



Hartlepool  
Borough Council

# Housing, Growth and Communities Committee Agenda

30 September 2026

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Location:** Council Chamber, Civic Centre

**Members:** Housing, Growth and Communities Committee

Councillors Bailey-Fleet, Bruce, Cook, Darby (C), Dodds, Male and Roy (VC)

Parish Council Co-opted Member:

C Grylls (Dalton Piercy Parish Council)

E Hurst (Wynyard Parish Council)

S Lee (Headland Parish Council)

S Smith (Greatham Parish Council)

H Tubb (Elwick Parish Council)

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## 1. Apologies for absence

## 2. To receive any declarations by members

## 3. Minutes

- 3.1. To receive the Minutes and Decision Record in respect of the meeting held on 17 June 2026 (previously published and circulated).

## 4. Budget and policy framework

None

### CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

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## 5. Key Decisions

5.1. Tides of Change - *Assistant Director - Inclusive Growth*

## 6. Other items requiring decision

6.1 Economic Growth Framework - *Assistant Director – Inclusive Growth*

## 7. Items for information

7.1 Out of Area Placements, Refugee Resettlement and Asylum - *Assistant Director of Housing and Community*

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

## For information

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2026 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber

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**Hartlepool**  
Borough Council

# **Housing, Growth and Communities Committee**

30 September 2026

**Report of:** Assistant Director - Inclusive Growth

**Subject:** TIDES OF CHANGE

**Decision Type:** Key (i) (F&CA 122/26)

## 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)                                             |
| 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 its community. (Organisation)         |

## 2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to:
- 2.2. Endorse the decision to not proceed with the Tides of change programme.
- 2.3. Consider whether to accept offers of grant funding for projects linked to the Museum of Hartlepool.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. In 2022 a proposal to develop the Museum of Hartlepool (MOH) project supported by funding from the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) and Tees Valley Combined authority (TVCA) was agreed, as part of the wider Waterfront Programme.

- 3.2. The intention was to bring substantial investment to assets owned by HBC, the Museum of Hartlepool and the Wingfield Castle, securing their future and bring them up to expected visitor standards. In doing so, it would contribute significantly to the regeneration of the Waterfront as part of the wider Waterfront Programme, producing a comprehensive redevelopment of the MOH complimenting the Highlight Active Wellbeing Hub.
- 3.3. A redeveloped museum and ship would provide free to enter spaces for families across the town and wider visitors, boosting the economy through secondary spend, and the current maintenance burden of both of these assets would be reduced.
- 3.4. A multi-disciplinary design team was procured in Autumn of 2023 and a Round 1 Development Phase application was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). This bid was successful with £631,440 awarded to develop the project, the grant was calculated based on an anticipated project cost of £9.6m. Since the initial submission, detailed plans for the Round 2 Delivery Phase have been produced.
- 3.5. Officers developed an application which covered four elements,
  - I. Re-imagining the Museum of Hartlepool
  - II. Restoration and fitting out Wingfield Castle
  - III. Activity Programme supporting work during and after the construction phases.
  - IV. Masterplan for the Museum site and the surrounding area.
- 3.6. Prior to handing in the application, a meeting known as a 'mid-stage review' is held with the NLHF, where the proposed scheme is discussed. At this meeting NLHF require assurances that funds are secured, or where necessary underwritten, to provide comfort that the application is viable.
- 3.7. The advice received from NLHF was that there is a need not only to seek additional sources of funding, but also for HBC to contribute towards any funding gap. This would show a commitment to the project.
- 3.8. The project secured investment from TVCA and DCMS which is acting as seed and match funding to progress the detail of the development. The application at the development stage estimated the request from the NLHF would be £6.24m.

- 3.9. It was known that during the development stage, further funding would be needed to match the lottery grant. A funding strategy was developed by officers and Counter Culture LLP to fundraise the remaining gap.
- 3.10. A number of grant applications were made and funding has been offered from:
- Arts Council England (ACE) grant for museum estates (MEND) of £2,458,641, for work to,
    - Repair the roof, install insulation, upgrade windows, drainage, foundations/structural repairs.
    - New WC facilities and accessible lifts
    - Upgrade the heating system, replacing it with a water source heat pump.
    - Upgraded security measures.
  - DCMS/Wolfson grant of £218,400 for works to the Art Store and part of the fit out of the temporary exhibition space within the museum.
  - A grant of £308,624 has been offered from Lloyd's Register Foundation to support works on the Maritime Hub strand of the Activity Plan.
- 3.11. The activity programme for the project has several strands. A key element is the Maritime Heritage Skills Hub which will include the restoration of vessels, teaching maritime crafts and traditional skills, and the creation of a website which will act as a tool to disseminate information and share opportunities relating to maritime heritage.
- 3.12. Other elements of the programme would focus on:
- Working with existing and targeted audiences to shape the content of the Museum programmes, providing events and activities to increase engagement and awareness of the offer,
  - Developing educational opportunities, and
  - Providing a volunteer programme to support both the museum and Wingfield Castle.

