



Hartlepool  
Borough Council

# Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services Committee Agenda

30 June 2026

**Time:** 1pm

**Location:** Council Chamber

**Members:** Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services Committee  
Councillors Buglass (VC), Hughes, Jorgeson, Little,  
Napper (C), Oliver and Scarborough

**Parish Council Co-opted Members:**

L Noble (Dalton Piercy Parish Council)  
S Smith (Greatham Parish Council)  
R Thompson (Elwick Parish Council)

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## 1. Apologies for absence

## 2. To receive any declarations of interest by members

## 3. Minutes

- 3.1 To receive the Minutes and Decision Record of the meeting held on 2 March 2026 (*previously circulated*).

### CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has been evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.



#### **4. Budget And Policy Framework Items**

4.1 None.

#### **5. Key Decisions**

5.1 School Meals Review – *Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*

#### **6. Other Items Requiring Decision**

6.1 Restriction of Vehicular Access to Land at the Rear of Bruntoft Avenue –  
*Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)*

#### **7. Items for information**

7.1 None.

#### **8. Any other business which the chair considers urgent**

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting: 15 September 2026 at 10am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



# Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services Committee

30 June 2026

**Report of:** Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services

**Subject:** SCHOOL MEALS REVIEW

**Decision Type:** Key Decision NRS 121/26

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## 1. Council Plan Priority

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b> (DELETE AS APPROPRIATE)
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where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
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## 2. Purpose of Report

2.1 To request approval for the school meal price effective from September 2026.

**2.2 This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) attached as Appendix 1.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Historically, Hartlepool Borough Council's in-house catering service (the 'service') had provided meals to all but three schools in Hartlepool up until ten years ago. Over the last decade the service has seen this number reduced gradually by Academy Trusts looking to private contractors for their catering at a lower cost, or by schools taking on the catering provision independent of the council.
- 3.2 In September 2024, the service was still providing meals at 25 primary schools including Horizon School and High Tunstall College of Science. To do this, the service employed over 160 catering staff.
- 3.3 In September 2025, this significantly reduced with seven schools choosing to leave the service, leaving only 18 schools including Horizon and High Tunstall, with 110 catering staff.
- 3.4 In September 2026, we expect to have 15 schools using the service. As the number of schools has reduced, whilst direct costs (staffing, ingredients etc.) has reduced, overhead costs for running the service remain broadly the same.
- 3.5 The council has previously recognised the importance of providing a schools meal service and has therefore been willing to subsidise the cost of service provision. This included allowing for additional costs during the covid pandemic and the significant inflationary pressures that followed. As such the council taxpayer is subsidising the school meal costs for 15 Hartlepool schools.
- 3.6 This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) attached as Appendix 1.**
- 3.7 The true cost of a UK primary school meal is estimated to be in excess of £3.44. The meal price charged by the council is currently £2.79, which is 65p less than the estimated true cost of a meal.
- 3.8 Approximately 80% of the meals provided are for free school meals, rather than paid for by parents. There is no specific 'per meal' rate for this funding as it is part of a wider schools funding formula, however for planning purposes it is assumed that this is in line with the Universal Free School Meal rate which is estimated to rise to £2.66 for 2026 pending confirmation from government. This therefore indicates a funding gap amounting to 78p for every free school meal consumed in comparison to the estimated true cost. In Hartlepool, the

cost of meals is currently 13p above the funding rate received by schools, and schools have to fund this differential through their budget.

