Hartlepool Board
Friday 4 September 2026 at 9am

Meeting Notes

Attendees – Board Members:
Jonathan Brash MP – Member of Parliament
Iain Caldwell – Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership
Christiana Celestine – Hartlepool Diversity Network
Cllr Scott Gaiety – Parish Council Representative
Carl Jorgeson – Hartlepool Sport
Martin Raby – Northern School of Art
Cllr Aaron Roy – Elected Member
Juli Simons – Hartlepool Community Trust
Matt Storey – Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
Darryl Tomlinson – Cleveland Police (S*ubstitute*)
Jess Tones – Co-Chair of Creative Partnership (*Substitute*)
Malcolm Walker – Independent Chair
Kathryn Whittle – Thirteen
Chris Woodcock - Hartlepool Borough Council (*Substitute*)

Other Attendees:
Tracy Bushnall - Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership
Scott Campbell – Hartlepool Borough Council
Javed Khan – Hartlepool Borough Council
Lisa West – Hartlepool Borough Council

1.	**Welcome, Introductions and Apologies** Apologies were received from Neil Atkinson, Cllr Rob Darby, Oliver Dixon, Christine Eddowes, Darren Hankey, Pamela Hargreaves, Cllr Graham Harrison, Haani Hasnain, Karen Hawkins, Sue Sharpe, and Matt Wilton. Darryl Tomlinson attended as substitute for Helen Wilson, Jessica Tones as substitute for Phil Douglas and Chris Woodcock as substitute for Matt Wilton. MW praised the strong bid that was submitted for the Town of Culture and asked JT if the Board could offer any support to Cultural Partnership. JT said that, although Hartlepool had been unsuccessful in its bid to be a Town of Culture, there had been some good collaborative work. There are now discussions around a year of creativity taking place. It was suggested that JT provides an update at the November meeting of the Hartlepool Board. **ACTION:** JT to provide an update on the Creative & Cultural Partnership at the November meeting of the Board.	

2.	**Declarations of Interest** Following a declaration of an interest at the last meeting in relation to the John Armitage Trust, CJ advised that Hartlepool Sport have been successful in a bid for funding of £240k from the Trust to continue the Early Years Fund.	
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.	
4.	**Launch of PiPP Open Call for Proposals – Approval of Funding Priorities and Next Steps** SC presented the report previously circulated to members, seeking approval for the proposed decision-making process and funding priorities for the first Pride in Place Open Call for Proposals, scheduled to launch in October 2026. SC reminded members that, at the previous meeting, the Board agreed to allocate up to £200,000 of capital funding through this first Open Call. This approach will enable the Board to test and refine the proposed decision-making process, develop a pipeline of community-led projects, and demonstrate early delivery against the priorities of the Pride in Place Programme. To ensure the first Open Call remains focused, community-led and capable of delivering visible change within the available budget, applications will be invited under two priorities which emerged consistently through community engagement, stakeholder consultation and the Innovation Days held in March. These are: • Priority 1 – Activating Parks, Public Spaces and Beaches • Priority 2 – Improving Community Assets and Neighbourhood Spaces SC also outlined the proposed decision-making process, which has been designed to ensure investment decisions are transparent, consistent and aligned with the Investment and Regeneration Plans. The process is comprehensive to provide assurance to the Board regarding governance, appraisal, due diligence and decision-making. A simplified version will be prepared for applicants highlighting key stages of the decision-making process. Applications will be welcomed from across the borough, with priority given to projects delivering clear benefits to areas experiencing the greatest levels of need, including Hartlepool's Mission Critical Neighbourhoods.	

	CJ welcomed the release of the first round of funding but highlighted a need for future rounds to also incorporate revenue funds. JS highlighted a need for a micro-grants fund for newly established community groups, who require a small amount of funding to cover costs such as insurance or DBS. MW queried if there is a need for an additional lower funding tier. MR noted the potential risk that allocating a large number of small grants could limit opportunities to support larger-scale projects and highlighted that higher-value projects often require longer delivery times. SC advised that currently the lowest tier of grants is under £10k and has been developed in response to requests from HOP. He emphasised that this initial Open Call would also provide an opportunity to test the process ahead of the release of larger funding allocations from April 2027. JB stressed the importance of promoting the opportunity widely and ensuring that advertising is not limited to the HBC website. SC agreed and highlighted the collective reach of board members in promoting the opportunity across Hartlepool. JB suggested that board members be provided with the application documentation prior to launch to assist with promotion. IC emphasised the importance of long-term engagement with communities, noting that building trust, listening to local people and providing ongoing encouragement will require sustained effort over many years, which forms a key part of HOP's role through the Board. **ACTION:** The application documentation will be shared with members of the Hartlepool Board prior to the launch of the Open Calls for Proposals. JT asked if smaller grants needed to have written applications, suggesting that video submissions would help improve accessibility and participation. MW supported introducing flexibility within the application process. SC confirmed that alternative application formats will be considered. **ACTION:** The application process will include the option for applicants seeking grants of less than £10k to submit a short video application as an alternative to a written application. CC highlighted that her organisation supports smaller groups by providing access to existing DBS and insurance arrangements, where appropriate. She also noted that the Diversity Network offers practical support, including access to office space and assistance with funding applications. JS added that DBS costs can represent a significant financial burden for smaller groups.	

