Hartlepool Board
Friday 3 July 2026 at 9am

Meeting Notes

Attendees – Board Members:
Iain Caldwell – Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership
Christiana Celestine – Hartlepool Diversity Network
Cllr Rob Darby – Chair of Housing, Growth & Communities Committee
Christine Eddowes – Faith Representative
Cllr Scott Gaiety – Parish Council Representative
Darren Hankey – Hartlepool College of Further Education
Pamela Hargreaves – Chair of Hartlepool Development Corporation
Cllr Graham Harrison – Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council
Haani Hasnain – Business Representative
Carl Jorgeson – Hartlepool Sport
Emma Joyeux – NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB *(Substitute)*
Tom Legg – Cleveland Police *(Substitute)*
Martin Raby – Northern School of Art
Cllr Aaron Roy – Elected Member
Juli Simons – Hartlepool Community Trust
Malcolm Walker – Independent Chair
Matt Wilton – Hartlepool Borough Council

Other Attendees:
Scott Campbell – Hartlepool Borough Council
Gemma Ptak – Hartlepool Borough Council
Lisa West – Hartlepool Borough Council

1.	**Welcome, Introductions and Apologies** Apologies were received from Neil Atkinson, Oliver Dixon, Karen Hawkins, Sue Sharpe, Matt Storey, and Helen Wilson. Emma Joyeux attended as substitute for Karen Hawkins, and Tom Legg as substitute for Helen Wilson.	
2.	**Declarations of Interest** Following declaration of an interest at the last meeting in relation to the John Armitage Trust, CJ commented that Hartlepool Sport has put in a bid for funding from the Trust. He will ensure that any further updates as part of this declaration are shared with the Board.	
3.	**Minutes and Actions from the Last Board Meeting** The minutes from the previous Board meeting were accepted as an accurate representation of the meeting.	

	JS asked board members to please contact her if anybody would like to participate in the walk and talk meetings which were discussed at the last Board. She will share further dates in the next few weeks and DH highlighted the benefits from the walk and talk he attended in Burn Valley.	
4.	**Shaping our Community-Led Approach** MW reflected on the positive feedback received following the previous Board, which included a session from Cormac Russell on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). SG commented that Cormac had suggested spending more time before spending funding for Pride in Place, but there is a need to spend money now in Hartlepool. CJ commented on the importance of how the money is spent, rather than what it is spent on. JS sated that there could be some experimentation with some of the spending and that we have to be innovative. MW shared insights from the previous New Deals for Communities (NDC), as caution was taken around spending, in order to spend it wisely which was welcomed by local residents and communities. CE commented that public awareness of the Board remained limited and stressed the importance of communicating the positive work that is taking place. GP advised of a discussion later in the agenda regarding the Board's identity which would support future communications and help raise awareness with communities in Hartlepool. GP provided a progress overview of the Pride in Place Programme, including a recap of the positive financial position presented at the previous meeting. She clarified the distinction between the Pride in Place Programme and the Impact Fund, noting that decisions relating to the Impact Fund are led by Council Officers with sign-off from the MP. Whilst the Impact Fund has supported a range of activities, including the Community Asset Grant, no projects funded through the Impact Fund have involved any funding from the main Pride in Place Programme. GP also provided an update on communications activity, including the development of the s website and the forthcoming place branding commission. SC confirmed that the Communications Sub-Group continued to meet monthly and was overseeing the development of both the website and the Board's wider communications approach. GP advised that the following presentation would identify potential opportunities that would need to be explored further and asked for feedback from the Board. SC then delivered a presentation on ‘Shaping our Community-Led Approach’.	

	SC stated that we had Cormac Russell at the last Board, who helped us to explore the principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and challenged us to think differently. It encouraged a change in mindset, and he highlighted some key themes for everyone to consider: • Community-First: Placing residents, relationships and local assets at the heart of our approach through PiPP • Building from Strengths: Connecting people, groups and resources already existing to drive local outcomes • Community-Centred Leadership: Consider how Board can create the conditions for communities to lead SC reminded members of the themes emerging following the session from Cormac Russell, including: • Community First – Placing residents, relationships and local assets at the heart of Pride in Place Programme • Building from Strengths – Connecting people, organisations and resources to drive local outcomes • Community Centred Leadership – Creating the conditions for communities to lead in Hartlepool This was all linked to a new mindset of moving from “doing for” communities to “working with” communities. SC explained that these principles had led officers and partners to reconsider the previously proposed approach to resident engagement and involvement, particularly linked to the requirement for the Board to transition towards community-led delivery by 2028/29. SC presented a revised model, developed in partnership with Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership, which builds on existing community strengths and networks rather than establishing Neighbourhood Forums. The proposed model comprises three stages: • Community Conversations • Community Action Groups • Community Leadership This approach would facilitate informal conversations with residents in the places and spaces they already access, including schools, community centres, shops and cafés. These conversations would identify shared priorities, support residents to develop solutions collaboratively and empower communities to influence decisions in Hartlepool. The proposed approach was welcomed by Board. GP emphasised that all board members have an important role in having these conversations as they are here not as an	