## 4. Current Position

- 4.1 As part of efforts to remove the on-going subsidy, the service had a £50,000 savings target agreed for 2025/26. At Q2 2025/26 it was identified that due to a reduction in the number of schools that still receive our service, fewer economies of scale were being achieved and the service faced a significant deficit in 2025/26, over and above the subsidy. The £50,000 savings target was therefore not achieved and the service faced a further £50,000 pressure for the new national insurance contributions which came into effect in 2025.
- 4.2 The department has done everything it can to maintain the quality service. It has always produced meals that meet all government school food guidelines. The menus are constantly revised to keep costs down; however, food inflation is still at an all-time high.
- 4.3 The service has reduced staffing levels to an absolute minimum in all schools to counteract rising payroll costs but with the increases in pay being aimed at the lower scale points, this has seen staffing costs grow exponentially over the past five years.
- 4.4 Despite best efforts the subsidy required to run the catering service has risen and is expected to continue to rise as the number of schools receiving the service reduces, and the cost of food, staffing and other incidentals continues to rise. The service needs to generate an additional £70,000 just to maintain the status quo.

## 5. Proposals

- 4.1 Work has been carried out looking at the following options
- That the price per meal is increased to a level which will remove all or some of the subsidies
  - That we explore running a joint service with neighbouring local authorities.
- 4.2 The option of a shared service has been explored but appears to be unlikely as other Local Authorities are experiencing similar issues. As such this report addresses the option of an increase to the cost per meal to cover operating costs and remove the part or all of the subsidy.

4.3 It is therefore proposed to increase the cost per meal (attached as **Appendix 1**). **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)**

4.4 There are three options proposed for members' consideration:

1. Increase the meal price to £4.00. This would remove all subsidies and also cover the £70K inflationary costs. This is based on a 50% reduction in paid meals and no reduction in free school meals i.e. all current schools keep our service. Such an increase would increase the school cost to £1.34 per meal from the current 13p. The increase for parents choosing to continue with a paid school meal would be £1.21 per meal.
2. Increase the meal price to £3.60. This is based on an assumed 50% reduction in paid meals and no reduction in free meals, i.e. all current schools keep our service. This option would cover all direct costs and only leave the central overheads as the remaining subsidy. Inflationary pressures would be covered by income from meals. Such an increase would increase the school cost to 94p per meal from the current 13p. The increase for parents choosing to continue with a paid school meal would be £81p per meal.
3. Increase the meal price to £3.43. This is based on an assumed 25% reduction in paid meals and no reduction of free meals, i.e. all current schools keep our service. This option would cover all direct costs and only leave the central overheads as the remaining subsidy. Inflationary pressures would be covered by income from meals. Such an increase would increase the school cost to 77p per meal from the current 13p. The increase for parents choosing to continue with a paid school meal would be £64p per meal. This is the recommended option.

4.5 Schools have been advised of the potential for the council to increase prices and that this is the indicative price from September 2026 to allow them to plan their budgets accordingly.

## 6. Other Considerations/Implications

<b>Risk Implications</b>	<p>Any increase in the cost of a school meal could result in schools transferring to other service providers. Should this occur in September, it may be that the service fails to cover its direct costs given additional loss of economies of scale.</p> <p>A further reduction in school numbers is likely to impact on the on-going viability of the service.</p>
<b>Financial Considerations</b>	As detailed in section 5 of the report.
<b>Subsidy Control</b>	N/A
<b>Legal Considerations</b>	The Authority has the power to provide a school meals service under the Education Act 1996 and associated legislation. In setting meal prices, the Council must ensure it is acting reasonably and in accordance with its fiduciary duty to manage public funds appropriately.
<b>Single Impact Assessment</b> (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)	Attached as <b>Appendix 2</b> . This item contains exempt information under <b>Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006)</b> namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
<b>Staff Considerations</b>	Attached as <b>Appendix 1</b> - This item contains exempt information under <b>Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006)</b> namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
<b>Asset Management Considerations</b>	None.
<b>Environment, Sustainability and Climate</b>	None.

<b>Change Considerations</b>	
<b>Consultation</b>	The schools that currently use the service have been advised of the indicative price rise in order to allow them to set their budgets accordingly. Schools have until the end of this academic year to sign up for the service.

