Hartlepool
Borough Council

Extraordinary Council

15 October 2026

Hartlepool
Borough Council

Civic Centre
Hartlepool

6 October 2026

Councillors Anderson, Bailey-Fleet, Bruce, Buglass, Clayton, Cook, Cowie, Darby, Dodds, Doyle, Dunbar, Feeney, Gaiety, Gaines, Hall, B Harrison, G Harrison, Holbrook, Hughes, Jorgeson, Lindridge, Little, Male, Napper, Nelson, Oliver, Reeve, Roy, Scarborough, Smith, Stevenson, Storey, Thompson, Wallace, Wiley and Young.

Madam or Sir,

You are hereby summoned to attend an EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL meeting to be held on Thursday, 15 October 2026 at 6.30pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool to consider the subject set out in the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

M Wilton
Chief Executive

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Hartlepool
Borough Council

Extraordinary Council Agenda

15 October 2026 at 6.30pm

in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool

1. To receive apologies from absent Members;

2. To receive any declarations of interest from Members;

3. To deal with any business required by statute to be done before any other business;

4. To consider the following:-

   In accordance with the Council's Constitution, we hereby requisition an Extraordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 15 October 2026 for the purpose of considering and determining the arrangements necessary to implement the Council's transition to a Leader and Cabinet form of governance.

   Signed: Councillors Young, Gaiety, Bruce, Cowie and Buglass.

5. To receive the Chief Executive's report - Implementation of Leader and Cabinet Governance Arrangements

Civic centre evacuation and assembly procedure

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

ITEM (5)

Implementation Of Leader and Cabinet Governance Arrangements - Chief Executive

Hartlepool Borough Council

Extraordinary Council

15 October 2026

Report of: Chief Executive

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF LEADER AND CABINET GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Full Council, following a request for an extraordinary meeting, to consider and agree the implementation of Hartlepool Borough Council's transition from its existing committee system to a Leader and Cabinet executive with effect from 10 December 2026.

1.2 The report also advises Full Council of the statutory changes to local authority governance arrangements introduced by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 ("the 2026 Act") and sets out the transitional arrangements (**Appendix A**) and implementation timetable (**Appendix B**) necessary to support the move to the new governance model.

2. BACKGROUND AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

2.1 Hartlepool Borough Council has operated a committee system since May 2013, following the referendum held on 15 November 2012 and Full Council's resolution on 6 December 2012.

2.2 Section 61 and Schedule 29 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 amend Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000. The effect is that existing committee-system authorities must move to Leader and Cabinet arrangements within the statutory period unless protected or exempt.

2.3 Hartlepool's statutory protection period arising from the 2012 referendum has expired. The Council is therefore required to implement Leader and Cabinet arrangements by 29 June 2027.

3. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE

3.1 It has been proposed that the new governance arrangements take effect from 10 December 2026. This is approximately seven months before the statutory long-stop date of 29 June 2027.

4. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 It is proposed that from 10 December 2026, the Council will operate a Leader and Cabinet executive form of governance. Full Council will retain functions reserved to it by law, the Leader and Cabinet will discharge executive functions, and overview and scrutiny arrangements will provide democratic scrutiny of executive decision-making.

4.2 Regulatory, quasi-judicial, statutory scrutiny and other legally required committee functions will continue within an appropriate committee structure. The principal change will be the transfer of executive functions currently discharged through the committee system to Leader and Cabinet.

5. TRANSITIONAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 The Leader and Cabinet governance arrangements would take effect on 10 December 2026, following approval of the revised Constitution by Full Council on 26 November 2026.

5.2 To support the transition to the new governance arrangements and the associated review of the Constitution, a Member/Officer Working Group, the Leader and Cabinet Transition Working Group, has been established. The Working Group is undertaking a review of the Council's constitutional framework to ensure it reflects the requirements of the Leader and Cabinet model, supports effective decision-making and provides robust overview and scrutiny arrangements. Its findings will inform the Constitution Committee's consideration of the revised governance and constitutional arrangements.

5.3 Recognising the breadth of matters requiring review within the available timeframe, three themed task and finish groups have been established to support the work of the Working Group:

- Group 1: Governance Structure
- Group 2: Constitutional Changes
- Group 3: Member Development, Engagement and Cultural Change

5.4 These groups have been considering specific aspects of the transition, including executive decision-making, scrutiny arrangements, regulatory and quasi-judicial

functions, schemes of delegation, procedural rules and Member/officer governance matters.

