m of external funding that will be delivered over the next 5 years on priorities identified within this Council Plan.

We know that people love the history and heritage of Hartlepool and the facilities that we have to bring people into the town including the National Museum of the Royal Navy and Christchurch Art Gallery. We will develop the key sites around these facilities to ensure that Hartlepool develops its reputation as a tourism destination.

We appreciate that people are concerned about the impact empty buildings have on their local neighbourhoods and we are committed to reducing the number of derelict buildings across the town and make the best use of all of the land we have available, particularly those sites that have been left abandoned for many years.

We understand that we need to improve our transport network to provide better strategic links for businesses and developers and to ensure that our residents are better connected to jobs and local services.

What success will look like:

- Reduction in derelict buildings and land.
- Improved connectivity across the town.
- Residents better connected to jobs, local services and neighbourhoods.
- Better strategic links for businesses and developers.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Develop the Waterfront and National Museum and Royal Navy site as a visitor attraction of national significance.
- Complete the renovation of Church Street and Church Square including improvements to shop fronts, Shades and the Christchurch Art Gallery.
- Deliver a new TV and film production studio in partnership with the Northern School of Art.

- Invest in our transport and the local road network including the Elwick bypass.
- Renovate Stranton Chapel and deliver improvements to Stranton Cemetery.
- Take effective enforcement action in relation to derelict buildings and land.
- Work with the Combined Authority to improve public sector transport and footpaths and cycleways.

4

Developing a healthy Hartlepool by working with our communities to improve the health and wellbeing of our people.

Improving the health and wellbeing of residents in the town is a key priority for the Council, our partners and indeed residents themselves. In our recent consultation people identified the need to improve the overall health of the population through preventative work and that they were concerned about drug issues across the town.

Over the next three years we will focus on reducing levels of smoking, halting the year on year increase in obesity, reducing the levels of substance misuse, reducing frailty and reducing violence and the impact that this has on our community. National statistics show that 18.6% of people in Hartlepool currently smoke, more than 4% above the national average. We also know that over 10% in Reception year in Hartlepool were recorded as obese in 2018/19 which is just above the national average. However the level of children recorded as obese in Year 6 increased to 26.86% which is significantly higher than the national average and the highest in the North East. Both of these have implications for the future health and wellbeing of our residents.

Through the last Council Plan we launched three Community Hubs which brought together a range of services for local people under one roof. People have told us that Community Hubs are one of the things that they feel are going well in Hartlepool. Over the next three years Community Hubs will have a key role to play in providing people with access to advice about health improvement so that they are able to make better, more informed choices that will help them to live longer, healthier lives.

Our sports and leisure facilities are another way in which we can support people to live healthier lives. We understand that developing recreational and leisure activities and facilities remains a priority for people. However, we recognise that some of our facilities are in need of updating and are committed through this plan to develop 21st century sport and leisure facilities that meet the needs of local people.

What success will look like:

- 21st century sport and leisure facilities that meet the needs of local people.
- People of Hartlepool are enabled to make better choices that promote their physical and mental health.
- Reduced levels of smoking, particularly in pregnancy.
- The level of increase in obesity will be arrested.
- Reduction in levels of substance misuse and drug and alcohol related hospital admissions and deaths.
- Reduced levels of violence including Domestic Violence.

- Reduced frailty in the population.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Build modern 21st century sport and leisure facilities.
- Increase the Community Hub offer to ensure that people can access information, advice and support and be signposted to services that benefit their wellbeing.
- Deliver programmes that support people with long term conditions including Cardio Vascular disease, cancer, muscular skeletal conditions, neurophysiological conditions and diabetes to improve their wellbeing and be more physically active.
- Provide a new clinically integrated drugs and alcohol service with a greater emphasis on prevention and developing strong links with primary and secondary care.
- Deliver a multi-agency programme of targeted initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in our most deprived neighbourhoods and wards with highest levels of need.
- Deliver a multiagency approach to obesity across Hartlepool linking council, health and third sector partners.
- Develop a standardised approach to provide stop smoking services using a community based approach with partners across Hartlepool.
- Work with General Practice to increase the uptake of screening and health checks to reduce late presentation.
- Implement a public health approach to reducing violent crime.

5**Building better beginnings and better futures for our children and young people.**

As a Council we remain committed to ensuring that our children and young people have the best start in life. We understand that the people of the town feel that our education provision is one of the things that is going well in Hartlepool and also that access to the best education and learning opportunities remains a priority for them. Most of our schools are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted and our primary schools achieved excellent KS2 results which were above the national average. We recognise that there is work to be done to improve outcomes for our children at secondary school and beyond to Higher Education and advanced apprenticeship pathways and this will be a key focus for the next three years.

