PRIDE IN PLACE NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD MEETING

FRIDAY 19th June 2026

10:00 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

Present	**Apologies**
Board Members	
Paul Gray (PG) –Chair	Geraint Williams
MP Gerald Jones (GJ)	Councillor Brent Carter
Sharon Richards (SR)	Zoe Thomas
Matthew Lewis	Daniel Jones
Councillor David Jones (DJ)	Rob Davies
Karen Courts (KC)	Craig Flynn
Elizabeth Bedford (EB)	Rob Davies
Robert Davies (RD)	Ellis Cooper
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
JD updated on apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

None noted.

Minutes & Actions of the Previous Meeting:

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

Actions from last time:

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

Local Growth Fund Update

PG introduced LW and invited him to provide an overview of the Local Growth Fund (LGF), outlining associated challenges and its potential links to the Pride in Place (PiP) Fund.

LW explained that the LGF is now live and differs significantly from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). As the name suggests, it is a growth-focused fund allocated directly by the Welsh

Government (WG), rather than central government. Merthyr Tydfil is one of ten participating authorities. The programme operates against clearly defined indicators and outputs.

Applicants are required to demonstrate growth within identified priority sectors aligned with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), including hospitality, transport, accountancy, and architecture. The foundational economy is also a key focus area, encompassing sectors such as construction and hospitality, alongside priorities identified within the Regional Skills Plan.

The application process launched earlier this week via the MTCBC website. Engagement events have been held, generating over 100 Expressions of Interest (EOIs). Ongoing communications activity is in place to further promote the fund.

Applications for commercial and start-up grants will close on **3 July**. Funding levels are structured as follows:

- Small grants: £500 – £14,995
- Medium grants: £15,000 – £35,000
- Larger property grants: targeted at long-term vacant properties outside the town centre

A comprehensive due diligence process is in place, involving consultation with 12 internal departments. Projects are then reviewed by the board using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status framework prior to final selection. Offer letters are anticipated to be issued during the week commencing **10 August**.

LW noted that the programme is dynamic, with processes continuing to evolve. Outputs are expected to be evidenced within six months, with job-related outcomes sustained for at least twelve months.

PG queried the key differences between SPF and LGF. LW highlighted a general lack of understanding regarding the distinction between capital and revenue funding and noted that, under LGF, individual items must exceed £500.

PG also raised the potential for complementary funding between PiP and LGF to improve project viability. LW confirmed that duplication of funding is not permitted; however, LGF can support distinct elements of wider projects (e.g. vacant properties outside the town centre).

Board members raised several points of clarification:

EB asked whether businesses must demonstrate regional impact.

GJ queried whether the programme is CCR-wide or locally focused and raised concerns around capacity and governance.

LW clarified that decision-making is local, though subject to overarching CCR governance, with reporting provided to Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) for scrutiny and eligibility checks.

SR questioned the exclusion of the third sector. LW confirmed this is a programme-wide requirement. While third sector organisations could theoretically apply if aligned to priority areas, they are not currently well represented.

SR highlighted ongoing growth and need within the third sector and offered to share evidence, including a video produced by VAMT, to demonstrate progress in this area. PG suggested inviting RB to a future meeting to present similar insights. SR welcomed this proposal, noting it could help identify cross-cutting themes and gaps.

PL raised concerns regarding support for more challenging businesses and asked whether entrepreneurs could secure match funding from other sources. LW confirmed this is encouraged and positioned LGF as a potential first step in accessing wider funding opportunities.

Item 5 – Programme Update

JD presented the key items within the dashboard report. It was noted that the Terms of Reference (ToR) are due for review, as they specify a six-month review period. PG advised that the immediate priority should be progressing project delivery, after which the ToR can be formally reviewed. It was agreed that the revised document will be circulated and formally adopted at the August meeting.

JD also provided an update on the QGIS mapping exercise, demonstrating an interactive map that has been developed to date. The map highlights key data, including community venues, services, and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) information, enabling identification of areas of greatest need. It was noted that the tool has the potential to incorporate additional data layers, such as heritage sites, conservation areas, and buildings, and will continue to evolve.

The long-term aim is to make the mapping tool publicly accessible via the website, allowing stakeholders to engage with the data and support future funding applications. Board members were invited to contribute suggestions for further development. LW suggested including evidence of funded projects within each area and exploring opportunities to integrate or link to existing datasets, such as those used by South Wales Public Services Boards (e.g. *South Wales Listens*).

JD highlighted the need to secure appropriate equipment to support ongoing engagement activity. The dashboard report was formally approved.

