



Audit and Governance Committee

14 July 2026

Report of: Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2026-27 –
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

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 progress the setting of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2026-27.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Audit and Governance Committee on the 23rd June 2026 considered potential topics, from within its statutory scrutiny responsibilities (health and crime and disorder), for proactive investigation during 2026/27. A number of potential topics were identified, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Potential Work Programme Topics

Topic	PICK Score
Maternity Services in Hartlepool	Appendix A
Community Cohesion (focusing in part, but not solely on hate crime)	Appendix B
Serious violence / knife crime in Hartlepool	Appendix C
Crime and Anti-social Behaviour (young men and boys)	Appendix D

Reoffending in Hartlepool	Appendix E
---------------------------	-------------------

3.2 To assist the Committee in making an informed decision, further information against each suggestion is attached in Appendices B to E. Members of the Committee will be asked to consider a PICK score for each topic suggestion.

3.3 The Committee is reminded of the need to:

- i) Focus its resources on issues of interest to the residents of Hartlepool, where it can have influence and add value.
- ii) 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 F** 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)
- iv) Consider the potential value of establishing working/ task and finish groups to carry out work relating to the topics. Evidence gathered by such groups will be reported back to full Committee. This will maximise the use of resources and time, assisting in the collection of evidence to inform investigations and helping manage the duration of formal meetings.

4. 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, consultation will be carried out for each investigation as applicable.

5. Recommendations

6.1 To set the 2026/27 Statutory Scrutiny Work Programme.

6. Reasons for Recommendations

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

7. Background Papers

7.1. Audit and Governance Committee report (23 June 2026)

8. Contact Officers

Joan Stevens
Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Tel: 01429 284142
Email: joan.stevens@hartlepool.gov.uk

Appendix A

Topic:											
Maternity Services in Hartlepool											
Background Information											
The provision of maternity services for Hartlepool residents from the University Hospital Hartlepool (UHH) has been a long-standing issue, considered by the Audit and Governance Committee (as part of this Health overview and scrutiny responsibilities) and Health and Wellbeing Board. The most recent discussions related to the temporary cessation of deliveries at the Rowan Unit. Provisional scope: - Update on maternity services from the UHH - Update on the cessation of services from the Rowen Unit (timescale for reopening) - Where Hartlepool mothers are being referred to for the delivery of babies - Future plans for the delivery of maternity services across the Tees Valley and UHH Previous consideration: - Scrutiny investigation (2019) followed by updates - Health and Wellbeing Board updated on the cessation of services (2025) Options for consideration: - Single meeting / focused session (ICB have agreed to come to a meeting to provide an update – date TBC)											
AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION	PICK Scoring System (Suggestion score)										
Public Interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen <table><tr><th>Score</th><th>Measure</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>no public interest</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>low public interest</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>medium public interest</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>high public interest</td></tr></table>	Score	Measure	0	no public interest	1	low public interest	2	medium public interest	3	high public interest	3 (Raised by Members in response to public comments)
Score	Measure										
0	no public interest										
1	low public interest										
2	medium public interest										
3	high public interest										
Impact – priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental, and health and well-being of the area <table><tr><th>Score</th><th>Measure</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>no impact</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>low impact</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>medium impact</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>high impact</td></tr></table>	Score	Measure	0	no impact	1	low impact	2	medium impact	3	high impact	2
Score	Measure										
0	no impact										
1	low impact										
2	medium impact										
3	high impact										

Appendix A

Council 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 budget proposals		1
Score	Measure	
0	'Green' on or above target performance	
1	'Amber',	
2	low performance 'Red'	
Keep in Context – work programmes must take into account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort		2
Score	Measure	
0	Already dealt with/ no priority	
1	Longer term aspiration or plan	
2	Need for review acknowledged and work planned elsewhere	
3	Need for review acknowledged	

TOTAL SCORE: 8

Appendix B

Topic: Community Cohesion (work including hate crime)											
Background Information A scrutiny investigation to provide an overview / progress update on community cohesion activity in Hartlepool, examining how public services, community organisations and residents work together to build understanding, inclusion and resilience across diverse communities. Provisional scope: - Consider the local response to hate crime and the support available to victims, with a wider focus on exploring the factors that contribute to community cohesion. This could include community engagement, integration, tackling prejudice and discrimination, reducing inequalities, and strengthening relationships between different groups. - Identify current strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement, helping to ensure Hartlepool remains a safe, welcoming and inclusive place for all residents. - Consideration of Implementation Plan Previous consideration: - Significant community cohesion work already undertaken. - Scrutiny investigation (hate crime - 2015) Options for consideration: - Selected as a single piece of proactive scrutiny for 2026/7, or - One briefing session on the implementation plan - Could effectively combine other topic suggestions (Crime and ASB / Re-offending)											
AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION	PICK Scoring System (Suggestion score)										
Public Interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Measure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>no public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>low public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>medium public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>high public interest</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Measure	0	no public interest	1	low public interest	2	medium public interest	3	high public interest	2 (Covers issues raised by Members in response to public comments)
Score	Measure										
0	no public interest										
1	low public interest										
2	medium public interest										
3	high public interest										
Impact – priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental, and health and well-being of the area <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Measure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>no impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>low impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>medium impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>high impact</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Measure	0	no impact	1	low impact	2	medium impact	3	high impact	3
Score	Measure										
0	no impact										
1	low impact										
2	medium impact										
3	high impact										

