

PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS BOARD MEETING

16th Of JANUARY 2026 @ 1.30PM

MINUTES

Present	Apologies
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Simon Evans (SE)
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	Geraint Williams (GW)
Councillor Brent Carter (BC)	
Lis Mclean (LM)	
Sharon Richards (SR)	
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	
Karen Courts (KC)	
Elizabeth Bedford (EB)	
MS Dawn Bowden (DB)	
Robert Davies (RD)	
Daniel Jones (DJ)	
Board Advisors	
Ellis Cooper (ES)	Steven Jones (SJ)
Ceri Dinham (CD)	Zoe Thomas (ZT)
Judith Jones (JJ)	Craig Flynn (CF)
Laura Willcox (LW)	Louise Davies (LD)
Paul Lewis (PL)	
Victoria Parry (VP)	
Matthew Lewis (Deputy to Steven Jones)	

Guest Attendees
UK Government: Natalie Noble (NN) & Sarah Pope (SP)

Items Discussed

Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair, PG, opened the meeting and welcomed members. A special welcome was extended to NN and SP from the UK Government

LW updated on apologies for absence

Actions of the Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

LW provided an update on standing actions:

1. PG and LW are scheduled to attend the Third Sector Leaders Forum in March to strengthen collaborative delivery.
2. The review of the Board structure remains "Live."
3. The Workstream Group discussion and the "Next Steps" roadmap have been integrated into today's agenda.

Dashboard Report:

LW presented the Dashboard Report, noting:

- The Pride in Place (PiP) programme financial differences, with Phase 1 split (30/70) and Phase 2 split (37/63).
- An update on capacity funding expenditure.
- Interviews for the Programme Manager post are scheduled for 20th January.
- The second Pride in Place (PiP) role is currently undergoing job evaluation, with recruitment expected in March.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on moving from "consultation" to "active conversation."

NN and PG emphasised the need to "weaponize" the Board's collective expertise to feedback community intelligence

PG highlighted a priority to re-engage young people and local businesses to ensure the 10-year programme remains sustainable.

To align with best practices in community-led regeneration, NN suggested reviewing the Coleraine (Northern Ireland) model.

Action: LW to request detailed case study data from NN to inform the local engagement strategy

LW run through the current top 3 risks:

4. Delays in Programme Manager recruitment
5. Refining the methodology for programme delivery.
6. Governance dilution due to irregular attendance.

Action: LW to circulate the Dashboard report to be circulated to the Board

Decision Items

1. The Board discussed rebranding from PfN to PiP.

While PFN served an initial purpose, the Board agreed it is not yet "fully embedded" in the public consciousness. Adopting the PiP classification aligns the project with the UK Government's mission to strengthen the social fabric and local identity of communities.

Board unanimously approved the name change to "Pride in Place."

2. Meeting Frequency & Delivery Architecture

To ensure momentum, the Board reviewed its operational rhythm.

- Board will move to Bi-Monthly meetings as per the ToR. The primary workload will be driven by monthly Workstream groups
- Following the UK Government's guidance on community-led recovery, three groups were proposed:
 - **Thriving Places** (Physical environment and local assets).
 - **Stronger Communities** (Social infrastructure and 3rd sector).
 - **Taking Back Control** (Empowerment and local decision-making).

NN advised that as per the December 2025 guidance, boards should aim for 51% resident representation to ensure genuine local drive. PG noted a "gap analysis" is required to meet this standard.

Action: All members to conduct a "stocktake" of existing active community groups to avoid duplication and maximise synergy.

3. Board Membership Review

The Board discussed the need for evolution in its membership:

- GD stated the need for representation from Health, Churches and chapels
- DB noted that upcoming elections and constituency changes (6 Members per region) may impact representation.
- LB emphasised the critical need for private business voices to ensure economic sustainability.

Action: All to review board membership and what is seen as a 'gap' in representation

AOB

NN confirmed that all five Wales plans will be submitted to the panel by 1st February. It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding is strictly tied to the release of funding. NN raised concerns on use of consultants; the Board reaffirmed that this must remain a locally led, distinct process or Merthyr.

PG and LW have established links with Barry and Cwmbran. The Board agreed that "shared practice" sessions with other Welsh Boards would be highly beneficial.

Date of Next Meeting

13th of February 2026, with the focus on Workstream Groups

Actions:

- **LW** to request detailed case study data from NN to inform the local engagement strategy
- **LW** to circulate the Dashboard report to be circulated to the Board
- **All** to conduct a "stocktake" of existing active community groups to avoid duplication and maximise synergy.
- **All** to review board membership and what is seen as a 'gap' in representation





