Hartlepool
Borough Council



Hartlepool Borough Council Local Plan

Scoping Consultation - November 2026

Scoping Consultation - Become involved in shaping Hartlepool through the new Local Plan.

Contents

1. Introduction

2. The Local Plan-Making System

3. Communication Throughout the Local Plan Process

4. Hartlepool Now

5. Hartlepool Now and In the Future

6. Developing a Local Plan Vision

7. Key Local Plan Priorities
    - 7.1 Achieving sustainable development
    - 7.2. Delivering housing to meet Hartlepool's needs
    - 7.3. Building a strong local economy
    - 7.4. Ensuring the vitality and viability of Hartlepool` s retail and commercial areas
    - 7.5. Promoting sustainable transport
    - 7.6. Promoting healthy communities
    - 7.7. Building a high-quality built environment
    - 7.8. Maintaining and enhancing the natural environment

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document

1.1 The Hartlepool Local Plan was adopted in May 2018, since then the Local Plan making system has been changed under the 2026 regulations and the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is accompanied by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is an online tool to provide guidance. The overarching aim of the new planning framework is to achieve sustainable development. It is necessary for Hartlepool to produce a new Local Plan in line with current national requirements.

1.2 The Local Plan will set out how the borough develops over a minimum of 10 years. Hartlepool's Local Plan will set a vision for the kind of place the area will be in the future and will set a number of aims and objectives to achieve this. The Local Plan will set the development framework in which these opportunities can be realised, covering a wide range of issues including new housing development, sites for business and industry, transport improvements and developments, retail, leisure and recreation and green spaces, amongst others. It will be a key consideration in the determination of planning and other applications the Borough determines as a Local Planning Authority.

1.3 This scoping document represents the start of the process for determining how Hartlepool will develop in the future by consulting on what should be the Local Plan`s key priorities and its overall direction. From this, the vision with its aims and objectives will be developed.

1.4 There may be other priorities, which you feel should be considered. The purpose of this paper is to stimulate debate – not to provide the answers – and your participation in this process is key to ensure that the Local Plan represents the views of the community of Hartlepool.

How to comment

1.5 This report is available for comments from Tuesday **24th November 2026 to Friday 22nd January 2027**.

1.6 This document and questionnaire is available online via the Council's website (www.hartlepool.gov.uk/planning-policy/live-land-use-policy-consultations) and are also available at both the following locations:

Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY
Community Hub Central, York Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9DE
In addition, the questionnaire is available on the Council`s Your Say Platform (yoursay.hartlepool.gov.uk)

1.7 **Comments can be submitted in a number of ways as set out below:**

- In person at the above locations,
- Via e-mail on LandUseConsultation@hartlepool.gov.uk or
- Via the Your Say Platform

1.8 Officers from the Land Use Policy Team can be available by appointment at the Civic Centre during normal office hours to expand on anything included in this paper and / or to discuss any other matters relating to the preparation of the Local Plan. If you are a member of a group of residents or businesses and would like an officer to attend one of your meetings, this can also be arranged.

1.9 To make an appointment, please contact the Land Use Policy Team at the Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS24 8AY (tel. 01429 401878 or email LandUseConsultation@hartlepool.gov.uk).

1.10 The responses received from this scoping consultation will be reviewed by officers and will be used to prepare the new Local Plan. A summary report of the consultation and the responses received will be published at the next stage.



2. THE LOCAL PLAN MAKING PROCESS

Local Plan Making Legislation

2.1 The Government introduced a new Local Plan making system under the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). The Levelling up and Regeneration Act paved the way for, amongst other things, Local Plan making regulations to be written. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 came into force on 25th March 2026. The new Local Plan will therefore be prepared in accordance with this new Local Plan making system.

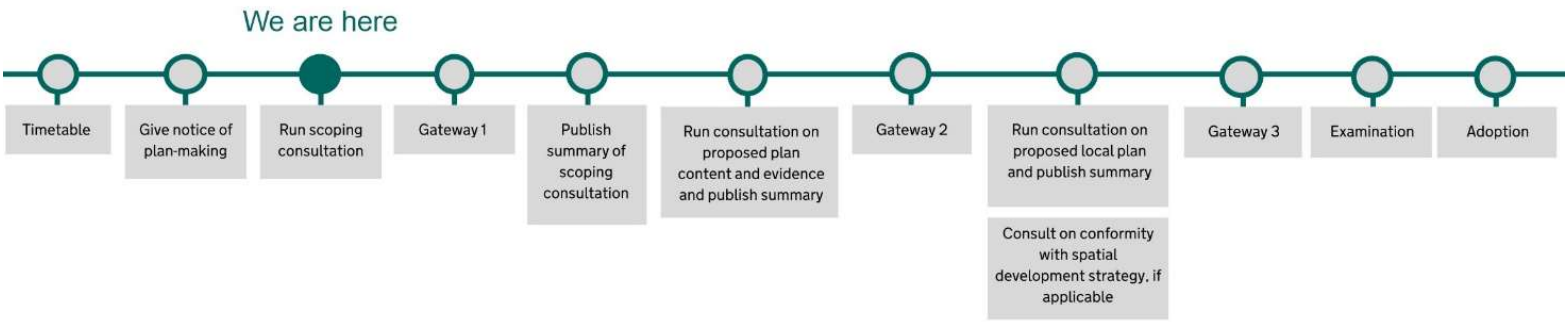
The New Local Plan Making System

2.2 As part of the transition arrangements for the introduction of the new Local Plan making system, the Government has imposed two key backstop dates for the preparation of the Local Plan these are 31st December 2026 as the lasts date a local planning authority can submit their Notice to Commence and 30th April 2027 as the last date that a local planning authority to publish their Gateway 1 Self-Assessment. Completion of the Gateway 1 stage marks the start of the new, statutory 30-month period for Local Plan preparations. The key stages of this process are outlined below.

Figure 1: Summary of the 30-month Local Plan process.



Figure 2: Legal Stages of the Loal Plan Process



Notice to Commence and Local Plan Timetable

2.3 The first stage in the statutory process is the issuing of the notice to commence, and the Council did this on 23rd October 2026 along with the Local Plan Timetable. The Notice and Timetable can be viewed on the Council web site (www.hartlepool.gov.uk/planning-policy/localplan/5).

Self-assessment stage (Gateway 1)

2.4 Following the issuing of the notice to commence, there is a minimum four-month period and then the first assessment stage of the Local Plan`s process, which is a self-assessment stage known as Gateway 1, must be submitted.

2.5 The following must be undertaken to complete Gateway 1:

- Establish the project management and governance arrangements for the preparation of the Local Plan;
- **Run a Scoping Consultation to invite early engagement in the process (this will invite feedback on how to engage during the process and what key topics the Local Plan should cover).**
- Develop an approach to consulting and engaging on the Local Plan;
- Gather base-line information on the area and start working on the vision, land availability information and evidence; and
- Progress the Environmental Assessment.

