PRIDE IN PLACE NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD MEETING

FRIDAY 17th APRIL 2026

11.00am – 12.30pm

MINUTES

Present	**Apologies**
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Geraint Williams
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	Councillor Brent Carter
Lis McLean (LM)	MS Dawn Bowden
Sharon Richards (SR)	
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	
Karen Courts (KC)	
Elizabeth Bedford (EB)	
Robert Davies (RD)	
Daniel Jones (DJ)	
Simon Evans (SE)	
Board Advisors	
Ellis Cooper (EC)	Zoe Thomas Craig Flynn
Laura Willcox (LW)	
Paul Lewis (PL)	
Tanya Edwards (TE)	
Joanne Davies (JD)	
Stephen Jones (SJ)	

Items Discussed

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, PG, opened the meeting and welcomed members. TE was introduced as the newly appointed Project Officer for the Merthyr Tydfil Pride in Place Programme (PiPP). PG informed the board that Dawn Bowden would no longer attend Board meetings, due to stepping down as an MS and asked that a letter be drafted to thank her for her valuable contributions to the Board.

JD updated on apologies for absence.

Action: JD to draft a letter to Dawn Bowden on behalf of the Board and send to PG for approval / signature

Declarations of Interest

None noted.

Minutes & Actions of the Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were checked for accuracy and approved.

JD provided an update on actions from the previous meeting:

- Coleraine Meeting Update – Coleraine (N. Ireland), have been identified by UK Government as an area of best practice for the Pride in Place Programme. The purpose of the meeting was to gain an insight into the how their programme is operating. Coleraine provided detail on their priorities, with a focus on building on strengths to challenge negative perceptions. They have held a series of workshops to identify key themes, supported by a "go where people are" approach, varied marketing, and ring-fenced third-sector funding through a simple application process. This supported a range of community activities and access to complementary funding. Projects were prioritised, with some carried into the next investment period. Coleraine's Pride in Place Programme is part of an overall partnership approach to community delivery across the Local Authority area. PG highlighted key similarities in approach, and feedback on our progress was also shared.

PG updated Board on the recent Pride in Place Reception he attended with GJ in London.

- JD has begun the community mapping exercise and will circulate information with the minutes. JD thanked SR for her valuable contributions in relation to identifying relevant organisations for inclusion. JD requested permission to investigate QGIS mapping. After a brief discussion, Board agreed, requesting that, should there be any financial implications, that JD brings that request back to the Board.
- JD to meet with Board Members individually and facilitate conversation in relation to Board Membership "gaps". Action to be updated at next meeting.

- LW/JD to circulate Pride in Place Boundary map to Board Members. Action Completed
- JD to collate Workstream Summaries and circulate to Board. Action Completed
- JD to co-ordinate and facilitate future Workstream Group meetings. Action Completed and Ongoing.

Action: JD to meet with Board Members individually and facilitate conversation in relation to Board Membership "gaps".
Action: JD to circulate community mapping information to Board for comment / suggestions for additions.
Action: JD to investigate the feasibility of using QGIS mapping system.

Programme Updates

LW and JD updated Board of the MoU received, which has been reviewed, signed and returned to UK Government. The delivery capital and revenue monies for 26/27 are to be released to the Local Authority in May. Board were made aware that the MoU covers the first Investment Period only. MTCBC as the accountable body is required to submit a return as part of the annual governance process.

JD updated that in relation to Board membership, a membership form has been drafted and will be published as part of a membership pack, once approved by Board. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed in line with agreed procedure.

The financial position for the Pride in Place programme was highlighted, there were no changes from the Board discussions in November 2025, where the Board agreed the 4yr investment plan that was submitted to UK Gov. For the purposes on the monitoring report to be submitted in April, the financials for the 2026/27 financial year were highlighted as follows:

- Capital budget: £360,000
- Revenue budget: £232,000: Of this, £160,000 has been committed to the delivery of Town Centre Wardens.

LW outlined that currently, the only revenue project formally approved by the Board for Investment Period 1 is the provision of the Town Centre Wardens, funded for the full four-year period. While revenue allocations exist against other themes, no additional, fully formed project proposals have yet been brought forward for Board consideration. This is the same for Capital.

TE updated on current progress of the communications and engagement plan. LM gave suggestions on how we ask people what they want and how they want to do it. PL suggested analysis of what others have done in public consultation to avoid duplication . GJ reiterated the benefit of going where people are and ensuring the programme is shaped by them. GJ also queried the procedure for allowing residents to get involved in the Programme. JD explained the role that community engagement, workstream groups and the Board will play in providing a conduit for ideas and involvement. SR mentioned that without a feedback mechanism people may become disengaged and apathetic.

EC reported that MTCBC has been selected by Welsh Government as a Marmot Place, requiring the development of a plan grounded in deep listening and community voice. “One Merthyr” aligns closely with Pride in Place values and presents a clear opportunity for collaboration. The use of a “Conversation, Not Consultation” approach was suggested as a strong and accessible bi-line to reflect this ethos.

Workstream Updates

PG invited updates from all respective Chairs of the Workstream groups

<u>Thriving Places</u>
KC reported the main discussion points from the meeting held on 10th April 2026 at Hope Church.

