

PRIDE IN PLACE NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD PANEL MEETING

Date: Tuesday 22 September 2026

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: The Vine, Northumberland Road, Shepway, Maidstone, ME15 7LP

Board Membership:

Matt Arnold, Maidstone Councillor Maureen Cleator, David Creasey (Chair), Gary Cook, Chloe Hubbard, Sherry Johnson, County Councillor Kemkaran, Leon Mileham, Genette Pinwill, Emma Tanner, Kandeegan Thanabalan, Stacy Turner and Helen Whately MP

*The Chair will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting.
Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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Issued on Monday, 14 September 2026

Continued Over/:



Park Wood and Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting

**22 September
2026**

Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek formal Neighbourhood Board approval for the adoption of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.

These key documents set out the governance framework for the Neighbourhood Board. They cover the decision-making process, how conflicts of interest are managed, and how the relationship between the Board and the Accountable Body operates.

These documents support the Board to function effectively, operate with the highest standards of transparency and accountability, and uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, which outline ethical standards for those working in the public sector.

Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

1. Approve the Terms of Reference
2. Approve the Code of Conduct

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek formal Neighbourhood Board approval for the adoption of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
 - 1.2 These documents form the governance framework for the Neighbourhood Board. They cover its remit and decision-making process, how conflicts of interest are identified and managed, and the operational parameters of the relationship between the Board and Maidstone Borough Council as the Accountable Body.
 - 1.3 The content of these documents was reviewed by Maidstone Borough Council's Director of Finance and Resources and by the Democratic Services team to ensure they comply with the requirements of the accountable body as well as Pride in Place programme guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
 - 1.4 Following review and approval in principle by the Chair, these documents were circulated via email to Board members during the recruitment and onboarding process, alongside the completion of the Declaration of Interest and Safeguarding Declaration forms.
 - 1.5 These documents provide the foundation to support the Board to function effectively, operate with the highest standards of transparency and accountability, and uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
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2. Recommendations and Next Steps

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Board is asked to approve the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
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3. Appendices

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference
- 3.2 Neighbourhood Board Code of Conduct

Draft Terms of Reference

Park Wood & Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board

Draft Terms of Reference

Status: Draft for review and ratification by the Neighbourhood Board

Date: 14/7/26

Version: Draft 2

Introduction

The Park Wood & Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board has been formed to help local people shape a long-term plan for the area.

Its role is to bring together residents, local organisations, community voices and partners so that decisions are rooted in local priorities, evidence and ongoing community engagement.

The Board will support the development of a 10-Year Pride in Place Plan and a more detailed 4-Year Investment Plan for Park Wood and Senacre. These plans should reflect what local people want to see change, what evidence tells us about local need and opportunity, and what can realistically be delivered through the programme.

Maidstone Borough Council will support the Board and will act as the Accountable Body for the programme at the start of the period. This means the Council is responsible for ensuring that public funding is managed properly, lawfully, fairly and transparently.

These Terms of Reference set out how the Board will work, how decisions will be made, and how the Board's community leadership role will sit alongside the Council's Accountable Body responsibilities.

Purpose of the Board

The purpose of the Board is to provide community-led strategic leadership for Pride in Place in Park Wood and Senacre.

The Board will:

- develop and test the local vision, priorities and outcomes for the Pride in Place Plan
- ensure priorities are informed by meaningful community engagement and relevant evidence
- help shape the 10-Year Pride in Place Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan
- work with Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body to ensure decisions are deliverable, lawful and accountable
- support open, transparent and respectful decision-making
- help build community capacity, confidence and participation
- ensure the programme remains focused on the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole.

In practice, this means Board members do not need to be governance experts. They need to come prepared, listen carefully, declare interests, work with evidence, and make decisions in the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole.

Role of the Board

The Board will:

- uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Board's Code of Conduct
- lead the development of the local vision and priorities for Pride in Place
- consider evidence from community engagement, consultation, research, evaluation and other local insight, alongside technical advice and the Board's own local knowledge
- agree recommendations for the 4-Year Investment Plan, subject to the Council's Accountable Body assurance requirements
- support and oversee the development of the 10-Year Pride in Place Plan
- identify issues, opportunities and priorities for Park Wood and Senacre
- consider risks, including financial, legal, reputational, delivery and community trust risks
- help ensure that community engagement remains ongoing and meaningful
- support clear communication with residents and local stakeholders
- support clear and accurate communications about Pride in Place and ensure any publicity or branding requirements are followed where relevant
- identify opportunities to build partnerships and bring additional support or investment into the area where appropriate.