## 4. Proposals

- 4.1. Whilst the project has successfully attracted significant external funding, detailed design and condition surveys undertaken during the development phase have increased the estimated project cost from £9.6m to £21,122,313. As a result, a funding gap of up to £9.8m has

emerged. Although some funds are in place, no viable funding solution has been identified to close this gap.

- 4.2. A significant part of the project is the restoration of Wingfield Castle. Various options to restore the vessel have been investigated. It was concluded that the most cost-effective solution to repair the ship is to lift it on to a cradle and repair it at the side of the quay where it is currently moored. With this methodology the cradle and infrastructure could remain in place and be used for future maintenance. Whilst work here is ongoing, we do not yet have full cost certainty on the restoration and fit out of the Wingfield Castle, nor the ongoing maintenance burden to HBC. As such there remains a significant risk of escalation of costs in the short and long term.
- 4.3. The Wingfield Castle is a significant part of the application however it is contributing considerably to the funding issues. Should the ship be removed from the application there would still be a gap in the funding that would need to be covered.
- 4.4. As no other funding sources have been identified to cover the funding gap, it would fall to HBC to underwrite and cover this from its own resources. This would expose HBC to a liability of up to £9.8m. In addition to the capital requirement, additional revenue costs would also need to be secured on an ongoing basis.
- 4.5. The scale of the scheme is acknowledged, in particular the increased cost of the projects which are the subject of this report. This has been the result of detailed development of each scheme, revealing unforeseen works, but also more accurate costings than had previously been available.
- 4.6. There are already pressures on current budgets. Whilst the transformational nature of the scheme is recognised it is considered that underwriting the budget gap for an indeterminate time would place undue pressure on existing budgets which are already stretched.
- 4.7. Even with an underwrite from HBC in anticipation of securing additional funds, the project still requires £1.4m of funding to be secured and / or provided by HBC. This would place a significant burden on the authority and would come with too high a level of risk to take on, with so many uncertainties around the project remaining.
- 4.8. With the lack of cost certainty on the Wingfield Castle and the potential for further escalation of costs here, there is a risk that the final exposure to HBC exceeds the amount currently forecast. It is acknowledged that risks remain with regards to the Wingfield Castle, namely that further deterioration will occur until such time an affordable resolution for its repair is found. Given the known significant costs associated with this, identifying and securing such funds will remain a

challenge.

- 4.9. Given the current exposure would already place an unserviceable liability on the authority, any increase in this burden could place HBC in a critical financial position.
- 4.10. Given the significant escalation in project costs, the remaining funding gap, the requirement for the Council to underwrite substantial financial liabilities, uncertainty regarding the final restoration and maintenance costs of Wingfield Castle, and the ongoing capital and revenue implications of the programme, the overall level of financial risk is considered too great HBC. It is therefore recommended that the Tides of Change programme does not proceed.
- 4.11. The details of the scheme are set out in **Appendix 1** with the cost of the works alongside the funding currently being investigated.