## 7. Recommendations

7.1 That the price of a school meal from September 2026 should be set at £3.43

**7.2 This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, (para 3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) – attached at Appendix 1.**

## 8. Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 To reduce the budget deficit within the service.

## 9. Background Papers

9.1. None.

## 10. Contact Officer

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 Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services  
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 01429 284291

Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 3 June 2026
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 3 June 2026
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 3 June 2026



# Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services Committee

date

**Report of:** Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)

**Subject:** RESTRICTION OF VEHICULAR ACCESS TO LAND  
AT THE REAR OF BRUNTOFT AVENUE

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

## 1. Council Plan Priority

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)
that is connected, sustainable, clean and green. (Place)

## 2. Purpose of Report

2.1. To prohibit vehicular access to the area of land to the rear of 21 – 89 (odds) Bruntoft Avenue, Hartlepool

## 3. Background

3.1 Officers were approached by ward councilors to investigate a longer term solution to the constant fly tipping issues and deliberate fires that occur on HBC land between the railway line and the rear of properties on Bruntoft Avenue. The land is regularly used for large scale fly tipping, normally from apparent house clearance items and where items with no scrap metal value are then set on fire either by the perpetrators or local youths. The Fire

Brigade are frequently called to attend to the deliberate fires and our own Cleansing Team are regularly required to clear the fly tipping and / or fire damaged debris before it becomes a risk to the public.

- 3.2 In an effort to tackle the fly tipping issue, The Enforcement Team deployed two temporary CCTV cameras in and around the vehicular access point to the site, however these cameras were stolen and/or damaged beyond repair. The installation of such cameras can only be used on a temporary basis. The reinstallation of cameras does not therefore provide a long term solution
- 3.3 Access to the site is via a narrow lane between numbers 81 and 83 Bruntoft Avenue which leads onto a hard standing and open area of grass land and shrubs. Some of the land has designated desire routes created by vehicle use and pedestrian walkways but much is overgrown.
- 3.4 HBC Enforcement Officers have carried out a number of investigations into fly tipping incidents at this site, most of which have been unable to recover any meaningful evidence that can be pursued. The use of CCTV camera installed on a temporary basis with the resident's knowledge and co-operation has not been successful at this location. This site is vast, and although we can obtain vehicle reg. numbers entering and leaving the site (in day light) there are limitations in the temporary cameras.
- 3.5 The pictures in **Appendix 1** were taken on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 and show flytipping on the site at that time, this demonstrates the type of reported fly tipping activity, the aftermath of fire damage and the risk of fire spreading to the close proximity of surrounding trees / bushes and properties.
- 3.6 As part of the Pride In Place work carried out in this area results were given that around 8 and half tonnes of waste has been removed from the rear of Bruntoft Avenue at a significant cost to the authority.
- 3.7 Data received from Cleveland Fire Brigade shows they have attended 22 fires in the period between 02/02/2025 and 09/11/2025. There have been a further 31 fires between the dates of 09/11/2025 and 01/05/2026.
- 3.8 Council data shows that since January 2024 we received 20 reports of fly tipping at this location.
- 3.9 This site has previously had gated access with local residents able to obtain keys. This has proved unsuccessful in preventing fly tipping in this area with the gate regularly being left open and the lock damaged.
- 3.10A limited number of the properties use the site for vehicular access to the rear of their own properties either to access garages or hard standing areas within the curtilage of the fence line that the residents have created. The site is within HBC ownership. Legal Services have advised that residents have no formal rights of access nor have any licenses to allow vehicle access

been granted. Any current access arrangement is therefore informal and historical but could have been established for a number of years. Access from the front of the properties is not possible due to the existing housing layout, although additional on street parking was created a number of years ago.

