

Hartlepool Board Terms of Reference

May 2026

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These Terms of Reference set out how the Hartlepool Board operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Board operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable whilst retaining its focus on the residents and communities within Hartlepool.

This document also reflects the governance requirements as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and should be read alongside other associated documents including the Code of Conduct.

1. Purpose

The Board brings together individuals and organisations with a strong commitment to the borough including local businesses, education institutions, and community leaders to provide collective strategic leadership that drives forward Hartlepool. Acting as a representative body for the whole of Hartlepool, the Board will operate as the borough's Local Strategic Partnership. In line with Government requirements for the Pride in Place Programme, the Board will transition to a community-led model of delivery by 2028/29. This means residents and communities having a central role in shaping strategic priorities, influencing decision-making, and being meaningfully embedded within the governance structures of the Board.

The Board will oversee a range of major funding and investment programmes, such as the £20m Pride in Place Programme, ensuring resources are aligned to the needs and priorities of the local community. The Board will also serve as a central platform for collaboration and shared decision-making across three core strategic themes:

- To create thriving places: Supporting economic growth, sustainability, and enhancing public spaces to build vibrant and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- To build stronger communities: Fostering social cohesion, championing community-led initiatives, and strengthening local networks and partnerships.
- To empower people: Enabling residents to shape decisions, influence local priorities, and take an active role in their communities.

The Board exists to enable resident-led decision-making, place-based delivery, and collective accountability for improving pride in place outcomes. The Board has developed a bold 10-year Regeneration Plan (2026–2036) which sets a long-term, community-led vision created by and for local people in Hartlepool.

2. Membership

The membership aims to ensure the Board remains as representative as possible of the local community whilst reflecting a diverse range of demographics, sectors, skills, and interests. The Board will include both statutory and nominated representatives with a deep connection to Hartlepool.

Statutory Members:

These members sit on the Board by virtue of the role or organisation they represent. If the individual holding that role changes, the new postholder will automatically assume the statutory place on the Board.

Role/Organisation	
1	Member of Parliament (Deputy Chair)
2	Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council
3	Chair of Housing, Growth & Communities Committee
4	Police & Crime Commissioner
5	Cleveland Police
6	Cleveland Fire Brigade
7	Hartlepool Borough Council
8	Tees Valley Combined Authority
9	NHS University Hospital Tees
10	North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
11	Hartlepool Opportunities Partnership (HOP - Local Infrastructure Organisation)
12	Chair of Hartlepool Development Corporation
13	Chair of Hartlepool Town Deal Board
14	Member of Youth Parliament
15	Elected Member from Non-majority Group of Hartlepool Borough Council

Nominated Representatives:

These members will serve a three-year term and will be selected through an open and transparent process through their relevant sector or representative body. At the end of their term, individuals may be re-appointed by their sector or representative body to continue serving as a member of the Board.

Sector/Body	
1	Housing Representative
2	Sports Representative
3	Creative & Cultural Representative
4	Primary School Representative
5	Secondary School Representative
6	Further & Higher Education Representative
7	Faith Representative
8	Parish Council Representative
9	Advisory Group Representative – Business
10	Advisory Group Representative – VCSE
11	Advisory Group Representative – Diversity & Inclusion
12	Advisory Group Representative – Children & Young People
13	Resident Representatives x 3

The resident representatives will play a key role in ensuring lived experience and neighbourhood priorities inform decision-making. Resident involvement will continue to be strengthened over time, including place-based and thematic perspectives as part of the transition to a community-led model for the Board.

Non-Voting Members:

In addition, support organisations or bodies may be invited to attend meetings of the Hartlepool Board in a non-voting capacity which will be at the discretion of the Chair. These attendees may provide specialist advice, technical expertise, or community

insight to inform discussions and support the work of the Board but will not hold voting rights. Their attendance will be determined by the Chair, and all non-voting attendees must adhere to the Board’s policies, including the Code of Conduct, and will be subject to the full requirements of these Terms of Reference.

Membership Review:

The Hartlepool Board membership will be reviewed annually, and new members are also required to participate in a Board Development CPD Programme. The review will also assess progress towards community-led governance, including resident participation, the influence of communities on decision-making, and the development of neighbourhood-level structures to support the work of the Board.