## 5. Other Considerations/Implications

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Implications</b>        | It is recognised that should the programme not proceed and the funding gap not be covered, this would potentially have the following impact; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputational risk to HBC as a flag ship scheme which has been championed and widely publicised.</li> <li>• Loss of an opportunity to draw down a significant sum of NLHF grant.</li> <li>• A continued maintenance budget pressure for HBC should the building not be refurbished.</li> <li>• A significant maintenance and, potential environmental issue, should the Wingfield Castle not be made sound with risk of the ship sinking if not repaired.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Financial Considerations</b> | The current financial position and proposals to address this are set out in the <b>Appendix 1</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Subsidy Control</b>          | Advice has been taken on Subsidy Control and the view is that the proposal is capable of being designed and delivered in line with the requirements of the UK's Subsidy Control regime.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Legal Considerations</b>     | The ownership of the site is mixed with a range of leaseholds and freeholds in place.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Single Impact Assessment</b> | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Staff Considerations</b>                                         | Costs of staff supporting the project are currently covered by grant funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Asset Management Considerations</b>                              | The MOH and PSWC are council assets. A successful application will ensure that these are repaired and enhanced which will assist with future maintenance of both.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Environment Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations</b> | The proposals include new energy efficient heating systems and insulation to reduce energy consumption. The proposed capital works will deliver against Hartlepool Borough Council's (HBC) Net Zero Strategy by refurbishing MoH and PSWC in line with the latest environmental standards, improving energy efficiency and reducing environmental impact, whilst supporting positive action in response to the climate crisis in interpretation, collections and programming. |
| <b>Consultation</b>                                                 | Extensive consultation has been completed to support the Tides of Change Project. This has included online consultation and targeted works with various groups to inform and co-design the programme.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1. Agree that the Tides of Change programme should not proceed due to the significant increase in project costs, the remaining funding gap, the risk of further cost escalation, the requirement for the Council to underwrite substantial financial liabilities, the uncertainty surrounding the final restoration and maintenance costs of Wingfield Castle, and the overall level of financial risk to the Council
- 6.2. Agree to review the terms of grants offered from ACE, DCMS/Wolfson and the Lloyds register and, where accepting such grants can only be done so without any incurring additional burden to HBC, Agree to review the terms of grants offered from ACE, DCMS/Wolfson and the Lloyds register and, where accepting such grants can only be done so without any incurring additional burden to HBC, authorise the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance, IT and Digital and the Director of Legal, Governance and HR, to negotiate any necessary variation to, and where appropriate accept, the identified grant offers.
- 6.3. Agree to explore new opportunities at the site under the Waterfront Programme, reflective of the current economic climate.

## 7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1. The proposed approach reflects the council's current financial position and the risk that would be associated with underwriting such a significant funding gap.
- 7.2. Reviewing the terms of the funding already secured from ACE, DCMS/Wolfson and the Lloyds Register would, should terms and deliverability allow, enable infrastructure works to be carried out to the museum and offer an opportunity for engagement activities to be delivered in line with the existing museum offer.

## 8. Background Papers

- 8.1. Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## 9. Contact Officers

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 Assistant Director - Inclusive Growth  
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Sign Off:-

|                                      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chief Executive                      | Date: 04/09/2026 |
| Director of Finance, IT and Digital  | Date: 07/09/2026 |
| Director of Legal, Governance and HR | Date: 04/09/2026 |

## Tides of Change Costed Project and Current Funding

### Current funding gap

The current funding gap on the project is £ £9,722,820. This is set out in the Table below.

| Step                                 | Amount         | Status          | Running Gap           |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Total Project Cost</b>            |                |                 | £ 21,122,313.00       |
| DCMS / Arts Council Wingfield Castle | £ 1,800,000.00 | secured         | £ 19,322,313.00       |
| MEND                                 | £ 2,458,641.00 | secured         | £ 16,863,672.00       |
| TVCA IGF Museum of Hartlepool funds  | £ 471,737.00   | secured         | £ 16,391,935.00       |
| TVCA Wingfield Castle IGF Funds      | £ 19,721.00    | secured         | £ 16,372,214.00       |
| Lloyds                               | £ 308,624.00   | offered         | £ 16,063,590.00       |
| NLHF                                 | £ 6,240,770.00 | to be submitted | £ 9,822,820.00        |
| <b>Current Funding Gap</b>           |                |                 | <b>£ 9,822,820.00</b> |
| Arts council - unlcoking collections | £ 100,000.00   | to be submitted | £ 9,722,820.00        |
| NLHF Uplift                          | £ 1,500,000.00 | to be submitted | £ 8,222,820.00        |
| remaining TVCA IGF pot               | £ 2,500,000.00 | to be agreed    | £ 5,722,820.00        |
| remaining TVCA Capital pot           | £ 919,000.00   | to be agreed    | £ 4,803,820.00        |
| proceeds of VRP                      | £ 3,400,000.00 | to be agreed    | £ 1,403,820.00        |
| <b>Final Programme Shortfall</b>     |                |                 | <b>£ 1,403,820.00</b> |

At the moment the project is supported by a variety of funders. This means that there are a number of interconnected elements which depend on each other. As a result, it is necessary to ensure that the funding gap can be covered to secure the delivery of the scheme as a whole.