- 3.11 In March 2023 a report was presented to Neighbourhood Services Committee to prohibit vehicular access to the area of land to the rear of 166 – 294 (even) West View Road, Hartlepool to provide a longer term solution to the constant fly tipping issues and deliberate fires that occur on HBC land between the railway line and the rear of properties. Following that report vehicular access was restricted with no keys provided to local residents. The removal of vehicular access has been successful in resolving the continual fly tipping and deliberate fires in this area with no reported fly tipping at this location since August 2023.

## 4. Proposals

- 4.1 To install a new locked gate to prevent vehicular access to the site with the capacity to be opened if emergency access is required and / or HBC services need periodic access to the area. The restricted access controls would be from Bruntoft Avenue end of this access lane.
- 4.2 Cleveland Fire Brigade support this proposal as it will reduce deliberate fires in this area.
- 4.3 Residents have no legal right of vehicular access to the rear of their properties, but many will have been able to enjoy such access through established historic use. In response to concerns that the proposal would remove disability access that is required to rear drive or rear of property it should be noted that additional on street parking was created some years ago which could compensate for any forced vehicle displacement.
- 4.4 When the site visit was carried out on 3<sup>rd</sup> June it was found that the soil track to the rear of the properties was in a very poor condition with large pot holes and undulations and would not be suitable for access by cars. Although there is evidence that some residents do still use the land as a vehicular access, there are several garages to the rear of properties which have clearly not been used for some time.
- 4.5 Although there is evidence that some residents do still use the land as a vehicular access, there are several garages to the rear of properties which have clearly not been used for some time.
- Appendix 2** is a location plan showing those properties affected.  
**Appendix 3** is a google maps download of the site

## 5. Options

## 5.1 The options to consider

1. To install a new locked gate to prevent vehicular access to the site with the capacity to be opened if emergency access is required and / or HBC services need periodic access to the area. The restricted access controls would be from Bruntoft Avenue end of this access lane.
2. Do nothing as the installation of CCTV cameras is not a long term solution, cameras previously located at this site have been damaged and stolen. The repair of the existing gate providing residents with keys to access the site has previously been trailed unsuccessful as the gate was left unsecure the lock was damaged and fly tipping continued.

## 6. Other Considerations/Implications

<b>Risk Implications</b>	Non-applicable
<b>Financial Considerations</b>	Whilst there will be a financial cost associated with the installation of the bollards which will be met from existing departmental budgets, there will hopefully be a resulting saving from reduced fly tipping at this location.
<b>Subsidy Control</b>	Non-applicable
<b>Legal Considerations</b>	Legal Services have advised that residents have no formal rights of vehicular access to this area, nor have any licences to allow vehicle access been granted. Any current access arrangement is therefore informal and historical
<b>Single Impact Assessment</b>	Non-applicable
<b>Staff Considerations</b>	Non-applicable
<b>Asset Management Considerations</b>	Non-applicable
<b>Environment, Sustainability and Climate</b>	Non-applicable

<b>Change Considerations</b>	
<b>Consultation</b>	A consultation was sent to residents of 21 – 89 (odds) Bruntoft Avenue a total of 39 properties asking for their views and potential support for the closure of vehicle access by installing a gate / restricted pedestrian gateway at the entrance to the site. We received 16 responses, 10 of which were in favour of the closure (Reasons in Favour of proposal Fly tipping, Fires ASB Car theft Rats Regular vehicles Residents using the land for their personal use) and 6 which opposed it claiming Disability access required to rear drive or rear of property.

## 7. Recommendations

6.1 To approve the prohibition of vehicular access to the land to the rear of 21–89 (odds) Bruntoft Avenue, and to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Legal and Governance to prepare and implement the necessary legal documentation to give effect to the closure.

## 8. Reasons for Recommendations

8.1. This reflects the majority support of residents who responded to the consultation and favoured the restriction of vehicular access proposed and will reduce fly tipping and deliberate fires in this area.

## 9. Background Papers

9.1. None

## 10. Contact Officers

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Sign Off:-

Chief Executive	Date: 9 June 26
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 9 June 26
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 9 June 26