The Board should not become a closed group or the only route for local involvement. It should actively support ways for residents, groups and organisations beyond the Board to be heard and involved.

Role of Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body

Maidstone Borough Council is the Accountable Body for the Pride in Place programme locally at the start of the programme.

The Board leads on local priorities, community voice and the development of the Plan. The Council provides assurance and accountability for the use of public funds.

The Council's role includes:

- ensuring public funds are distributed and managed fairly, effectively and transparently
- ensuring compliance with relevant legal, financial, procurement, subsidy control, equalities and risk requirements
- supporting the Board to put in place proportionate governance arrangements
- working with the Chair and Board to develop appropriate controls for funding and decision-making
- supporting the secretariat function, including agendas, papers, minutes, decision logs and declarations of interest, subject to local arrangements being agreed

- publishing or making available governance documents, agendas, papers, minutes, decision logs and declarations information as agreed
- advising the Board where a proposed decision may create financial, legal, procurement, equalities, delivery or reputational risk
- advising on any programme publicity, branding or communications requirements that apply to Pride in Place funding
- ensuring Council decisions connected to Pride in Place are made in accordance with the Council's constitution and assurance requirements
- maintaining appropriate local assurance, monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the programme, including any reporting required by government or the Council's own governance processes
- submitting monitoring, reporting and assurance information to government where required
- ensuring the Council is not put at unmanaged financial, legal or reputational risk by Board decisions.

How Board and Council responsibilities fit together

The Board and Council will need to work in partnership. The table below sets out the intended working relationship.

Area	Board role	Council role
Local vision and priorities	Leads discussion and agrees the community-led direction	Provides advice on evidence, deliverability and programme requirements
10-Year Pride in Place Plan	Shapes and recommends the Plan to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Supports development and checks compliance with programme and Council requirements
4-Year Investment Plan	Agrees preferred investment priorities and recommendations to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Provides assurance on finance, procurement, subsidy control, equalities, risk and deliverability
Use of public funding	Recommends priorities and delivery approaches	Accountable for lawful, fair and transparent use of funds
Community engagement	Ensures resident voice shapes decisions and that engagement reaches beyond the Board	Supports transparency and links with wider Council and programme processes
Risk and assurance	Considers local, delivery and community trust risks	Advises on financial, legal, procurement, equalities and reputational risks
Transparency	Explains decisions clearly and supports open working	Supports publication of papers, minutes, decision logs and declarations as agreed

The aim is not for the Council to override the Board's community leadership role. The aim is for the Board's local priorities and recommendations to be supported by the Council's assurance role, so that decisions are credible, lawful, transparent and deliverable.

Capacity and support funding

Where capacity or support funding is available, it may be used to support the effective operation of the Board and the development of the Pride in Place Plan.

This may include:

- convening the Neighbourhood Board
- supporting community engagement
- developing the 10-Year Pride in Place Plan
- developing the 4-Year Investment Plan
- providing technical expertise
- supporting communications and resident involvement
- putting in place appropriate delivery and governance support.

Use of any capacity or support funding will be subject to Maidstone Borough Council's Accountable Body requirements and any relevant programme guidance.

Role of the Independent Chair

The Independent Chair will provide inclusive and impartial leadership for the Board.

The Chair will:

- chair meetings effectively and fairly
- help all members contribute, including members who are newer to formal governance
- promote a collaborative, non-hierarchical culture
- help prevent gatekeeping or domination by any individual, group or organisation
- work with the Council and support partners to agree agendas and keep the Board focused
- ensure conflicts and declarations of interest are considered and managed appropriately
- support the Board to reach clear decisions and maintain momentum
- represent the agreed views of the Board where required
- work with the Council to ensure the programme is not put at unmanaged financial, legal or reputational risk.

Role of Board Members

Board members will:

- act in the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole
- attend meetings wherever possible and read papers in advance
- bring local knowledge, lived experience, skills, networks or community insight to discussions
- contribute constructively and respectfully

- listen to other members and the wider community
- work towards consensus where possible
- declare interests openly and keep declarations up to date
- challenge constructively where needed
- support wider community involvement
- avoid acting as a gatekeeper for any group, organisation, network or interest
- follow the Code of Conduct and agreed ways of working.

Board members may bring a particular perspective, for example as a resident, organisation representative, business owner, volunteer, faith/community representative, service provider or someone with lived experience. However, when acting as Board members, they should consider the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole.

