



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Audit and Governance Committee

Agenda

Tuesday 23 June 2026

Time: 10.00am

Location: Council Chamber

Members: Audit and Governance Committee

Councillors Anderson, Bailey-Fleet, Dunbar (VC), Hall, B Harrison, Hughes, Jorgeson (C), Little and Storey

Standards Co-opted Independent Members: - Mr Martin Slimings and David Whitmore

Standards Co-opted Parish Council Representatives: Parish Councillor Kane Forrester (Wynyard) and Parish Councillor Patricia Andrews (Headland)

Local Police Representative

1. Apologies for absence

2. To receive any declarations by members

3. Minutes

3.1. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2026.

4. Audit Items

4.1. None.

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

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5. Standards Items

5.1. None

6. Statutory Scrutiny items

6.1. Introduction to Scrutiny – *Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager*

6.2. *Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme 2025/27 – Healthwatch Development Officer*

6.3. *Scrutiny Work Programme 2026-27 - Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager*

6.4. *Dedicated Scrutiny Budget - Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager*

Crime and Disorder issues

6.5 None.

Health scrutiny issues

6.6 None

7. Other items

7.1. *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) – Quarter 1 update - Director of Legal, Governance and HR*

8. Minutes from recent meetings for receipt by the committee

- 8.1 Health and Wellbeing Board – None
- 8.2 Finance and Policy Committee relating to Public Health issues – None
- 8.3 Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee – None
- 8.4 Safer Hartlepool Partnership – 16 Jan 2026
- 8.5 Tees Valley Area Integrated Care Partnership – None
- 8.6 Regional Health Scrutiny – None
- 8.7 Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Health Scrutiny Committee - None

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9. Any other confidential items which the chair considers urgent

For information

Dates of future meetings -

Tuesday 14th July 2026

Tuesday 22nd September 2026

Tuesday 13th October 2026

Tuesday 3rd November 2026

Tuesday 1st December 2026

Tuesday 26th January 2027

Tuesday 9th March 2027

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Audit and Governance Committee Minutes 17 March 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: 5pm

Location: Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Rob Darby (VC) (In the Chair)

Councillors: Moss Boddy, Gerard Hall, Brenda Harrison, Philip Holbrook, Michael Jorgeson.

Standards Co-opted members:

Martin Slimings – Independent Member
David Whitmore - Independent Member

Standard Co-Opted Parish Council Representatives:

Parish Councillor Kane Forrester (Wynyard)

Also present: Councillor Christopher Wallace

Leanne McCrindle, Associate Director of Quality Governance,
Compliance and Quality Data, Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS
Foundation Trust (TEWV)
Chris Morton, Lived Experience Care Group Director, TEWV

Officers: James Magog, Director of Finance, IT and Digital
Noel Adamson, Head of Audit and Governance
Sarah Scarr, Head of Service (Heritage and Open Spaces)
Joan Stevens, Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Gemma Jones, Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer

73. Change in Committee Membership

The Chair highlighted the following change in membership of the committee:–

Councillor Harrison replaced Councillor Roy.

74. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Fiona Cook, Corinne Male and Shane Moore.

75. Declarations of Interest

None.

76. Minutes

Minutes from 24th February 2026 – agreed.

77. Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 Update – *Head of Audit and Governance*

Members of the Committee were provided with an update in relation to the progress made to date in completing the internal audit plan for 2025/26. The Committee's attention was drawn to the Employee Protection/Violence Register (EPR) item that was listed as having 'limited' assurance levels.

The reasons for this assessment were outlined within the report, along with the actions that needed to be taken to mitigate the risks identified. The Head of Audit and Governance proposed that the Assistant Director for this service area be invited to a future meeting. This would be to update the Committee on the progress made in mitigating the risks identified and implementing the actions agreed.

Members were also provided with an update on the Museums Collection management, as agreed during the December 2025 meeting of this committee. This audit was assessed as limited assurance due to the lack of a fully documented inventory and safe and secure locations for collections on display or in storage.

In the discussion that followed the Head Of Service (Heritage and Open Spaces) was able to provide an update on the progress made to date. It was confirmed that whilst they could not be specific regarding how much of the work had been catalogued, significant progress had been made in this area. Officers and volunteers had worked through items in the museum and art store to catalogue the work and assess the condition of each piece.

A Member queried why a significant piece of artwork owned by the council, by English artist Lowry, was not permanently on display. The Head of Service

confirmed that artwork is displayed on a rolling programme, driven by exhibitions and themes of display.

Reflecting on this a Member echoed the importance of this piece, they highlighted the need to inform when it was on display to ensure residents in the town would be given the opportunity to see it. It was also accepted that space for artwork was limited and that there were other very talented artists.

Moving to the EPR audit item assessed as limited assurance, it was confirmed that, following the audit, the management of the register had been identified as a risk. Comprehensive actions had been agreed to mitigate that risk.

A Member highlighted that the safety of staff was very important and asked if there had been communication with staff on this issue. Whilst not being able to comment on individual cases, the Head of Audit and Governance reiterated that the Assistant Director for this service area could attend a future committee meeting to provide an update on this. This would include an update on the monitoring of agreed actions and the progress made in mitigating these risks. Assurance was provided to the Committee that these risks would be addressed.

Recommended

- i) It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report.
- ii) That the relevant Assistant Directors provide an update to the Committee at a future meeting in relation to progress made in implementing the actions agreed.

78. Internal Audit Charter, Strategy and Plan 2026/27 – Head of Audit and Governance

The Head of Audit and Governance was in attendance to seek approval of the Internal Audit Charter, and the Internal Audit Strategy and annual operational Internal Audit Plan 2026/27, as detailed in the report.

It was highlighted that the Internal Audit Plan is produced to ensure all relevant risk areas are covered. This is developed following a rigorous process, involving discussions with Executive Leadership Team, to ensure a comprehensive plan and delivered in line with available resources. The importance of providing this information to the Committee was emphasised.

A Member requested more information on the auditable area of workforce strategy. It was confirmed that this area has been identified as a key control in relation to corporate risk. For this reason, it was included in the audit plan in order to provide members of the committee assurance that it operates effectively.

A discussion was held regarding the audit of schools. It was confirmed that this did not extend to academies and only Hartlepool local authority-maintained

schools were included in this plan. Changes to Special Educational Needs legislation was also discussed.

Recommended

It is recommended that Members:

- i) Review and approve Internal Audits Charter and Strategy.
- ii) Review and approve the 2026/27 Internal Audit Plan and note the Internal Audit budget for 2026/27 of £229,976.

79. Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust – Quality Account and Quality Priorities Progress - Associate Director of Quality Governance, Compliance and Quality Data

Representatives from TEWV were in attendance to provide the committee with the progress made to date for the Trusts Quality Account and Quality Account priorities. A presentation was provided that highlighted all NHS providers have a statutory duty to develop and publish an annual quality account by 30 June each year. The Committee was invited to consider and comment on the quality accounts.

Members were reminded of the quality account priorities, as detailed below and informed that each priority would be carried forward each year for a period of 3 years. This would be to ensure sustained and continued improvement in delivering high quality care.

Quality Account Priority 1 - Patient Experience – promoting education using lived experience

It was highlighted that this priority focused on improving accessibility of services and early intervention. By use of the recovery college and feedback from patients, a cycle of learning will be established. Other aspects were strategic carer involvement, clear mapping of existing carer-related activity and strengthening assurance through strategic dialogue.

Quality Account Priority 2 - Patient Safety – relapse prevention

This involves timely and proactive access to support for patients who experience relapse in order to minimise harm. Further areas in progress to support this delivery were co-producing training resources and animations, quality assurance and improvement programmes and co-creation board discussions.

Quality Account Priority 3 – Clinical Effectiveness - improving personalisation in Urgent Care

This priority relates to improving the effective use of ‘my story once’ approach and includes linking with community transformation work and aims to improve

patient experience when accessing urgent care services. Activity under this priority has focused on targeted workforce development including training for urgent care teams. Other aspects were digital prompts within electronic records and culture of care sessions for medical staff and delivery to leadership.

An assurance review for each priority had been completed with all priorities deemed to be *reasonable*. Representatives noted there was more work to be done to measure the impact of each priority, but that action was taking place in providing consistent personalised care.

In the discussion that followed a Member commented on the improvements made by the Trust and referred to the GMC training survey where TEWV had ranked 17th in the UK for training by junior doctors.

A Member expressed they were pleased to see that those with lived experience were involved in this work. They queried if there was representation from all groups and participation from those residing in Hartlepool. Assurance was given that there was good representation from the region and core groups included BAME communities, children and young people and those accessing forensic services. It was however, acknowledged that more work was needed in terms of involving children and young people.

Referring to Healthwatch, it was noted that they play a vital role in this process and whilst the future of Healthwatch was uncertain other avenues were being explored to carry on this work. The involvement of independent groups was welcomed by TEWV.

Representatives were thanked for their attendance and presentation.

Recommended

- i) The Committee should consider and comment on the update on performance and the priorities for quality improvement.
- ii) That a statement of assurance be prepared and submitted to the Trust, with final approval delegated to the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair.

80. Armed Forces Veterans: GP support and signposting – draft final report – *Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer*

The Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer presented the draft final report for the investigation into *Armed Forces Veterans: GP support and signposting*. It was explained that the report formalised the evidence that had been presented to Members over the course of the investigation. The report included –

- terms of reference for the investigation
- background to the armed forces covenant
- data for veterans both at a regional and national level

- challenges for veterans in accessing health care
- how GP's can support veterans
- the consultation and engagement process
- evidence from partners

Conclusions from the investigation were noted in the report. Proposed recommendations were tabled during the meeting for Members to discuss and consider.

In the discussion that followed Members commented on the proposed recommendations. A Member recognised that despite the engagement not being as far reaching as hoped, some real value had come from the survey responses.

Referring to the evidence presented it was discussed that some veterans may attend the GP practice for support with non-health related issues as they may be unsure of where to attend for support. It was hoped that the potential of a valour centre opening in the town would help with this. As well as the education of all GP staff on further sources of information and support.

It was clarified that the 11 GP Practices contacted about the survey in the town covered multiple branch locations. It was confirmed that the survey had been advertised via the Armed Forces Liaison Group and other charitable organisations. A request was made to add percentages to the veteran data within contained in the report. It was advised that, this amendment along with others received, would be made to the draft report.

The Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager highlighted it was positive that 100% of GP practices had signed up to the voluntary Veteran Friendly GP accreditation scheme.

Proposed recommendations had included increasing opportunities for those with lived experience, encouraging GP practices to become Armed Forces Covenant signatories and writing to the Armed Forces Minister. It was noted that proposed recommendations should be focussed, achievable and balanced and be monitored over a period of time.

A Member commented that more work needed to be done regarding the education of veterans in where to access support and the management of expectations, whilst facing no disadvantage in accessing services. It was also emphasised that more work was needed in addressing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager requested that delegation be given to officers in conjunction with Chair/Vice Chair of the committee to include comments from Members and other stakeholders in the final report.

Recommended

- i) That Members identify recommendations to be included in the final report.
- ii) Considers approval of the report for submission to Adult Services and Public Health Committee; and
- ii) Identifies any additional views or comments it would like to be brought to the attention of the Adult Services and Public Health Committee, during consideration of the report's conclusions / recommendations.

81. Scrutiny investigations – progress report – *Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer*

The Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer, in line with committee procedure, provided an update on previous scrutiny investigations.

Within the report was up-to-date action plans showing progress to date for:-

- Child and Family Poverty investigation
- Accessibility of Council Services investigation

In terms of the Child and Family Poverty investigation, Members noted the majority of actions were marked complete, one was deemed not feasible and two were noted as being in progress. In relation to the actions in progress Members noted that:-

- Action 6 was in progress as local data sets are made available, as and when required, to the poverty action group.
- Action 10 – progress had been made in terms of reviewing council tax letters and including advice agency contact details within them. Social media campaigns were also launched around where to seek advice and support for debt issues.
- Action 12 – could now be marked as complete.

In terms of Accessibility of Council Services investigation, the majority were noted as complete and 2 remained in progress. The items in progress both related to social media campaigns focussing on what the council does to make things more accessible and where people can access further support.

In the discussion that followed a Member welcomed advice support agency details being added to council tax letters to further support residents that need help. It was noted that Members requested that an update on the recommendations for both investigations be provided at a future meeting.

Recommended

That Members: -

- i) Note the progress against the agreed recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee and explore further where appropriate.
- ii) Consider if any investigations can be closed.
- iii) Retain appendix A and B for future reference.

82. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) – Quarter 4 update - *Director of Legal, Governance and HR*

The Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer provided the Committee with an update in relation to powers under RIPA to conduct authorised covert surveillance. It was noted that in the Quarter to date of this meeting there had been 0 RIPA authorisations relating to directed surveillance.

Recommended

- i) That Members note the quarterly report.

83. Minutes from recent meetings for receipt by the Committee

Noted.

84. Any other business which the Chairman considers urgent

The Chair highlighted that this was the last meeting of the current municipal year and took the opportunity to thank all Members of the Committee, officers and representatives from partner organisations for their input and support during the year.

The meeting concluded at: 6.20pm.

CHAIRMAN



Audit and Governance Committee

23 June 2026

Report of: Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

Subject: INTRODUCTION TO SCRUTINY

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:

with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.

2. Purpose of Report

2.1 To provide an overview of the role and functions of the Audit and Governance Committee in fulfilling its statutory scrutiny responsibilities.

3. Background

3.1 Within the Council's Constitution, responsibility for the authority's statutory scrutiny functions is delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee. These statutory scrutiny functions relate to the areas of health and crime and disorder.

Statutory Health Scrutiny

3.2 In fulfilling the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council has a statutory responsibility to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services at both local and regional levels. In doing this, local authorities not only look at themselves (i.e. in relation to public health), but also at all health service providers and any other factors that affect people's health.

3.3 The Audit and Governance Committee will review / scrutinise and make reports with recommendations to the Council (and / or Finance and Corporate Affairs Committee where appropriate), a 'responsible person' (that being relevant NHS body or health service provider) and other relevant agencies about possible improvements in service in the following areas:-

(i) health issues identified by, or of concern to, the local population;

- (ii) proposed substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in the local authority area (except where a decision has been taken because of a risk to safety or welfare of patients or staff);
- (iii) the impact of interventions on the health of local inhabitants;
- (iv) an overview of delivery against key national and local targets, particularly those which improve the public's health;
- (v) the development of integrated strategies for health improvement; and
- (vi) The accessibility of services that impact on the health of local people to all parts of the local community.

Additional Responsibilities:

- (i) Recommend to Council that a request for the call in of a proposed significant variation of service be submitted to the Secretary of State where there are concerns over insufficient consultation on major changes to services; and
- (ii) Participate in, and develop, joint arrangements with neighbouring authorities the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (including the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee and Northeast Joint Health Scrutiny Committee).