Appendix B

Council 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 budget proposals		1
Score	Measure	
0	'Green' on or above target performance	
1	'Amber',	
2	low performance 'Red'	
Keep in Context – work programmes must take into account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort		2
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	

TOTAL SCORE: 8

Appendix C

Topic: Serious violence / knife crime in Hartlepool	
Background Information Hartlepool, like many communities across the country, continues to face challenges associated with serious crime and knife crime and the significant impact these offences can have on individuals, families and neighbourhoods. Key stakeholders to include Cleveland Police, Hartlepool Borough Council, the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV), education providers, health services, youth justice and youth support organisations, community and voluntary sector representatives, and other relevant partners involved in tackling serious violence. This would include supporting those at risk of offending or becoming victims of crime. Latest available local intelligence shows that serious crime remains a significant challenge in Hartlepool. The Hartlepool Crime Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reports that violence against the person continues to be the most common crime type in the borough and that overall crime rates remain substantially higher than regional and national averages. While recent data indicates a reduction in weapon possession offences, other serious crime categories, including robbery and drug-related offending, have shown an increasing trend. The JSNA also highlights that serious and weapon-related crime is disproportionately concentrated within the borough's most deprived communities, contributing to fear of crime, community harm and adverse outcomes for young people and vulnerable residents. These trends reinforce the importance of continued partnership activity to prevent serious violence, reduce knife crime, support victims and address the underlying causes of offending (Hartlepool Crime JSNA). Provisional scope: - Local concerns and emerging trends - Prevalence, causes and consequences of serious violence and knife-related offending within the borough - Effectiveness of current prevention, intervention and enforcement activity and identify opportunities to strengthen partnership working and enhance community safety (including outreach work) Previous consideration: - Significant community cohesion work already undertaken Options for consideration: - Selected as a single piece of proactive scrutiny for 2026/7 - One meeting briefing session. - Potential to combine with reoffending topic	AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION
	PICK Scoring System

Appendix C

		(Suggestion score)
Public Interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen		2
Score	Measure	
0	no public interest	
1	low public interest	
2	medium public interest	
3	high public interest	
Impact – priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental, and health and well-being of the area		2
Score	Measure	
0	no impact	
1	low impact	
2	medium impact	
3	high impact	
Council 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 budget proposals		1
Score	Measure	
0	'Green' on or above target performance	
1	'Amber',	
2	low performance 'Red'	
Keep in Context – work programmes must take into account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort		2
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	

TOTAL SCORE: 7

Appendix D

Topic:

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour (young men and boys)

Background Information

Young men and boys in Hartlepool can face a range of challenges that increase their vulnerability to crime and anti-social behaviour, including poverty, poor mental health, educational disengagement, family instability, adverse childhood experiences, and a lack of positive opportunities or role models. These factors can be compounded by peer pressure, exploitation by criminal groups, substance misuse, and social isolation.

While these challenges remain significant, Hartlepool has seen encouraging reductions in youth offending in recent years. Data from Hartlepool Youth Justice Service shows that referrals to the service fell from 320 in 2015/16 to 111 in 2018/19, reflecting a substantial reduction in youth offending and first-time entrants to the youth justice system. The Hartlepool Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2024/25 also highlights that the town has experienced a significant reduction in youth crime, although reducing reoffending remains a key priority. Addressing the underlying causes of offending through early intervention, education, family support, and positive community engagement continues to be essential to improving outcomes for young people.

Crime Trends in Hartlepool (taken from Hartlepool JSNA)

The number of Recorded Offences in Hartlepool (Excluding Fraud) was 130.1 per 1,000 population for the year ending December 2025. This is higher than the North East Rate of 96.44 per 1,000 which itself is higher than the national rate of 84.09 per 1,000. Hartlepool's rate is 7th Highest of 292 local authorities. The rate has decreased from a peak of 151 per 1,000 in the year ending June 2023.

Violence against the person, Theft and Shoplifting are the most common types of crime with 46.35, 42.48 and 24 offences per 1,000 population in the year ending December 2025 respectively. The crime types where Hartlepool ranked highest nationally were Criminal Damage and Arson (2nd highest Local Authority in England), Shoplifting (2nd highest) and Miscellaneous Crime (4th Highest). Theft from the person was the only crime type where Hartlepool's rate was in the lowest half of local authorities.