	individual but to represent their local communities, sectors and organisations in Hartlepool. SC presented four opportunities for the Board to consider as part of a longer-term community-led investment approach. SC outlined the concept of a Community Endowment Fund, describing it as a permanent investment fund established to support local people, places and priorities. The income generated from the fund would provide an ongoing source of community funding, creating a sustainable legacy beyond the Pride in Place Programme. It could also bring together contributions from community, businesses, public sector and philanthropic investors to create lasting local impact within Hartlepool. SC highlighted a successful example from Barking & Dagenham in London. The next opportunity was around Community Animators. SC explained the role of Community Animators as place-based workers who support residents to identify strengths, build relationships and turn ideas into action - it is rooted in ABCD. Rather than delivering services directly, they help communities organise themselves and develop resident-led solutions. He shared an example from Bristol, where the model has operated successfully for over a decade. The third opportunity was a Neighbourhood Matching Scheme. SC outlined the concept whereby small grants usually up to £2,500 would be provided to community-led projects and matched by local contributions, such as volunteer time, donated materials, professional expertise or funding. Typically, for every £1 of grant, the community contributes at least £1 of equivalent value which unlocks additional community resources and increases the overall impact of projects. SC shared successful examples of this model from both Seattle and Leeds. The final opportunity was for a Community Accelerator. This model provides flexible funding directly to neighbourhoods, with residents solely deciding how resources are used to address local priorities. It means that the decision-making power is in the hands of communities rather than institutions, creating greater local ownership and accountability. It would enable communities to support local ideas, activities and projects that matter to them with funding being held by a Credit Union. MW highlighted a similar example of this approach through the Big Local Programme. SC and GP then moved onto present a proposed approach to investment. Members noted that the Pride in Place Programme has a four-year investment period and the flexibility to carry forward funding, creating an opportunity to	

	build strong foundations and community capacity before committing all available resources. To maintain momentum and demonstrate early progress, it was proposed that 50% of the available Year 1 capital allocation be used to launch thematic open calls for proposals during September/October 2026. The remaining funding would be retained while the Board further explored the longer-term opportunities presented today. KW added that Thirteen have 'Community Connectors'. This is on a smaller scale, but it is ABCD focussed. She would be happy to provide further information as this resource can help support the Community Animation. MW highlighted the importance of collaborative working across organisations. MR asked how Community Animators are funded within the Bristol model. SC explained that funding is sourced through a collective investment approach, but it is led by the Local Authority. IC advised that a similar community-led model in Wales had contributed to a significant reduction in crime of around 90% and offered to share further information with the Board. CJ welcomed the concept of a Community Endowment but queried whether contributions could come from the Pride in Place revenue or capital allocations. SC advised that any such approach would require further consideration and discussions with Government. PH said that she would like to see a brave approach, although this may mean that negotiation be needed with MHCLG, and highlighted the importance of community development. It was suggested that working with Angela Kail for advice on securing wider investment for the potential Community Endowment. PD stressed the need for effective communication and visible progress to maintain confidence from residents. SG echoed this point, supporting the opportunities presented but emphasising the need to deliver investment and tangible benefits for communities without unnecessary delay. GH noted that residents are unlikely to be aware of the development work taking place and will focus on the level of funding being invested locally from Pride in Place. MWi commented that funding should be invested carefully and strategically, with the proposed approach providing a balance between delivering early activity and exploring longer-term opportunities.	

GP clarified that retaining 50% of the Year 1 allocation would not prevent additional open calls being launched later in the 2026/27 financial year. She also highlighted the capacity challenges of delivering multiple simultaneous open calls for proposals across the different themes in the Investment Plan.

MR welcomed the opportunities presented and emphasised the importance of developing initiatives that create lasting change for Hartlepool.

AR questioned whether capital funding could be utilised in more devolved, community-led ways and whether Government would support such an approach. GP advised that all opportunities were currently exploratory and would require further discussions, including with MHCLG. AR suggested that a business case should be developed for each opportunity. GP confirmed that each proposal would be led by a sponsor from the Board, supported by the Council.

PH concluded by noting that a Community Endowment Fund could provide an important mechanism for attracting and sustaining future investment in Hartlepool. MW then moved to a vote on the two proposed recommendations for Board.