- 3.4 Health Scrutiny Regulations enable the Committee to request the attendance of 'a responsible person' to answer questions. The responsible person is under a duty to comply with these requests.

A responsible person - NHS body or relevant health service provider.

NHS bodies – All NHS Trusts including acute or hospital trusts, mental health and learning disability trusts, ambulance trusts and care trusts.

Relevant service providers - Private, independent or third sector providers delivering services under contract to the NHS or to the local authority.

Statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

- 3.5 In fulfilling the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council has a statutory responsibility to establish a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership. This function is fulfilled through the Audit and Governance Committee, which has responsibility for:-

- (i) Scrutiny of the work of the partners (insofar as their activities relate to the partnership itself);
- (ii) The review or scrutiny of decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge, by responsible authorities, of their crime and disorder functions (in this context responsible authorities means the Council, the Police, the Fire Authority and the Health Bodies) and make reports or recommendations to the Council or the appropriate Policy

Committee with regard to the discharge of those functions. Key areas for review or scrutiny being:

- Policy development – including in-depth reviews;
- Contribution to the development of strategies;
- Holding to account at formal hearings; and
- Performance management.

(iii) Making reports and recommendations to the Council or to the appropriate Policy Committee on any local crime and disorder matter (as defined by section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006) which has been referred to it by a Member of the Council as a Councillor Call for Action.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Audit and Governance Committee is requested to note the report.

5. Background Papers

5.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

6. Contact Officers

Joan Stevens

Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01429 284142

Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk



Audit and Governance Committee

23 June 2026

Report of: Healthwatch Hartlepool
Subject: HEALTHWATCH HARTLEPOOL WORK PROGRAMME 2025/27

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
Where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. Purpose of Report

2.1. To update the Audit and Governance Committee of the content and delivery of the Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme 2025/27 (appendix A).

3. Background

3.1. Healthwatch Hartlepool is the independent consumer champion for patients and users of health and social care services in Hartlepool. To support our work we have appointed a member led Steering Group, which enables us to evaluate information collated through our communication and engagement activity and identify Work Programme priorities for future years. This will ultimately positively influence health and care services within the borough. Further information related to the work of Healthwatch Hartlepool can be viewed via - www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk.

4. Proposals

4.1. The purpose of the Work Programme is to set out the activities, priorities and outcomes expected from Healthwatch Hartlepool between 2025 and 2027.

4.2. Presentation of the Work Programme will update members of the Audit and Governance Committee as to content, progress made and future priorities.

5. Other Considerations/Implications

Risk Implications	There are no risks associated with this report.
Financial Considerations	There are no financial considerations associated with this report.
Subsidy Control	Not applicable.
Legal Considerations	Healthwatch Hartlepool was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and all activities are carried out within defined legislative parameters.
Single Impact Assessment	Healthwatch Hartlepool aims to be accessible to all sections of the community, we listen with compassion, value every voice and work to include those who are often left out.
Staff Considerations	There are no staffing considerations associated with this report.
Asset Management Considerations	There are no asset management considerations associated with this report.
Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations	There are no environmental, sustainability and climate change considerations associated with this report.
Consultation	As outlined in the report, the Healthwatch Work Programme is a result of our ongoing communication and engagement with local communities in Hartlepool

6. Recommendations

6.1. That the Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme 2025/27 and associated updates are noted.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1. To enable members to scrutinise and monitor the Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme 2025/27 .

9. Contact Officers

Christopher Akers-Belcher – Healthwatch Hartlepool CEO
Healthwatch Hartlepool
Greenbank
Waldon Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7QS
Tel – 0800 254 5552
Email – Christopher@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk



Work Programme 2025/27

Healthwatch Hartlepool is the independent consumer champion for patients and users of Health & Social Care services in Hartlepool. To monitor the robust delivery and support our work we have an appointed Volunteer Steering Group (VSG), which enables us to feed information collated through our communication & engagement plan to form our strategic vision. Our work is intended to inform the future shape of contracted and commissioned Health & Care services within the Borough of Hartlepool and the wider Integrated Care System. Further information relating to the work of Healthwatch can be viewed via our website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

The purpose of this work programme is to set out the activities, priorities and outcomes expected from Healthwatch Hartlepool in 2025 and 2026. This will be delivered in accordance with our Governance Framework, through a range of meetings & associated task & finish groups, public meetings and our service specification. This work will build upon progress made during recent years.

Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the requirements set out in the legislation mean Healthwatch Hartlepool will be expected to:

- Obtain the views of the wider community about their needs for and experience of local health and social care services and make those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social care services.
- Promote and support the involvement of a diverse range of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services through membership of local residents and service users.

- Make reports and recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Provide information to the public about accessing health and social care services together with choice in relation to aspects of those services.
- Represent the views of the whole community, patients and service users on the Health & Wellbeing Board, Health Scrutiny via the Council's Audit & Governance Committee Integrated Care Partnership (Place) Hartlepool.
- Make the views and experiences of the broad range of people and communities known to Healthwatch England helping it to carry out its role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with recommendations, if for example urgent action were required by the CQC).

Healthwatch Hartlepool is for adults, children and young people living in or accessing health and/or social care services in the Borough of Hartlepool. Healthwatch Hartlepool aims to be accessible to all sections of the community. The Healthwatch VSG will review performance against the work programme on a quarterly basis and report progress to our membership through the monthly newsletter and an Annual Report. The full Healthwatch Hartlepool work programme will be available from www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Our work is underpinned by our Healthwatch values:

Equity

We listen with compassion, value every voice, and work to include those who are often left out. We build strong relationships and support people to shape the services they use.

Empowerment

We create a safe and inclusive space where people feel respected,

supported, and confident to speak up and shape the changes that matter to them.

Collaboration

We work openly and honestly with others, inside and outside our organisations, to share learning, build trust, and make a bigger difference together.

Independence

We stand up for what matters to the public. We work alongside decision-makers but stay true to our role as an independent, trusted voice.

Truth

We act with honesty and integrity. We speak up when things need to change and make sure those in power hear the truth, even when it's hard to hear.

Impact

We focus on making a real difference in people's lives. We're ambitious, accountable, and committed to helping others take responsibility to make change happen.

Please note Appendix (1) details the key principles we shall follow when delivering the Healthwatch Hartlepool work programme:

Theme	Objective	Time frame
Primary Care	CVD – Continue to work with Hartlepool’s ICB Place sub-committee, Public Health and other stakeholders to raise awareness of Cardiovascular Disease. Follow up on the research from Teesside University re healthy heart checks and the level of take-up rates. Healthwatch Hartlepool would like to help host an event to promote self-help & care in the centre of Hartlepool.	October 2025 to October 2026
Acute Care	LD Annual Health checks – Healthwatch Hartlepool are working with the North East & North Cumbria ICB, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust, Hartlepool Borough Council and Inclusion North. to examine the patient pathways involved in Annual Health checks for those living with a Learning Disability and/or Autism. This piece of work is being will examine the communications strategy around appointments, access and associated Health Plans. It is very much hoped this piece of work in Hartlepool can be a pilot within the Tees Valley and feed into the	July 2026

	<p>work of the ICB more broadly. The work will initially commence to better understand the people who did not achieve an annual health check for 25/26 and seek improvements for the benefit of all within the cohort to be offered an annual health check.</p>	
<p>ICS</p>	<p>Our focus for this coming year will initially be based around supporting the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Boards’s (ICB) Primary Care Access Recovery Plan. Essentially, we are continuing our research of 25/26 when we were one of 14 Healthwatch having engagement events and surveys to promote greater community awareness of Extended Access, the NHS APP and Pharmacy First. Healthwatch Hartlepool have new literature, and a banner co-produced with the ICB that is utilised as part of our Communication and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>Secondly, we shall be carrying out further engagement based on the publication of the NHS 10-year plan and the Dr Penny Dash review. Working with the ICB we will undertake further engagement</p>	<p>April 2026 onwards</p>

	<p>around delivery of the plan whilst examining those areas within the plan that we can influence with regards to improving population health.</p> <p>Thirdly we shall be looking at the Patient Transport service in conjunction with the North East Ambulance Service. Over 6000 surveys have been sent out across the region for those accessing the service and Healthwatch Hartlepool is assisting the whole region to support these surveys. Our work is also being complemented by a engagement events at North Tees Hospital and a number of 1 to 1 interviews with actual current users of the service.</p>	
<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Continue to work with the Health & Wellbeing services in Hartlepool in closely monitoring the impact of ongoing reconfiguration of TEWV Community Based Mental Health services to ensure patient care and experience is maintained and improved.</p> <p>Celebrate World Mental Health Day with all our partners & stakeholders.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 26</p>

Appendix A

<p>Enter & View</p>	<p>To complement our Cardiovascular work, we shall be undertaking further planned visits to Hartlepool Hospital and community settings, responsible for cardio-rehabilitation. This will be in addition to our already conducted visits to the University Hospital Tees and the University Hospital of South Tees to examine cardiovascular patient pathways and transfers of care.</p> <p>Other Enter & View visits will be based around Primary Care & Modern General Practice with a focus on access and improvements in line with our support of the ICB’s Primary Care Action Recovery Plan. These will cover actual G.P. practice locations.</p>	<p>November 25 onwards.</p>
<p>Health & Wellbeing Events conditions</p>	<p>Organise and face to face seminars focusing on member led priorities.</p> <p>We will work with the University Hospitals Tees to promote greater public understanding of their horizontal integration across all sites.</p> <p>We will agree 2 additional events jointly with the Hospital Trust and</p>	<p>May 2026</p> <p>January/March 2026</p>

	ICB with a focus on such topics as Optometry, ‘Fit for the Future’ (NHS 10 year plan) & Mens Health.	
Strategic	Continue to recruit, develop and support Healthwatch members with a view to having a broader cross section of the population represented.	Ongoing
Strategic	Review our work with Healthwatch England on an update of our agreed Quality Standard Framework in line with our service specification – We shall focus on quality/impact and update our data sharing procedures	Ongoing
Strategic	<p>Represent and contribute to strategic decision making across the borough. Examples of such:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICB • Health & Wellbeing Board • Audit & Governance (Health Scrutiny) • Adult Services & Public Health Policy Committee • North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust • North–East Ambulance Service • The Health & Wellbeing Alliance • Tees–wide Adults Safeguarding Board 	Ongoing

Enter & View	Continue to review and develop member training & development requirements around their Enter and View role and activity in line with the national guidelines. Include dementia training.	Ongoing
Training & Development	Develop, implement and deliver a robust and meaningful Induction Programme for new Healthwatch members & volunteers.	Ongoing
Communication & Engagement	Three Big Questions Plan on a Page Our previous home care investigation highlighted the lack of enthusiasm for completing long surveys and the need for punchier, more focused research methodology to capture people's interest and attention. The Three Big Questions approach would allow us to engage in a focused way with different audiences, and would be based around discussion rather than structured survey. It would generate valuable insight of current patient/service user experience in a thematic way, which can be fed back to commissioners, service providers and influence future Healthwatch workplan priorities. Suggested Questions	

	<p>1) What is working well? 2) What needs to change or improve? 3) Your ideas about how this can happen?</p> <p>The questions can be adapted or reframed, depending on the issue, but should follow the underlying objective.</p> <p>Proposal – 4 Month Process The process can be completed from start to finish in 4 months –</p> <p>Month one</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the issue and develop the scope. • Identify who we want to speak to using intelligence from the local Healthwatch Network, Hartlepool Community Trust, Partner Organizations etc. • Contact and arrange to meet. • Promotion via Healthwatch and partner social media <p>Month two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting the evidence • Meeting with identified groups, organisations, and individuals • Organize a specific event/s • Online survey <p>Month three</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of findings, produce a short report and present to VSG. <p>Month four Publish and promote findings – community, ICB, HWB Board, Commissioners, HW E and regional network, provider organisations, etc.</p>	
<p>Communication & Engagement</p>	<p>Deliver a comprehensive schedule of activity which will focus on the support of Modern General Practice and the engagement activity with seldom heard and/or Digitally Excluded and hard to reach groups including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with every Pharmacy across the Borough • Understanding stakeholders in the community • Mapping outreach • Collating patient stories • Effective outreach promoting Extended Access, the NHS App and Pharmacy First • Analysis and reporting • Peoples First Advocacy service • Promote & participate in Community hubs • Annual General Meeting 	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Communication & Engagement</p>	<p>Promote the work of Healthwatch with the wider community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the use of social media to enhance engagement hard to reach groups including children and young people • Monthly ‘Digital’ newsletters • Press releases • Input into and promotion of all Foundation Trusts’ Communications Strategies • Healthwatch Annual report 	<p>Ongoing</p>
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Clear - We will be clear about what activities we are carrying out. For example, we will be honest about whether we are informing, consulting, involving or co-producing.

Identify the need - We will be clear about the need to engage the community by:

- a. Being clear about the identified need or knowledge gap
- b. Involving the community at the earliest stage in the process
- c. Identify and justify the target audience
- d. Produce a clear project plan with deadlines including details of when results and actions will be available.

Consider other options/information -

- a. Where possible, look to coordinate consultation
- b. Identify if there has been recent research –sharing results
- c. Sharing common intelligence
- d. Forward planning-where possible linking consultation to the business planning cycle

Consistent - We are committed to involving citizens in all aspects of our work. These principles apply to the way we involve and consult across the board, including the way that we involve our own staff in decisions that affect their working lives.

Accountable - We will make sure that we feed citizen's views into decisions, policies and service developments and we will demonstrate and communicate what has changed as a result of public involvement.

Purposeful - We will only carry out engagement when there is a clear purpose. For example:

- a. Stakeholders themselves want to be involved
- b. The policy or strategy will have a direct impact on stakeholders' lives
- c. We have identified a gap in our knowledge
- d. There is a statutory requirement

Honest - when involving and consulting we will be honest about:

- a. What we are doing
- b. Why we are doing it
- c. What level of commitment we are asking from participants
- d. Be clear about individual responsibilities (that is both those asking and those responding)
- e. Only consult on what is achievable
- f. How we will use our findings
- g. How this feeds into our decision-making process
- h. How we will feed back

Open - We will make sure that our full meetings are held in public and that stakeholders can easily access the records of our meetings. We will also increase the opportunities for stakeholders to be involved.

Accessible - We will make sure that engagement is accessible by:

- a. Using plain English in any documents we publish
- b. Using the right methods of engagement for the right audiences
- c. Actively promoting materials in a range of formats, for example on tape, in Braille or in large print

- d. Using venues that are easy to get to and held at times and place that are appropriate to the participants.