Approval of 'Call for Projects' Documentation

JD confirmed that the draft documentation, including guidance materials, had been circulated for review and feedback. Minor amendments have been made to enhance the quality of information collected; these changes are not considered substantive.

JD sought formal approval of the documentation. Councillor Jones raised a query regarding references to project longevity, noting a perceived inconsistency between the supporting papers and guidance. JD clarified that the scoring criteria differ proportionately between large, medium, and small grants. For smaller grants, longevity is reflected through impact-based assessment, whereas larger projects can achieve additional points across a broader range of criteria. This

approach ensures that requirements remain proportionate to the level of funding and do not create unnecessary barriers.

In response to a request for examples of impactful projects, JD cited initiatives such as improvements to community venues, addressing accessibility requirements (including Disability Discrimination Act compliance), and enabling business growth through refurbishment and expansion (e.g. kitchen upgrades, improved facilities, and increased accessibility).

GJ commended JD for the work undertaken to date and asked for an update on engagement activity. TE provided an overview of current engagement activity and outlined future plans. GJ also suggested incorporating attendance at funding events organised by VAMT into the engagement schedule. TE agreed to include this and circulate an updated draft to the Board ahead of formal approval in August.

PL raised concerns regarding competing funding demands. PG clarified that the approach is intended to be complementary, supported by ongoing review of workstream groups. PG also emphasised the importance of deferral (rather than refusal) where appropriate, alongside a focus on capacity-building.

The documentation was put to a vote and formally approved.

Item 6 – Board Membership Review and Workstream Reorganisation

JD referred to the MS paper and confirmed that LM will be stepping down. A replacement for Soar representation is required, alongside broader representation for the creative and arts sector. JD sought views on whether to accept a proposed replacement or to follow a formal appointment process.

PG advised that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed and a formal process followed. This approach was supported by GJ. PG also highlighted the need to review overall Board membership and consider expansion to ensure appropriate representation.

LW noted the requirement for at least 51% resident representation, which must be reflected in any changes. KC queried whether there is a minimum Board size and suggested that succession planning should be considered, particularly in relation to key roles.

JD confirmed that this issue has been discussed within the workstream groups and outlined the rationale for a broader review. Feedback highlighted the need to ensure alignment with programmes such as Merthyr Together and Marmot Place, while avoiding duplication with existing initiatives (e.g. Stronger Together). These considerations will inform the development of an options paper.

PG also referenced recent changes to MS representation, noting the transition from one to six MSs, and the need to ensure fair and equitable representation. JD circulated an options paper, with responses indicating support for Options 1 and 3. LW proposed a hybrid model, which was discussed and refined.

JD will present the proposal to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), following which it will be shared with MS representatives. While final approval rests with UK Government, positive feedback from the WLGA suggests alignment with broader consensus.

The proposed approach was put to a vote and unanimously approved.

Item 7 – Supporting Communities

PG proposed allocating £10,000 to support community capacity-building initiatives. It was suggested that this funding be ring-fenced to support activities and events that align with the engagement and communications plan, with effectiveness reviewed to inform future provision.

PG emphasised the importance of enabling community engagement and mobilisation in support of programme delivery. A simplified application process focused on engagement outcomes was recommended.

LW queried whether the existing EOI process could support this approach. GJ expressed support for the proposal. TE will ensure this is incorporated into the Engagement and Communications Plan and will develop proposals for implementation and promotion.

PL highlighted the importance of building on existing consultation work and ensuring that previously gathered insights are fully utilised. TE confirmed that mechanisms are in place to capture and integrate prior consultation findings.

GJ referenced the potential role of community ambassadors and the need to further develop this concept. It was agreed that further detail will be brought forward in a future paper.

Any Other Business (AOB)

LW requested that all relevant documents be shared with Natalie for oversight and information-sharing purposes.

LW will circulate a video from the Vale alongside the meeting minutes.

JD raised concerns regarding attendance and quoracy and will circulate proposed future meeting dates.

SR shared a recent video produced by VAMT, highlighting challenges facing the third sector and the potential impact of reduced sector capacity.

Date of Next Meeting
Venue and date TBC

Actions:

- PG suggested inviting RB to future meeting
- Draft and circulate revised ToR and options paper re.revised structure of workstream groups
- JD send all project docs to Natalie
- LW to circulate video
- JD to circulate meeting dates
- Board and officers asked to share video
- TE to review minutes and include suggestions around permitted investment and community ambassadors to include in E&C plan.
- TE to review current EOI in line with suggestion of a simple application for engagement funds
- TE to contact GJ and SR to include E&C event into planned funding days
- TE to review existing alignment with programmes such as Merthyr Together and Marmot Place and how they relate to current plan
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