### NLHF advice regarding the funding gap

It is possible to request an uplift in funding from the NLHF when making a delivery stage application, however the gap as it stands would not be covered solely by them. In a best-case scenario, it would be hoped that between £1 – 1.5m could be agreed. This proposal could be tested at the mid-term review meeting however it would need to be presented alongside other funding available to bridge the gap, including a commitment from HBC to underwrite and / or directly cover any remaining gap.

### Other funding

Royal Navy Museum (RNM)/Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

The RNM have decided not to expand their museum offering into Vision Retail Park, which was purchased for this purpose with £3.4m of funding from TVCA.

Now it is known that these developments will not progress, officers have discussed recovering these funds to support the Tides of Change project to bridge some of the funding gap.

When this £3.4m is recovered it would, when combined with other TVCA money available, provide £7,310,458 of funding.

TVCA would need to agree to the reassignment of these funds. This would still leave a shortfall that HBC would be expected to cover.

#### Council (HBC)

This funding strategy requires the Combined Authority to agree to the movement of the funds to a revised project. Discussions with officers at the authority indicated it would be their intention to take an item for information to their September meeting and a further report to the December meeting for final agreement.

The NLHF deadline for this application is the 12<sup>th</sup> November. In order to make that submission HBC would need to show that it would underwrite the funding gap until agreements are in place for any other funding sources.

This would mean that until such time as TVCA approve the movement of the remaining funds, HBC would need to underwrite the full gap of £9,722,820.

Subject to TVCA agreement of the above, HBC would continue to underwrite any remaining exposure until the VRP proceeds are returned and any additional capital is secured.

Even with an underwrite from HBC, the project still requires an additional £1.4m of funding to be secured and / or provided by HBC. This would place a significant burden on the authority and would come with too high a level of risk to take on, with so many uncertainties around the project remaining.



# Housing, Growth and Communities Committee

30<sup>th</sup> September 2026

**Report of:** Assistant Director – Inclusive Growth  
**Subject:** ECONOMIC GROWTH FRAMEWORK  
**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)                                             |
| that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (Potential) |

1.1. The report is seeking endorsement of an Economic Growth Framework for Hartlepool, including its principles, which will create a common structure for organising growth activity, aligning strategic priorities, informing investment decisions, and presenting a clear economic proposition to businesses, investors, residents and partners. Although the proposed framework has a borough-wide strategic scope, endorsement at this stage does not itself introduce or alter services, allocate resources, approve projects or produce an immediate significant impact on communities. Any subsequent plans arising from the framework will be separately assessed against the Key Decision criteria.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Hartlepool does not currently have a single, shared vision that sets out how the town wants to grow its economy, what that growth should deliver, and how future activity will be organised.
- 2.2. The Councils Inclusive Growth Strategy has reached the end of its period. While the strategy provided a narrative rationale for existing activity, it did not provide a sufficiently clear basis for setting direction, sequencing investment or testing future decisions against shared principles.
- 2.3. With that strategy reaching the end of its period, and with the Borough at a significant point in its regeneration journey, this is the right time to establish a new framework.
- 2.4. Hartlepool has a genuine transformation opportunity in front of it, but we are competing on a regional, national and indeed international scale for the investment to fulfil our potential.
- 2.5. Unlocking and achieving growth depends on the town being able to offer a compelling proposition to both attract and retain businesses, investors and residents.
- 2.6. This proposition needs to sit within a wider, growth-led approach to regeneration, one in which the council acts as an active partner in delivery rather than solely a regulator of it.
- 2.7. An Economic Growth Framework is intended to provide a structured approach to Hartlepool's growth, providing the strategic basis for communicating that proposition.
- 2.8. It will also give Hartlepool a clear position within the Tees Valley, providing a local account of Hartlepool's priorities, and aligning them where relevant to the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan, rather than leaving those priorities to be inferred from regional documents.

## 3. Proposals

- 3.1. The proposed framework establishes the strategic logic for Hartlepool's Economic Growth. It is not intended to be a separate or competing strategy. Rather, it will provide a common framework for aligning existing and future strategies, organising evidence, supporting decision-making and presenting

Hartlepool's economic proposition to residents, businesses, investors and partners

3.2. The framework is based on the following relationship;

- Principles for Growth; how Hartlepool will pursue growth
- Strategic Themes; where action is needed
- Enabling strategies and plans; how ambitions will be achieved
- Delivery and outcomes; what will be delivered and measured

3.3. The principles will apply across the whole framework, describing how Hartlepool will pursue growth and provide a basis for testing future strategy, policies and investment decisions. They will also help ensure that the council can present a credible offer to investors, stakeholders and partners

3.4. The following principles are proposed;

- We make Hartlepool investment-ready.
- We lead growth, not just enable it.
- We connect residents to the opportunities growth creates.
- We invest in people alongside places.
- We work as a genuine partner to the private sector.