Inclusive - We will be inclusive by:

- a. Making extra efforts to involve people whose views have been underrepresented in the past
- b. Making sure that people are not excluded from engagement processes through circumstances. This might mean providing crèches or carer support, hearing loop systems, language signers and holding meetings at appropriate times and in appropriate venues
- c. Making sure that no participants are out-of-pocket for taking part in involvement activities
- d. Ensuring consultees have the necessary information to participate effectively
- e. Enabling people to participate through building their capacity or by providing advocacy arrangements
- f. Communicating using plain English, avoiding jargon and abbreviations
- g. Making sure the consultation is widely communicated to the target audience
- h. Making sure information is available on request in large print or other formats (e.g. audio tape) and in both paper and electronic formats

Flexible - We will endeavour to provide a flexible approach by:

- a. Making sure that we allow enough time and space so that participants can contribute
- b. Where we have time constraints, making this clear and explaining the reasons why
- c. Making sure, where possible, to involve stakeholders at the earliest stages in the planning of services and projects rather than simply consulting them about pre-determined options
- d. Giving people the chance to get involved in ways that suit them best by offering a range of ways they can respond
- e. Making sure, with reason everyone who wants to take part can do so
- f. Giving people enough time to take part
- g. Working within the VCS Compact when involving voluntary and community groups
- h. Undertake robust research that can stand up to scrutiny

Safe - We will make sure that participants are safe and their views respected by:

- a. Making sure that we consider the needs of vulnerable participants
- b. Respecting what participants tell us in confidence
- c. Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998
- d. Recognising our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Efficient - We will co-ordinate and link our community engagement activities where appropriate to help avoid duplication of effort, time and resources. We will take an active part in regional and countrywide activities and networks intended to achieve cost effectiveness.

Supported - We will make sure that elected members and staff undertaking public involvement activities are properly supported resourced and trained.

Evaluated - We will make sure that we build evaluation and monitoring into our consultation planning so that there is a way of measuring whether the outcomes have impacted on policy and strategy development.

Shared - We will make the results of engagement available to participants, partners and wherever possible, the general public and other key stakeholders.

Improved - We will learn lessons from our own activities and those conducted elsewhere so that we share, promote and publicise good practice and innovation in engagement



Audit and Governance Committee

23 June 2026

Report of: Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2026-27

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:

where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. Purpose of Report

2.1. To -

- i) Outline the process for the selection of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme; and
- ii) Identify potential topics for investigation as part of the 2026/27 Statutory Scrutiny Work Programme.
- iii) Agree topics for further consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 14 July 2026. The Committee at that time to formally agree its 2026/27 work programme.

3. Background

3.1 The Council's Audit and Governance Committee has responsibility for two areas of statutory scrutiny:

- i) Health. Matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services at a local and regional level; and
- ii) Crime and Disorder. Activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, as the local authority's Crime and Disorder Committee.

3.2 In order to fulfil these responsibilities, the Audit and Governance Committee establish an annual work programme that includes:

- i) Potential proactive investigations;
- ii) Policy Framework Items, as detailed below.

BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS	TIMETABLE FOR CONSIDERATION
Youth Justice Strategic Plan	July 2026
Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027	Not for consideration in 2026/27

- iii) Reactive issues of local concern that arise during the year with the potential for bespoke ‘one off’ meetings; and
- iv) Mandatory topics (e.g. substantial variations / changes in service provision).

3.3 Whilst items ii) to iv) are either prescribed or reactive (as and when required), the identification of proactive investigations is at the discretion of the Committee. Consideration of potential proactive topics is sought today.

4. Process for Identification and Selection of Work Programme Topics

4.1 In considering the development of the Committee’s work programme, topic suggestions have been sought from a range of sources:

- i) Hartlepool Borough Council Directors and Elected Members;
- ii) Partner organisations (including Cleveland Police and the Integrated Care Board);
- iii) The membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safer Hartlepool Partnership;
- iv) Parish Councils;
- v) Healthwatch; and
- vi) The Voluntary and Community Sector (e.g. Lets Connect).

4.2 Members are today asked to explore the potential identification of topics for proactive investigations and as part of the process it is important that the Committee focuses its proactive resources and time on issues of interest to the residents of Hartlepool, where it can have influence and add value. In doing this, Members are reminded of the need:

- i) For topics to fall within the remit of the Committee (as detailed in para 3.1).

- ii) To give due regard to the need to retain capacity to respond to reactive issues, such as service change, as and when they may arise during the course of the year. Also, to consider the resources (Member and Committee time) available after consideration of the items already scheduled for consideration. **Appendix A** provides a schedule of these items, as at the time of production of this report.
- iii) Take into consideration that the following topics have already been investigated by the Committee:
 - Armed Forces Veterans: GP Support and Signposting
 - Retail Crime
 - Derelict Land and Buildings
 - Child and Family Poverty
 - Accessibility of Council Services
 - Anti-Social Behaviour in Hartlepool
 - High Quality Maternity Services and Elective Surgery at the University Hospital of Hartlepool Site
 - Access To Transport for People with a Disability
 - Hate Crime in Hartlepool
 - Dementia: Early Diagnosis
 - Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

4.3 In considering potential topics, the Committee may wish to also consider:

- i) Utilisation of the PICK scoring matrix as a useful tool. Details of which are provided in **Appendix B**.
- ii) Documents that may be useful in identifying areas for development or where specific performance is of concern:
 - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (**Appendix C**)
 - Community Safety Plan Hartlepool Borough Council (**Appendix D**)
 - Council Plan 2030 (**Appendix E**)
 - ICB Annual Report (not available until the 28 July 2026)
 - University Hospitals Tees (UHT) Quality Account 2025/26) (Link – Item 8
<https://middlesbrough.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g10458/Public%20reports%20pack%2002nd-Jun-2026%2010.00%20Tees%20Valley%20Joint%20Health%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20TVJHS.pdf?T=10>)
 - NEAS Quality Accounts 2025/26 – Update (Link -
<https://rcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10717/NEAS%202025-26%20Quality%20Account%20Update%20for%20OSC.pdf>)

- 4.4 At the time of production of this report no topic suggestions had been received for consideration by members of the committee. The committee is asked to identify any potential items / issues it would like to consider for inclusion its 2026/27 work programme.
- 4.5 Should the Committee identify a potential topic(s), further details on each (potential time frames / baseline scoping) will need to be provided to allow an informed decision to be made. A further report will then be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 14 July, at which the Committees work programme for the remainder of the year will be finalised.
- 4.6 In the further management of the Committees workload, consideration may also need to be given to the potential value of establishing working/ task and finish groups to carry out work relating to topics. Evidence gathered by such groups reported back to the full Committee, maximising the use of resources and time, assisting in the collection of evidence to inform investigations and helping manage the duration of formal meetings.

5. Other Considerations/Implications

Risk Implications	None
Financial Considerations	None
Subsidy Control	None
Legal Considerations	None
Single Impact Assessment	None (to be done for each investigation if applicable)
Staff Considerations	None
Asset Management Considerations	None
Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations	None
Consultation	Councillors and partner organisations were asked for topic suggestions. Also, to be done for each investigation as applicable.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 To:
 - i) Identify potential topics for investigation as part of the 2026/27 Statutory Scrutiny Work Programme; and
 - ii) Agree topics for further consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 14 July 2026.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1. To facilitate the agreement of the Audit and Governance Committee's work programme.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. None.

9. Contact Officers

Joan Stevens

Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

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Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

TIMETABLE 2026/27	23 June 2026	14 July 2026	22 Sept 2026	13 Oct 2026	3 Nov 2026	1 Dec 2026	26 Jan 2027	9 March 2027
Statutory Scrutiny Work Programming								
Conduct of Scrutiny Investigation(s)								
Appointment to other Committees and Outside Bodies								
Dedicated O&S Budget / Introduction to O&S								
Scrutiny Investigation Update Report (Annual)								
Retail Crime – Final report and Action Plan / Closing the Loop								
Youth Justice Strategic Plan (BPF)								
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Items								
Community Safety Partnership – Performance								
Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027 (not to be reviewed until 2027)								
Health Scrutiny Items								
Healthwatch Hartlepool	Work Programme	Enter and View Home Care Report 2025 / (TBC)						
Healthwatch Hartlepool Annual Report		Via Health and Wellbeing Board						
Quality Accounts: Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS FT								
Quality Accounts: North East Ambulance Service								
Quality Account/Regular General Update: North Tees & Hartlepool NHS FT								
Complaints Advocacy - Annual Update								
Care Quality Commission Update (CQC) (TBC)								
Rowan Unit Update (TBC)								
Clinical Strategy – University Hospital Tees								
Audit Items								
2025/26 Financial Report (including the audited statement of accounts)	Final Accounts							
Joint Declarations from Management and those Charged with Governance	Final Accounts							
Audit Completion Report 2026/27	Final Accounts							
Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 and Update 2025/26	Treasury Management Strategy							
Treasury Management Strategy Update 2026/27	Treasury Management Strategy							
Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2025/26	Internal Audit							
Audit Strategy Memorandum	Final Accounts							
Internal Audit Plan 2026/27 Update	Internal Audit							
Internal Audit Charter, Strategy and Plan 2026/27	Internal Audit							
Annual Governance Statement 2025/26	Final Accounts							
Anit Fraud and Corruption Policy								
Letter to those Charged with Governance	Final Accounts							
Regulation of Investigation Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)	Q1			Q2 - ANNUAL			Q3	Q4
Standards/Conduct Annual Report								
Standards Complaint Investigations (as required)								
Independent Remuneration Panel (as required)								

PICK Priority Setting

P for Public Interest

Members' representative roles are an essential feature of Scrutiny. They are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that the policies, practice and services delivered to the people of the District, by both the Council and external organisations, are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny. This could include current issues. For example, dignity is consistently cited as a high priority for service users (e.g. Mid Staffordshire Enquiry, care in Winterbourne hospital) and scrutiny committees are well placed to influence the agenda locally and drive forward better quality services). Members themselves will have a good knowledge of local issues and concerns. Surgeries, Parish Councils, Residents Associations and Community Groups are all sources of resident's views. Consultation and Surveys undertaken by the Council and others can also provide a wealth of information.

I for Impact

Scrutiny is about making a difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. Not all issues of concern will have equal impact on the well-being of the community. This should be considered when deciding the programme of work, giving priority to the big issues that have most impact. To maximise impact, particularly when scrutinising external activity, attention should also be given to how the committee could influence policy and practice. Sharing the proposed programme of reviews with Members, officer and key partners will assist this process.

C for Council Performance

Scrutiny is about improving performance and ensuring the Council's customers are served well. With the abolition of external inspection regimes, scrutiny has an even more important role to play in self regulation. Members will need good quality information to identify areas where the Council, and other external organisations, are performing poorly. Areas where performance has dropped should be our priority. As well as driving up Council performance, scrutiny also has an important role in scrutinising the efficiency and value for money of Council services and organizational development.

K for Keep in Context

To avoid duplication or wasted effort priorities should take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered. Is there another review happening or planned? Is the service about to be inspected by an external body? Are there major legislative or policy initiatives already resulting in change? If these circumstances exist Members may decide to link up with other approaches or defer a decision until the outcomes are known or conclude that the other approaches will address the issues. Reference should also be made to proposed programmes of work in the Council's plans and strategies

PICK Scoring System

- **P**ublic Interest: the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen

Score	Measure
0	no public interest
1	low public interest
2	medium public interest
3	high public interest

- **I**mpact: priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area

Score	Measure
0	no impact
1	low impact
2	medium impact
3	high impact

- **C**ouncil Performance and efficiency: priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well or proposals which will support the current Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Programme.

Score	Measure
0	'Green' on or above target performance
1	'Amber',
2	low performance 'Red'

- **K**eep in Context: work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Score	Measure
0	Already dealt with/ no priority
1	Longer term aspiration or plan
2	Need for review acknowledged and worked planned elsewhere
3	Need for review acknowledged

Each topic will be scored under each category as indicated above. Where a category is not applicable, no score will be given.

Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy

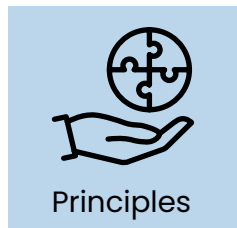


HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy on a page



Our Vision: We will address health inequalities by working together to ensure everyone in Hartlepool has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their potential



Principles

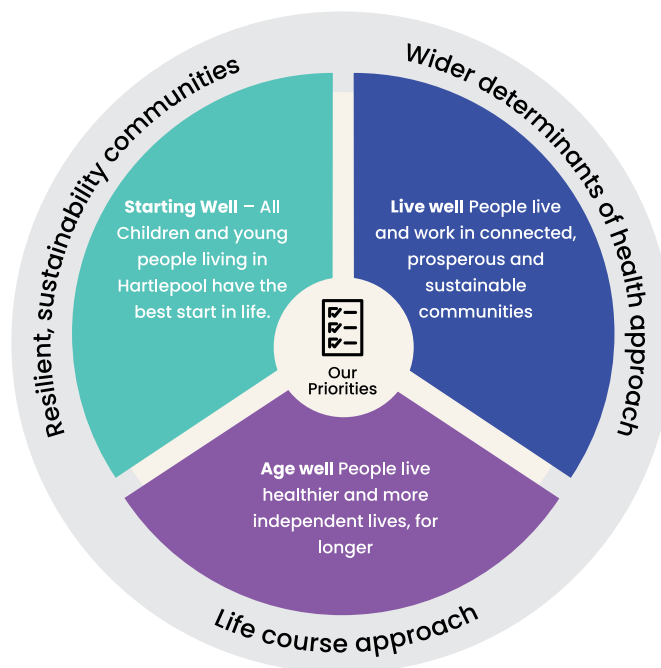
Tackling inequalities

Empowering local communities

Shared responsibility

Integrated approaches

Building health



The Board will develop an action plan which measures identified priority areas against the principles and priority themes.

Contents

Welcome from the Chair

What makes us healthy

Links to local/national plans

What we know – Health in Hartlepool

Our principles

- Tackling inequalities

- Empowering local communities – The voice of local communities is at the centre of our decision-making

- Shared responsibility

- Integrated approaches

- Building health

What people said

Our priorities

Cross Cutting

Measure of success – Delivering the strategy and monitoring Impact

References

Welcome from the Chair



Our new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy presents a real opportunity to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of everyone in Hartlepool together with partners and communities.

The Strategy has been produced in collaboration with Health and Wellbeing Board partners and feedback from the 'Big Conversation' consultation. Much has happened since the last Strategy was implemented in 2018; the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic combined with rising living costs and significant pressures in the health and care systems and the public sector are continuing to impact on people's lives.