Resident-led working and avoiding gatekeeping

The Board should remain open, community-led and connected to the wider area.

Board members should:

- help make sure residents outside the Board continue to be heard
- avoid assuming they speak for everyone
- actively support engagement with people who may not usually take part
- avoid controlling access to the Board or the programme
- be open about organisational, personal or community interests
- challenge any behaviour that risks making the Board feel closed, exclusive or dominated by a small number of voices.

Resident-led does not mean that every Board member must have the same experience or confidence. The Board should create space for people to learn, ask questions and build confidence over time.

Community engagement, evidence and external input

The Board will use community engagement evidence, local insight, data, research and technical advice to shape the Pride in Place Plan and inform its decisions.

Some engagement, consultation, research, delivery or evaluation activity may be carried out by external partners or commissioned providers. These partners may provide briefings, reports, findings or recommendations to support the Board's work.

External partners do not replace the Board's community-led role and are not responsible for Board governance or Board decision-making.

The Board's role is to use evidence carefully and transparently, alongside its own local knowledge and Maidstone Borough Council's advice, to shape the Pride in Place Plan and related recommendations.

Board members may help promote engagement opportunities and open doors locally, but should avoid controlling who is heard, filtering community views, or acting as gatekeepers to the programme.

Membership

Board membership was confirmed through a local selection process using three main sources of evidence: expressions of interest forms, group discussion observations, and structured conversations with the Chair. The process is guided by five principles: local legitimacy, resident leadership, balance of skills and perspectives, support for people who may be newer to formal governance and the need to determine the required skills mix for the Board as a whole rather than ranking individuals in isolation. Where future vacancies arise, prospective board member(s) will be recommended to the Neighbourhood Board for approval following this process.

The Board must be resident-led and include a balanced mix of local residents, community voices, organisations, businesses, services and other relevant perspectives.

The Board must include the local MP and at least one ward councillor, alongside the Independent Chair and other members confirmed through the local process. The table below outlines the initial board membership.

Role / perspective	Name
Independent Chair	David Creasey
Local MP	Helen Whately MP
Ward Councillor	Councillor Maureen Cleator
County Councillor	Councillor Linden Kemkaran
Resident perspective	Sherry Johnson
Resident perspective / VCSE	Chloe Hubbard
Resident perspective / Faith community	Leon Mileham
Resident perspective / Business	Stacy Turner
Business perspective	Kandeeban Thanabalan
Education perspective	Gary Cook
Social Housing perspective	Genette Pinwill
Business perspective	Matt Arnold
VCSE perspective	Emma Tanner
<i>Young Person</i>	<i>Vacant</i>

Attendance, substitutes and ending membership

Board members are expected to attend meetings wherever possible. If a member cannot attend, they should notify the Chair or secretariat in advance.

In order to maintain the balance, resident-led nature and continuity of the Board, no substitutes are accepted.

A member may cease to be a member if:

- they resign in writing
- they are removed or replaced by an appointing organisation, where relevant
- they are no longer able to fulfil the role
- they repeatedly fail to attend without reasonable explanation (apologies to be received and accepted by the Board)

- they are removed under the agreed process following a serious or repeated breach of the Code of Conduct.

Where removal from the Board is being considered because of a serious or repeated breach of the Code of Conduct, the member should be given written notice of the concern and the reasons why removal is being considered. The member should be given a reasonable opportunity to respond in writing and/or in person before a final decision is made.

The final removal process should be agreed by Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body and should be consistent with the Board's Code of Conduct and any relevant Council requirements.

Meetings

The Board will agree its meeting frequency at its first meeting. This will be quarterly at a minimum (in line with government guidance). During the development of the Pride in Place Plan, meetings may need to be more frequent. Any extra meetings will be called by the Chair and secretariat.

There is a presumption that key full Board sessions, particularly during onboarding and early decision-making, will be held in person. Meetings may be held online or hybrid where the Chair and Council agree this is appropriate.

Council officers, technical advisers, engagement providers, delivery partners, evaluation partners or other external advisers may be invited to attend all or part of a meeting where useful. They may contribute with the Chair's permission but will not have voting rights unless they are also voting Board members.

The Chair, supported by the secretariat, will agree meeting agendas.

Quorum and decision-making

The Board will be quorate when 50% of the voting members are present, including two residents. Where decisions relate to funding, assurance or formal recommendations, an Accountable Body representative must also be present.

The Board will aim to make decisions by consensus wherever possible.