3.5. Five strategic themes are proposed as the organising structure of the framework, the purpose being at this stage to establish the areas under which enabling strategies and plans will be developed and organised.

3.6. The following themes are proposed;

- A Town of Enterprise (Economy)
- An investment Ready Place (Investment)
- A Place People Choose (Place)
- Connected Places (Infrastructure)
- People Ready for Growth (People)

3.7. The principles and strategic themes form the initial structure of the Economic Growth Framework. Following endorsement, officers will further develop and implement the framework through the establishment of supporting evidence, strategic priorities, performance measures, delivery arrangements and alignment with existing and future strategies and plans.

- 3.8. The Framework will provide the structure through which Hartlepool's assets, strengths and opportunities into a clear proposition for investors, businesses, residents, government and regional partners.
- 3.9. It will also act as the basis for identifying priority actions, delivery responsibilities, partnerships and, where appropriate, governance arrangements
- 3.10. The proposed Economic Growth Framework will sit beneath the council plan and provide an overarching approach to economic growth, investment and place-based transformation, complementing rather than replacing statutory documents.

#### 4. Other Considerations/Implications

|                                                                      |                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Implications</b>                                             | There is a risk that without a suitable framework in place, the Borough is not positioning itself as an attractive investable location. |
| <b>Financial Considerations</b>                                      | There are no direct financial implications for endorsing the proposed strategic framework.                                              |
| <b>Subsidy Control</b>                                               | There are no subsidy control issues.                                                                                                    |
| <b>Legal Considerations</b>                                          | There are no direct legal implications arising from endorsing the proposed strategic framework.                                         |
| <b>Single Impact Assessment</b>                                      | A single impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the development and implementation of the new framework.                       |
| <b>Staff Considerations</b>                                          | Costs of developing the framework are covered through existing services with the HGC Directorate.                                       |
| <b>Asset Management Considerations</b>                               | None                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations</b> | The Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change will all be considered as part of the wider framework development.                   |
| <b>Consultation</b>                                                  | The framework is built upon previous work on Hartlepool's Inward Investment approach, intelligence gathered through Pride in Place      |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | engagement, and consideration of the towns existing strategic activity. Further Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken as the framework is finalised and implemented. |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 5. Recommendations

- 5.1. Note the full principles and themes framework in **Appendix 1**
- 5.2. Endorse the Economic Growth Framework as an overarching structure for organising economic growth activity and informing future strategy, policy development and investment decisions
- 5.3. Delegate authority to officers to further develop, implement and maintain the Economic Growth Framework, including the development of supporting evidence, performance measures, delivery arrangements and alignment with relevant strategies and plans, with periodic updates provided to Members.

## 6. Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1. Hartlepool has a transformative opportunity in front of it, but the opportunity is not guaranteed to translate into growth. The Borough is competing at a national, regional and international level for investment, businesses, skills and residents. To attract and retain them, Hartlepool needs a compelling proposition which brings together its economic assets, investable opportunities, places, infrastructure, housing, skills, workforce and quality of life.
- 6.2. The proposed framework provides the basis for developing that proposition. The principles will set out how growth will be pursued, the themes will identify where action is required, and the enabling strategies and plans will subsequently set out how the agreed ambitions will be achieved.
- 6.3. Endorsing the framework will establish a structured approach to economic growth. It will provide a consistent basis for organising economic activity, aligning related strategies and plans, guiding investment and policy decisions, and ensuring that future activity is developed within a shared strategic framework.

## 7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Hartlepool Inclusive Growth Strategy 2022-2025

## 8. Contact Officers

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Assistant Director - Inclusive Growth  
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Tel: (01429) 523169

Sign Off:-

|                                      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chief Executive                      | Date: 04/09/2026 |
| Director of Finance, IT and Digital  | Date: 27/08/2026 |
| Director of Legal, Governance and HR | Date: 04/09/2026 |

## **Proposed principles and themes**

This appendix provides fuller narrative to support Committee's consideration of the proposed strategic framework. It does not seek approval of the individual enabling strategies identified.