5.5 The findings of the task and finish groups will be reported to the Leader and Cabinet Transition Working Group and will inform its recommendations to the Constitution Committee. The recommendations of the Constitution Committee will then be referred to Full Council at its meeting on 26 November 2026, when the revised Constitution can be considered and approved. Subject to that approval and completion of the necessary statutory and administrative steps, the Leader and Cabinet governance arrangements would take effect on 10 December 2026.

6. PUBLICATION AND NOTICE

6.1 Section 9KC of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council, following a resolution to change governance arrangements, to publish notice of the change and make the new arrangements available for inspection. The Monitoring Officer will arrange publication of the statutory notice.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Risk Implications	The principal risks are failure to implement the statutory requirement within the prescribed period; constitutional provisions becoming inconsistent with the new governance model; uncertainty regarding responsibility for individual functions; and loss of effective scrutiny during transition. These risks will be mitigated through implementation from 10 December 2026, a full constitutional review led by the Monitoring Officer, revised responsibility for functions, and approval of the revised scrutiny arrangements before commencement.
Financial Considerations	The change is not expected to have a significant direct financial impact. Any one-off costs, including Member and officer training, constitutional review, notice publication and meeting changes, will be managed within existing budgets wherever possible.
Subsidy Control	n/a
Legal Considerations	Set out within the body of the report.
Single Impact Assessment	The change is not expected to have a direct adverse equality impact. The revised governance arrangements will need to remain accessible and comply with applicable equality and accessibility duties.

Staff Considerations	The change principally affects democratic decision-making structures rather than the Council's underlying officer structure. Officer delegations will be reviewed to ensure they remain legally and operationally appropriate.
Asset Management Considerations	n/a
Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations	n/a
Consultation	The legislation does not permit a further referendum. The Council will communicate the change to Members, officers, residents and other relevant stakeholders, and Members will be provided with appropriate briefings and training before the new arrangements commence.

8. OPTIONS

Option 1 – Implement Leader and Cabinet from 10 December 2026

8.1 This is the recommended option. It enables the Council to complete the transition in a planned way well before the statutory deadline and provides clarity for Members, officers and residents.

Option 2 – Delay implementation until a later date

8.2 Delay remains possible provided the Council complies with the statutory deadline but would reduce the time available to address implementation issues.

Option 3 – Continue the committee system beyond the statutory period

8.3 Continuing the committee system beyond the statutory period is not available unless a specific statutory exemption or extension applies.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Council is recommended to:

i. Note the statutory requirement for Hartlepool Borough Council to move from the committee system to a Leader and Cabinet executive under Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026.

ii**.** Agree that the transition to Leader and Cabinet governance arrangements shall be implemented with effect from 10 December 2026, noting the transitional arrangements and timetable set out at Appendix A and B.

iii. Note that, if implementation from 10 December 2026 is agreed, the revised Constitution will be considered by the Constitution Committee before being submitted to Full Council for approval on 26 November 2026.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The recommendations are made to ensure that the Council complies with the statutory requirement to move to Leader and Cabinet arrangements within the prescribed period, provides a clear and orderly transition from the committee system, and enables the necessary constitutional, democratic and administrative changes to be completed before the new arrangements take effect.

APPENDIX A

TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS

1. The existing Policy Committees will continue to exercise their functions until 9 December 2026, subject to the Constitution and any statutory requirements.
2. From 10 December 2026, executive functions will transfer to the Leader and Cabinet arrangements.
3. Regulatory, audit, scrutiny and other statutory committees will continue in accordance with the revised Constitution.
4. The Monitoring Officer will issue guidance identifying the decision-making route for matters already in progress at the date of transition.
5. Democratic Services will revise the Council's meeting calendar to reflect the new governance arrangements.
6. Existing committee appointments will be reviewed and amended where necessary.
7. The revised political balance requirements will be applied to committees where legally required.

APPENDIX B

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Date	**Action**
June 2026	Statutory provisions commence
10 November 2026	Constitution Committee considers detailed arrangements
26 November 2026	Council considers revised Constitution
November 2026	Member briefings/training
Before 10 December 2026	Statutory notice/publication
10 December 2026	**Leader and Cabinet governance arrangements commence**
December 2026 onwards	New executive and scrutiny arrangements operate
March 2027	Centre for Governance and Scrutiny will conduct a three-month review of how the new arrangements are working.
By 29 June 2027	Statutory long-stop date