We have set out high level ambitions for the next five years. This Strategy sets out our commitments and vision for improving health and wellbeing for the people of Hartlepool. Members of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board will play a key role in delivering the Strategy locally. We will make sure that action plans have been tailored to meet local needs and build on the strengths of our communities.

Councillor Brenda Harrison
Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council

What makes us healthy

Most people associate the word 'health' with hospitals and doctors. When considering 'good health' they tend to think simply of an absence of illness but this strategy looks at health in its broadest sense: a person's level of good physical and mental health, and the extent to which individuals in a society are enabled to live healthy and flourishing lives.




Links to local/national plans



The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Hartlepool links to wider strategies aimed at addressing the health and wellbeing needs including:

 [Hartlepool Borough Council Plan W](#)

 [NHS Long Term Plan v1.2 August 2019 \(\[england.nhs.uk\]\(http://england.nhs.uk\)\)](#)

 [North East and North Cumbria Joint Forward Plan 2023-2028](#)

 [North East and North Cumbria Health & Care Partnership 'Better Health and Wellbeing for All'](#)

What we know - Health in Hartlepool

Starting Well - Why is this important?

The early years of life from conception to entering adulthood are critical for wellbeing.

During pregnancy there are opportunities to ensure and promote healthy behaviours. Good support in the early years is vital in helping parents access support for their child's needs, but also for employment opportunities and housing which help to reduce child and family poverty. Schools are also vitally important in improving the health behaviours of children and young people and ensuring high levels of achievement and ambition to help chances throughout life.

In Hartlepool we know:

Starting Well

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2022-23

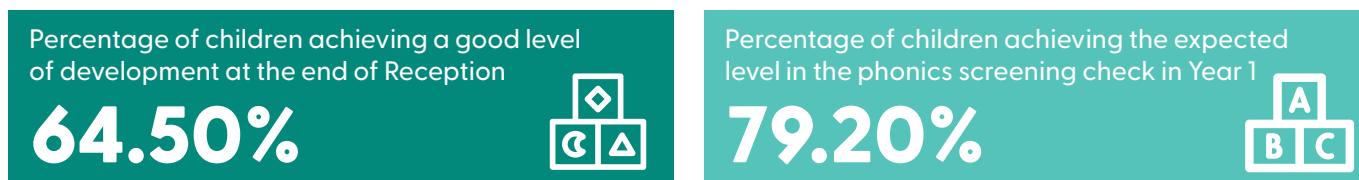


Low income households



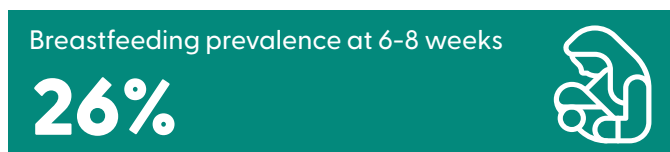
Department for Work and Pensions HM Revenue and Customs

School readiness



Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile

SATOD/Breastfeeding



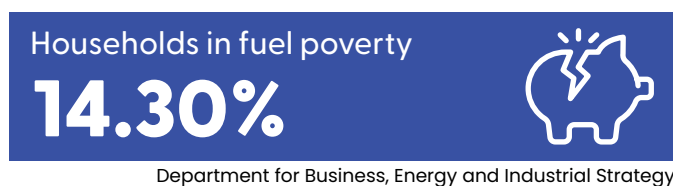
Living Well – Why is this important?

Unemployment, wages and employment are all factors which influence people's health. Similarly, our local communities, and the regeneration that takes place, provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing and build resilient, sustainability communities and tackle the wider determinants of health. We must work together to provide support to people.

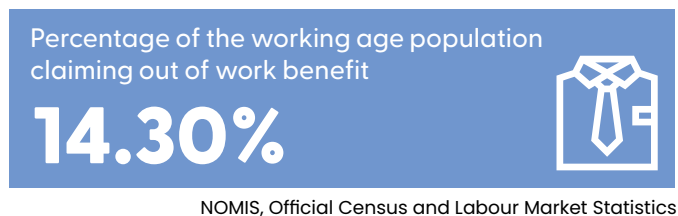
In Hartlepool we know:

Starting Well

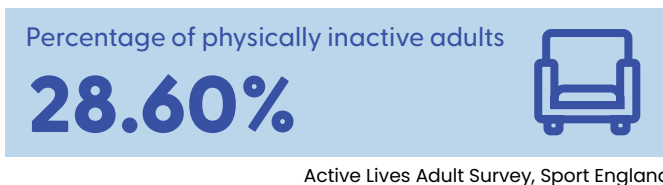
Fuel Poverty



Unemployed



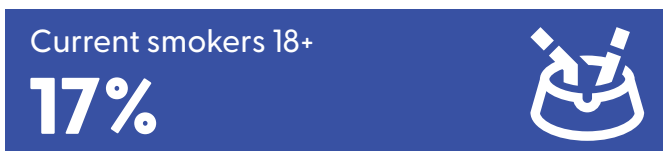
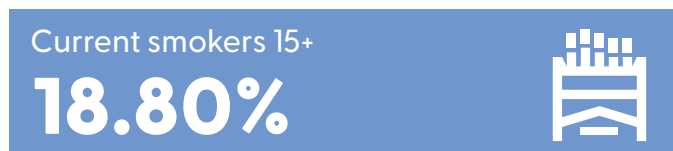
Physically active adults



Depression



Smoking



Ageing Well - Why is this important?

Older age can and should be an opportunity for an active, independent and thriving time of life however the likelihood of having one or more long-term conditions does increase with age. In particular the older population has particular health needs, which may include falls and dementia. The local health system including primary, hospital and community care is essential to health.

In Hartlepool we know:

Age Well

Healthy life expectancy

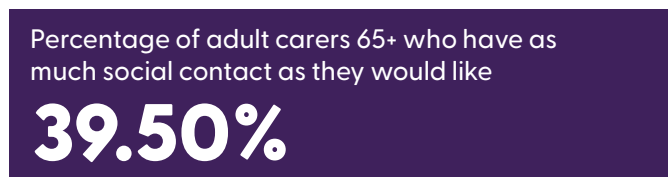


Dementia



NHS

Isolation



ASCOF

Reablement support



Our Principles

Tackling inequalities

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. These include how long people are likely to live, the health conditions they may experience and the care that is available to them.

The conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age can impact our health and wellbeing. These are sometimes referred to as wider determinants of health.

Empowering local communities – The voice of local communities is at the centre of our decision-making

Communities, both place-based and where people share a common identity, have a vital contribution to make to health and wellbeing. Community life, social connections and having a voice in local decisions are all factors that underpin good health, however inequalities persist and too many people experience the effects of social exclusion or lack social support.

Shared responsibility

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Board will ensure a shared responsibility with partners to collectively deliver a range of functions and services that protect, promote and improve the public's health. With a growing number of challenges facing the health and care system, it is more important than ever in order to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

Integrated approaches

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Board will work with partners as integrated care is essential to improving outcomes for people who use health and social care services – with a focus on prevention, better outcomes and reducing health inequalities.

Building health

Where we live can shape our health, including how long we can expect to live, but inequalities between local areas restrict people's opportunities to live a healthy life. By improving things like access to good-quality jobs, homes and making healthy food more accessible we can make a difference to our communities.

What people said

We held a Big Conversation to find out people's thoughts and ideas about the type of place they wanted Hartlepool to be in the future. In the context of health and wellbeing, this is what they told us:

The Big Conversation ran for 12 weeks from 22nd November 2023 until 14th February 2024 and we had over 1,600 engagements with residents, our employees and partners from the public, private, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors. This was through online and in person events.

Summary of responses included:



What do you think is going well in Hartlepool?

Having easy access to the outdoors, nature and green spaces is a big benefit of living in Hartlepool, although some felt we don't make enough of these. People also liked that there is a strong VCSE sector in Hartlepool with a support group or charity to help with every need. They also felt that there is a really strong, friendly community who support each other in adversity. Though some felt community cohesion was declining.

What would make Hartlepool a better place to live?

People were very concerned about the impact of drugs both from a health perspective and also in terms of associated crime and anti-social behaviour, which many people said made them feel unsafe and reduced their enjoyment of outdoor spaces. A stronger stance on drugs in Hartlepool would be welcomed. Additionally, people felt that they could make more use of our outdoor spaces for exercise and wellbeing if they were safer, cleaner, better maintained and had more facilities. Difficulties in accessing local healthcare, particularly GPs, dentists and hospital services, was also an area of major concern.





How can we work together to make a difference?

People wanted agencies to work together more closely, share information more and to see action being taken. They also felt that agencies should involve residents and young people more in decision-making. In terms of actions; people wanted to see more availability of better quality housing, particularly in the social and private rental sectors. They also wanted actions to reduce inequalities (particularly in relation to poverty, warm homes, healthy diets and healthy lifestyles). Disabled respondents said they wanted Hartlepool to be more disabled-friendly, especially in terms of accessible/adapted housing, transport and access to services.

What would help to improve your health and wellbeing?

The two key areas that people highlighted were that they wanted a greater range of leisure activities (including more affordable activities and more availability in the evenings and at weekends – note “leisure” does not just mean sport and many different activities were mentioned). They said that this would improve their health and fitness as well as allow them to make and maintain social connections and stay independent. The second area was they wanted better and easier access to health services, particularly increased availability of GP appointments and NHS dentists. Easier access to mental health services was also mentioned.



Our priorities

Starting Well – All Children and young people living in Hartlepool have the best start in life.

We Will:

- Work together to improve the mental health outcomes of the children and young people of Hartlepool
- Ensure every child has the 'Best Start' in life
- All children, whatever age, are supported in order to prepare them to start school and are ready to learn
- Work together to tackle childhood poverty
- Ensure Hartlepool is a safe place for children and families to grow and thrive
- Ensure that all services are person centred and family focused
- A focus on prevention and shifting to a social determinants of health approach
- Increase the uptake of childhood vaccinations

Live well – People live healthier and more independent lives, for longer

We Will:

- Reduce the numbers of people taking up and continuing to smoke
- Reduce the numbers of people using substances and work to reduce the number of substance-related deaths
- Promote access to good nutrition and access to physical activity opportunities including green spaces in order to reduce levels of obesity
- Work with partners to address levels of anti-social behaviour and violent crimes
- Grow the numbers of businesses engaged in addressing workplace health
- Promote mental and physical health, and prevent ill health
- Work together so more families will be living in decent homes with good opportunities for work
- Develop a coordinated approach to community resilience
- Work to address the health impacts of poverty

Age well – People live healthier and more independent lives, for longer

We Will:

- Support people with a long-term health condition to manage their condition
- Fewer older people will feel socially isolated, and more will be actively participating in community life
- Provide early prevention and detection, and coordinated care in older age
- Reduce the numbers of people who experience falls, and those who do will be enabled to feel confident and remain independent
- Support people to remain independent and able to make decisions about the health and social care services they receive
- Increase the opportunities for older people to participate in physical activity
- Include and support people in their end-of-life care choices

Cross Cutting

Resilient, sustainability communities

Healthy and sustainable places and communities – we will ensure that our communities and places have the right building blocks for health in place to build stronger, more resilient communities to ensure we support those conditions necessary for people to be healthy adopting a culture of health which encompasses a broader vision of what it means to be healthy, extending beyond health care to include work, family, and community life.

Life Course Approach

The life course approach is an approach to understand people's life's over time and across generations and helps us to understand and explain health and disease patterns and the impact of early life and life transitions on health outcomes from birth to death and is critical in improving health and health equity.

Wider determinants of health approach

The wider determinants of health are a diverse range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence people's mental and physical health. Variation in these factors is an important driver of the health inequalities.

Measure of Success - Delivering the Strategy and Monitoring Impact

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will inform an action plan which will involve partners and stakeholders.

This will be monitored by the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board which meets quarterly. The board will also produce an annual report demonstrating progress against priority areas.

A local outcomes frame work will be used to monitor impact and change.

References

ⁱ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/core20plus5-cyp/>

ⁱⁱ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/768979/A_guide_to_community-centred_approaches_for_health_and_wellbeing_full_report_.pdf#:~:text=There%20is%20extensive%20evidence%20that%20connected%20and%20empowered,a%20positive%20impact%20on%20people%E2%80%99s%20health%20and%20wellbeing.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d0759f1e5274a0b82d62f2f/Quality_in_public_health_shared_responsibility_2019.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.health.org.uk/infographic-what-makes-us-healthy>

^v <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-profile-for-england-2018/chapter-6-wider-determinants-of-health>



Safer Hartlepool Partnership



Community Safety Plan

2024 - 2027



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1. FOREWORD

As Chair, I am pleased to present the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Plan for 2024 – 2027 on behalf of The Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP).

The Partnership Plan brings together our aims, ambitions and priorities for the next three years. We will work in Partnership to tackle the issues which impact on, and matter to local people.

The Community Safety Plan retains the strategic objective and priorities of the 2021/24 plan, with an additional priority of serious violence, reflecting the outcomes of the 2022 - 2023 SHP Strategic Assessment and ongoing analysis of emerging issues across the Town. Utilising this data and information enables the SHP to deliver a holistic approach to address the priorities, with a greater emphasis on prevention and reducing harm.

In recent years, there has been a significant change in issues that are presented to partners to address, whilst also tackling substantial resource pressures. Important matters such as anti-social behaviour, serious violence, substance misuse, domestic violence and responding to those members of our communities with specific vulnerabilities understandably take priority.

The SHP will continue to look at new and innovative ways of working collaboratively to reduce crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending, and most importantly, improving the quality of life for the people who live and work in and visit Hartlepool.

Chair, Safer Hartlepool Partnership



2. INTRODUCTION

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP) brings together a number of agencies and organisations concerned with tackling crime and disorder in Hartlepool. As defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Partnership comprises members from each of the “responsible authorities”; Hartlepool Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service, The Probation Service and Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group. In addition, a range of other stakeholders from the public and voluntary sectors are also represented and include Thirteen Group, Safe In Tees Valley and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland.

Our key role is to understand the kind of community safety issues Hartlepool is experiencing; decide which of these are the most important to deal with; and then decide what actions we can take collectively, adding value to the day-to-day work undertaken by our individual agencies and organisations.

We detail these actions in our Community Safety Plan. To help us do that we undertake a Strategic Assessment which analyses a range of detailed information that exists about crime, disorder, substance misuse, re-offending and other community matters that are affecting Hartlepool.

The outcomes of the assessment form recommendations about how to keep the Community Safety Plan priorities relevant.

In producing our plan we are also mindful of the pledges of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the Police and Crime Plan and the requirement to ‘have regard’ to the priorities established by this plan.