- A potential proposal for a 24/7 hub addressing poverty, addiction, and mental health, which would require further analysis and development.
- Discussion around establishing a car parking sub-group, noting evidence that town centre trade increases during periods of free parking.
- A need for improved town centre footfall counters to better capture and use data.
- Revitalisation of the business network.

Feasibility will be discussed in future meetings. PG suggested contacting Lance Whiteley with a view to discussing footfall technology options.

<u>Stronger Communities</u>
DJ, reported the main discussion points from the meeting held on 14th April at the Orbit Centre and sought Board approval for Merthyr Tydfil Together to lead on the priority areas within this workstream, specifically for the Town Centre. The rationale provided was that Merthyr Tydfil Together is an established partnership with strong community intelligence and well-developed links to communities and key partners. This would allow the Pride in Place workstream to focus on a pilot area within the geographical boundary of the programme but outside the Town Centre. DJ asked for agreement to proceed.

The proposed approach is that:

- Merthyr Tydfil Together will develop priority proposals for the Town Centre.
- These will be considered by the Stronger Communities workstream;
- The workstream Chair will then bring proposals to the main PiPP Board for consideration and approval.

PG requested that a written summary of these requests be prepared and circulated to Board members to enable formal consideration.

DJ also mentioned the Safer Places Fund from the Welsh Government which could provide match funding opportunities for relevant projects.

Action: JD to circulate workstream notes to Board Members.

Taking Back Control

SR reported the main discussion points from the meeting held on 16th April at VAMT Offices.

- Connections should be identified between the PiPP and One Merthyr as complementary programmes.
- Mentoring SMEs in AI was a potential project. Feasibility will be investigated.
- Retrofitting energy solutions in housing was briefly discussed. Opportunities may align to developing technologies, funding feasibility studies.
- Communication and the strengthening of community and third sector organisations was a priority for this workstream. "At risk" organisations will be identified and potential support mechanisms will be mapped out accordingly with relevant partners.

There was an interest expressed to invite the DWP partnerships manager for Merthyr Tydfil to the next meeting to talk about their youth hub initiative and explain the support available within the community. Officers will investigate as to whether the "Business & Education Together Partnership" is still in existence.

Several areas of overlap between workstreams were identified. EC proposed undertaking a second-stage mapping exercise to:

- Capture all workstream discussion areas.
- Identify areas of overlap and duplication.
- Clarify where activities are best placed for delivery within the programme structure.
- Identify where the Local Authority and partners can add value.

Action: JD to identify and add pertinent workstream similarities / overlaps into future dashboard reports.
Action: JD to collate matrix of project ideas and potential delivery agencies / partnerships.
Action: JD to circulate all workstream notes to Board Members.

Draft Project Proposal Documentation

JD discussed the idea of holding a workshop in order to agree key documentation for the programme. All in agreement. This will enable any key governance documentation to go through to board for formal sign off in June with a view to start a 'call for projects' process to begin in June and run until October.

A discussion was held around intervention rates and the need to determine agreed percentages with recent advice suggesting that rates of a maximum 70% are usually more favourable from a subsidy control perspective. PG asked JD to seek further clarification on this.

Action: TE / JD to organise workshop session for third week of May
Action: JD to seek clarification on best practice in relation to intervention rates for funding, taking into account subsidy control requirements.

JD sought approval to explore digitalisation/software options to allow clear, transparent and smooth project processes including application stages. Board were in agreement that this could be explored

Action: JD to investigate funding digitisation options and report to Board at a future meeting.

Monitoring Information – UK Government

JD sought authorisation to submit the first monitoring return to UK Government for 2026/27, and permission was requested to submit a replication of the current year breakdown as agreed in the UK Government approved Investment Plan. There were concerns that this may restrict future flexibility within the budget areas, but reassurance was provided from LW and JD, that until Board agree projects, the themes by which the current Investment Plan aligns are flexible. Board agreed for the monitoring return to be submitted aligning with the investment plan.

AOB

Next meeting suggested at a community venue such as Soar, VAMT or the College.

Members asked for regular email reminders clarifying future meeting dates relevant to the programme (i.e. Board Meetings, Workstream Group Meetings, Workshops)

Action: JD to schedule regular email updates to Board, reminding Members of relevant dates.

Date of Next Meeting
Friday 19th June
Venue TBC

Actions:

- **JD to draft a letter to Dawn Bowden on behalf of the Board.**
- **JD to meet with Board Members individually and facilitate conversation in relation to Board Membership "gaps".**
- **JD to circulate community mapping information to Board for comment / suggestions for additions.**
- **JD to investigate the feasibility of using QGIS mapping system.**
- **JD to circulate workstream notes to Board Members.**
- **JD to add pertinent workstream similarities / overlaps into future dashboard reports.**
- **JD to collate matrix of workstream project ideas and identify potential delivery agencies / partnerships.**
- **JD to circulate all workstream notes to Board Members**
- **TE / JD to organise workshop session for third week of May.**
- **JD to seek clarification on best practice in relation to intervention rates for funding, taking into account subsidy control requirements.**
- **JD to investigate funding digitisation options and report to Board at a future meeting.**
- **JD to schedule regular email updates to Board, reminding Members of relevant dates.**