



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Housing, Growth and Communities Committee Minutes and Decision Record

17 June 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: 5:00pm

Location: Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillors Rob Darby (In the Chair)

Councillors Quewone Bailey-Fleet, Dave Bruce, Fiona Cook, Corinne Male and Aaron Roy

Parish Council Co-opted members: Stephen Smith (Greatham Parish Council)

Also present: Councillors Scott Gaiety, Amanda Napper and Mike Young

Officers: Gemma Ptak, Director of Housing, Growth and Communities
Suzanne Halliwell, Assistant Director (Housing and Communities)
Javed Khan, Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth)
Scott Campbell, Service Manager
Angela Lucas, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer
Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Matthew Dodds

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes

Minutes from 11th March 2026 – received.

4. **Crisis Resilience Fund Delivery Plan** (Assistant Director – Housing and Communities)

Type of decision

Key

Purpose of report

To approve proposed delivery plan for the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) in preparation for submission to government 1st July 2026.

Issue(s) for consideration

The CRF launched in April 2026 and runs until March 2029. It replaces the Household Support Fund and incorporates elements of the former Discretionary Housing Payments. Hartlepool was allocated £2,357,132 for 2026/27 through the CRF including £233,796 specifically ringfenced for housing payments. The fund runs until March 2029 and future years payments are expected to be broadly similar albeit that the housing payment allocation will drop to £180,929 for the final year. Local schemes are expected to address 3 main outcomes namely:

- Provision of crisis support
- Improvement of the individual's financial resilience
- Bolstering the local level support landscape

A detailed proposal for the CRF Plan was appended to the report structured under the areas required by the DWP namely crisis payments, building resilience investments, community coordination, housing costs and administrative costs. The plan was based around a number of principles one of which was to proactively identify the root causes of vulnerability and where resilience could be best developed in order to mitigate the human impact and costs of crisis. Partners are integral to design and delivery. The Council are required to submit their delivery plans by 1st July 2026 and members were asked to approve the proposed delivery plan with the acknowledgment that the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Chair of Housing, Growth and Communities Committee be given delegated discretion during the course of the CRF to manage variances to ensure the grant is fully utilised.

A member noted that the CRF had launched in April but information was only now being made available. Officers confirmed that there were obligations on Council's to develop plans by 1st July 2026 and clarity on processes and plans had not been supplied to enable implementation from 1st April. The grant continues to be

available under the House Hold Support Fund policy and approach, to ensure support is available to residents who are in need and eligible. Full adoption of Crisis Resilience Policy and Framework will be from September 2026 which is supported by HM Government, expectations on this are being managed with residents.

The Director of Housing, Growth and Communities responded as follows to member queries:

- Recruitment of additional staff to support the CRF was underway with staff expected to be in place as soon as safer recruitment processes enable and assumed no later than the end of the calendar year.
- Engagement had taken place with the voluntary and community sector, there will be provider opportunities for the sector and appointment will be through assessment of expressions of interest across a number of lots, applications should demonstrate experience and quality. It is assumed there will be increased engagement due to the value of funds available being higher.
- There is currently proactive connectivity with employment and skills services, maximising the economic activity or possible return to work for people where necessary.
- Applicants could apply directly but systems would also be put in place to proactively identify those who would benefit from advice and support through a data analytics online platform (LIFT), this will enable preventative working.
- Cash is available and a cash first approach is proactively supported with CRF. This is not the preference of all individuals due to personal circumstances and this is managed on a case by case basis. There will be support in relation to benefit maximisation and also making people aware of other opportunities available for example discount water rates.
- Not all applications for Household Support Funding and DHP have been successful and this will be the case for CRF. There will be wider opportunities of support that may be more appropriate to manage long term reliance on services and encourage personal resilience.
- The CRF is in place until March 2029, it's success will be monitored and consideration may be given to extension or reinvestment based on the preventative approach and value for money.

Decision

That the delivery plan as set out in Appendix 1 be approved. Delegated discretion be given to the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Chair of Housing, Growth and Communities Committee during the course of the CRF to manage variances to ensure the grant is fully utilised.

5. Pride in Place Programme Update (Director of Housing, Growth and Communities)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with an update on Hartlepool's Pride in Place Programme

Issue(s) for consideration

Pride in Place is a Government initiative, providing £20 million of funding over a 10-year period for community regeneration. There are 3 strategic initiatives namely thriving places, stronger communities and taking back control. As per Government guidance the Pride in Place Programme operates as a partnership comprising the Hartlepool Board, Local Authority and Local Community. The Hartlepool Board is responsible for the strategic oversight and governance of the funding. They had developed a 10-year regeneration plan (appended to the report) supported by a 4-year Investment Plan. Extensive community and stakeholder engagement had been undertaken to develop this plan and the Hartlepool Board had chosen to adopt the following priority themes which were those most strongly identified by residents:

- Safety and security
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Cohesion
- High Street, Heritage and Regeneration

They had also identified Housing and Education & Opportunity as foundational themes and Community Power as a cross-cutting way of working for the Board. Communities were placed at the centre of the programme.