The community safety landscape continues to evolve and partners continue to face challenges in having to adapt the way services and initiatives are delivered. Since the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, legislative changes have amended our focus, and also the statutory partners we work with, but the principles of working together remain at the heart of tackling crime and disorder.

The strategic objective of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership remains unchanged and is still as important as it ever has been:

“To make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit”








3. LOCAL CONTEXT

Hartlepool is the smallest unitary authority in the North East region with a population of approximately 93,366 people; 51% female and 49% male.

There are approximately 40,434 households with 58% of homes owned outright / owned with a mortgage.

The average age in Hartlepool is 40 with 7% of the population aged 55-59.

The largest ethnic group is White British (98%).

 Population	Hartlepool's population has increased slightly over the past 5 years from 92,401 in 2019 to 95,366 in 2023.	Hartlepool's population is becoming more diverse with increasing numbers of ethnic minority residents.	Twenty percent of the population are aged 65 or over; whilst 21% are age 18 and under.
 Unemployment	Unemployment rates in Hartlepool are above the national and regional averages. Almost 70% of Universal Credit claimants in Hartlepool are not in employment.	The unemployment rate of young people aged 18-24 remains above the national average.	
 Deprivation	Hartlepool has pockets of high deprivation where communities experience multiple issues: higher unemployment, lower incomes, child poverty, ill health, low attainment, poorer housing conditions and higher crime rates.	Hartlepool is the 25 th most deprived local authority area out of 317 local authority areas.	Inequality within Hartlepool is getting worse, with the gap between the most deprived and the least deprived parts of the town widening.
 Health & Wellbeing	Hartlepool residents spend a higher proportion of their lives in poor health than in other local authority areas.	Hartlepool has the highest rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions in the northeast region at 3,629 per 100,000 population. This is significantly higher than the national rate.	At 14.8 per 100,000, the rate of drug-related deaths in Hartlepool is significantly higher than the regional rate and almost three times the national rate.
 Housing	Over half of the properties in Hartlepool are within the lowest "Band A" Council Tax bracket. 31% of pensioners in Hartlepool live alone, which is associated with multiple adverse outcomes.	Geography	Community safety problems are not evenly spread and tend to be concentrated in geographic hotspots, particularly in the most deprived wards in Hartlepool.



4. SUMMARY OF THE 2021/24 PLAN

Over the last 3 years we have focused on ensuring Hartlepool is a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit by undertaking activity to address the issues that are likely to have most effect on people during their day to day lives.

Community Safety Priority: Anti-social Behaviour

- **Operation Endurance** is an ongoing campaign which tackles anti-social behaviour caused by off-road bikes in local communities. Responding to community intelligence, numerous targeted operations have resulted in offenders being identified and off-road bikes subsequently seized and destroyed
- **Effective use of Anti-Social Behaviour Tools and Powers** including obtaining premise closure orders, issuing of Community Protection Warnings, engaging young people in Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and undertaking reviews of ASB cases through the Community Trigger process
- **Publicity campaigns** to increase awareness of environmental crime, such as fly-tipping and deliberate fires, and encourage the reporting of these issues.
- **Robust enforcement** in relation to individuals illegally dumping waste in the Town

Community Safety Priority: Drugs and Alcohol

- **Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment** undertaken to identify any gaps in treatment and support services.
- **Development of a Drug and Alcohol Strategy** which focuses on prevention and early intervention, reducing drug and alcohol related harms, supporting wider health needs and reducing drug and alcohol related crime
- **Execution of warrants** under the Misuse of Drugs Act resulting in the recovery of controlled drugs amounting to millions of pounds in street value
- **Presentations and targeted interventions** delivered in schools and colleges across Hartlepool on key themes including County Lines and anti-social behaviour and drink spiking

Community Safety Priority: Domestic Violence and Abuse

- **Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment** undertaken and Domestic Abuse Strategy developed.
- **Improved provision** of safe accommodation for victims of Domestic Abuse
- **Re-commissioned** specialist domestic abuse services based on lived experiences

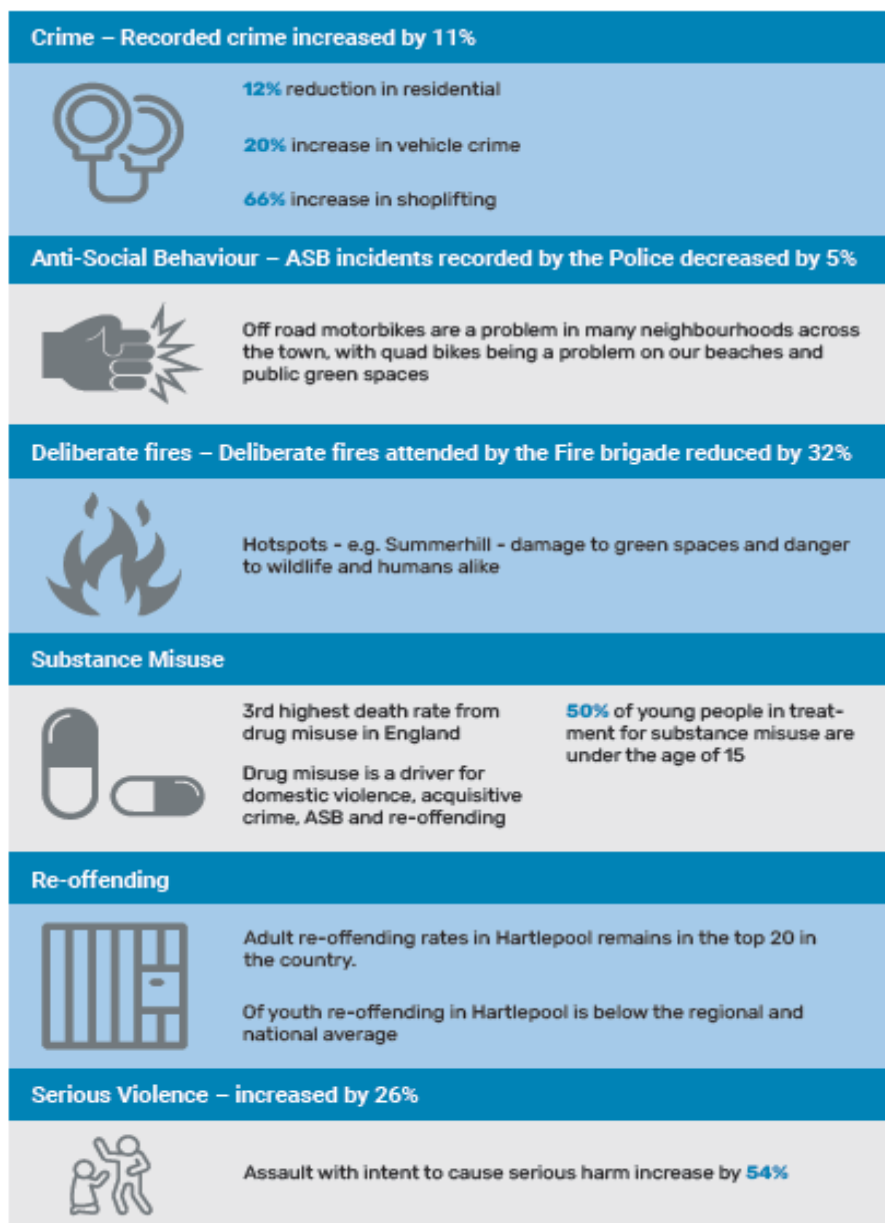


- **Publicity campaigns to raise awareness** of domestic abuse and promote initiatives including “ask for ANI”, a code word scheme that enables victims of domestic abuse to discreetly ask for immediate help in participating pharmacies, and “ask for Angela”, a code word scheme for women to seek help from staff in pubs and bars if they are feeling unsafe on a night out.



5. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Partnership conducts an annual assessment of the levels and patterns of crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in Hartlepool to identify and address the community safety issues that impact upon and really matter to the local community. The following provides an overview of the key findings from the assessment which covers the period from October 2022 to September 2023.



Community Safety Partnerships are arranged in “Most Similar Groups¹” with 14 other CSPs, determined by various measures including population figures and

¹ Most Similar Group (MSG) Community Safety Partnerships – I-Quanta: Walsall, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Halton, Barrow-in-Furness, Rochdale, St Helens, Newport, Knowlesley, Stoke-on-Trent, Middlesbrough, North East Lincolnshire, Bradford, Thanet, Hartlepool.



deprivation levels. Positions in these groups are ranked with 1 being the lowest (fewest offences) and 15 the highest (most offences).

The crime rate in Hartlepool is above the Most Similar Group (MSG) average of 118 per 1,000 population, standing at 154. (July 2023). (Table 1)



Crime Type	Hartlepool	MSG Average	Hartlepool Position	MSG Comparison
All Crime	154.006	117.497	15	Above
Violence against the Person				
Homicide	0.054	0.013	15	Above
Violence with Injury	13.492	12.661	11	Above
Violence without Injury	21.130	17.855	13	Above
Sexual Offences				
Rape	1.577	1.286	12	Above
Other Sexual Offences	3.025	2.461	15	Above
Acquisitive Crime				
Burglary Residential*	10.404	6.418	15	Above
Burglary Bus & Com	1.707	1.513	9	Above
Bicycle Theft	1.113	0.967	11	Above
Theft from the Person	0.0605	0.574	9	Above
Robbery - Personal	1.145	0.858	12	Above
Robbery - Business	0.162	.0125	13	Above
Vehicle Crime	6.449	6.040	11	Above
Shoplifting	17.576	8.159	15	Above
Other Acquisitive	10.208	8.290	13	Above
Criminal Damage				
All Criminal Damage	16.938	12.309	15	Above
Arson	1.015	0.804	13	Above



6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership has a statutory obligation to engage and consult with the communities of Hartlepool about community safety priorities.

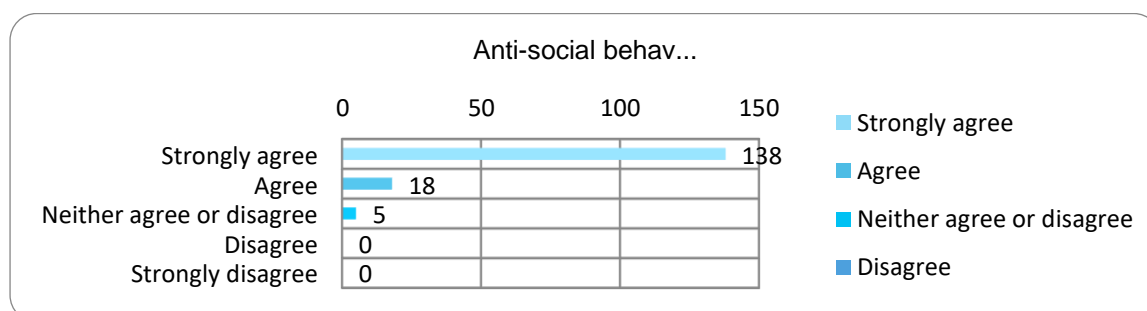
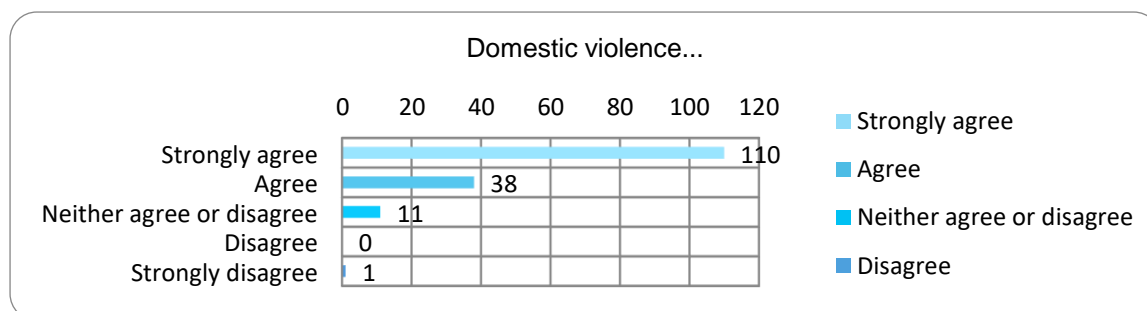
The Community Safety Survey is designed to assist the Partnership to:

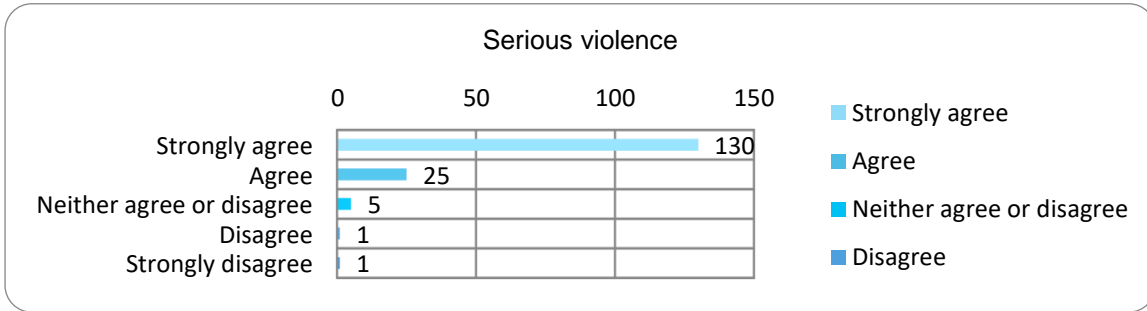
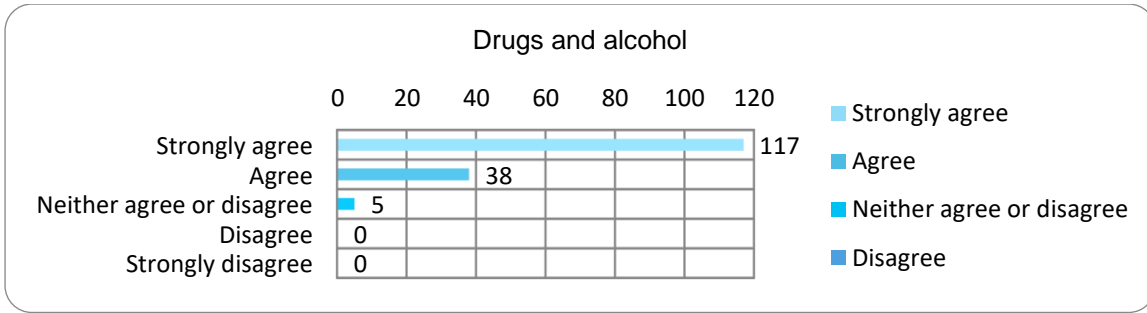
- Gain a wider understanding of public perception of crime and anti-social behaviour in the local area;
- Understand what makes people feel safe and unsafe; and
- Understand which issues cause most concern

Analysis of the results of the survey conducted in 2024 highlighted that, although many residents perceive crime and anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their area, with off road bikes being highlighted as the biggest concern. More than half of respondents said they had not been a victim of crime in the previous 12 months.