30-month statutory Local Plan making period (month 1 to 23)

2.6 Once Gateway 1 has been passed, a statutory 30-month period for the Local Plan preparation officially begins. The majority of the work to develop the Local Plan occurs between months 1 to 23. During that period, the key actions that must be achieved include;

- Gathering evidence to support and shape Local Plan content;
- Holding consultation on the proposed content of the Local Plan;
- seeking observations and advice from the Planning Inspectorate (known as completing Gateway 2);
- Refining the content of the Local Plan;
- Holding a consultation on The Local Plan;
- Finalising the Local Plan and evidence;
- Passing Gateway 3, where the Planning Inspectorate will decide if the plan is ready to be submitted for examination.

30-month statutory Local Plan making period (month 24 to 30 - examination)

2.7 From month 24, and if the Local Plan passes Gateway 3, the Local Plan should be submitted for examination. This is led by the Planning Inspectorate and is expected to take up to 6 months, unless an extended period is required to allow for more work to be undertaken.

2.8 If the proposed Local Plan is found sound, the Council will be asked to formally adopt it. The framework requires that the decision to adopt the Local Plan is taken within month 30 of the process. The adopted Local Plan should then be published alongside the policies map.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

2.9 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 require that plans setting the framework for consent on future development projects are subject to an environmental assessment. The object of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is to provide for a high level of environmental protection and the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes.

2.10 The Government has stated its intention to replace SEAs with Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs). However, at the current time these requirements have not been formalised through regulations and, as such the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 continue to apply.

2.11 The Council will, therefore, be preparing an SEA to inform the development of the Local Plan. The first stage of this will be a draft SEA Scoping Report, which will be subject to consultation in due course. This SEA Scoping Report will set out the proposed scope, methodology, and environmental consideration for assessing the potential impacts of the Local Plan.

2.12 Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 requires that:
"A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:

- is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, and

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives."

2.13 This assessment is known as a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). The Council will be preparing a HRA to accompany future drafts of the Local Plan and to ensure that the implications upon European protected sites are identified and fully considered.

National planning

<u>The National Planning Policy Framework</u>

2.14 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in August 2026, this sets out new Local Plan making policies and national decision-making policies, clearly distinguishing between the two.

2.15 The NPPF sets out that Local Plans should not replicate or restate national decision-making policies, unless explicitly required by other parts of the Framework, in order to reduce duplication. This means new Local Plans will need to include locally specific detail rather than repeating national policies

and future planning applications will be determined using both the Local Plan and the national decision-making policies.

Regional planning

The Emerging Tees Valley Spatial Development Strategy

2.16 Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) set out the vision for future growth and change at sub-regional level and they include strategic policies to set a spatial framework for investment and growth for at least 25 years. They are able to cover strategic land-use matters and set out broad locations for growth, nature conservation and strategic infrastructure but cannot include specific allocations for development. The Spatial Development Strategy for the Tees Valley is being prepared by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

2.17 The emerging Tees Valley Spatial Development Strategy is currently at an early stage of development, the Hartlepool Local Plan is required to support the delivery of the SDS, the Council will continue to engage with the TVCA as the SDS progresses.

Local Planning - Hartlepool Local Plan

2.18 A Local Plan is a statutory document prepared by local planning authorities, such as Hartlepool Borough Council. It sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area, and those policies are used to guide decisions on planning applications to ensure development is sustainable and aligned with national policy objectives, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.19 Local Plans identify where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and services will be located, and how the natural and built environment will be protected and enhanced. Local Plans are subject to public consultation and independent examination to ensure they are sound, justified and deliverable. Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for Hartlepool and planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.20 Hartlepool's Local Plan will set a vision for the kind of place the area will be in the future and will set a number of aims and objectives to achieve this.

2.21 The Local Plan will set out requirements, such as the amount and location of housing to be provided in Hartlepool, and will also contain policies covering employment, retail, leisure, community and essential public services and transport development, setting out key development areas for these types of development and stipulating general principles regarding how the sites should developed whilst respecting and protecting the amenity of neighbouring sites.

3. ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

3.1 The new Local Plan will be informed by three stages of consultation. These are:

- Scoping consultation (this document)
- Consultation on the proposed Local Plan content and evidence, and,
- Consultation on the proposed Local Plan.

3.2 Engagement relating to the future stages of the Local Plan will be set out in a communication and engagement strategy that we will prepare after this scoping consultation.

3.3 The communication and engagement strategy will set out how residents and interested parties can get involved in the process of preparing the Local Plan. This strategy will be published alongside the Gateway1 self-assessment information.

3.4 In our engagement strategy, we intend to propose a range of methods to involve residents and communities. The table below sets out how the Council currently engages and intends to do so in the future.

Table 1: Methods for Consulting on the Local Plan

<table>
<tr><th>Potential Communication Method</th><th>Target Audience</th></tr>
<tr><td>Letters and Emails</td><td>• Sent directly to relevant stakeholders and residents whose details are on our Consultation lists.
• Businesses working within the minerals and waste development sectors.
• Industry representatives.
• Statutory consultees.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Press Releases</td><td rowspan="8">All residents, businesses and other stakeholders.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Social Media</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Council Website</td></tr>
<tr><td>Posters and documents in Council Offices and Hubs/Libraries</td></tr>
<tr><td>Attend Parish Council meetings</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meet with Neighbourhood Plan Groups</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meet with any other interested parties</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hold drop in events across the borough</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Question 1 - Are there any other methods of communication or engagement that you would like us to use when consulting on the Local Plan?
Question 2 - Are there any particular groups you think we should engage with and if so, please provide as much contact information as possible.
Question 3 - Do you have any other views on how the Council should be involving local communities and stakeholders in the Local Plan?