The Regeneration and Investment Plans were approved by the Board and submitted to Government in November 2025. The following April the Council and Independent Chair of the Hartlepool Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the 10 year programme. In March 2026, 3 innovation days were held to translate community priorities into deliverable interventions. These brought together 140 partners, stakeholders, community representatives and residents to develop ideas aligned with the priority investment themes. An Investment Prospectus was now being developed which would underpin the launch of Open

Calls for Proposals in Autumn 2026. This will allow organisations and partnerships to submit proposals aligned to the agreed priorities and outcomes of the Pride in Place Programme.

Members praised officers for their work in setting up the Hartlepool Board and encouraging collaboration between the partners. The Director of Housing, Growth and Communities said this was a tribute to the hard work of the Service Manager. She responded to member queries as follows:

- Vacant shops and spaces across Hartlepool were one of their highest priorities.
- Organisations will be invited to apply through an open call process. Due diligence will be applied to prevent financial and legal risk. Consideration needs to be given in relation to any organisations who are not constituted however this is across the lifetime of the programme and more planning is needed. There was a level of caution given that this was public money and the Council was ultimately accountable for the way it would be spent. Assurance was given that appropriate systems, processes and sign off of all spend was in place.
- Applications will not have to be made online and consideration will be given to ensure accessibility for all applicants.
- Officers confirmed that Parish Councils will be eligible to apply for funds and advice will be shared on this when investments are launched.
- The Director of Housing, Growth and Communities was ultimately responsible for the sign off of any approved funding applications. She would be happy to run through the due diligence that is in place with elected members. Hartlepool Board ensure allocations are in line with criteria and strategic priorities. Board meetings are public and transparent with all details available online.

A member noted that the involvement of the wider sectors in these allocations could result in match funding which would not happen if it was just Council involvement.

Decision

- I. That the current progress of the Pride in Place Programme be noted and the 10-year Regeneration Plan and 4-year Investment Plan be endorsed.
- II. That the proposed next steps be noted including the development of an Investment Prospectus and subsequent launch of Open Calls for Proposals in Autumn 2026 aligned with the agreed priorities of the Pride in Place Regeneration Plan.

6. Pride in Place Impact Fund Update (Director of Housing, Growth and Communities)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide Committee with an update on the £1.5 million Pride in Place Impact Fund, including the interventions being delivered across Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

Hartlepool was allocated £1.5 million through the Pride in Place Impact Fund over a 2 year period (£750,000 per year). This is focussed on 3 strategic objectives namely community spaces, public spaces and high street revitalisation. The Council is the accountable body for the fund and dedicated officers provide oversight to ensure that all investment decisions are subject to due diligence and funding managed in line with grant conditions, statutory and legal obligations and financial governance requirements. As per the guidance, Hartlepool's MP is consulted on the sign-off of funding allocations for the Impact Fund in Hartlepool and engagement with the wider community and stakeholders is undertaken through the Hartlepool Board. Funds must be delivered by March 2027 with any remaining monies returning to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Details of the key investments for Year 1 and the proposed investments for Year 2 were given within the report.

The Service Manager gave a brief presentation outlining some of the projects delivered in the first year of the impact fund. These included improvements to Rossmere Park, Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre, Hartlepool Rovers Rugby Club, Browning Avenue Baptist Church and West View Project.

A member praised the team for their work on the impact fund. She was pleased to see the proposed reinvigoration of York Road and Raby Road but questioned how the economic value of this could be measured. The Director of Housing, Growth and Communities advised that this could be measured through the amount of footfall before and after the process. Both areas had come up during the consultation process as being in need of investment. None of the business premises identified for investment were Council owned.

In terms of the consultation process for the areas which had been improved the Service Manager confirmed that communities had been fully involved. Specifically relating to Rossmere Park local residents and families had been asked what they wished to see and the Council's technical experts had advised on where equipment should be placed. All parks across the town required

improvement but priorities were based on assessed need and had not been a political decision.

Decision

- I. That the progress made in the delivery of the Pride in Place Impact Fund be noted including the Year 1 investments across Hartlepool.
- II. That the proposed investments for Year 2 be noted
- III. That the governance, financial management and assurance arrangements in place to support effective management and delivery of the Pride in Place Impact Fund be noted.

7. Any other business which the Chairman considers urgent

A member requested an update on the work around the protocols for out of area placements. The Director of Housing, Growth and Communities would discuss this with them outside the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6:55pm

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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