When asked about feelings of safety, whilst most respondents said they feel safe being outside during the day the majority felt unsafe at night. Those who said they felt unsafe stated this was due to poor street lighting, lack of police, suspicious people hanging around and people dealing drugs.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree with each of the priorities identified in the Community Safety Plan 2024-27 and gave clear support to these priorities.







7. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2021-2024

Based on the findings of the 2022 - 2023 Strategic Assessment and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders, the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's Strategic Objective 2024-2027 is: -

To make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit

8. PRIORITIES 2024 - 2027

As with any town, Hartlepool faces many challenges and must work within an environment of conflicting demands and limited resources.

The Partnership recognises that there are many issues that impact on the lives of some, or all, of Hartlepool's residents and continued efforts will be made by all Partnership members to address these in a focussed and effective manner.

Issues such as violence (particularly serious violence) and exploitation are significant in both the local and national context and the Partnership recognises the need to work both individually and collectively to address them.

However, the Partnership also recognises the benefits of identifying those issues that have the greatest impact on the town and the need to target resources and efforts to deal with them effectively and efficiently.

To do this, the Safer Hartlepool Partnership will focus activity on four key priority areas:

Anti-Social Behaviour

By adopting an intelligence led problem solving approach, the Partnership will work to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) across the town by deploying resources and undertaking targeted activity to address the issues that cause concern for our residents and communities and negatively impact on their quality of life.

Drugs and Alcohol

Through targeted partnership working, focussed efforts will be made to reduce both the demand for, and the supply of, illegal drugs in Hartlepool.

The Partnership will also work together to reduce the negative social, personal and health consequences caused by the misuse of alcohol in the town.



Domestic Violence and Abuse

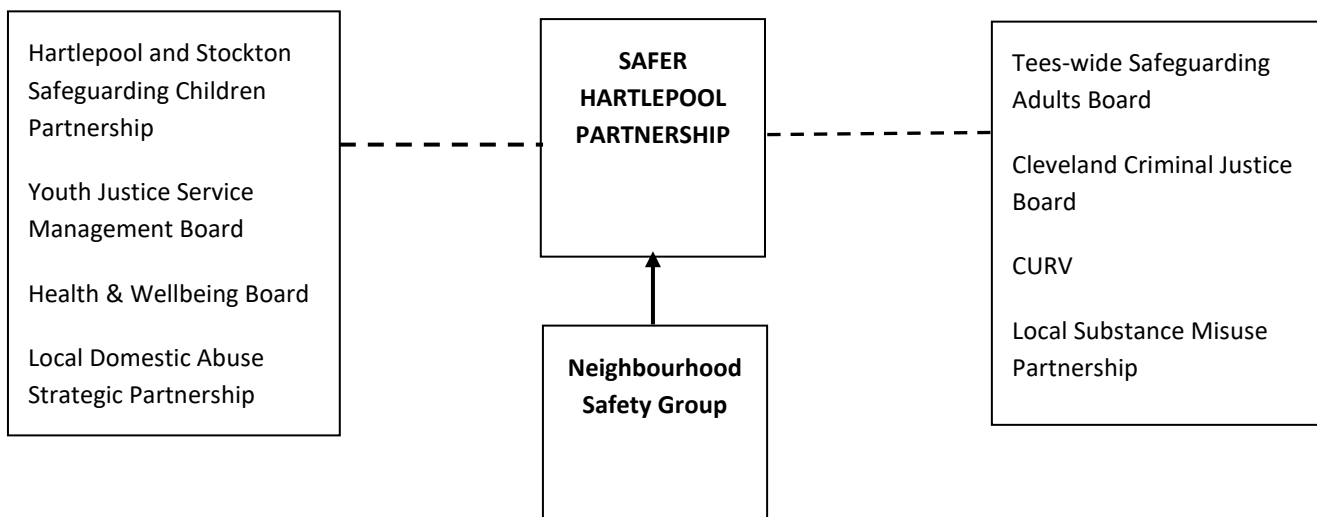
The Partnership will work together to safeguard individuals and their families from domestic violence and abuse. Working with the Office and the Police and Crime Commissioner, the development of a perpetrator strategy is a key priority for 2024/25.

Serious Violence

The Partnership will continue to work with the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) to deliver the objectives contained in its Response Strategy at a local level.

9. DELIVERING THE PLAN

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership has the responsibility to deliver the priorities that are set out within this plan. There are governance structure is outlined below. This chart outlines the Partnership delivery and reporting structure. Recognising its responsibility to reduce re-offending, the SHP sub groups will include re-offending as a specific area of focus. Performance monitoring will be undertaken on a quarterly basis to assess progress against key priorities drawn from the strategic assessment and identify any emerging issues.





10. MONITORING PERFORMANCE

Performance reporting will be in the form of an action plan covering each priority with the Community Safety Plan. The action plan will outline the work being carried out by partners and updates will be reported to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership every six months. The action plan is a living document which will allow partners to include new initiatives to fully reflect the work being carried out.



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Council Plan 2030

Agreed by Finance and Policy Committee 7th April 2025

Introduction from the Leader and Managing Director of the Council

Welcome to our Council Plan which sets out our vision for Hartlepool in 2030 and the priorities that we will be focussing on over the next 5 years.

As a Council we deliver a wide range of services everyday including:

People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting older people and adults with disabilities, sensory loss or mental health needs to live independent fulfilled lives.• Providing housing advice and supporting those who are rough sleeping, homeless or at risk of homelessness.• Supporting education, early years and children with special educational needs.• Keeping children safe and families together.• Working with communities to support health and wellbeing.• Supporting unpaid carers.• Responding to concerns about anti-social behaviour and community safety.
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining our local roads and transport infrastructure, parks and open spaces.• Collecting bins and providing recycling services.• Supporting culture, museums and visitors.• Delivering capital projects to regenerate the Borough.• Providing cemeteries and crematorium facilities.• Delivering sport and leisure activities and venues.• Providing Community Hubs and library services.
Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging economic development and growth of businesses.• Delivering learning and skills opportunities.• Supporting residents into employment.

We aim to ensure that we deliver services which meet the needs of our community now and improve Hartlepool for future generations.

Our plan has been formed around the views of residents who engaged with The Big Conversation at the end of 2023, as well as the manifesto upon which we were elected.

Despite the challenges from over a decade of cuts forced onto us by the previous national government, alongside increasing levels of need for some of the most

vulnerable in our community, we are optimistic and hopeful about the future. We continue to lobby our MP for a fairer funding system which recognises the levels of need that we have here in Hartlepool.

Since May 2024 we have listened to resident's views and abolished the booking system for the waste disposal site. We've worked hard to increase opportunities for member of the public to engage with the council by changing half of all meetings to after 5pm, inviting members of the Parish councils to sit on committees, and we've cut councillor's Special Responsibility Allowances.

We're making great progress on the Highlight Leisure Centre, implementing a Landlord Licensing scheme and bringing some of our looked after children back into the care of the council.

We are proud of our achievements so far, and despite the challenges, remain optimistic about the future for our Borough.

This plan sets out what else we need to deliver over the next few years and we have confidence we will deliver.

Cllr Brenda Harrison
Leader of the Council

Denise McGuckin
Managing Director

Our Vision for the future of Hartlepool in 2030

Hartlepool will be...

... a place where people live healthier, safe and independent lives.

People

... a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green.

Place

... a place that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all.

Potential

... a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.

Organisation

The following pages set out our priorities for the next five years which will help us to achieve our vision.

Hartlepool will be a place where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (PEOPLE)

Our priorities for the next 5 years will be...

- Working with our partners to reduce poverty and to minimise the impact of poverty on our residents.
- Helping people understand what they are entitled to so that they can access the benefits they are eligible to receive by supporting the training and development of our workforce and partnership working with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.
- Working with our schools and academy trusts to ensure we have strongly performing schools that serve children well and improve their future life chances across all key stages.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs in a local school wherever possible unless specialist provision is in their best interests.
- Providing seamless, high-quality services to children and their families that are responsive to need and enable them to achieve and thrive.
- Transforming our multi agency early help system to support children to remain safely within their families, have their needs met and reduce reliance on statutory specialist services.
- Providing a children's social care system that supports children and young people and their families and helps them to stay together in loving homes, be safe and uses the family network to help families experiencing problems.
- Reducing the number of victims of domestic abuse by being part of a multi-agency system where victims are protected and provided with support that meets their needs.
- Delivering the Community Safety Strategy bringing together strategic partners to focus on tackling anti-social behaviour, including off-road bikes, and reducing serious violence within Hartlepool.
- Delivering the Drug and Alcohol Strategy and reducing the number of drug and alcohol related deaths.
- Reducing the number of residents who smoke through the delivery of the Tobacco Control Strategy.
- Delivering new cycle schemes across the Borough to encourage residents to live healthier and more active lives.
- Delivering targeted health improvement campaigns and interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

- Put in place interventions to start to tackle the inequalities in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.
- Supporting local employers to create cultures that value the health and wellbeing of their workforce and wider community through the Better Health at Work Award.
- Working together with partners to develop local, accessible services and opportunities for residents to increase their physical activity including the Highlight Active Wellbeing Hub.
- Delivering an Adult Social Care information and advice offer promoting wellbeing and independence and making people aware of what's already available in the community. Expanding this to include digital and technology solutions that allow people to self-serve, such as online financial assessment.
- Providing or commissioning high quality adult social care services that are safe, timely, responsive and person-centred, and enable people to be supported by well trained and appropriately skilled staff.
- Focussing on early action and support that promotes care closer to home and prevents avoidable admissions to hospital and to permanent residential care.
- Delivering an approach to safeguarding adults that meets the needs of adults who are most at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Supporting opportunities for local people to volunteer and improve their confidence, skills, and experience and to contribute to the local community.
- Increasing the literacy skills of adults for life and work, by realising the ambition of the Hartlepool Literacy Taskforce.
- Engaging residents in learning to increase their skills, confidence and raise their aspirations through the delivery of Hartlepool Employment and Skills Strategy.
- Continuing to develop our Community Hubs, providing opportunities for people to access support and services.
- Supporting our communities to be strong, resilient, empowered and inclusive.

Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green. (PLACE)

Our priorities for the next 5 years will be...

- Meeting local need, reducing homelessness and improving the supply of good quality housing through the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- Tackling empty commercial and residential properties and combating tenants causing anti-social behaviour, and landlords who allow it.
- Increasing the number of houses owned by the Council and the range of social housing options available to those residents who need homes for social rent.
- Delivering the Town Deal Programme including the Wesley Chapel and reimagining Middleton Grange Phase 1.
- Transforming the Museum of Hartlepool and Wingfield Castle into vibrant, welcoming spaces telling the story of Hartlepool.
- Developing Hartlepool Waterfront into a visitor destination providing leisure, culture and heritage opportunities with improved access from the town centre, along Church Street and into the Marina.
- Displaying our artistic treasures for the people of Hartlepool.
- Creating a new waste transfer station within the Borough providing a more efficient approach to waste collection.
- Increasing recycling rates through the introduction of food waste collections and education with residents on the benefits of recycling.
- Delivering the A19 / Elwick Road / North Lane Junction and Elwick Road / Hartlepool Western Link Project reducing pressure on our existing A19 junctions and improving access into Hartlepool.
- Making improvements to key junctions in the local road network ensuring a more reliable and efficient bus network and better connectivity across the town.
- Delivering the Net Zero Strategy and reducing carbon emissions by the Council.
- Ensuring our parks and coastline are welcoming, community led and thriving green and blue spaces.

Hartlepool will be a place that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (POTENTIAL)

Our priorities for the next 5 years will be...

- Developing a thriving production village surrounding the film and tv studios which provides opportunities for supply chain businesses and improved employment opportunities.
- Increasing the number and range of businesses within Hartlepool and building opportunities for our young people to have great jobs and careers through the Inclusive Growth Strategy and regeneration schemes.
- Supporting our local supply chain to benefit from the opportunities created by the Council and its partners through public contracts.
- Embedding our approach to social value so that it is simpler for SMEs bidding for Council opportunities, supports cultural alignment with major suppliers and maximises the positive impact on our communities.
- Developing a Community Wealth Growth initiative to stimulate investment, create jobs and keep Hartlepool's money in Hartlepool.
- Working in partnership with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust through the Health & Social Care Academy to increase the range of qualifications in health disciplines and promote social care as a career choice.
- Supporting the partnership with Hartlepool College of Further Education and delivery partners through the Civil Engineering Skills Academy – Hartlepool, to increase the range of qualifications and apprenticeships in fabrication, welding, construction and civils and promote engineering as a career choice.
- Delivering bespoke employer led programmes based on the skills needs and priorities of local employers to create a skilled workforce.
- Supporting Hartlepool residents with complex barriers to employment get back into work through the national 'Connect to Work' programme, improving the employment rate, and improving economic activity.
- Working collaboratively with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and the Hartlepool Development Corporation to bring investment into the Borough.

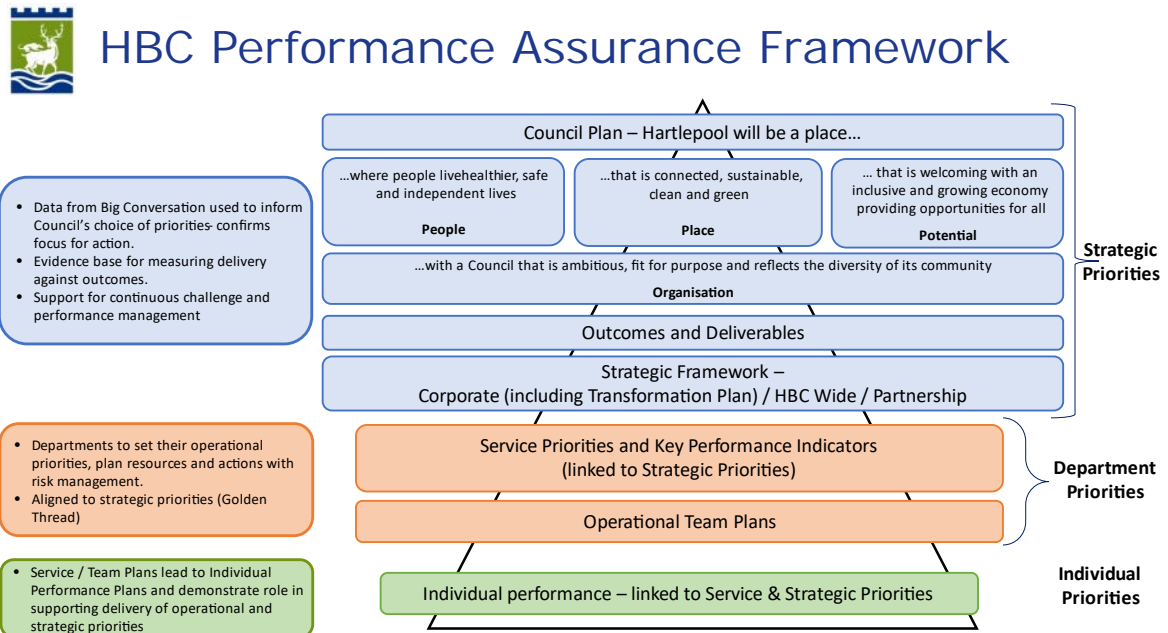
Hartlepool will be a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (ORGANISATION)

Our priorities for the next 5 years will be...

