

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

17 June 2025

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Hargreaves (In the Chair)

Councillors: Councillors Matthew Dodds, Jim Lindridge, John Nelson, Owen Riddle, Martin Scarborough, Mike Young

Parish Council representatives:
Stephen Smith (Greatham Parish Council)

Also present: Oliver Huermann, Hartlepool's Member of the Youth Parliament
Rebecca Garlick, Participation Officer

Officers: Tony Hanson, Executive Director Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director (Preventative and Community Based Services)
Kieran Bostock, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director (Regulatory Services)
Steve Hilton, Senior Public Relations Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Hurst (Wynyard Parish Council)

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2025

Received.

4. Presentation – Introduction to Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee *(Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services and Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services)*

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services along with the Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services provided a very detailed and comprehensive presentation to the Committee with key highlights noted below. The presentation summarised the role of the Committee and its Members and the functions of the Committee. It was noted that there had been a significant amount of communications and marketing undertaken over the previous 12 months with more planned over the next year. An outline of the work undertaken in relation to Procurement, Strategic Development, Asset Management and Estates and Economic Growth was provided in the presentation. There was a lot of positive events being undertaken such as the launch of the new HBC website, improved use of data and new technology and a greater emphasis on social value in relation to procurement. A key success for the town was the management of the £150 capital programme including the £40m Waterfront development along with the development of the Wesley and the reimagining and restoration of Middleton Grange. Work was also underway completing land sales for future developments and the progression of the A19 Elwick Bypass. In the year ahead, work would continue with Tees Valley Combined Authority on a new business support programme to deliver to Hartlepool businesses.

In relation to Culture and Events, there had been a significant level of work undertaken and more planned for the Museum of Hartlepool, phase one complete on PS Wingfield Castle, secured MEND funding to invest in Art Gallery and reopen the Tower, feasibility work is being concluded on Borough Hall and Town Hall Theatre. Details were provided of the work undertaken in Jobs and Skills Service including Adult Skills, Learning for Inclusion, Youth Trail Blazer and Connect to Work among others. Work was ongoing in conjunction with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to conclude a Heritage Feasibility which will inform a strategic approach to heritage across the Tees Valley with a focus on the provision of assets and services to the local and visiting economy. In the year ahead there were many projects being undertaken including the establishment of new employment hubs across Hartlepool, a pilot for new learning opportunities linked to community resilience and events, and further development of Bespoke Employment Led Programmes (BELPs) connecting to local growth sectors.

There were two videos provided for the Committee that showcased key developmental areas in the town including the Waterfront and Highlight along with the area surrounding the Northern Studios.

The Chair thanked Officers for the informative and comprehensive presentations and highlighted the importance of changing people's lives

through skill development and employment opportunities. It was highlighted that the Council undertook such a breadth of projects and initiatives for the residents of Hartlepool ensuring the effective and efficient use of every council tax pound as well as the significant amounts of external investment secured by Officers. It was noted that joined up thinking and collaborative working was key to the successes achieved with a lot of projects coming to fruition over the next 12 months. In response to a request from a Member, the Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services confirmed that the programme of economic growth events over the last 12 months including business/creative weeks and a programme for the year ahead will be circulated to Members of the Committee.

The importance of tailoring the support provided to enhance employment skills, including literacy was key to the success of strengthening the employability of residents. The Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services confirmed that there were a lot of programmes relating to employment as part of the government's 'Get Britain Working White Paper' and devolved via the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). Workshops are ongoing with TVCA and other partners to explore where inward investment will be prioritised going forward.

Decision

- (i) The presentation was noted.
- (ii) That presentations be provided to future meetings of the Committee on the following:
 - Communications and Communications Strategy
 - The Council's assets and the strategies for managing them.

5. Presentation – Supporting Young People into the Workplace *(Member of the Youth Parliament)*

Hartlepool's Member of the Youth Parliament, Oliver Huermann was invited to provide the Committee with a presentation on supporting young people into employment. There had been a significant amount of work undertaken to engage with young people about their experience of trying to find employment and the difficulties they had faced. As a result of this, a comprehensive resource called 'Canny CVs' was created to support young people. This resource provided examples of cover letters, personal profiles, key skills, volunteering, know your rights, do and don't advice from employers as well as other information and links to relevant websites and other resources. This resource had been circulated widely to all schools and youth centres across the town and would be available on the new Council website.

It was noted that having a secure job was a high priority for young people along with ways of gaining work experience. In addition young people indicated that a central point to find jobs aimed at 16 year olds would be

helpful as they felt it was luck when they found out about any local jobs. One of the key areas that young people felt was important was the development of soft skills as it was these skills that they lack confidence in. A suggestion was that young people could be encouraged to be involved in activities, community work or volunteering opportunities to develop their soft skills.

Members commended Oliver for his passion and enthusiasm that shone throughout his presentation. A member sought clarification on the views of young people in relation to the development of AI technology. It was noted that young people had split views on AI technology with around half viewing it as the future and half not really wanting to engage with the technology. A discussion ensued on the value and availability of work experience for young people at secondary school and it was a mixed experience for young people and young people were crying out for that engagement and experience in the workplace which would increase their confidence as well as skills. It was noted that the procedure for young people to secure work experience was cumbersome and a Member asked for further information on this. It was suggested that opportunities for young people to access work experience and development of skills should be discussed at a future meeting of the Business Forum. In response to a question from the Chair the Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services indicated that linking to the Youth Trailblazer programme could be explored. The Chair thanked Hartlepool's Member of the Youth Parliament, Oliver Huermann for his attendance at the meeting and for his enthusiastic presentation and engagement with Members.

Decision

- (i) The presentation was noted and the piece of work undertaken by the Member of the Youth Parliament be shared with Members of the Committee.
- (ii) That information on the provision of work experiences for young people within secondary schools be circulated to Members.
- (iii) That the Youth Trailblazer scheme is connected to wider opportunities to support young people into the workplace through liaison with Children's Services.

The meeting concluded at 11.10 am

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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