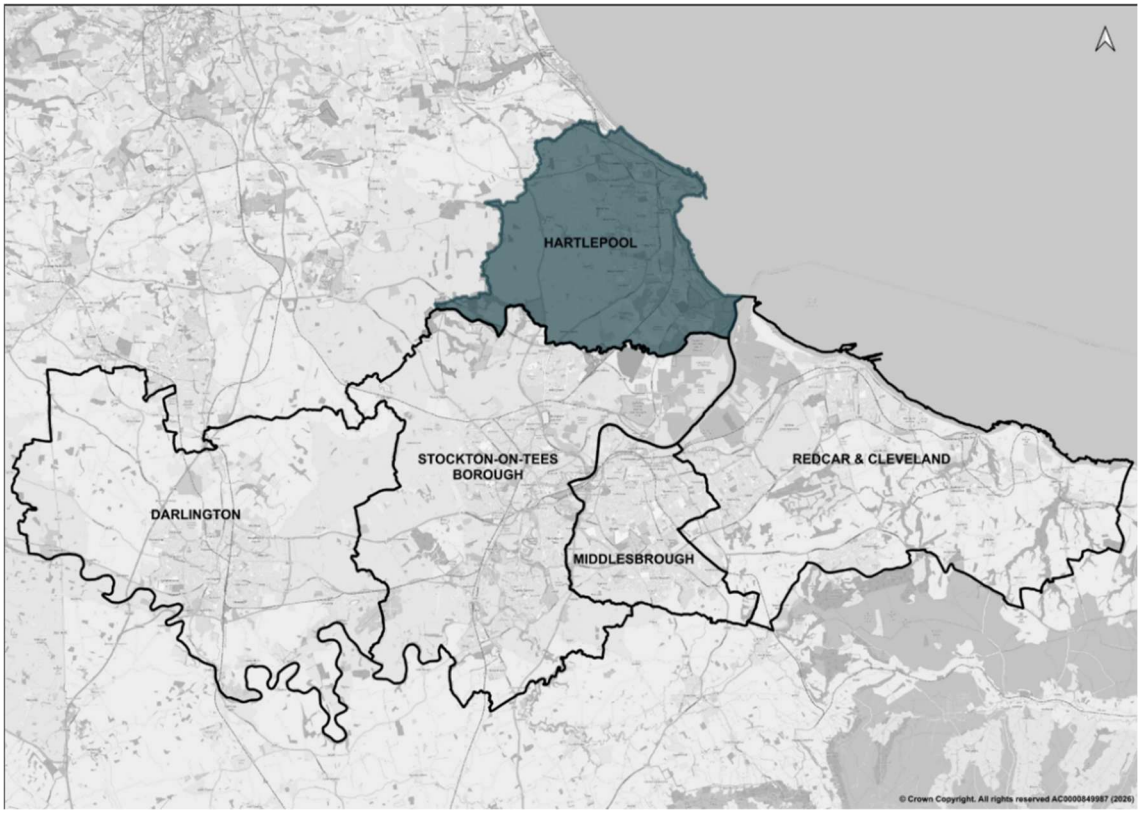
4. THE BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL

4.1 Hartlepool is located on the North East coast to the north of the River Tees. The Borough of Hartlepool covers an area of approximately 9,400 hectares (over 36 square miles) and has a population of around 99,656 (mid 2025). The Borough comprises the main town of Hartlepool, the seaside resort of Seaton Carew, an attractive rural hinterland within which lie the villages of Greatham, Hart, Elwick, Dalton Piercy and Newton Bewley, and the residential area of Wynyard.

4.2 Hartlepool is located within the North East of England within an area known as the Tees Valley. The Tees Valley comprises the five Boroughs of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. In developing a Local Plan for Hartlepool, it is also important to reflect the wider aspirations for growth within the Tees Valley and take account of other neighbouring areas, in particular County Durham.

4.3 Hartlepool is relatively congestion free and is well connected to other parts of the region and beyond by road via the A689 and A179 and the A19, and by rail through a direct rail link to York and London as well as links to Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough.

4.4 Over the past 20 years Hartlepool has experienced some transformational changes through public and private investment which was stimulated by the development of Hartlepool Marina, investment in the town centre and continued with investment in the rich fabric of the historic Headland for its intrinsic heritage value and for tourism and development of high quality, and prestige business parks at Queen's Meadow.



4.5 Some facts and figures in relation to Hartlepool are contained below.

People



Total population: 99,656
Ages 0-15 – 18.6%
Age 16-64 – 61.1%
Age 65+ -20.3%

Economy



70.8% of the working age population are economically active, below the regional and national average.
67% of which are in full-time employment, the remaining being in part-time employment.
23.9% of households have no one working, this is above the North East average of 19.9%.



29.6% of the population are without a car which is above the national average of 23.5%.

Housing



31.2% of households own their house outright and a further 27.6% own their house with financial assistance.
23.4% of household live within Council/registered provider rented accommodation with a further 17.7% of households living within privately rented accommodation.

Education



57.9% of the working age population have registered qualifications this is below the regional (62.8%) and national (67.4%) levels.

Health



Life expectancy within the Hartlepool is below the national average, with females living an average of 3 years less and males living an average of 2.2 years less.
Obesity levels in Hartlepool are significantly higher than the regional and national level.

		Hartlepool	North East	England
Resident Population - Mid 2025 (ONS)		99,656	2,762,746	58,620,101
Population age 0-15 – Mid 2025 (ONS)		18,536	472,430	10,786,099
Population age 16-64 – Mid 2025 (ONS)		60,890	1,701,852	36,872,044
Population age 65+ – Mid 2025(ONS)		20,230	588,464	10,961,958
Number of Households – mid 2025 (ONS)		*40,930	*1,175,680	24,400,000
Area (hectares)		9,400	780,400	13,031,000
Population Density (persons per hectare)		10.6	3.54	4.50
%Households with no one working – Nomis Profile Labour 2025		23.9	19.9	14.4
% of working age economically active – Nomis Labour Profile 2026		70.8	75.7	79
% in part-time employment – Nomis Labour Profile 2026		32.3	25.8	24.0
% in full-time employment – Nomis Labour Profile 2026		67.7	74.2	76.0
% self-employed – Nomis Labour Profile 2025		6.9	7.2	9.6
% of households without a car – Census 2021		29.6	27.6	23.5
**Crime rate per 1000 population – total offences recorded		130.1	96.4	-
Household tenure- outright owner occupied – Census 2021		31.2%	32.5%	32.8%
Household tenure- owner occupied (mortgage/loan/shared ownership) – Census 2021		27.6%	28.2%	29.7%
Household tenure- Council/RP rented – Census 2021		23.4%	22.0%	17.1%
Household tenure- Private rented/live free – Census 2021		17.7%	17.2%	20.5%
Qualifications: Registered Qualifications Framework (RQFs/NVQ) 3+ Nomis Labour Profile 2025 % 16-64 yrs working age group		57.9	62.8	67.4
No Qualifications: % 16-64yrs working age group Nomis Labour Profile 2025		11.2	8.5	6.2
Life & Health Expectancy: years Nomis Labour Profile 2025	Female	80.3	81.6	83.3
	Male	77.3	77.7	79.5
% Obesity Prevalence in children at year 6 Nomis Labour Profile 2025		14	14.2	22.2
% Obesity Prevalence in adults (18+ yrs) Nomis Labour Profile 2025		35.8	33.1	26.6

Table 2: key statistics comparing Hartlepool to the northeast and England.

Sources - Office for National Statistics (ONS) Nomis Labour Profile mid-year 2025 estimates (01/10/2026), * Official 2021 ONS Census (no verified updates as of 2025 mid-year estimates), ** Hartlepool Borough Council Crime JSNA, using police-recorded crime data (December 2025) ONS Nomis Labour Profile – 2025 and 2026.

5. HARTLEPOOL NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

5.1 An assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing Hartlepool, focusing on its economy, communities, environment, education, health, infrastructure, regeneration and social inclusion is shown in table 3 below.

5.2 The SWOT analysis provides an appropriate context within which to develop a vision for the new Local Plan. It also provides a structured way to understand the context of the area and draws from key statistics. The SWOT analysis technique is used to identify factors, which are likely to have greatest impact on the direction of growth over the Local Plan period, and potentially beyond, to help define key priorities.