### **Principles for growth**

#### **We make Hartlepool investment ready**

Hartlepool should present a clear and credible proposition to investors, be clear and consistent about what the Council will accept, actively promote investment opportunities, and work collaboratively to de-risk sites, infrastructure and, where appropriate, capital ahead of need. The aim is to reduce uncertainty and create the conditions in which private investment can commit to the town and remain and expand over the longer term.

#### **We lead growth, not just enable it**

Where the market alone will not deliver the pace or quality of growth Hartlepool needs, the Council should work alongside investors and developers. This may include removing barriers, assembling land, coordinating infrastructure and accelerating delivery where appropriate.

#### **We connect residents to the opportunities growth creates**

Investment must be genuinely reachable by Hartlepool people. Transport, jobs, digital access and wider infrastructure should therefore be treated as conditions of growth rather than consequences that are addressed afterwards.

#### **We invest in people alongside places.**

Skills, employment and health provision should be aligned to the sectors and places the Plan is backing. This will help ensure that growth increases local prosperity, supports access to talent and retains residents rather than importing a workforce around it.

#### **We work as a genuine partner to the private sector.**

The Council's role is to convene, create and enable the conditions for investment. The Plan should support a clear and credible proposition that Hartlepool is a place where the Council is clear, responsive and prepared to work constructively with businesses and investors.

## **Strategic themes**

### **Economy – A Town of Enterprise**

This theme will focus on growing Hartlepool's business base and foundational economy, while ensuring established and emerging sectors have the conditions to expand and invest. It will cover nationally recognised sectors as well as the everyday businesses that sustain communities, provide employment and keep spending circulating locally.

#### **Enabling / connected strategies and plans may include:**

Business Support Strategy; Inward Investment Strategy.

### **Investment – An Investment-Ready Place**

This theme will establish Hartlepool's investment proposition and provide the framework for attracting, retaining and expanding private investment. It will identify the Towns priority opportunities, sites and sectors, the barriers that need to be addressed, and how the Council and its partners will work with investors to de-risk development and bring projects forward.

#### **Enabling / connected strategies and plans may include:**

Inward Investment Strategy; Local Plan; investment prospectus; private-sector partnership or investment compact.

### **Place – A Place People Choose**

This theme will focus on the quality, character and identity of Hartlepool as a place to live, work, visit and invest. It will draw on the town centre, maritime and cultural heritage, coastline, Seaton Carew and the Headland, as well as the role of housing and the emerging town brand.

#### **Enabling / connected strategies and plans may include:**

Housing Strategy; Culture and Heritage Strategy; Visitor Economy and Tourism Strategy.

### **Infrastructure – Connected Places**

This theme will focus on the physical and digital infrastructure needed to support growth and connect residents and businesses to opportunity. Investment and housing will not deliver their full benefits unless residents can access jobs, services, markets and communities, while investors need confidence that development can function.

#### **Enabling / connected strategies and plans may include:**

Transport and Active Travel Strategy; Digital Infrastructure Strategy;



## **People – People Ready for Growth**

This theme will focus on ensuring Hartlepool residents have the skills, health and support needed to participate in growth. It will also recognise that businesses and investors need access to talent and that local residents should be able to benefit from the opportunities created.

### **Enabling / connected strategies and plans may include:**

Employment and Skills Strategy; Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The themes are complementary rather than separate delivery silos. Skills, transport, housing, health and digital inclusion are likely to contribute across several themes. The themes are intended to provide a clear strategic home for activity while allowing the full Plan to reflect the interdependencies that determine whether growth can be achieved and whether Hartlepool can attract and retain the people, businesses and investment it needs.



# Housing, Growth and Communities Committee

30 September 2026

**Report of:** Assistant Director - Housing and Community

**Subject:** Out of Area Placements, Refugee Resettlement and Asylum

**Decision Type:** For information

## 1. Council Plan Priority

**Hartlepool will be a place:**

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

that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all. (Potential)

## 2. Purpose of Report

2.1. The purpose of report is to provide an overview of out of area placements, asylum dispersal and refugee resettlement in Hartlepool. It also explains the legal duties placed upon a local authority in relation to asylum dispersal.

## 3. Out of Area Placements

### 3.1. What are out of area placements?

Out of area placement is a term used to describe situations when a household from a different local authority has been placed into Hartlepool. This

predominantly occurs because of a household presenting as homeless to the original local authority. Section 208 of the Housing Act 1996 requires councils to provide homeless applicants with accommodation within their own district “so far as reasonably practicable”. As such these placements may be referred to as Section 208 placements. Hartlepool Borough Council should be notified by other local authorities if they are placing a household in Hartlepool via a Section 208 notification within 14 days of the placement.