Over the last few years we have faced increasing demands for services from families that are struggling to provide their children with a healthy and safe childhood. The number of children that are looked after by the Council has increased significantly and this is due, in part, to issues of domestic violence and substance misuse within families. Since 2009 the rate of looked after children in Hartlepool has increased by 103% compared to a national average increase of just 20% and we have the 4th highest increase in the North East. Child and family poverty in Hartlepool is high with 34.1% of children living in poverty in 2017/18 and we have also seen the impact of being an early adopter area for Universal Credit on families in the town. We are proud that our children's services have been consistently good and that we have been rated outstanding by Ofsted for our work with children in care and care leavers. We were also named the Local Government Chronicle's Children's Services of the Year in 2019. However, we will work to build resilience and support in families and communities for our vulnerable children and to develop the understanding of all frontline professionals so that they can provide the best response to those who have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).

The emotional and mental health and wellbeing of Hartlepool children is also a key priority for the town. We will build upon what we have initiated in the last three years and look to work more closely with partners to take this important area of work forward.

What success will look like:

- Fewer children will experience harm through abuse, neglect and adverse childhood experiences.
- All children benefit from good development and learning in their critical first three years.
- Children's attainment at key stages 1 – 5 is at or above national average.

- More Hartlepool young people are entering Higher Education and advanced apprenticeship pathways.
- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families have their needs met in a timely way that improves outcomes.
- All schools and education providers are judged good or outstanding.
- Barriers to learning are removed for the most vulnerable children and young people.
- Children and young people have good mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Establish a Community Support Team to develop a new model of practice aimed at reducing the need for children to become looked after.
- Provide early support to families and communities to build resilience to support vulnerable children at an early stage.
- Provide workforce development to all front line professionals so that they have a good understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences and can respond appropriately.
- Implement a Borough wide approach to improving early language skills in the first 1001 days.
- Establish an Education Improvement Board to encourage schools to collaborate and improve education outcomes for children and young people in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Deliver initiatives in partnership with schools to ensure 14 and 19 year olds achieve the best education outcomes possible and can progress to higher skills pathways and Higher Education.
- Provide effective challenge and support to schools to ensure they achieve good inspection outcomes.
- Develop and deliver a new model to support school transitions to improve pupil readiness for learning.
- Deliver an improvement plan for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families to ensure they have their needs met in a timely way that improves outcomes.
- Improve education provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Work with partners to develop and implement a strategy and whole system approach to improving the emotional and mental health and well being of Hartlepool children.
- Improve the alternative education and cultural offer at CECA and remove barriers that prevent schools from accessing this resource.

- Work with health visitors and school nurses to support children identified as obese or overweight and to promote breast feeding.
- Deliver 'Fill the Holiday Gap' schemes to promote health eating and cooking skills.

6**Improving outcomes for adults with health and social care needs and their carers.**

Improving health and social care services in the town have been a key focus for the Council in the last 3 years. Working with partners we have developed an award-winning Integrated Hospital Discharge Team which has focussed on ensuring people experience a safe and timely discharge following a hospital stay. The work of this Team has reduced delayed transfers of care from an average of 452 days per month in 2016/17 to 114 days per months over the first 4 months of 2019/20. We have also worked with local care home providers to encourage the development of new care facilities and to improve availability of places which has brought about a 23.5% reduction in the number of older people in care home placements outside of the town since 2016. The quality of the provision in Hartlepool has also improved and the number of adult social care providers rated as good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) reached 87.9% at the end of 2018/19 from just 56.3% at the end of 2016/17.

Over 97% of people in the recent Council Plan consultation identified that having excellent local health and care services and support remains an important priority for them. We recognise that whilst services have improved we have a growing elderly population and that there are concerns from our residents about the health offer in Hartlepool particularly in relation to hospital and mental health services.

What success will look like:

- People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated.
- Adults with care needs are supported to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Services are accessible and responsive, and people only have to tell their story once.
- The role and contribution of carers is recognised and valued.
- Services that are commissioned to support adults with care needs are rated good or better by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

What we will do to make this happen:

- Provide advice, guidance and support to people to link them into their communities and reduce social isolation.
- Strengthen support for carers and ensure a range of options are available to help them continue in their caring role, including information, advice and peer support.

- Work with strategic partners, carers and people who receive care and support to reduce the stigma associated with the term 'mental health' and increase understanding of what is good mental health.
- Support adult care providers to continually improve which ensures that vulnerable adults are getting the best possible care.
- Develop services at the Centre for Independent Living (CIL) to incorporate a Community Hub offer, as well as supporting adults with disabilities to live more independent lives.
- Deliver integrated services with health partners that reduce preventable admissions to hospital and care homes and support people to return home and regain independence following a hospital stay.

7**Building and improving homes that people want to live in.**

In 2016 people told us that housing was a key priority for the future of our town. They identified the need to build starter homes and affordable homes. They felt that we needed to work to improve and promote the range of housing to attract people to live here and that we also needed to reduce the number of empty homes. We have worked to deliver on this priority and Hartlepool has had the fastest housing growth in the Tees Valley over the period 2014/15 to 2019/20, up 11.46% compared to an average of 9.62%. This growth is providing additional recurring Council Tax income of £4.24m in 2019/20. We now have 293 Council houses available for social rent and we have delivered new social housing units including over 90 empty homes brought back into use.