5.3 Hartlepool SWOT:
Strengths: These are the existing assets, positive characteristics and advantages that Hartlepool can build upon.
Weaknesses: These are the internal challenges and disadvantages that limit the borough's development and affect residents' quality of life.
Opportunities: These are external developments and potential investments that Hartlepool can take advantage of to improve its future.
Threats: These are external risks and circumstances that could undermine Hartlepool's progress and future prosperity.

Economic

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strategic location in the region with access to the A19, A1(M) and wider Tees Valley. • Growth in engineering, manufacturing, off-shore wind, maritime, tourist and creative industries. • Small business and SME development • Competitive property and business costs. • Developer agreement for new nuclear power station. • Increasing enrolment numbers in the Northern school of arts and design.	• Higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity. • Lower average earnings compared with the Northeast and England. • Low education attainment • Relatively low business start-up rates • Increased levels of congestion • Limited availability for highly paid professional and skilled employment opportunities • High retail vacancy rates • Reductions in public resources have affected regeneration and employment levels.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Growth of the creative industries. • Support growth of renewable energy technology, advanced manufacturing and engineering. • Increase support for small business and SME development • Allocation of employment land to enable diversification. • Improvements to transport network • Support town centre regeneration, waterfront developments and tourism.	• Suitability of available employment land for investment. • Outward commuting of residents into neighbouring employment areas • Skills gap between local residents and emerging industries • Competition on town centre from neighbouring retail parks • Delays to regeneration and infrastructure improvements

Social

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Increased delivery rates of high-quality housing. • Strong sense of community identity and local pride. • Range of heritage assets that assist foster a sense of place • Active voluntary and community sector • Positive community engagement • Opening of the state-of-the-art Highlight leisure centre at the waterfront	• Hartlepool has an aging population, which raises the demand for health and social care. • Limited provision of adaptable homes • Higher levels of obesity in adults than the national average. • Life expectancy below the national average.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Allocate a range of housing sites to meet Hartlepool's needs. • Ensure new housing includes a range of choices including affordable, adaptable and older person accommodation. • Provide community facilities with new residential developments. • Control of hot food takeaways • Provision of green spaces and public realm to improve mental health, well-being and social interaction.	• Providing the right type of affordable housing to meet residents needs. • Increasing levels of ageing population putting further demands on health and social care. • Decline of rural communities through closure of community facilities.

Environmental

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Availability of attractive green spaces, coastline, beaches and marina. • Diverse, high quality and accessible natural environment. • Location of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA).	• Unequal access to green spaces • Impacts of climate change and coastal erosion • Tree canopy cover is among the lowest in England at 5.7%.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Improve green spaces, walking routes and cycling infrastructure • Attract investment into sustainable tourism and environmental projects • Promote opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism and healthy lifestyles. • Improve tree cover across the borough. • Support environment agency work on flood defences.	• Increase in population and visitor numbers have the potential to negatively impact upon the SPA. • Pressure for more homes to be built in the rural area. • Failure to meet net zero targets.

Question 4 - Do you have anything to add to the SWOT analysis?

6. DEVELOPING A LOCAL PLAN VISION

6.1 Local planning authorities (LPAs) must prepare a vision as part of the Local Plan that covers a minimum of 10 years but can also include longer term ambitions.

6.2 The vision will set out how Hartlepool should change over the period of the plan, guide the Local Plan through its production and help monitor its success once adopted.

6.3 The vision should:

- Set aims and objectives for the future of Hartlepool, and
- Be ambitious but also reflect what can be achieved through the Local Plan policies, and
- Be specific to Hartlepool, and
- Align with other Council plans and strategies including the Council Plan.

6.4 From the vision there must be 10 measurable outcomes that will monitor the success of the plan. In order to develop a vision for the future of Hartlepool a base-line analysis has been carried out identifying strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats from these a set of key priorities have been drafted.

6.5 The key priorities section of this document sets out a series of questions. Your views will help shape the new Local Plan's vision, aims and objectives

6.6 Hartlepool Borough Council has produced a Council Plan which sets a vision for Hartlepool in 2030 and the priorities what will be focused on over a 5 - year period.

The Council Plan vision for the future of Hartlepool in 2030 Hartlepool will be:

- a place where people live healthier, safe and independent lives (People)
- a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green (Place)
- a place that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all (Potential)
- a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects its community (Organisation).

Question 5 - What time period should the Local Plan cover?
a. 10 years
b. 15 years
c. 25 years

7. KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE HARTLEPOOL LOCAL PLAN

7.1 A number of key priorities for the new Local Plan have been prepared and are set out within this section under themes. The priorities are based upon national policies, including the NPPF (2026), existing plans and strategies, which are of importance for Hartlepool, including The Council Plan and the base-line analysis set out within section 4 (The Borough of Hartlepool).

7.2 Although the following are key priorities for Hartlepool, some will be managed by national decision-making policies within the NPPF and specific policies would not be included within the new Local Plan.

7.3 The key themes throughout this document are set out below, the following paragraphs expand upon each priority and how the Council seeks to ensure the priorities are achieved.

7.4 Key themes are:

1. Achieving sustainable development,
2. Delivering sufficient homes to meet Hartlepool's needs,
3. Building a strong, local economy,
4. Ensuring vitality and viability of Hartlepool`s retail and commercial areas
5. Promoting sustainable transport,
6. Promoting healthy communities,
7. Built environment,
8. Natural environment.



7.1 Achieving sustainable development

7.1.1 The key priorities for achieving sustainable development are:

A. Ensuring current and future generations are considered throughout the Local Plan process and in decision making,

B. Ensuring that climate change mitigation and adaptation is considered,

C. Locating new development in areas that are well connected.

7.1.2 Sustainable development will be embedded in all policies within the new Local Plan, all policies will be shaped with a combination of national and regional guidance, local evidence and with the above priorities in mind.

7.1.3 At the national level, the NPPF sets out that the Local Plan should plan positively for growth and change by providing for new development and improvement of the environment, in a way that promotes a sustainable pattern of growth and seeks to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects.

7.1.4 The NPPF sets out that Local Plans should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and to ensure that when shaping places, climate change resilience and the need to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions should be an important consideration.

A. Ensuring current and future generations are considered throughout the Local Plan process and in decision making.

7.1.5 The SWOT analysis above sets out many reasons why Hartlepool is great place to live, work and visit, today many people are enjoying and benefiting from what Hartlepool has to offer. In the future Hartlepool should still be a great place to live, work and visit but to ensure this, the next Local Plan must allocate land and set policies that ensure Hartlepool grows in a way that adds to what Hartlepool has without destroying other parts and that protects and enhances the best of what Hartlepool has.

Question 6 - Do you agree that ensuring current and future generations are considered throughout the Local Plan process and in decision making should be a priority?

B. Ensuring that Climate Change mitigation and adaptation is considered throughout the Local Plan process and in decision making.

7.1.6 Meeting the challenge of climate change is a cross-cutting issue, it is embedded within the planning system and is a consideration on all priorities detailed below, and will also be in the evolution of policies, the policy itself and decision making.

7.1.7 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green and to assist in ensuing this the Council will deliver the Net Zero Strategy and reduce the Council's carbon emissions.