Importantly, anyone accepted as being owed a homeless duty must be able to access public funds. Therefore, they are not an asylum seeker or any other household who cannot access public funds.

Out of area placements may also occur to safeguard a household, i.e. a survivor or victim of domestic abuse. Social care services may place out of area to meet specialist needs, or to ensure the individuals are closer to family/friends. Out of area placements do not cover situations when a household chooses to move to Hartlepool.

Households affected by out of area placements are typically British citizens. If the household is originally from abroad, they will now have a form of leave to remain so that they can access public funds. The households can be families with dependent or adult children, single people or couples without children. In Hartlepool, the recent out of area placements are all of working age.

A placement may be temporary whilst the local authority investigates a homelessness application or fulfils a homelessness duty, or a permanent placement where the accommodation is a housing solution which brings the duty to an end.

Number of permanent placements into Hartlepool

| Period                        | Number of households | Number of people | Number of children |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 April 2025 to 30 March 2026 | 73                   | 131              | 89                 |
| 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026  | 11                   | 40               | 23                 |

Most of these placements are coming from the South East of England particularly London.

Number of temporary placements into Hartlepool.

| Period | Number of households |
|--------|----------------------|
|--------|----------------------|

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2026 | 79 |
|------------------------------|----|

Most of these placements originate from elsewhere in the North East.

### **3.2. Challenges associated with out of area placements.**

Hartlepool Borough Council is not routinely receiving Section 208 notifications from the placing authority, especially regarding permanent placements. The notification is either delayed, or the authority is not notified at all. This may mean that the household does not receive the associated support it requires in a timely manner.

The number of placements creates additional demand on wider public services such as households with children requiring school placements. There have also been occasions when those placed in Hartlepool required more intensive support from social care services which may create additional pressures upon the local authority. Poor communication from the placing authorities makes planning and responding to those household needs, challenging.

Occasionally the households who are placed here, would have rather remained in their initial local authority area.

Placements, due to the overall national financial constraints, may be concentrated in lower value properties in the private rented stock, in certain localities. As such, out of area placements are not consistent across all communities in Hartlepool.

### **3.3. Actions being taken in response to out of area placements**

3.4. As Hartlepool has a very affordable rental market compared with the rest of the country, it may be viewed as a practical option for other local authorities to discharge its own Section 208 duties. This may be compounded when that authority also has very high levels of homelessness and challenging organisational finances. Hartlepool Borough Council continues to work closely with other local authorities to better support each other in their discharge of their statutory duties. The local authority is also in regular communication with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to highlight the challenges that the current system creates.

From a procedural perspective, in line with MHCLG guidance, the local authority has published a Section 208 protocol which aims to encourage the placing authorities to provide a greater level of detail surrounding the households. This will allow the local authority to respond accordingly to the needs of the placed household, whilst also providing more robust data to share with MHCLG regarding the local impact upon public services.

The local authority is working closely with placed households to understand their wishes. If they requested to be placed elsewhere in the country as opposed to Hartlepool, they are signposted to housing charities to appeal their homeless decision. This could lead to a better outcome for the household as they may be able to remain in their previous locality and may help Hartlepool to challenge placements from authorities outside the North East.

The local authority continues to work closely with national colleagues and referring local authorities to provide the appropriate access, advice, support required for all residents.

## 4. Asylum

### 4.1. What is an asylum seeker?

A person would make a claim “seeking” asylum for themselves and their family in situations where they are from another country, on the basis that they are fleeing persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or at risk because of the social, cultural or political situation in that country, for example gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

The UK assesses claims for asylum under domestic legislation, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and obligations arising under European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Individuals may seek asylum regardless of how they entered the UK. A person should make a claim for asylum as soon as possible after arrival if they require protection. The Home Office considers all applications for asylum.

Claims for asylum are unlikely to be considered if someone is from the EU, if someone travelled to the UK through a ‘safe third country’ or have a connection to a safe third country where they could claim asylum.

When someone is awaiting an asylum decision, they cannot access welfare, benefits, or public housing (council or social housing, or access homeless assistance from a local authority). Asylum seekers do not have the right to work, though this may be granted in rare situations for those with specialist skills.

#### **4.2. What is asylum dispersal?**

An asylum applicant who is unable to support themselves may initially be housed in an accommodation centre. Subsequently they may be dispersed to alternative accommodation throughout England. Asylum seekers are placed dependent on the availability of the accommodation.