- Ensuring the council is financially sustainable, with a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan, and annual accounts that are timely, accurate, true and fair.
- Continuing to lobby central government for a fairer funding system that recognises the level of poverty and need that we have here in Hartlepool.
- Reviewing the senior officer structure to ensure maximum efficiency.
- Reforming our electoral system to make savings and bring stability to the Council.
- Bringing together stakeholders from all sectors through the Hartlepool Partnership to drive a shared strategic vision.
- Developing a Residents Forum to ensure the views of local people are heard.
- Delivering accessible communications which are aligned to the priorities of the Council and our communities.
- Providing a Council website that is accessible and becomes the default option to contact the council.
- Implementing a digital and IT transformation strategy that will continue to evolve and ensure that we have a modern, fully enabled and efficient workforce.
- Transforming the Council into a modern, data informed organisation where data empowers us to make informed decisions, enhance service quality, foster community engagement, optimise resource allocation, plan for the future, embrace innovation and promote transparency.
- Delivering a strategic and operational workforce plan which enables the Council to focus resources on key skills to support talent growth, apprenticeship planning, succession planning, recruitment and retention and risk management in the workforce and support strategic workforce planning.
- Supporting the health and wellbeing of our workforce.
- Ensuring our workforce has the foundations to deliver and develop the best service performance possible for the benefit of the Hartlepool community.
- Undertaking a review of Council buildings and assets to ensure that they meet the needs of residents and the organisation now and in the future.

How we monitor Council performance

The Council has a Performance Assurance Framework which brings together all the strategies and plans that we have in place across the whole organisation.



The Council Plan sits at the top of our Framework because it sets out the top strategic priorities for the Council.

This is underpinned by our Strategic Framework. These are the other corporate-level strategies that provide greater detail for key themes such as transformation, economic growth, community safety, health and wellbeing or finance. It includes strategies that are shared with strategic partners and those that are only relevant to the Council. See appendix 2 for the full list.

Our aim is to ensure that we have a streamlined process where performance information is shared in the right place, with the most appropriate audience. For the Council Plan that will be with Finance and Policy Committee. Other performance information may be more appropriate to go to a different Policy Committee, a Partnership Board such as the Safer Hartlepool Partnership or the Health and Wellbeing Board, Audit and Governance Committee, or an officer group such as our Departmental Management Teams. We will ensure that the information presented to the identified audience is relevant and sufficient to enable oversight of our work whilst upholding the principle of openness and transparency.

As a Council we monitor our performance through our Performance Assurance Framework using performance indicators (PIs), actions and risks.

Performance indicators

To assess our progress and service performance we have four types of performance indicators:

- Council Plan Key Performance Indicators – these are our headline indicators which are chosen to provide Elected Members, Senior Leaders and our residents with a clear picture of our progress towards achieving our Council Plan vision. See appendix 3 for the list.
- Strategic Framework Key Performance Indicators - these are indicators which provide a clear picture of our progress towards achieving the corporate-level strategies within our Strategic Framework including our Health and Wellbeing Strategy or Transformation Plan.
- Departmental Key Performance Indicators - these are indicators which provide a clear picture of our progress on our departmental priorities and help demonstrate how well our services are performing.
- Organisational Health Performance Indicators – these are indicators which are chosen to provide Elected Members and Senior Leaders with a clear picture of how the organisation is functioning. For example, employee sickness, complaints and customer contacts.

Actions

In some areas we have agreed action plans which set out what we will deliver, by when and who will be responsible for delivering it. These often relate to specific projects or programmes of activity.

Risks

It is important that we identify and manage risk in our activities. We have a Risk Management Framework which outlines our approach to risk management. Risks are identified throughout the Council and are regularly reviewed by Managers. Each Department collates its own risk register and the most significant risks are included on our Strategic Risk Register which is overseen by the Executive Leadership Team.

In addition to assessing our performance ourselves we are also subject to a range of external inspection frameworks and audits such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

How we will report progress on the Council Plan

Finance and Policy Committee will receive an update on the Council Plan each quarter. Each report will focus on one area of priority:

- People
- Place

- Potential
- Organisation

These updates will include the latest position on the Council Plan Key Performance Indicators, an update from Senior Leaders on progress, achievements and challenges and an updated Strategic Risk Register.

An Annual Report will also be produced each year summarising the Council's achievements and this will be shared more widely with our residents.

Appendix 1 - The Big Conversation

The Big Conversation was launched in November 2023 because as a Council we wanted to hear how people felt about Hartlepool and to understand what mattered to them. Over 12 weeks the Big Conversation gave people the space to share their thoughts and ideas about the type of place they want Hartlepool to be in the future.

We sought to engage as many people as possible in the Big Conversation including residents, employees and partners from the public, private, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors. In total there were over 1,600 engagements including:

- 662 public survey responses (including paper, online and easy read versions)
- 48 business survey responses
- 149 responses to the quick poll
- 522 postcard responses
- 266 attendances registered at face-to-face discussions supported by officers from the Council
- 18 face-to-face discussions held by the Council or other public, voluntary, community and social enterprise partner organisations

The Big Conversation confirmed what is important to residents of Hartlepool and the emerging themes identified were unsurprising as they remained consistent with other consultation and engagement activities that have been undertaken in recent years. The findings from the Big Conversation have been used to inform the development of this Council Plan and key points that were raised have been reflected in the Plan as follows:

What people said	How that's reflected in the Council Plan
<p>Action not words – they felt that the Council had the right priorities but that it was not always clear what was going to be delivered so that they could hold the Council to account. They also wanted to see things being delivered on the ground rather than talked about.</p>	<p>The priorities in the Council Plan have been simplified into People, Place, Potential and Organisation with clear activities identified for delivery in the next 5 years.</p>
<p>Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Activity to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour is included within the People priority on pages 9 and 10.</p>

What people said	How that's reflected in the Council Plan
<p>Everyone should feel safe – comments related to community safety and also that it shouldn't just be those who are identified as vulnerable who feel safe.</p>	<p>Safe is now included within the People priority on pages 9 and 10 and covers everyone not just those identified as vulnerable.</p>
<p>Jobs and employment opportunities – improving the types of jobs available in Hartlepool so that people don't move away and attracting new employers in.</p>	<p>Activity to improve the types of jobs available in Hartlepool and attracting new employers is included within the Potential priority on page 12.</p>
<p>Clean the town – comments related to the local environment including litter and weeds.</p>	<p>Activity to improve the local environment is included within the Place priority on page 11.</p>
<p>Facilities, services and opportunities for children and young people – giving our children and young people things to do to and opportunities to have successful futures within Hartlepool.</p>	<p>Activity related to opportunities for children is included within the People priority on pages 9 and 10.</p>
<p>Transport – across Hartlepool and between Hartlepool and the Tees Valley / wider region.</p>	<p>Connected is now included in the Place priority on page 11 to provide a focus on improving transport and access within and beyond Hartlepool.</p>
<p>Council Tax – concerns around how much Council Tax costs and the services that the average resident receives.</p>	<p>Activity related to the Council's financial sustainability, including lobbying for fairer funding, and communications about the services that the Council provides are included within the Organisation priority on page 13.</p>

Appendix 2 – Strategies in the Strategic Framework

Adult Social Care Strategy	Inclusive Growth Strategy
Capital Strategy	Indoor Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy
Carers Strategy	Local Area Inclusion Plan (SEND)
Children in Our Care	Local Council Tax Support Scheme
Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Published Arrangements	Local Plan
Community Hub Strategy	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
Community Cohesion Strategy*	Net Zero Strategy
Community Safety Plan	Poverty Strategy
Domestic Abuse Strategy	Substance Misuse Strategy
Early Intervention Strategy	Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Business Plan
Education Improvement Plan	Tobacco Control Strategy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Transformation Plan
Hartlepool Employment and Skills Strategy	Treasury Management Strategy
Hartlepool Volunteer Strategy	Workforce Strategy
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Youth Justice Strategic Plan
Heritage Strategy	
Housing Strategy	

* To be developed

Appendix 3 - Council Plan Performance Indicators

<p>People</p>	<p>Poverty - exact indicator(s) TBC</p> <p>Key Stage 2 performance</p> <p>Key Stage 4 performance</p> <p>Number of schools considered to be serving children well through inspection - TBC following change to Ofsted ratings</p> <p>Healthy life expectancy</p> <p>Smoking - long term quit dates at 12 weeks</p> <p>Engagement and reach of Community Hubs</p> <p>Engagement and reach of family hubs</p> <p>Number of victims and repeat victims of domestic abuse</p> <p>Rates of children in need per 10k population</p> <p>Rates of children subject to a child protection plan per 10k population</p> <p>Rates of children in our care per 10k population</p> <p>Ofsted inspection outcomes of regulated services</p> <p>Substance misuse treatment numbers - Opiates</p> <p>Substance misuse treatment numbers - Alcohol</p> <p>Substance misuse completions - Opiates</p> <p>Substance misuse completions – Alcohol</p> <p>Overall Satisfaction of people who use service with their care and support</p> <p>Overall satisfaction of Carers with social services</p> <p>The proportion of people who use services and Carers who find it easy to find information about services</p> <p>Proportion of people who use adult social care services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secure</p> <p>Admissions of older people to residential and nursing care per 100,000 population</p> <p>% of Commissioned Services rated 'Good or Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission</p>
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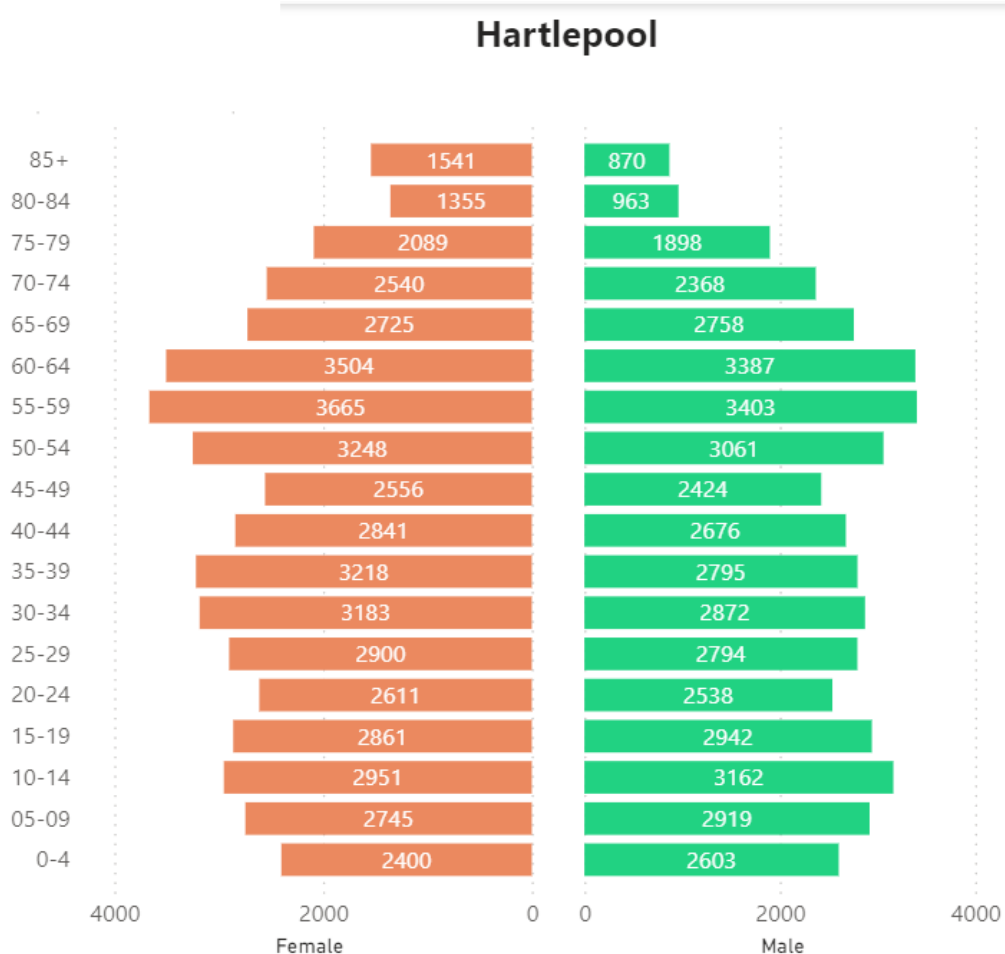
<p>Place</p>	<p>Homeless presentations Housing waiting lists Rough sleepers Environmental health action to tackle dangerous tenancies Build rates including increasing capacity of social housing Number of properties in the Housing Revenue Account Greenhouse gas emissions from HBC estates, operations and services (in tonnes of CO2e) Household waste recycling rate Recycling contamination rate</p>
<p>Potential</p>	<p>Overall number of businesses in Hartlepool Business deaths Employment rate Unemployment rate Value of the visitor economy (STEAM) Visitor numbers (STEAM) Percentage of the population with Level 2 or higher qualification (5 or more GCSEs or equivalent) Percentage of Council spend that goes to local suppliers</p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Number of transactions delivered digitally Annual balanced budget agreed by Council A Medium-Term Financial Plan that is sustainable Annual accounts produced to statutory deadline and that are determined by External Auditors to be “true and Fair”</p>

Appendix 4 - About Hartlepool Factfile

(in the final published version this will be displayed in an infographic style around the 3 pillars)

People:

- Total Population = 95,336 (ONS 2023 Mid-Year Population Estimate), 3.1% higher than in 2023.
- Number of households = 40,930 (Census 2021), 1.2% higher than in 2011.



- Ethnicity / English not as main language
- All Ofsted regulated Children's Services provided by the Council are judged as good or better.
- 95.6% of Commissioned Adult Social Care Providers rated 'Good or Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission.
- 87.8% of adults with learning disabilities supported to live at home.