We have worked in partnership with Thirteen Group to deliver new social housing in the Raby Estate and with Placefirst to deliver the Carr and Hopps Street regeneration scheme, “The Green”, which won three awards at the Sunday Times British Home Awards for Development of the Year (under £10m), Development Transformation of the Year and the Judges’ Award for Excellence.

Improving housing provision particularly focusing on private landlords, homelessness support and more social / affordable housing were identified as areas that needed to improve in recent consultation. We also recognise that increasing the number of Council houses and the development of student accommodation in the town centre are important priorities for the future.

What success will look like:

- More high value homes to support economic growth.
- More Council houses.
- More purpose built homes for vulnerable adults.
- Better accommodation to meet the needs of the growing student population in the town.
- More affordable homes.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Working with private sector housebuilders and registered providers to grow the housing stock in Hartlepool.
- Work in partnership with private sector housebuilders and registered providers to increase the number of affordable homes.
- Increase the number of Council houses in Hartlepool by designing, building and acquiring our own houses.

- Adopt a multi-agency approach in the Oxford Road area to tackle issues of crime, anti-social behaviour, street cleansing, building maintenance and vacant properties.
- Take effective action to tackle poor housing standards and anti-social behaviour in private sector housing.

8

Shaping a well-led, safe, high performing and efficient council that is fit for the 21st Century.

In order to deliver on our ambitious plans for Hartlepool we need to be a well-led, safe, high performing and efficient council that is fit for the 21st Century. The funding that we receive from Central Government has reduced year on year since 2010/11 and the burden of paying for local services is being pushed to Council Tax raised locally. In 2019/20 we received approximately £20m less from Central Government than in 2013/14, a reduction of about 45%. We have managed this reduction by making efficiencies whilst trying to limit the impact on our frontline services. Services have been redesigned and we have worked in partnership with other council's and partners from the public and voluntary and community sectors to make our activities more efficient. Over the last 3 years we have focussed on developing online access to our services, a priority from the 2016 Your Say, Our Future consultation. This has made many of our services accessible at times more convenient for our residents.

We recognise that there is more that we can do to protect our services from future reductions. Through this Council Plan we will review our estate and look to reduce the number of Council offices we have across the town and also to ensure that those that we keep allow access to services in an integrated and accessible way whilst being more energy efficient. Being more energy efficient will also lead to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

We will look to increase the Council's traded services and increase our income streams. We have delivered award winning schemes for other councils as well as within Hartlepool and we will build upon that success.

Our employees across the Council play a vital role in ensuring that services are delivered. It is the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of our employees that has enabled us to continue to deliver excellent services during a period of austerity and uncertainty. Demand for our services is increasing at the same time as our budget is reducing and our employees face challenges every day to make this work so that our residents receive the support that they need. We will work over the next 3 years to ensure that our employees have the skills, resilience and motivation to achieve high standards of public service in a safe working environment.

Through recent consultation people told us that the #LoveHartlepool campaign was something that they felt was going well but that we needed to celebrate what we do more. We recognise that there is still work to be done to promote the positive things that are happening in Hartlepool and to tell our story regionally and nationally. We are committed to providing effective communication to our residents and to work with

partners to promote Hartlepool as a vibrant, welcoming and inspiring place to live, work, invest and grow up in.

What success will look like:

- Reduced number of Council offices.
- Improved energy efficiency in Council office accommodation and reduce the Council's carbon footprint.
- Expansion of Council traded services and increase income streams.
- Increased voter engagement in the democratic process.
- Better awareness and participation of citizens in community life.
- A healthy and motivated workforce who are given the opportunity to grow the skills they need to achieve their best.
- Improved public satisfaction with the range of Council services that can be managed online.
- Improved positive coverage of the town on a local, national and international basis.

What we will do to make this happen:

- Undertake a strategic review of the Council's property and accommodation to ensure that services can be delivered in an integrated and accessible way.
- Undertake a strategic review of all fees and charges across the Council to ensure that they are fair, affordable and maximise income for the Council.
- Undertake an energy efficiency audit of all Council buildings and introduce improvement measures.
- Deliver development opportunities to ensure that our staff have the skills, resilience and motivation to achieve high standards of public service in a safe working environment.
- Provide effective communication to our residents and work with partners to promote Hartlepool regionally and nationally as a vibrant, welcoming and inspiring place to live, work, invest and grow up in.

How will we know if we are succeeding?

In order to understand whether we are on track to achieve our strategic priorities we have identified what success will look like and what we will do to make it happen (our key deliverables). We will monitor progress on these key deliverables throughout the lifetime of the plan and we will report to elected members through Finance and Policy Committee every six months. We will also produce annual reports for our residents that will set out what we have achieved during each year of the plan.