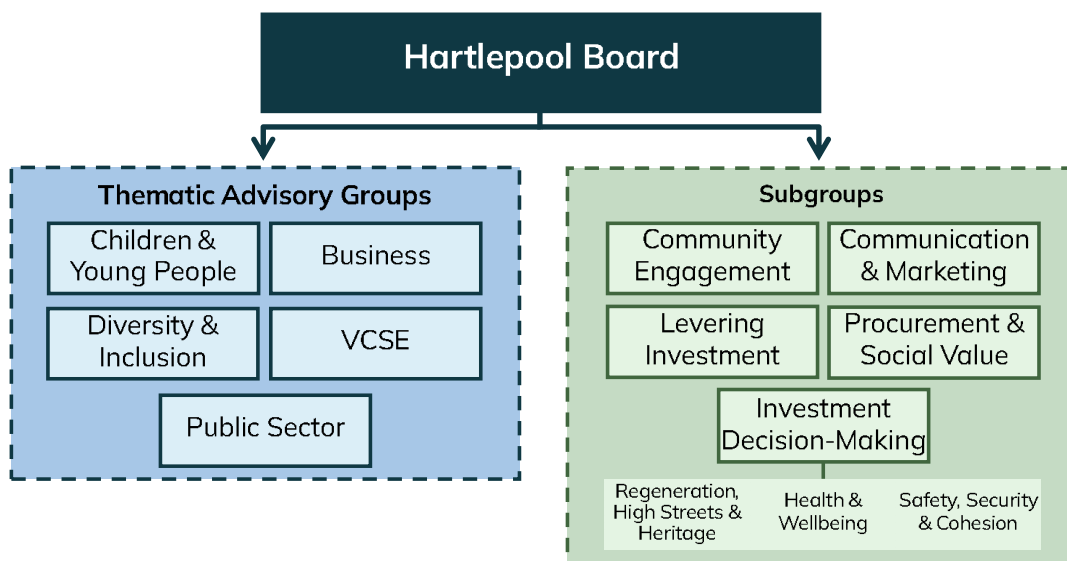
Each member will provide a named substitute who will attend meetings if the Board Member is unavailable, which will help ensure continuity for the Board. This should not be on a sustained basis unless agreed with the Chair.

To maintain high standards for the operation of the Board, all members need to act in accordance with the agreed governing documents including the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy. Each member will also adopt the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the principles of Civic Leadership.

3. Governance Structure

Members of the Hartlepool Board will be expected to share the views of the community in the context of their role as Civic Leaders, rather than solely representing personal or professional interests. Members should maintain active engagement with the community and within their respective organisations, ensuring they can effectively contribute to and communicate the work of the Board.

The governance structure for the Hartlepool Board includes Thematic Advisory Groups and identified Subgroups as set out below.



To ensure clear governance, transparency, and accountability the Advisory Groups and Subgroups will report directly to the Hartlepool Board.

The governance structure will evolve over time to support the transition towards a community-led model. The Board, working with HOP and community partners, will support the development of neighbourhood-level engagement structures to increase community participation, involvement and leadership across Hartlepool.

Thematic Advisory Groups:

The thematic Advisory Groups have been established to provide ongoing insight, challenge, and dialogue to the Board. They act as an extension of the Board's governance capacity by ensuring a broad range of voices, perspectives, and expertise inform decision-making. The purpose of the Advisory Groups are:

- To ensure the perspectives and lived experiences of communities, stakeholders, and organisations are reflected in the work of the Board.
- To provide strategic insight and provide informed advice to the Board.
- To engage with all existing partnerships, networks and stakeholder groups ensuring alignment, connectivity, and complementarity.
- To strengthen two-way communication between the Board and wider networks, sectors, and communities within Hartlepool.

Each Advisory Group will have an identified Lead Board Member who will act as the primary liaison between the thematic group and the Hartlepool Board.

Subgroups:

The Subgroups will provide focused oversight, development, and coordination for priorities identified by the Board. Subgroups can be established for either a time-limited basis to undertake a specific piece of work or can operate on an ongoing basis where sustained attention is required on priority areas of strategic importance. The Board may decide to establish further Subgroups and will nominate a lead. These Subgroups can include people and organisations outside of the membership of the Board. The purpose of the Subgroups are:

- To lead on their designated area and generate evidence-based insights, options, and recommendations to support the Board.
- To support the delivery of the Board's work programme by developing proposals, pathways, and practical solutions.
- To produce regular updates and reports for the Board, ensuring transparency, accountability, and shared understanding.
- To coordinate partner activity and strengthen collaboration across organisations working within Hartlepool.

The Subgroups may make operational recommendations, but they do not hold decision-making authority so will not require voting mechanisms and are advisory to the Board. Subgroups will be approved by and report to the Board and members will adhere to all policies including the Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference.