If consensus cannot be reached, the Chair may call for a vote. Each voting member will have one vote unless otherwise agreed. In the event of a tie, the Chair has a casting vote.

Decisions required at meetings should be clearly set out in agendas and papers. Decisions should be recorded in minutes and, in a decision log.

If the Board takes a decision that is determined to place Maidstone Borough Council at unmanaged financial, legal, procurement, equalities, subsidy control or reputational risk, it will be reported back to the Board to determine whether to set the decision aside, or to retake the decision with the advice of the accountable body taken into account.

Urgent decisions

Where an urgent decision is needed and a Board meeting cannot be convened in time, the Chair may approve an urgent decision where:

- The decision is determined to be urgent, due to a reason for urgency, where the decision cannot reasonably be taken at the next meeting, or at a meeting called for that purpose;
- The Chair informs the board members of the decision taken, the reasons for the decision, and the reasons for urgency, in writing immediately after the decision is taken

- The Chair has consulted with the accountable body to confirm that the decision is urgent, reasonable, legal and able to be taken
- Any urgent decisions will be recorded and provided to the next meeting of the Board for ratification

Conflicts and declarations of interest

All members must complete a Declaration of Interest form before or shortly after joining the Board, prior to attending their first meeting.

Members must update their declaration annually, and when their circumstances change.

The Chair will invite declarations at the start of every meeting and before any relevant item where needed.

Where an interest creates a potential conflict, this will be managed in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Communication and reporting

Agendas and papers will normally be circulated to members at least five clear working days before a Board meeting.

Board members may propose agenda items through the Chair and secretariat. The Board should agree a practical timescale for proposing items, supported by a Forward Plan.

Minutes will be prepared by the secretariat and approved at the following meeting, signed by the Chair. Draft minutes of meetings following the meeting will be published within 10 working days. Final minutes, once approved by the Board, will be published within 10 working days

Decisions will be recorded in a decision log where appropriate.

Conflicts of interest relevant to decisions will be recorded in the minutes.

The Board should seek to explain its decisions in plain English so residents can understand what has been agreed and why.

Transparency, confidentiality and information rights

The Board will operate with a presumption of transparency, subject to lawful confidentiality requirements.

Some information may need to be kept confidential, for example where it relates to:

- personal data
- commercial matters
- legal advice
- live procurement
- sensitive negotiations
- information that cannot lawfully or appropriately be published.

The Board's activities, records and decisions may be subject to information access requirements, including Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and data protection legislation. Maidstone Borough Council will advise on publication and confidentiality in line with these requirements and manage any formal information requests in line with its legal responsibilities and local procedures.

Where information cannot be published, the reason will be publicised with the agenda and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting where the information is considered or decision taken. The Board may need to produce separate confidential Minutes for relevant items where decisions are made on confidential items. This will only be done where the Minutes cannot be written so as to be public and not reveal confidential information. Confidential Minutes will not be published and must be treated as confidential.

Programme lifecycle and review

These Terms of Reference are intended to provide the initial governance framework for the Park Wood & Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

They are designed to support the Board as it moves through different stages of the programme, including:

- initial onboarding and Board formation
- development of the 10-Year Pride in Place Plan
- development and agreement of the 4-Year Investment Plan
- delivery, monitoring and review of agreed activity
- future changes to delivery arrangements, where appropriate.

The Board's role, ways of working and relationship with Maidstone Borough Council may need to evolve over time. This may include changes linked to programme guidance, Council assurance requirements, the development of community-led delivery arrangements, changes in Board membership, or the creation of working groups, sub-groups or delivery partnerships.

These Terms of Reference should therefore be treated as a living document. They should be reviewed:

- after the initial onboarding period
- when the 10-Year Pride in Place Plan and 4-Year Investment Plan are agreed
- before any significant change in delivery arrangements
- if national programme guidance changes
- if the role of the Council as Accountable Body changes
- at least once a year.

Any changes should be agreed through the Board and Maidstone Borough Council, with appropriate advice from the Council as Accountable Body.

Review

These Terms of Reference should be reviewed in line with the programme lifecycle and review points set out above. At a minimum, they should be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by programme guidance, Council requirements, Board membership changes, delivery arrangements or local circumstances.

Draft Code of Conduct

Park Wood & Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board

Draft Code of Conduct

Status: Draft for review and ratification by the Neighbourhood Board

Date: 14/7/26

Version: Draft 2

Introduction

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from members of the Park Wood & Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

The Board has an important role in shaping the Pride in Place Plan and providing community-led strategic leadership for Park Wood and Senacre. Members should act in a way that maintains public confidence in the Board, Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body, and the Pride in Place programme.