	KW sought assurance that the Board would maintain oversight of higher-value projects, including key project documentation such as delivery plans and risk registers. SC confirmed that updates on approved projects would be incorporated within the standard Programme Update agenda item. KW also questioned whether financial due diligence would be undertaken prior to the release of funding. SC confirmed that financial and organisational checks form part of the proposed decision-making process. Members shared examples of community-led activity already taking place across the borough. CJ highlighted work undertaken by Hartlepool Sport in Rossmere Park, where local residents are now independently using the equipment provided. JS reported that residents on the Central Estate have assumed responsibility for maintaining three community noticeboards and are using them to share information locally. SC noted that these examples demonstrate the positive momentum already being generated within Hartlepool. MW requested that references to the Deputy Chair be included within the decision-making process alongside the Chair and Vice Chair. MW then introduced the recommendations, which sought approval of the proposed funding priorities, eligibility requirements and decision-making process for the Pride in Place Open Call for Proposals. The recommendations also delegated authority to the Council to finalise the application documents, supporting guidance and decision-making arrangements, and to undertake all actions necessary to launch the Open Call on behalf of the Board. • Those for: JB, IC, CC, SG, CJ, MR, AR, JS, MS, DT, JT, MW, KW and CW • Those against: None. • Those abstaining: None MW confirmed that the recommendations have been approved unanimously by the Hartlepool Board.	
5.	**Programme Update** SC provided a programme update and advised members that the Government had recently issued updated guidance. The changes are relatively minor and primarily consolidate the previous Phase 1 and Phase 2 guidance into a single document. The revised guidance also provides additional clarity regarding community use requirements for funded assets, reaffirms the role of LAs as the Accountable Body, and strengthens guidance relating to branding.	

	MW noted that a letter had also been received from MHCLG, which had been briefly discussed at the previous meeting. He suggested that it would be beneficial for all board members to receive a copy. **ACTION:** SC to circulate a link to the updated Pride in Place guidance and a copy of the MHCLG letter alongside the meeting notes to all members of the Board. SC advised that the next Pride in Place Monitoring Return is due in October 2026. This forms part of the regular monitoring arrangements and will include updates on Board membership, programme delivery, project progress and the forecast use of funding during 2026/27. The monitoring return will be completed by the Council on behalf of the Board. SC then updated members on discussions regarding the future name of the Hartlepool Board. Feedback received from stakeholders suggested that the current title does not fully reflect the Board's community-led focus, particularly as the programme moves into the delivery phase. The matter had been considered by the Communications Subgroup, which had generated several potential alternatives, with further discussion scheduled at its next meeting. JS commented that many residents are currently unaware of the purpose of the Board and that there is an opportunity to review the name before community projects funded through Pride in Place begin to be delivered in Hartlepool. Members held a wide-ranging discussion regarding the Board's identity and public profile. One suggestion was ‘One Hartlepool’, although CC noted that this name had recently been used in connection with activities linked to the Headland Carnival. CJ stated that there must not be any cost associated with rebranding. JB commented that the Board's remit extends beyond Pride in Place and that it effectively fulfils the role of the borough's Local Strategic Partnership. CW added that the current title suggests a primarily strategic function and does not accurately reflect the Board's membership or purpose within Hartlepool Following discussion, it was agreed that the Communications Subgroup would continue to lead work on the potential renaming of the Board. **ACTION:** Any proposed name change will be shared with members for feedback before it is implemented in Hartlepool. IC presented the quarterly progress report on behalf of HOP. He highlighted ongoing public engagement activity and the continued development of partnerships across the borough. IC outlined the outputs delivered to date and provided examples of the intensive engagement work being	