Investment Decision-Making Technical Subgroups:

Aligned to the priority investment themes, and operating in accordance with the governance requirements set out for all Subgroups, the Investment Decision-Making Technical Subgroups will provide focused oversight and expert recommendations to the Board.

These Subgroups will assess, review, and provide recommendations on all potential proposals, enabling a consistent and strategic approach to the allocation of resources and forming a key part of the investment decision-making processes. Each will be led by a Board Member. The membership will reflect the Board's commitment to inclusive, community-led leadership and will include, as a minimum:

- An inclusion representative,
- A young people's representative,
- A community representative, and
- A resident representative.

Operating within the overarching governance arrangements for Subgroups, the Investment Decision-Making Technical Subgroup will review evidence, ensure alignment with existing activity, and bring forward clear, evidence-based recommendations for consideration and decision-making by the Board.

4. Board Leadership

The Hartlepool Board will be led by an independent Chair, currently Malcolm Walker. As part of the governance arrangements, in the event of a vacancy, a new independent Chair will be appointed through an open and transparent recruitment process, led by the Council as Accountable Body and in consultation with the MP.

The Member of Parliament will serve as the Deputy Chair, reflecting the responsibilities associated with supporting the Chair. The Deputy Chair will work closely with the Chair to provide strategic support and assist in fulfilling the governance responsibilities of the Board.

The Board will also elect two Vice Chairs, one drawn from the Statutory Members and one from the Nominated Representatives. These roles are currently held by Pamela Hargreaves and Haani Hasnain, respectively. When a Vice Chair position becomes vacant, nominations will be invited from eligible Board Members. If multiple nominations are received, a vote will take place involving the remaining members on the basis of one vote per member. The nominee receiving the most votes will be elected Vice Chair. In the event of a tie the casting vote will be from the Chair.

Role of the Chair:

The Chair will act as a champion for Hartlepool and provide strategic leadership for the Board. The Chair will ensure the Board operates effectively, collaboratively, and in line with its objectives whilst also playing a central role in fostering strong partnerships and maintaining the profile of the Board. The key responsibilities are to:

- Lead Board meetings, ensuring they are well-structured, inclusive, and outcome-focused.
- Work with members and Hartlepool Borough Council as the secretariat to set and agree meeting agendas.
- Facilitate effective and accountable decision-making, ensuring all perspectives are considered and consensus is built where possible.
- Act as the primary spokesperson for the Board, representing its decisions and priorities publicly, including to the media and key stakeholders.
- Serve as a principal liaison between the Board and local partners, public bodies, key stakeholders, and community organisations.
- Provide strategic direction, ensuring Board activity aligns with community priorities and the long-term vision for Hartlepool.
- Oversee the development and delivery of the key policies, programmes, and initiatives under the remit of the Board.
- Promote clear communication across the Board to ensure members are informed, engaged, and able to contribute effectively.
- Champion community engagement, ensuring local voices inform the decision-making of the Board.
- Mentor and support members in fulfilling their roles and developing their leadership capabilities.
- Mediate and resolve disputes fairly, transparently, and constructively, promoting a positive and collaborative culture for the Board.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, the Chair ensures that the Board operates with integrity, effectiveness, and in the best interests of the community within Hartlepool.

Role of the Vice Chairs:

The Vice Chairs will support the overall leadership of the Board, helping maintain continuity, resilience, and effective governance working together with both the Chair and Deputy Chair. The key responsibilities are to:

- Support the Chair in delivering their leadership duties and contributing to effective governance of the Board.
- Lead meetings and undertake the Chair responsibilities in the absence of the independent Chair.
- Assist in preparing agendas, planning meetings, and ensuring smooth and efficient meeting delivery.
- Act as a link between the Chair and members, strengthening communication and collaboration.
- Support the resolution of disputes within the Board, ensuring fair and transparent processes.
- Participate actively in strategic discussions, planning, and decision-making to support the work of the Board
- Offer feedback, scrutiny, and support on key policies, programmes, and initiatives under the remit of the Board.
- Represent the Board at events, meetings, and public engagements when delegated by the Chair.
- Foster an inclusive, collaborative environment that enables effective partnership working and encourage participation from all Board Members.

Working alongside the Chair and Deputy Chair, the Vice Chairs will help ensure strong leadership, continuity, and smooth operation of the Board.

In the context of the Board's transition to a community-led model, the Board may, in the future, consider the appointment of a Resident Vice Chair to support leadership development and enhance community involvement in the governance of the Board.