Question 7 - Do you agree that ensuring that climate change mitigation and adaptation is considered throughout the Local Plan process and in decision making should be a priority?

C. Locating new development in areas that are well connected

7.1.8 Hartlepool has a relatively contained urban area, with the majority of growth happening in the built-up area of Hartlepool or on its western edge, the exception to this is Wynyard. Wynyard has developed as a joint employment and housing area with Stockton on Tees.

7.1.9 Due to Hartlepool's compact size, it is relatively small in nature when navigating from one place to another and many place are within easy reach by sustainable modes of transport. The use of the car, although a desirable option, is not essential.

7.1.10 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green, and to deliver this the Council Plan sets out a number of measures for enhancing services and facilities within the main urban area which is considered to be a well-connected area along with ensuring the delivery of the A19 grade separated junction and new link road north of Elwick.

7.1.11 The new Local Plan should also ensure that development occurs in the most sustainable places, these will either be locations within the urban area, on the urban edge or in areas that are well serve by sustainable transport options or that can be served by sustainable transport options.

7.1.12 Ensuring that residents and visitors can move around the borough without the need for a private car. Although the use of a car is a desirable option, it is important the Council ensures a real alternative to the car is available. Locating development in areas with strong sustainable transport links will assist in improving the boroughs carbon impact, improve the health and wellbeing of people and ensure nature can thrive.

Question 8 – Do you agree that locating new development in areas that are well connected should be a priority?
Question 9 - Do you agree that development should be focused in areas that are well connected?
Question 10 - Do you agree that if areas are not well connected, development should only take place if realistic sustainable connectivity options are put in place?

7.2 Delivering housing to meet Hartlepool's needs

7.2.1 The key priorities for housing in Hartlepool are:

A. Providing sufficient homes across the borough,

B. Providing sufficient homes for different groups across the borough,

C. Providing high-quality homes and environments.

7.2.2 The housing policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national and regional guidance, local evidence, and key planning objectives. The NPPF sets out that the Local Plan should have an understanding of the number of homes needed in the areas along with the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups.

A. Providing sufficient homes across the borough

7.2.3 The minimum housing requirement across the borough derives from a methodology that is set out in Government guidance. Using the Government guidance, officers calculate that a minimum of 366 dwellings should be built in the borough each year. This figure can be increased if there is clear justification to do so such as, an anticipated growth in employment rates that would increase the need for more homes, the need to accommodate homes from a neighbouring planning area and / or the need to provide sufficient affordable homes within the borough.

7.2.4 Within Hartlepool there are approximately 3050 dwellings still to be completed on housing sites approved across the borough.

7.2.5 If the Council plans to build 366 dwellings per year, based on the current number of dwellings still to build via approved planning permission, then the Council would have sufficient planning approval for just over eight years.

7.2.6 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green and to assist in achieving this the Council will look to meet local need, reducing homelessness and improve the supply of good quality housing.

Question 11 – Do you agree that providing sufficient homes across the borough should be a priority?
Question 12 – Do you think that the Council should plan for more than 366 dwellings per year?

B. Providing sufficient homes for different groups across the borough

7.2.7 People in Hartlepool have different housing needs, a significant number of people require a house that is typically readily available on the open market. However, many residents need homes that are at an affordable price to rent

or own, some residents need a home where there is a level of adaptability or a level of support is provided, this can be because of their needs as they age or because they have a disability. Equally, homes that provide support can help people of all ages live an independent and happy life. In addition, there are looked after children within the borough who require support and need to be placed in a home environment.

7.2.8 Many residents require homes that are adaptable to their needs, and many residents desire to continue living in their home as they age or their circumstances change but many homes are not easily adapted and thus many people have to move, out of necessity, more than choice.

7.2.9 In addition to market homes, affordable homes and homes with an element of support, there are those who wish to build their own home, a custom-built home of their choosing.

7.2.10 Hartlepool has a low Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People population, research to date indicates that those Gypsies and Travellers within Hartlepool are settled in dwellings and do not typically live a lifestyle where they move from place to place, or desire to. Further research needs to be undertaken to understand the Gypsy and Traveller population of the borough and their needs, understanding this will assist in deciding if there is a need to specifically allocate land to meet their housing needs.

7.2.11 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green and to achieve this the Council will increase the number of houses owned by the Council and the range of social housing options available to those residents who need homes for social rent.

Question 13 – Do you agree that providing sufficient homes for different groups across the borough should be a priority?
Question 14 – How do you think homes for all residents can best be delivered?

- On sites with a mix of all types of homes
- On sites specifically designed for specific types of dwellings i.e. market homes only, affordable homes only, supported homes only,
- Other.

C. Providing high-quality homes and environments

7.2.12 Having a home is a basic necessity, but it is just as important to have a home that is safe, clean and healthy and within an environment that is attractive and safe. Information relating to the design of homes and environments is set out within chapter 7.8.

Question 15 – Do you think that providing high-quality homes and environments is a priority for the Local Plan?

7.3 Building a strong local economy

7.3.1 Key priorities for building a strong local economy are:

A. Support economic growth and inward investment,

B. Safeguard land for a new nuclear power station,

C. Supporting growth of the creative industries,

D. Strengthen the rural economy,

E. Support the growth of leisure and tourism,

F. Securing renewable and low carbon energy.

7.3.2 The employment land policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national and regional guidance, local evidence, and key planning objectives. At the national level, the NPPF requires local authorities to set out a clear economic vision and strategy, which encourages sustainable economic growth in both urban and rural areas and to allocate sites to meet this need.

A. Support economic growth and inward investment.

7.3.3 For the new Local Plan, an Employment Land Review (ELR) will be produced to establish the amount of employment land realistically available and the long-term needs for sites. It is important for inward investment to have a wide range of sites available for different employment requirements, thus the current allocated sites cater for most types of industrial activity, including sites for general industry, for high-quality prestige development, port related development, specialist industry and as part of mixed-use areas.

7.3.4 There may be some existing employment sites where take up has been limited. The ELR will also consider the possibility of reallocating sites with limited take up for other uses.

7.3.5 Queens Meadow Business Park is the prestigious employment area and is successfully developing as an area for high-quality office space within an attractive setting.

7.3.6 Most of the land currently allocated for employment is known as the southern business zone located in the south of the borough with the north only being served by Oakesway and the Port.

7.3.7 Some employment areas are reserved for specific uses such as land at North of Seaton Channel for port related development. This is another area that the ELR will consider so that the Council can understand if the allocation is achievable and deliverable over the new Local Plan period.

7.3.8 The Sandgate area is home to uses such as car breakers and scrap metal recycling facilities factories these uses are important for the local economy. Such uses are difficult to locate as they can be unsightly and noisy and typically should not be located next to more attractive uses such as business head quartets.

7.3.9 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is welcoming with an inclusive and growing economy providing opportunities for all and identifies increasing the number and range of businesses within Hartlepool as a priority.