Place:

- Over 2 million domestic bins emptied each year.
- Over 14,000 streetlights maintained.
- 356 Council Houses
- Green Flag awards for Ward Jackson Park and Summerhill Country Park
- Seaside Award for Seaton Carew beach
- Carbon reduction
- £135,000 – 2023 average house price
- Capital programme / Regeneration investment

Potential:

- 2,165 businesses in Hartlepool (December 2023)
- £31,584 median gross annual pay for full time workers who are residents and £32,947 for workplaces

The challenges we face:**People**

- Poverty / Fuel poverty / Deprivation
- Homelessness and waiting lists for social housing
- Health inequalities and low life expectancy
- 13.5% Smoking rate
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse rate = 44.2 per 1,000 population over 16 years old (2022/23)
- Children looked after rate = 164 per 10,000 children aged under 18 years old (2023/24)

- Projected growth in the number of residents aged over 65 years old and over 85 years old

Place

- 30.10% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (2022/23)
- 368 miles of footpath and 256 miles of road to maintain

Potential

- Employment rate / Unemployment rate
- Business
- 14.7% with a Level 2 qualification (5 or more GCSEs or equivalent)
- Skills gap



Audit and Governance Committee

23 June 2026

Report of: Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Subject: DEDICATED OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET
2025/26 - UPDATE

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:
- with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide the Audit and Governance Committee with an update in relation to expenditure from the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget in 2025/26.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2013, a budget of £5000 per year was allocated to the Overview and Scrutiny function. The purpose of the budget is to provide support for the delivery of the work programme and development of the function.
- 3.2 The agreed process for the allocation of funding from the dedicated scrutiny budget is that:
- £500 and below. Any expenditure from the Dedicated Scrutiny Budget up to the sum of £500 could be delegated¹ to the Scrutiny Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee. An annual report outlining all expenditure to be presented to the Committee on an annual basis.

¹ Delegation approved by the Audit and Governance Committee on the 13th November 2013

- £500 and above. Appropriateness of any funding requests to be considered by the Committee.

4. Budget Spend for the 2025/26 Financial Year

- 4.1 Further to the required annual update, the Committee is advised that expenditure to date from the 2025/26 dedicated scrutiny budget is a **nil return**.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Audit and Governance Committee notes expenditure from the 2025/26 dedicated scrutiny budget.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact Officers

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Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

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Audit and Governance Committee

23 June 2026

Report of: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE & HR
Subject: REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 – QUARTER 1 UPDATE

1. Council Plan Priority

Hartlepool will be a place:
where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
that is connected, sustainable, clean and green. (Place)
that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (Potential)
with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community. (Organisation)

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1. To provide Members with a quarterly update on the Council’s use of surveillance powers and its policies under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).
- 2.2 Hartlepool Borough Council has powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to conduct authorised covert surveillance where this is necessary and lawful.

- 2.3 This report is presented to Members in accordance with paragraph 4.47 of the *Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Revised Code of Practice (August 2018)*, which states that:

Elected Members of a local authority should review the authority's use of the 1997 Act and the 2000 Act and set the policy at least once a year. They should also consider internal reports on the use of those Acts on a regular basis to ensure that they are being applied consistently with the authority's policy and that the policy remains fit for purpose.

- 2.4 Since 1 November 2012, local authorities may only exercise their powers under RIPA to prevent or detect criminal offences that carry a custodial sentence of at least six months, unless the investigation relates to the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco (not applicable to this Council). These amendments came into force on 1 November 2012.
- 2.5 Examples of cases where authorisation may be sought include serious criminal damage, unlawful or dangerous waste dumping, and serious or persistent benefit fraud. Any surveillance must satisfy the tests of necessity and proportionality. The 2012 amendments mean that authorisations cannot be granted for lower-level offences such as littering, dog control, or fly-posting.
- 2.6 All RIPA authorisations require both internal approval by a designated Authorising Officer and external approval by a Magistrate. Where the Council seeks to undertake directed surveillance or use a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS), an application must be made to a single Justice of the Peace.
- 2.7 During Quarter 1 there have been no authorisations under the RIPA legislation.

Communications Data	Nil
CHIS	Nil
Directed Surveillance	Nil

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the quarterly report be noted.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. To enable the Council to monitor and oversee the use of the powers under the RIPA effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements and relevant guidance.

5. Contact Officers

Hayley Martin, Director of Legal, Governance and HR

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SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

16 January 2026

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Responsible Authority Members:

Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services, Hartlepool Borough Council
Helen Wilson, District Commander, Cleveland Police (Vice Chair)

Other Members:

Jonathan Brash, MP for Hartlepool (Chair)
Chris Woodcock, Acting Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council
Matt Storey, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
Angela Corner, Head of Community Resilience, Thirteen Group

Non-Voting Observer, Councillor Jorgeson, Representative of Audit and Governance Committee, Hartlepool Borough Council

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 John Lovatt was in attendance for Jill Harrison (Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council

Also Present:

Councillors Shane Moore and Amanda Napper
Sergeant Thomas Legg and Anna Waddington, Cleveland Police
Tracey Brittain, Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

Officers:

Phil Gleaves, Youth Justice Service Manager
Phil Hepburn, Enforcement and Car Parking Services Manager
Rachael Readman, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
Steve Hilton, Senior Public Relations Officer
Joan Stevens, Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

19. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Karen Oliver and Owen Riddle, Gordon Bentley (North East and North Cumbria Integrated

Care Board), Ann Powell (Head of Stockton and Hartlepool Probation Delivery Unit), Sean Smith (Cleveland Fire Authority) and Jill Harrison (Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council).

20. **Declarations of Interest**

None

21. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025**

Minutes approved

22. **Development of a Domestic Abuse Strategy**

(Interim Director of Public Health)

Purpose of report

To provide members an opportunity to comment on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Interim Director of Public Health advised members that the current Domestic Abuse Strategy for Hartlepool was due to end this year and a needs assessment had been carried out to inform the development of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2026-2029. This was a requirement under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The needs assessment had reviewed the level of need for domestic abuse services and identified 3 key strategic themes which had been used to inform the draft strategy:

- I. An insufficient availability of support services of victims and survivors, particularly those hidden from services or with complex needs.
- II. Children affected by domestic abuse are not consistently recognised as victims in their own right and current services are not always responsive to their needs
- III. A lack of consistent accountability for perpetrators of domestic abuse and existing intervention services may not be sufficiently effective in changing behaviour or reducing repeat offending.

Consultation on the draft strategy would run until 30 January 2026 with the final strategy due to be considered for approval by Adult Services and Public Health Committee in March 2026. Members were asked to give their feedback on the draft strategy as appended to the report.

The Chair highlighted concerns around the need to create clear pathways and engage with multi-agency partners, specifically high street banks. He felt that it was critical that workers in these organisations be fully trained to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and be able to signpost victims to get the help they needed. The Interim Director of Public Health advised that financial institutions were not yet fully involved in the system wide response but would deal with these issues already. Partnerships continued to evolve.

The Chair referred to the large numbers of people being brought to Hartlepool from the South, some of whom may be victims of domestic abuse. If this was the case the authorities needed to be made aware so that appropriate support could be offered. If other local authorities did not provide this information or transported people without making them aware of where they were being taken then this should be flagged up as it could be damaging to the person concerned and Hartlepool. The Interim Director of Public Health advised he was unable to provide numbers in terms of those who had moved into the area in this manner but indicated that people were sometimes moved for good reasons and this was a national challenge.

Decision

That the draft strategy and members feedback as detailed be noted.

23. Retail Crime Investigation – Final Report *(Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee)*

Purpose of report

To present the Audit and Governance Committee's findings following completion of its investigation into retail crime in Hartlepool and seek approval of its recommendations.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the findings of its investigation into retail crime. Cleveland has one of the highest rates of retail crime and shoplifting in the country which is a concern both financially and in terms of the staff safety. The report gave a clear picture of the scale of the problem and potential reasons behind it, primarily substance abuse. Crimes of this type tended to be committed by repeat offenders and were regularly under reported due to a belief that nothing would be done from a legal perspective. Eight recommendations for a way forward were identified. A joined up approach would be needed to solve this

problem but central to this must be safeguarding workers from violence and abuse. The investigation had been impeded by a lack of engagement from involved parties however in the case of shop owners it had been conducted over the busy Christmas period so this was somewhat understandable. He thanked all those who had engaged and the scrutiny officers for their work as part of the investigation.

The Chair requested an update from the District Commander around the police response. She confirmed that there were dedicated officers posted in the Victoria and Burn Valley areas and there had been significant reductions in retail crime in a number of areas. There was a national focus on this. Sergeant Legg advised that in many cases shop owners were reluctant to report this to the police because of community links to the perpetrators. He estimated around 34% of incidents were reported.

The Chair accepted that the police were under pressure but noted there would be a number of perpetrators who would be jailed then reoffend when released. Sergeant Legg indicated there were procedures in place allowing offenders to be targeted and given conditions around their release.

The Chair suggested the formation of a Retail Crime Forum would be appropriate as it would give retailers a platform to express their views and concerns. The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that a retail Business Partnership was due to commence in a few weeks and a Retail Crime Summit had recently taken place. The findings had been similar to the Audit and Governance Committee report and a lot of retailers had wanted to look at what sentences were being given and whether custodial sentences were correct. He did not want any response to have a negative impact on economic priorities. The Chair acknowledged the work behind the scenes but it did not help if people were scared or intimidated

The Chair thanked all those who had engaged with the Audit and Governance Committee investigation and the scrutiny officers for their work.

Decision

- I. That the Retail Crime investigation report be noted and the recommendations agreed
- II. That progress on the investigation be brought back to the Audit and Governance Committee annually.

24. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Action Plan 2025/26 *(Assistant Director (Regulatory Services))*

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance linked to the priorities outlined in the Community Safety Plan 2024/27.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Community Safety Plan has a strategic objective to make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit. This would be accomplished by focusing on anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol, domestic violence and serious violence. An action plan had been prepared covering each priority and partners were expected to provide an outline of their work. Since the previous update additional actions had been added covering the York Road ramp, off road bike, retail crime and deliberate fires. The recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee retail crime investigation had also been added. Links to other partner action plans were also included.

The Chair requested an update on the town centre public space protection order. The Assistant Director for Regulatory Services confirmed that this was due to be considered by Neighbourhood Services Committee with full support from the police and Police and Crime Commissioner. The consultation on the document had resulted in no real changes to the draft. The Chair urged that every possible option available under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme Powers be considered including handing police powers to security personnel in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre. The Enforcement and Car Parking Services Manager advised that this had previously been a fairly straightforward action. The Assistant Director for Regulatory Services noted that the Public Space Protection Order could only be enforced by the local authority or Police. The Chair acknowledged this and felt given police capacity challenges the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme Powers should be used as a back up. He was reassured that the process was quick.

Decision

That members note the Safer Hartlepool Action Plan 2025/2026 and approve the following additions:

- I. The recommendations from the Audit and Governance Committee report on Retail Crime
- II. The additional actions from Safer Hartlepool Partnership workshops relating to Off Road Bikes, Retail Crime and Deliberate Fires.

25. **Strategic Briefing: Cleveland Police – Violence Against Women and Girls** *(Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland)*

Purpose of report

To give a presentation on the priorities of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner for tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Issue(s) for consideration

The Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager gave a briefing on the work being carried out by the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland to tackle VAWG. This was designed to support joint planning, scrutiny and a unified response to preventing harm, supporting victims and pursuing perpetrators. The prevention of violence against women and girls is a strategic requirement and a priority of the Force's Management Statement and Strategic Plan.

The Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager advised that VAWG offences accounted for 22.5% of total recorded crime in Cleveland between September 2024 and September 2025. This was an overall reduction on the previous year although crimes relating to sexual violence had increased while domestic abuse had decreased. The high number of referrals had impacted on waiting lists and resulted in funding challenges. There was a focus on making support available and accessible to victims. Details were given of the key activities to tackle VAWG through partnership working with voluntary agencies including Harbour, Halo and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust which do work around stalking prevention. Arch Teesside focus on prevention of sexual violence and had recently been given additional funding to support their work. They particularly focus on child abuse victims particularly keeping them engaged with the justice system. In terms of domestic abuse this was not necessarily perpetrated by an intimate partner but could be familial. There were also concerns around an increase in children attacking parents.

In terms of funding this is calculated based on the population of the police force area rather than crime rates or demand on victim services meaning that despite having the highest rate of violence in the country and being amongst the most economically deprived Cleveland receives less funding per person than other areas with lower crime rates. The Police and Crime Commissioner had written to the Chancellor as part of a campaign to make the system fairer. He had also responded to the Government's Independent Review of Criminal Courts welcoming their recommendations to make the justice system more effective and improve victim experiences.

Specific plans for making women and girls feel safe and supported while holding perpetrators to account were from 2025-2027 were detailed. Action plans around the night time economy and a reduction in town centre violence were also outlined.

The Chair thanked the Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager for a complex presentation reflecting the seriousness of the issue. He was pleased to see a reduction in domestic abuse and noted that if there was parity of funding the Cleveland area would be entitled to around £1 million more. In his role as Member of Parliament he had raised this issue in the House of Commons and been told there were plans to look at the current funding formula during the life of this Parliament.

A member asked what was being done in terms of getting information from schools around potential perpetrators. The Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager advised that they would be looking at key priorities with other partners but there was a concern around labelling young people at this early stage of their lives. They would work with schools and with sports providers to help support them to become healthy adults. In terms of social media work on cyber crime and digital online crimes was ongoing but this was more than VAWG with radicalisation also a concern. The Chair expressed his support as Member of Parliament for a ban on under 16s accessing social media.

The Chair noted that 84% of victims of sexual crime know their attacker and asked what the impact of this was. The Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager indicated that in many cases the victim was unwilling to pursue prosecution for this reason as the defence would make reference to the relationship. The Chair noted that the current media narrative was focused around the 16% attacked by strangers. The Policy, Partnerships and Delivery Manager acknowledged this saying they were working with partners to help correct these distorted narratives. In terms of prosecution the District Commander advised that officers were trained to gather as much evidence as possible even if a person decided they did not wish to pursue prosecution. An application could be made to the courts for an order to prevent the perpetrator from contacting the victim or coming near them. Perpetrators could also be given access to programmes such as alcohol prevention but they have to be willing to engage with this. The Chair asked that she write to him with suggestions of how to make improvements and he would take them forward with the relevant ministers.

The Chair asked that a copy of the presentation be circulated to all members of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership

Decision

That the presentation and information given to the Partnership be noted.

26. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair reported that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 18th February at 5pm. This would be a face the public event around anti-social behaviour. He asked that members promote this meeting to ensure maximum attendance.

The meeting concluded at 2.25pm

CHAIR