The first recommendation seeks to approve the continued exploration of the four opportunities presented (Community Endowment Fund, Community Animators, Neighbourhood Matching Scheme and Community Accelerator) to assess their potential suitability for Hartlepool.

- Those for: IC, CC, RD, CE, SG, DH, PH, GH, HH, CJ, EJ, TL, MR, AR, JS, MW and MWi.
- Those against: None.
- Those abstaining: None

MW then moved on to the second recommendation. This seeks to approve the proposed approach of launching thematic open calls for proposals using 50% of the available Year 1 capital funding for the Pride in Place Programme.

- Those for: IC, CC, RD, CE, SG, DH, PH, GH, HH, CJ, EJ, TL, MR, AR, JS, MW and MWi.
- Those against: None.
- Those abstaining: None

MW confirmed that both recommendations have been approved unanimously by the Hartlepool Board.

ACTION: Board Members are invited to act as a sponsor for each of the opportunities, helping lead on their development and assessing their suitability for Hartlepool.

5.	**Hartlepool Diversity Network Overview** Christiana Celestine gave a presentation about the Hartlepool Diversity Network. This provided context on the development of the organisation and outlined its vision of building a more connected and inclusive Hartlepool. The presentation highlighted progress to date, including engagement with over 5,000 residents, support for over 15 community events and connections with over 30 partner organisations. Members heard how the organisation's work aligns with the ambitions of the Pride in Place Programme. CC shared a range of planned projects and future development opportunities. A video was also shown from the documentary they have developed about shared stories from communities across Hartlepool. CC would like everyone to work together, for example, loan each other equipment. The aim is for events to be free, and they are setting up a Volunteer Academy. All board members were invited to the official launch of the Hartlepool Diversity Network on Wednesday 8 July from 5.30pm at the Enterprise Centre.	
6.	**Programme Update** GP advised that MHCLG had issued a letter to all Pride in Place areas, reminding Local Authorities of the accountability and decision-making responsibilities that sit with Neighbourhood Boards. GP noted that the governance arrangements are already established in Hartlepool through this Board which align with these expectations but felt it was important to bring the update to the Board. IC informed members that the current Chair of Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership had stepped down from the role to focus on leading his own charity. A recruitment process will therefore be launched for an Independent Chair, with applications sought from individuals outside the existing Trustee Board. HOP will also be actively recruiting for further additional Trustees. **ACTION:** HOP to commence recruitment for an Independent Chair and additional Trustees, with IC providing a progress update at the next meeting of the Hartlepool Board.	
7.	**Any Other Business** **Exploring Community-Led Information Networks, Complimenting Digital and Physical**	

	JS advised that she had been exploring opportunities to improve community information sharing and strengthen connections with residents. She noted that while there are a number of community noticeboards across the town, many contain outdated information and are therefore underutilised. JS highlighted the need for a blended approach, recognising that residents access information through both digital and traditional formats in Hartlepool. JS suggested establishing a small working group to consider how community information could be shared more effectively. She advised that TVCA has installed several digital signage board across the town. JS suggested that partnerships with local businesses could be explored to support the initiative and potentially generate income, citing an existing example on Oxford Road. JS noted that there may be a requirement for small-scale investment to support delivery. She proposed developing a number of pilot projects to test the approach and assess local interest for Community-Led Information Networks. MW welcomed the proposal in principle and advised that there will be open calls for proposals in September. GP suggested that the idea be referred to the Communications Sub-Group for further consideration as they have some ring-fenced Capacity Funding. GP also advised that work was already underway to review existing community noticeboards across Hartlepool, including addressing issues such as damaged boards and missing keys which would support the proposal from JS. **ACTION:** JS to update the Communications Sub-Group on her proposal for Community-Led Information Networks. SC advised that a Forward Plan was being developed for the Hartlepool Board to support future agenda planning and ensure consideration of key strategic issues. Members were encouraged to suggest topics and presentations for future meetings, reflecting the Board's broad role as Hartlepool's Local Strategic Partnership. PD provided an update on the work of the Hartlepool Creative and Cultural Partnership, which continues to meet regularly. Members noted that a commission is being procured to develop a new strategy and that an application has been submitted for Town of Culture. Due to time constraints, SC advised that several agenda items and updates would be deferred to the next meeting. SC also confirmed that members will emailed regarding proposals for the future identity and renaming of the Hartlepool Board.	

	In considering future meetings, MW proposed that the next meeting of the Hartlepool Board be held in September to accommodate the summer holiday period. This was agreed unanimously by Board.	
8.	**Date and Time of Next Meeting** The next meeting is on Friday 4 September 2026 from 9:00am to 10:30am.	