Question 16 - Do you agree that supporting economic growth and inward investment is a key priority?
Question 17 - What investment is needed to make employment land more attractive for development?
Question 18 - Should Queens Meadow continue to be safeguarded as a prestigious employment site?
Question 19 - Should the Southern Business Zone be safeguarded for employment uses?
Question 20 - Should the Ports continue to be protected for port related activity and supply chain business?
Question 21 - Do you think that prestigious employment uses and uses that can often be less visually pleasing, should be, in the main, in separate locations?

B. Safeguard land for a new nuclear power station.

7.3.10 The existing power station has had its operational life extended until at least 2028. The TVCA Local Growth Plan sets out that Hartlepool Power Station was identified as a potential site for a new nuclear power station by the Government and operator. A development agreement has been signed to develop up to 12 Advanced Modular Reactors near the existing site.

7.3.11 Nuclear energy production is considered a clean energy option; the environmental benefit of nuclear power is provided through generating large-scale electricity without burning fossil fuels.

7.3.12 The current power station is a significant employer, and it is likely that the building of a new power station and its operational life will provide great economic benefits for the borough. The Council should safeguard land for a new nuclear power station, this ensures that no other development can be placed on that land. The determination of any planning application for a new nuclear power station would be a national decision.

Question 22 - Do you agree that a new nuclear power station is a key priority for the new Local Plan?

C. Supporting growth of the creative industries

7.3.13 The TVCA Local Growth Plan and the Council Plan want to see Hartlepool grow as a vibrant creative economy through developing a thriving production village surrounding the film and tv studios.

7.3.14 The growth of the creative industries will be provided through regeneration, production facilities particularly those within the Church Street area, heritage assets, and an innovation hub. The growth of this sector will also provide opportunities for supply chain businesses, improved employment opportunities, enhanced tourism and strengthening regional identity.

7.3.15 The growth of the creative industries will build upon the success of Hartlepool College and the Innovation and Skills Quarter (ISQ). The ISQ provides space for new small business development, particularly those relating to the creative and digital industries.

Question 23 Do you agree that supporting the growth of the creative industries should be a priority?
Question 24 How can the creative industries offer be more attractive in Hartlepool?

- Provide adequate buildings,
- Provide an attractive environment,
- Adequate infrastructure,
- High-quality design.

D. Strengthen the rural economy

7.3.16 Hartlepool's rural area comprises approximately two thirds of the Borough, although the population of the rural area is very small. The rural economy comprises of farm business, equestrian businesses, renewable energy development, tourist related activities, and some village business such as public houses.

7.3.17 The businesses within the rural area are important for employing a local workforce, attracting people to the area, and providing places for social interaction. All of this ensures that the rural area is more than an area where people just live, it is a community.

Question 25 - Do you agree that strengthening the rural economy should be a priority?
Question 26 - How do you think the Local Plan can support the rural economy?

E. Support the growth of leisure and tourism

7.3.18 Hartlepool has a range of leisure and tourism attractions, these are located across the borough particularly in the town centre area, the headland, Seaton Carew and the rural area.

7.3.19 Leisure and tourism attractions are an important part of Hartlepool's history and culture and make a significant contribution to the economy. The leisure and tourism offer makes Hartlepool a unique place to live, work and visit.

7.3.20 The Council Plan recognises the importance of the Museum of Hartlepool and the waterfront and seeks to ensure these places are vibrant and welcoming spaces that provide cultural and heritage opportunities with improved access from the town centre, along Church Street and into the Marina.

Question 27 - Do you agree that supporting the growth of leisure and tourism should be a priority?
Question 28 - Do you agree that The Town Centre, The Headland, Seaton Carew and the Rural Area are key locations?
Question 29 - Are there any other key leisure and tourism areas?
Question 30 - How do you think the Local Plan should support leisure and tourism in Hartlepool?



F. Securing renewable and low carbon energy.

7.3.21 At the national level, the NPPF supports the transition to net zero through creating policies within the new Local Plan which allocate areas suitable for renewable and low carbon energy development and explore opportunities for decentralised networks.

7.3.22 Renewable energy generation within Hartlepool is likely to come principally from the following sources:

- Onshore and offshore wind turbines,
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) developments,
- Biomass,
- Energy from Waste (EfW),
- Wave and Tidal.

7.3.23 Hartlepool is well placed for the development of renewable and low carbon energy developments with readily available connections to the national grid. This has seen the development of several solar and wind energy developments, and their associated infrastructure, on the western edge of the borough.

7.3.24 TVCA Local Growth Plan sets out that Teesside can support the transformation of the energy system and economy, with the aim of increasing energy security whilst reducing energy bills and emissions.

7.3.25 The Council Plan includes the priority of delivering the Net Zero Strategy and reducing carbon emissions by the Council. The Net Zero Strategy has the target of achieving Net Zero by 2050 through reduction in emissions and the decarbonisation of national energy supply.

Question 31 - Do you agree that securing renewable and low carbon energy should be a priority?
Question 32 - What should be considered when identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy?

7.4 Ensuring vitality and viability of Hartlepool`s retail and commercial areas

7.4.1 Key priorities for ensuring vitality and viability of Hartlepool`s retail and commercial areas are:

A. Promote the vitality and viability of the town centre by encouraging a mix of uses

B. Establish a retail hierarchy which protects and promotes existing retail centres

7.4.2 The retail policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national guidance and local evidence. At the national level, the NPPF requires that Local Plans to develop a strategy for town centres, ensure that a full range of potential needs and opportunities for development is considered, and allocate a range of sites to meet these needs. This includes the scope to accommodate additional floorspace and to broaden the mix of uses beyond main town centre uses. The NPPF also requires Local Plans set out a hierarchy of centres and review existing boundaries.

A. Promote the vitality and viability of the town centre by encouraging a mix of uses.

7.4.3 A Retail Needs Assessment (RNA) will be undertaken as an evidence base for the new Local Plan. The RNA will assess the current position of retail in the borough, identify any further retail needs, determine where there are gaps in the current provision, and the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development.

7.4.4 Hartlepool has a relatively self-contained town centre serving the local area and the adjoining areas of south-east Durham and Billingham. It is the main shopping, commercial, educational and social centre of Hartlepool. The town centre is focused around Middleton Grange Shopping Centre and York Road along with the Church Street area to the east of the A689. Immediately surrounding and radiating out from the town centre are defined edge of town centre areas.

7.4.5 The town centre is in a sustainable location, well served by public transport and within close proximity to a number of residential areas allowing for a high number of residents to access it by sustainable means.

7.4.6 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green and prioritises delivering the Town Deal Programme including the reimagining Middleton Grange Phase 1

Question 33 - Do you agree that promoting the vitality and viability of the town centre through encouraging a mix of uses should be a priority?
Question 34 - Do you think that providing a mix of uses in the town centre is a good idea?
Question 35 - How can the town centre be made more attractive?
Question 36 - Do you think the Church Street area should continue to be for late night uses?