Bicycle Theft has increased since December 2024 which is against regional and national trends whilst Stalking and Harassment offences in Hartlepool have reduced over the last 2 years. Possession of weapons has decreased since December 2024. Drug Offences, Robbery, Sexual Offences and Theft offences have seen an increasing trend in Hartlepool over the last few years.

At the local level, Burn Valley and Headland & Harbour wards consistently report the highest crime rates, though trends are volatile, likely due to smaller populations. Finally, street-level data confirms that crime is concentrated in Hartlepool's most deprived areas (IMD 1–4), highlighting the strong link between deprivation and crime prevalence.

Figures for anti-social behaviour reported to the council show an increasing trend with fewer than 400 incidents reported in 2020, 2021 and 2022 but over 600 reported in 2023 and 2024. April 2025 was the month with the most incidents (85) followed by June 2023 (84) and July 2024 (77). Around 1 in 5 incidents reported to the council are related to Drugs / Substance misuse and dealing which was the most common category of incident. Victoria is the ward

Appendix D

with the most incidents of ASB followed by Burn Valley and Foggy Furze. Victoria in particular saw a significant increase in incidents with the number in 2023 (102) more than double the previous year (48) and increasing further in 2024 to 141.

Provisional scope:

- Does data support the identification of this as an issue?
- Levels of youth crime in Hartlepool (breakdown across age and gender)
- Issue from a young man / boy's perspective
- Challenges
- Support services / interventions (effectiveness / impact)

Previous consideration:

- Scrutiny investigation (2020)

Options for consideration:

- Tie into consideration of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan (September – A&G) and Community cohesion issue without need for separate investigation

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION		PICK Scoring System (Suggestion score)										
Public Interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen <table><tr><th>Score</th><th>Measure</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>no public interest</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>low public interest</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>medium public interest</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>high public interest</td></tr></table>		Score	Measure	0	no public interest	1	low public interest	2	medium public interest	3	high public interest	2 (Raised by Members in response to public comments)
Score	Measure											
0	no public interest											
1	low public interest											
2	medium public interest											
3	high public interest											
Impact – priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental, and health and well-being of the area <table><tr><th>Score</th><th>Measure</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>no impact</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>low impact</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>medium impact</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>high impact</td></tr></table>		Score	Measure	0	no impact	1	low impact	2	medium impact	3	high impact	2
Score	Measure											
0	no impact											
1	low impact											
2	medium impact											
3	high impact											
Council 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 budget proposals <table><tr><th>Score</th><th>Measure</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>‘Green’ on or above target performance</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>‘Amber’,</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>low performance ‘Red’</td></tr></table>		Score	Measure	0	‘Green’ on or above target performance	1	‘Amber’,	2	low performance ‘Red’	1		
Score	Measure											
0	‘Green’ on or above target performance											
1	‘Amber’,											
2	low performance ‘Red’											

Appendix D

Keep in Context – work programmes must take into account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort		2
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	

TOTAL SCORE: 7

Appendix E

Topic: Reoffending in Hartlepool											
Background Information Reoffending rates in Hartlepool have shown a concerning upward trend across both male and female populations over the past three years. Although juvenile reoffending saw a sharp decline in 2021, this was short-lived, with rates rising again the following year—possibly due to the small population size affecting statistical stability. Hartlepool consistently reports higher reoffending rates across nearly all age groups compared to both the national and regional averages, with the exceptions being the 10–14 age bracket (Hartlepool JSNA). Provisional scope: - Does data support the identification of this as an issue? - Levels of reoffending in Hartlepool (breakdown across age and gender of offender and victim) - Challenges - Support services / interventions (effectiveness / impact) Previous consideration: - Scrutiny investigation (2014) Options for consideration: - Selected as a single piece of proactive scrutiny for 2026/7, or - One meeting briefing session. - Tie into Community cohesion issue without need for separate investigation											
AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION	PICK Scoring System (Suggestion score)										
Public Interest – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Measure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>no public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>low public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>medium public interest</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>high public interest</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Measure	0	no public interest	1	low public interest	2	medium public interest	3	high public interest	2 (Raised by Members in response to public comments)
Score	Measure										
0	no public interest										
1	low public interest										
2	medium public interest										
3	high public interest										
Impact – priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental, and health and well-being of the area <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Measure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>no impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>low impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>medium impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>high impact</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Measure	0	no impact	1	low impact	2	medium impact	3	high impact	2
Score	Measure										
0	no impact										
1	low impact										
2	medium impact										
3	high impact										

Appendix E

Council 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 budget proposals		1
Score	Measure	
0	'Green' on or above target performance	
1	'Amber',	
2	low performance 'Red'	
Keep in Context – work programmes must take into account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort		2
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	

TOTAL SCORE: 7

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)									