There are dispersed accommodation properties in Hartlepool as part of this national scheme. There are no asylum seekers placed in hotel accommodation in Hartlepool.

The Home Office provides a weekly support allowance for a single person for food and subsistence to those dispersed. Each local authority also receives a set amount per asylum seeker resident in their locality to cover the cost of providing support and services to those seeking asylum.

#### **4.3. Working for a fairer distribution of asylum dispersal in the UK?**

Hartlepool does not have as high a volume of asylum seekers (403) as other neighbouring authorities such as Stockton (837). Nine out of the twelve North East local authorities had more dispersed asylum seekers in their area than Hartlepool. However, Hartlepool has the fifth highest rate per 10,000 population in the North East (41/10,000).

Hartlepool, along with several other North East local authorities, have advocated to the Home Office for a fairer distribution of asylum dispersal across England. Currently, the North East accommodates around 8% of the national asylum population despite representing only 4% of the UK population. Whilst this is less than 2019 when the North East accommodated 11% of the asylum population, it still highlights the higher share in the North East.

In August 2024, the Home Office made a commitment to Hartlepool to 'maintain and replace' and as such would not go over the number of asylum dispersal places that were in place at that time. From the available data this has been consistent in Hartlepool.

The local authority works closely with the Home Office to ensure local input into the location and purpose of dispersal properties. The local authority liaises with key partners such as the Police, health services and education colleagues to help inform decisions around the property locations and any subsequent impact upon public services.

In August 2026, the Government announced a commitment to a fairer distribution of asylum dispersals across the UK. This may have a positive impact upon Hartlepool.

## 5. Refugee Resettlement Programmes

### 5.1. What are refugee resettlement programmes?

Refugee resettlement programmes enable selected refugees, often referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to come directly to the UK through safe and legal routes rather than claiming asylum after arrival. Accepted refugees receive support to settle into local communities. These schemes are delivered at a local level by a local authority but fully funded by the Home Office.

Since 2016, the UK Government via the Home Office, has established several refugee resettlement programmes including:

- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) - launched in 2014, with the aim of resettling vulnerable refugees displaced as a result of the civil war in Syria
- Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) - the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) was launched in 2016 to resettle 'at risk' refugee children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa region.
- United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) - under the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) the UK will offer a safe and legal route to vulnerable refugees in need of protection with support for integration and long-term stability

### 5.2. Numbers currently being resettled by Hartlepool and funding

Since 2016, there have been 218 people in total resettled and since 2021, this has been exclusively via the UKRS. In the UKRS, families are agreed in advance with the local authority, with settled accommodation (which could be sourced by the local authority from the social or private rented sector) in appropriate areas. This ensures there is not a requirement for temporary or emergency accommodation and it remains voluntary.

Funding is provided for five years for each household member, with additional funding available for exceptional costs. Locally a dedicated team provides this support, as a condition of the grant agreement with the Home Office. This

ensures effective integration into the local community to enable resettled households to make a positive contribution to the community through employment or volunteering.

#### Current Number of Households Supported Through Resettlement Programmes

| Current Number of Households Supported | Current number of adults | Current number of children |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 23                                     | 53                       | 54                         |

## 6. Other Considerations/Implications

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Risk Implications</b>               | There are several programmes and statutory duties which may lead to a household being placed in Hartlepool. These may be misinterpreted as the same scheme which could then have implications for community relations.                                                                                                   |
| <b>Financial Considerations</b>        | Out of area placements are not directly controllable by the local authority. Due to the variety of placements in Hartlepool, it is difficult to accurately assess the financial pressures placed upon the local authority<br><br>Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Schemes are nationally funded schemes.                  |
| <b>Subsidy Control</b>                 | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Legal Considerations</b>            | The report refers to relevant statutory and national arrangements, including Section 208 of the Housing Act 1996, Home Office asylum dispersal arrangements and Home Office-funded refugee resettlement schemes. There are no additional legal implications arising directly from this report, which is for information. |
| <b>Single Impact Assessment</b>        | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Staff Considerations</b>            | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Asset Management Considerations</b> | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                                      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations</b> | N/A |
| <b>Consultation</b>                                                  | N/A |

## 7. Recommendations

7.1. The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

## 8. Contact Officers

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Sign Off:-

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|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chief Executive                      | Date: 03/09/2026 |
| Director of Finance, IT and Digital  | Date: 02/09/2026 |
| Director of Legal, Governance and HR | Date: 02/09/2026 |