B. Establish a retail hierarchy which protects and promotes existing retail centres.

7.4.7 Hartlepool has four types of key retail and commercial centres within the retail hierarchy, typically it follows that the hierarchy is:

1. The town centre.
2. Edge of centres. – Avenue Road/Raby Road, The Brewery and Stranton, East of Stranton, Lynn Street, Mill House, Park Road West, West Victoria Road, York Road South.
3. Retail and leisure parks - Marina, West of Marina Way, Trincomalee Wharf, Tees Bay.
4. Local centres - for example, Fens shops, Elizabeth Way and Wynyard Road.

7.4.8 The reason for a retail hierarchy is to focus retail and commercial development within the most sustainable locations which are considered to be the town centre, then edge of centre, then retail and commercial centres and then typically the local centres.

7.4.9 The edge of centre locations are well integrated and relate well to the town centre providing complementing retail, business and other services. The edge of centre areas commonly incorporate a higher proportion of residential uses compared to the town centre.

7.4.10 Within Hartlepool there are four retail and leisure parks, three of the parks are located to the north of the town centre (The Marina, West of Marina Way and Trincomalee Wharf) and the fourth, Tees Bay Retail and Leisure Park, is located approximately two miles to the south of the town centre. The parks play an important role in providing retail and leisure opportunities within the borough.

7.4.11 Away from the town centre and edge of town centre areas, and commonly located in existing residential areas, are the local centres. The scale, function and character of local centres are typified by centres that provide the day-to-day shopping and other local needs of the community, particularly for those who are less mobile.

7.4.12 Having a high-quality environment in the retail centres of the borough is important to attracting inward investment and encouraging their use.

Question 37 - Do you agree that establishing a retail hierarchy, which protects and promotes existing retail centres should be a priority?
Question 38 - Do you think the current retail centre hierarchy should be changed?
Question 39 - Do you agree that improving the environmental quality of retail and commercial areas is important?



7.5 Promoting sustainable transport

7.5.1 Key priorities for promoting sustainable transport are:

A. Ensure the highway network in the borough is safe and fit for purpose.

B. Improving connectivity across the borough by a range of sustainable modes of transport,

C. Reduce congestion on the roads within the borough.

7.5.2 The sustainable transport policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national and regional guidance and strategies along with local evidence. At the national level, the NPPF seeks to ensure that transport considerations are taken into account in the preparation of Local Plans and that a vision-led approach should be followed to ensure that transport infrastructure plays a role in creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places.

7.5.3 A vision-led approach to planning for transport should be considered at the earliest stages of Local Plan preparations. The Council are doing this by raising transport as a key priority and by seeking views on how the Local Plan ensures a vison led approach is achieved in Hartlepool.

7.5.4 The NPPF also sets out that policies may be included within Local Plans that set thresholds for what is considered to be a significant amount of movement that would arise from new development. The setting of the threshold would assist in achieving the aims of NPPF policies TR3 and TR6.

A. Ensure that the highway network in the borough is safe and fit for purpose.

7.5.5 Historically Hartlepool's road network has been seen in a positive light, but more recently the road network is viewed as becoming more congested with alternative more sustainable options being limited. The increasing levels of congestion can have negative impacts upon investment, visitor numbers and quality of life for residents. The road network should be safe and free flowing so that Hartlepool is an attractive place to invest and a healthy place to live.

7.5.6 Hartlepool has good links to the A19 and the A1 (via the A689) and benefits from a dual carriageway that runs through the majority of the built-up area, which allows for the flow of people and goods and is thus a benefit to the economy. However, the benefit of having a dual carriageway through the main built up area and in particular through the town centre also creates a number of issues, in particular for pedestrians, as the heavily trafficked road cuts off the town centre from the Marina, Church Street and the public transport interchange.

7.5.7 To ensure that Hartlepool's roads are safe and free flowing, investment is needed in the roads within the borough but also the alternative options, such as walking and cycling links, so that people choose to walk or cycle and thus not add to the current road issues.

7.5.8 The Council Plan sets out that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green, and to help achieve this the Council will prioritise the delivery of the A19 grade separated junction and new link road north of Elwick and will make improvements to key junctions in the local road network ensuring a more reliable and efficient bus network and better connectivity.

Question 40 - Do you agree that ensuring the highway network in the borough is safe and free flowing should be a priority?
Question 41 – Do you think that the Local Plan should set thresholds for what is considered to be a significant amount of movement that would arise from new development.

B. Improve connectivity across the borough by a range of modes of transport.

7.5.9 Traditionally, to solve congestion problems more roads have been built, this approach can work, but it's often only an effective solution if a package of sustainable transport improvements are also planned. Improvements to walking, cycling and equestrian links, along with improving the infrastructure for public transport and working with providers to increase frequencies, will assist in ensuring that people have a choice on how they access places of work, education and leisure.

7.5.10 Hartlepool does have a significant network of walking and cycling links and an active public transport network, including links to the Tees Valley and beyond. The Council continues to invest in this active travel network which has been evidenced in recent years with significant developments around the Town Centre and Burn Valley. However, some of the environments that paths and cycle ways flow through are not attractive, there are gaps and the quality of some links is poor, thus in many parts, walking and cycling is not considered a desirable option. The Council does have a number of schemes in place to assist in addressing some of these issues, but as areas develop it is important that attractive sustainable transport links do too.

7.5.11 The new Local Plan should try to address the amount and quality of sustainable infrastructure across the borough.

Question 42 – Do you agree that improving connectivity across the borough by a range of modes of transport should be a priority?
Question 43 - What areas of the borough would benefit most from the provision of new cycle and walkways?
Question 44 - Are there other methods of encouraging sustainable transport that the Local Plan should cover?

7.6 Promoting healthy communities

7.6.1 Key priorities for promoting healthy communities are:

A. Creating places and spaces that facilitate and encourage a healthy lifestyle,

B. Protect, maintain and improve community facilities,

7.6.2 Promoting healthy communities' policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national guidance, local evidence, and key planning objectives. At the national level, the NPPF sets out Local Plans should promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places through the provision of appropriate community facilitates and public services. Local Plans should be informed by an understanding of existing facilities and public services and identify where additional services are expected. The NPPF also sets out that the new Local Plan should ensure that new developments are supported by appropriate community and public service infrastructure.

A. Creating places and spaces that facilitate and encourage a healthy lifestyle

7.6.3 Creating places and spaces that facilitate and encourage a healthy lifestyle will be embedded across many themes of the new Local Plan including sustainable transport, design, climate change and the natural environment.

7.6.4 Encouraging healthy food choices is an important factor for promoting healthy communities. The NPPF includes a national decision-making policy restricting hot-food takeaways. Further evidence will be carried out to determine the need for any Local Plan policies and provide clarity on this issue.

B. Protect, maintain and improve community facilities

7.6.5 For the new Local Plan, assessments will be carried out on the current provision of facilities, whether any new facilities are required and what would be needed for any developments proposed.

7.6.6 Community facilities include schools, community centres, libraries, health facilities and indoor sports facilities. Community facilities contribute to the quality of life, prosperity and well-being of local residents.

7.6.7 The provision of major facilities serving the town as a whole is important and many of these are located in and around the town centre so that they are accessible to as many people as possible. Community facilities are also located within the communities they serve, such as the Community Hubs, schools and health facilities, these are an important service for local communities.