	undertaken with local communities and the VCSE sector. Members welcomed the progress being made and noted the important role fulfilled by HOP.	
6.	**Hartlepool Town Centre Crime & Safety Funded Project** SC presented an overview of the proposed Hartlepool Town Centre Crime & Safety Project, which has been developed through the Tees Valley Investment Zone and aims to support economic growth by creating a safer, more welcoming and vibrant town centre environment. Members were advised that a business case for a £1.8m programme, comprising £1.3m of Investment Zone funding and £500k of complimentary match, had been submitted to the TVCA. The project has been developed collaboratively with partners and follows two multi-agency workshops which developed the interventions and decided on the proposed option. The funding is for the period to March 2029 and focuses on a defined town centre boundary area, incorporating key regeneration sites and high street locations including Church Street, York Road and Murray Street. SC outlined the evidence base for the project, including levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and commercial vacancy rates within the area. The proposed programme seeks to address these challenges through a combination of enforcement, prevention, business engagement, community participation and town centre activation activities. Planned interventions include additional enforcement and CCTV capacity, targeted youth outreach, support for local businesses, a dedicated Town Centre Manager and the launch of a small grants programme. Subject to approval by TVCA, delivery is expected to commence in October 2026. DT welcomed the proposals and advised that he had been involved with Middlesbrough's project, which has recently received approval and shares a number of similarities with the approach in Hartlepool. He also highlighted the significant contribution made by Thomas Legg from Cleveland Police during the development of the project. MS commented that the proposal represented a strong example of partnership working across a range of organisations, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. JS noted the significant impact that fear of crime can have on communities and emphasised the importance of ensuring that engagement and support activities reach those groups who may be less likely to participate but are often most affected. She welcomed the project and the opportunities that it would provide to communities and businesses in Hartlepool.	

	JB welcomed the focus on supporting businesses and events within the town centre, noting the volume of concerns regularly raised in relation to Middleton Grange Shopping Centre and the importance of continuing engagement with HDC. He also referenced the recent successful event at Scarborough Street and welcomed the inclusion of support for event management and the Safety Advisory Group process within the project. SG highlighted opportunities to build on the success of events taking place at the Headland and Highlight and suggested there was potential to develop a regular programme of events across the town, whilst recognising that support and coordination may be required. JB also referenced ongoing partnership work between Hartlepool Police and Public Health focused on signposting and support services, noting the potential for this work to align with the proposed project. SC confirmed that prevention was a key element of the project which would involve working with stakeholders and support services such as START. During discussion, JB also highlighted the importance of ensuring that improvements within the town centre do not inadvertently displace issues into other parts of Hartlepool. Members strongly welcomed the proposed investment and recognised the significant opportunity it presents for the town centre. The Board commended the partnership approach taken to develop the project and its ambition for Hartlepool.	
7.	**Developing Hartlepool's Town Goals** SC delivered a presentation which introduced the concept of Town Goals. The slides outlined how a shared set of ambitions could help connect the town's various strategies, programmes and investment plans, providing an overarching vision for Hartlepool's future. Members were advised that the intention was not to create another strategy, but to develop a small number of simple, memorable and meaningful goals that could be collectively owned by residents, businesses and partner organisations. Examples of similar approaches were highlighted including in Sheffield and Bristol. SC explained that the development of Town Goals would be a phased process over the coming months and would be closely linked to the emerging place branding work. Members were informed that a specialist organisation had been commissioned to support the development of Hartlepool's Place Brand and that it was proposed that the Board's October meeting be replaced with a facilitated workshop focused on Hartlepool's identity, strengths and future ambitions. Members supported this approach and welcomed the next stage of the place brand work for Hartlepool.	

	JK commented that whilst many strategies already exist, any future goals need to be genuinely owned by the town and reflect the aspirations of local people. He noted that similar approaches have been successful elsewhere and can help challenge negative perceptions by focusing on a shared vision for the future. JB stressed the importance of keeping any future goals simple and relatable. He reflected on Hartlepool's post-industrial journey and the ambition to create a town where people can learn, develop their careers and choose to remain. He highlighted the opportunities presented by the future aspirations of Northern School of Art and development of the Production Village. CC commented that perceptions of Hartlepool can sometimes be negative, particularly on social media, and highlighted the importance of promoting positive stories and achievements. MW confirmed that place branding and the development of the Town Goals would form a key focus of the workshop in October. Following the presentation, board members participated in an interactive exercise designed to inform the development of Hartlepool's future Town Goals. Using the prompt: "Hartlepool is a town where..." Members were asked to identify a single ambition that they would like to see achieved over the next 10-15 years. The responses were recorded on post-it notes and covered a range of themes, including opportunity, education, community, culture and health. SC stated the outputs from the exercise will be used alongside wider engagement to inform the next stage of developing Hartlepool's Town Goals.	
8.	**Any Other Business** CJ shared feedback from the Powered by Imagination event which was organised by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The notes from the event were shared with the agenda and the opportunities strongly align with Pride in Place. **ACTION:** Joseph Rowntree Foundation to be invited to a future Board meeting to present on its work in Hartlepool. MW expressed support and solidarity from the Board with those affected by the recent tragic incident in Middlesbrough.	
9.	**Date and Time of Next Meeting** The next meeting will be a wider Place Brand Workshop on Thursday 1 October 2026 from 2pm at the Town Hall Theatre	