5. Responsibilities and Duties

Board Members are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, probity, and accountability. In fulfilling their role, members are collectively responsible for ensuring that the Board operates effectively, transparently, and in the best interests of the community. Their key duties include:

- Providing strategic oversight of the 10-year Regeneration Plan (2026–2036) and the 4-year Investment Plan (2026–2030).
- Engaging with communities to co-produce plans, support community-led delivery, and ensure local voices are embedded in decision-making.
- Allocating resources responsibly and monitoring progress to ensure value for money and alignment with strategic objectives.
- Maintaining transparency through regular reporting on outcomes, performance, and programme delivery.
- Communicating openly with stakeholders, ensuring that communities, partners, and organisations are kept informed of the Board's activities, progress, and decisions.
- Monitoring the implementation of Board initiatives and programmes, ensuring they remain on track, address local needs, and deliver intended benefits.
- Promoting learning and development, encouraging training opportunities that strengthen the skills and effectiveness of Board Members.
- Supporting investment activity, including identifying and pursuing additional funding and partnership opportunities that would benefit Hartlepool.
- Addressing conflict constructively, helping to mediate disputes within the Board or with external parties, and ensuring issues are resolved fairly, transparently, and in a way that protects positive working relationships.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, members will help ensure that the Board functions as a dynamic and effective strategic partnership - one capable of driving meaningful, long-term and positive change for the benefit of communities in Hartlepool.

6. Meeting Protocols and Conflicts of Interest

Meetings of the Hartlepool Board will be held monthly for up to two hours and will be held either face to face or virtually. The Council website will publish an annual schedule of meetings for the Board.

The quorum for any meeting of the Board will be 25% of the membership or ten members, whichever is the greatest, and needs to include either the Chair, Deputy Chair, or a Vice Chair. Actions of each meeting will be tracked and the headline discussion points captured which will then be circulated after each meeting and will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Board.

A conflict of interest arises where a Board Member, a close associate, immediate family, business, organisation, or employer has an interest in a matter which is the same as, connected to or may be affected by the matter under discussion. At the start of the Board, Members must declare any interest which they have in any matter to be considered at that meeting. These will be recorded in a declaration of interest register which will be managed by the Council.

Board Members should take personal responsibility for declaring their interests before any decision is considered by the Board. These will be formally noted within the published notes of meetings of the Board. If any Member has any queries about their interests and the disclosure thereof, they should seek advice from the Chair.

7. Voting

All items requiring a decision will be decided upon by a simple majority of those members present in the room and eligible to vote. Where a decision cannot be concluded due to an equal number of votes, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Where a substitute Board Member is attending, they are eligible to cast a vote. However, any representatives attending in an advisory capacity or as a member of public cannot cast a vote.

Any Board Member who has declared a pecuniary or prejudicial interest cannot vote on matters of conflict. However, due to the nature of information the Board Member may have relating to the topic under discussion and so they can articulate the need of communities, the Member will be able to take part in the debate. The dedicated Conflict of Interest Policy should be read alongside these Terms of Reference and sets out the expectations of all members on the Board.

8. Decision-Making Powers

The Hartlepool Board operates as a strategic partnership, and the decision-making powers are therefore designed to balance community-led leadership with the statutory responsibilities of Hartlepool Borough Council as the Accountable Body.

Scope of Board Decision-Making:

The Hartlepool Board will make decisions relating to the programmes within its remit for a range of purposes, which includes:

- The strategic priorities, objectives, and outcomes of the 10-year Hartlepool Regeneration Plan and 4-year Investment Plan.
- Commissioning, prioritisation, and approval of projects, programmes, or initiatives to be funded such as for the Pride in Place Programme.
- Allocation of resources within the programmes for which the Board has responsibility, subject to the statutory requirements of the Accountable Body.
- Endorsement of business cases, delivery plans, evaluation frameworks, and programme-level monitoring arrangements.

- Establishment of Advisory Groups and Subgroups to support delivery of the work programme for the Board.
- Recommendations relating to investment opportunities, policy changes, or strategic issues affecting Hartlepool.

Board decisions are binding within the scope of their remit, provided that they comply with the funding requirements and the financial and legal frameworks of the Council.

Role of the Accountable Body:

Hartlepool Borough Council acts as the Accountable Body for the investment governed through the Hartlepool Board and therefore retains responsibility for:

- Compliance with all legal, financial, constitutional, and regulatory requirements.
- Entering into funding agreements and contracts on behalf of any programmes, initiatives, or the Hartlepool Board.
- Ensuring proper stewardship of public funds, including financial monitoring, procurement, and audit.
- Ensuring decisions made by the Board are lawful, deliverable, and consistent with statutory duties within the UK.

Where a Board decision has financial, legal, or statutory implications, the Council will apply its own governance processes before any decision can be formally enacted to ensure compliance as the Accountable Body.