7.6.8 The Council Plan vision is for Hartlepool to be a place where people live healthier, safe and independent lives and sets out priorities to deliver this including: continuing to develop Hartlepool's Community Hubs, working with schools and academy trusts to ensure Hartlepool has strongly performing schools, and work with partners to develop local, accessible services and opportunities for residents to increase their physical activity including the Highlight Active Wellbeing Hub.

Question 45 - Do you agree that protecting, maintaining and improving community facilities should be a key priority?
Question 46 - Are there any specific types of community facilities, which the new Local Plan should allocate land for or seek on new development?
Question 47 - What planning measures should the new Local Plan put in place to help create healthier food environments?



7.7 Building a high-quality built environment

7.7.1 Key priorities for building a high-quality built environment are:

A. Create well-designed neighbourhoods that enhance the quality of life for all,

B. Preserve, protect and positively enhance heritage assets.

7.7.2 The built environment policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national and regional guidance, local evidence, and key planning objectives. At the national level, the NPPF requires the effective use of land to meet the need for homes and other uses, while also promoting high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places.

7.7.3 The NPPF requires the Local Plan's vision to reflect the desired design and placemaking outcomes for the area. The Plan should also identify where design guides, codes or masterplans are necessary, and set out locally specific design policies, where necessary.

A. Create well-designed neighbourhoods that enhance the quality of life for residents.

7.7.4 The Local Plan should seek to raise the overall standard of design for new development across the borough. It is important that general design is improved, not just of buildings, but also other features such as landscaping and open space as good design not only includes the physical appearance of buildings and spaces but also how development integrates with its surroundings and addresses accessibility.

7.7.5 In June 2026 the Council adopted the Residential Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which sets out a vision for the design of new residential development within Hartlepool. The code provides design parameters and guidelines that, when followed, will ensure new residential development is high quality, enhances its location and meets the aspirations of the Council and residents. This SPD was informed by an evaluation of the existing characteristics and potential for the borough and was created through a process of proactive engagement.

Question 48 - Do you agree that creating well-designed neighbourhoods should be a priority for the Local Plan?
Question 49 - What design features do you think are important to make Hartlepool an attractive place?
Question 50 - With regards to residential development, do you think it is appropriate to use the evidence base and content of the Design Code SPD to inform future Local Plan policies?
Question 51 - Do you think large scale development proposals should be accompanied by design guides, design codes and/or masterplans?

B. Preserve, protect and positively enhance heritage assets.

7.7.6 The historic environment plays an important role in defining the borough's character, culture and heritage. It provides a direct reminder of the historical evolution of Hartlepool and adds to the sense of place experienced today. There are eight conservation areas across the Borough, designated because of their special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve and enhance. Hartlepool also has 213 nationally listed buildings, one protected wreck site, 8 scheduled monuments and one Registered Park and Garden.

7.7.7 There are a number of high-quality, attractive buildings that are not nationally designated so have limited protections but have a role to play in defining local character and a sense of place. As development creates a constant state of change, consideration of the impact of this on heritage assets and the historic environment is critical.

7.7.8 The NPPF sets out that Local Plans should deliver a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment by identifying the heritage assets, including those at risk, consider the benefits of conservation of the historic environment and identify opportunities where the historic environment can add to the character and quality of development. The Local Plan should also be supported by a local heritage list to identify non-designated heritage assets (i.e. buildings or structures that are not statutorily listed buildings) that are important to the local community.

Question 52 - Do you agree that protecting heritage assets should be a priority for the new Local Plan?

7.8 Natural Environment

7.8.1 Key priorities for the natural environment are:

A. Protect, maintain and enhance green spaces and places,

B. Protecting wildlife and natural habitats,

C. Managing flood risk and coastal erosion.

7.8.2 The natural environment policies in the new Local Plan will be shaped by a combination of national and regional guidance and strategies as well as local evidence. At the national level, the NPPF (2026) seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment and states that Local Plans should set out a hierarchy of internal, national and local designated sites, identify areas for conservation, enhancement and recovery, and set standards for green infrastructure provision. The Local Plan should also consider the natural environment when allocating sites for development.

7.8.3 The natural environment is a vital asset that supports sustainable and healthy communities by providing habitats for wildlife, helping to tackle climate change, improving air and water quality, reducing flood risk, and supporting physical and mental wellbeing.

A. Protect, maintain and enhance green spaces and places

7.8.4 Hartlepool has a network of multi-functional green spaces which forms the basis of a positive framework for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment within both urban and rural areas.

7.8.5 Within Hartlepool green spaces and places include:

- Green wedges
- Parks and Gardens
- Children's play spaces
- Outdoor sport including playing fields
- Local green corridors
- Churchyards and commentaries
- Civic spaces
- Allotments and community gardens
- Amenity open space
- Natural and semi-natural green space

7.8.6 Assessments will be carried out for the new Local Plan to find out the amount and condition of green spaces across the borough and determine if any extra provision is needed.

7.8.7 The Council recognises that green spaces and places are an essential feature of the borough and are just as important as other features (i.e. housing, roads, schools, healthcare etc). One of the key priorities identified in the Council Plan is that Hartlepool will be a place that is connected, sustainable, clean and green.

Question 53 - Do you agree that protecting, maintaining and enhancing green spaces and places should be a priority?
Question 54 - Which green spaces in Hartlepool do you value the most and why?
Question 55 - Are there any green spaces in your neighbourhood that you think need protection?

B. Protecting wildlife and natural habitats

7.8.8 Hartlepool has numerous sites that are designated for their biodiversity interest: including:

- Internally designated sites (Special Protection Areas and wetlands) – this includes part of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site.
- Nationally important sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)- includes 5 Sites of Special Scientific Interest,
- Locally important sites (Local Wildlife Sites) – includes 14 Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife/Geological sites.

7.8.9 The protection of these areas is set out in legislation and will be an important consideration when preparing the new Local Plan. The Tees Valley Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is due to be endorsed in December 2026, the LNRS will also inform policies in the new Local Plan and help to identify opportunities for habitat restoration and nature recovery.

Question 56 - Do you agree that protecting wildlife and natural habitats should be a key priority?

C. Managing flood risk and coastal erosion

7.8.10 NPPF sets out that the Local Plan should take a risk-based approach to identifying suitable sites for development, taking into account flood risk and the future effects of climate change.

7.8.11 As part of preparing the new Local Plan, the Council will work closely with utility providers including Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency to determine existing capacity and any infrastructure needs to manage flood risk and coastal erosion. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be undertaken which will consider current and future flood risk from all sources.

7.8.12 Planning permission has recently been granted for the Environment Agency's £25m scheme that will help reduce the flood risk for Hartlepool. It will provide better flood protection to nationally important industry and infrastructure while restoring lost intertidal habitat. Flood alleviation projects have also been undertaken and are planned across the borough in places such as Burn Valley.

Question 57 - Do you agree that managing flood risk and coastal erosion should be a key priority?