Urgent Decisions:

In exceptional circumstances where an urgent decision is required between scheduled meetings of the Board, the Chair may approve a decision following consultation with the Deputy Chair, Vice Chairs, and the Council. Urgent decisions will be recorded and reported for transparency at the next Board.

9. Attendance at Meetings

Members will endeavour to attend all meetings of the Hartlepool Board and attendance will be monitored. However, if a Board Member is unable to attend any meeting, then they should submit their apologies in advance of the meeting. Each Board Member will provide a named substitute who will attend meetings if the member is unavailable, which will help to ensure continuity for the Board.

10. Escalation and Dispute Resolution

Where disagreements arise, Board Members should seek to resolve issues informally through discussion with the parties involved and, where needed, with support from the Chair, Deputy Chair, or Vice Chairs.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it should be referred to the Chair (or the Deputy Chair if the issue involves the Chair) for formal consideration and mediation

in line with the Terms of Reference. If the dispute remains unresolved, it may be escalated to the Council as the Accountable Body.

In addition, where a person has reason to believe that the conduct of a Board Member has fallen short of the standards as set out in the Code of Conduct, encapsulated in the Nolan Principles, a complaint may be made in writing to the Chair, or to the Council.

11. Changes in Membership

Membership will change over time and Board Members may also be removed from the Board if they do not adhere to the agreed principles, practices and policies including the Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct.

A Board Member shall cease to be a member of the Board in the following circumstances:

- Gives written notice of their notice of their resignation to either the Chair or to Hartlepool Borough Council.
- Personal circumstances such as ill health means that they are not able to continue with their role on the Board.
- Following a recommendation by the Chair and by a resolution of the Board that it is in the best interests that their membership is terminated.
- Members who breach confidentiality or refuse to adhere to the values and behaviours expected for the Board.

The Chair, Deputy Chair and Vice Chairs, in consultation with the Council as Accountable Body, shall determine whether a member who has been absent from three consecutive meetings, without a substitute attending on their behalf, has good cause for their absence and if an alternative member needs to be identified in line with the Terms of Reference.

12. Communications, Press and Media Relations

In the first instance, press and media enquiries shall be referred to the Chair and the Council before any statement is made by individual members of the Board.

All Board Members are expected to act as positive ambassadors. Communication relating to the Board or its associated programmes should reflect a constructive and supportive tone, promoting the initiatives and their benefits. Members should avoid making negative or disparaging public statements about the Board or programmes and instead raise any concerns through appropriate channels via the Chair.

13. Transparency

In line with the principles of public life, it is important that there is transparency around the operation of the Hartlepool Board. Meetings of the Board shall be called by the Council at the request of the Chair of the Board. The agenda and papers for each meeting shall be agreed by the Council and the Chair.

Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time, and

date together with an agenda of the matters to be discussed at the meeting shall be forwarded to Board Members and any other person required to attend no later than four working days before the date of the meeting. The agenda will be made publicly accessible through the Council website once they have been approved for publication by the Chair. Wherever possible, any supporting reports and/or papers shall be sent at the same time to Board Members.

The proceedings and resolutions of meetings of the Board, including the names of those present and in attendance, shall be minutes. Notes of meetings of the Board shall be published in draft form until approved by the Board. In addition, profiles of each Board Member will be published on the Council website to provide openness and transparency for the Hartlepool Board.

The public can attend formal board meetings but only as observers. The only exception is when certain parts of the agenda contain confidential, commercially sensitive, or otherwise exempt information in which case the public may be excluded and there will be a private section of the meeting. Any members of the public attending as observers may not participate in the discussions of the meeting unless invited to by the Chair. In addition, the Chair may exclude a member of the public due to misbehaviour and to maintain orderly conduct for meetings of the Board.

14. Confidentiality

On occasions the Board may wish to discuss matters where confidentiality is required. Confidentiality will only apply where the Chair determines that the item is confidential or exempt due to commercial sensitivity, personal data, legal privilege, or another other lawful basis. Where an item is treated as confidential or exempt, it may be included in a private section of the agenda, and the meeting notes will record this when published by the Council.

The Board is not a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council; however, in determining whether an item is confidential or exempt, the Board will apply equivalent standards to those in the Council's Procedure Rules.

All Board Members are expected to retain confidentiality in respect of those matters and should not discuss or circulate information outside the perimeters of the Board. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated seriously and may result in action being taken in line with the Code of Conduct, which may include removal from the Board.

15. Review and Revision

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually or by exception should circumstances change or at the request of the Board.