This Code applies to Board members when acting in their Board role. It also provides guidance for Council officers, advisers, consultants and support partners involved in Board business, recognising that their roles are different from voting Board members.

The purpose of this Code is not to catch people out. It is to help the Board work fairly, openly, and respectfully, especially when decisions are difficult or when people have different views.

Expected behaviour

Everyone involved in the Board should:

- treat people with respect
- act in a way that promotes equality and does not unlawfully discriminate
- listen to different views and make space for others to contribute
- avoid intimidating, bullying, harassing, or attempting to silence others
- avoid doing anything that compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those working for or on behalf of the Board
- act in the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole
- declare relevant interests and relationships openly
- use evidence fairly and consider the views of the wider community
- support a collaborative, non-hierarchical culture
- avoid gatekeeping or controlling who is able to be heard
- help maintain public trust in the Board and the Pride in Place programme.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

When acting in a Board member capacity, members should behave consistently with the Seven Principles of Public Life.

These are:

- **Selflessness:** acting solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity:** avoiding improper obligations or influence, not taking decisions for personal gain, and declaring and resolving interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** acting and taking decisions impartially, fairly, on merit and using the best evidence.
- **Accountability:** being accountable to the public for decisions and actions.
- **Openness:** acting and taking decisions openly and transparently unless there are clear and lawful reasons not to.
- **Honesty:** being truthful.
- **Leadership:** showing these principles in behaviour, treating others with respect, promoting the principles and challenging poor behaviour where it occurs.

Board members should avoid doing anything they could not justify to the public or to fellow Board members.

Acting for the whole neighbourhood

Members may have particular local knowledge, lived experience, organisational links, professional skills, or community networks. These are valuable.

However, when acting as Board members, they should consider the interests of Park Wood and Senacre as a whole.

Members should not use their position to promote only their own organisation, personal project, political interest, or local network.

Where members have a particular connection or interest, they should declare it openly and follow the agreed process for managing interests or conflicts.

Resident-led working and avoiding gatekeeping

The Board should remain open, resident-led and connected to the wider community.

Board members should:

- help make sure residents outside the Board continue to be heard
- avoid assuming they speak for everyone
- support involvement from people who may not usually take part
- avoid controlling access to the Board or the programme
- avoid filtering community views through their own organisation or network

- challenge behaviour that risks making the Board feel closed, exclusive, or dominated by a small number of voices.

Being resident-led means creating space for different experiences, not only the most confident or experienced voices.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may arise where a Board member, close associate, immediate family member, business, employer, organisation or group has an interest in a matter that is the same as, connected to, or may be affected by, a matter under discussion.

Conflicts can be financial or non-financial.

A financial interest may include a direct or indirect financial benefit to the Board member, close family member, employer, business, or organisation.

A non-financial interest may include an unpaid role, personal relationship, organisational loyalty, campaigning role, or strong connection that could reasonably be seen to affect judgement.

Having an interest does not automatically mean someone has done anything wrong or cannot be involved. In local work, people often have connections. The important thing is that interests are declared openly and managed fairly.

All members must complete a Declaration of Interest form before or shortly after joining the Board, prior to attending their first meeting.

Members must update their declaration annually, and when their circumstances change, registering any new interests that arise within 28 days.

Board members must declare relevant interests at the start of meetings or when they arise during discussion.

- If a conflict is considered to be financial and significant the member must leave the room, or online meeting, for the relevant item(s) and may not vote.
- If a conflict is considered to be financial and minor the member may speak on the item but not vote.
- If a conflict is considered to be non-financial and significant the member may speak on the item but not vote.
- If a conflict is considered to be non-financial and minor the member may participate as normal.

Whether an interest is minor or significant will be determined by consideration of whether a reasonable person having knowledge of the facts would reasonably conclude that it was so.

In unclear situations, Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body will advise whether an interest should be treated as a conflict and what its status is. The decision and reasoning must be recorded in the minutes.

Advisers, officers, and support partners

The role of Maidstone Borough Council as Accountable Body, and of officers, engagement providers, technical advisers, delivery partners, evaluation partners and other support partners, is to provide advice, evidence, support, and facilitation to the Board.

They do not replace the Board's community-led role.

Board members, advisers and officers all serve the interests of the programme, but their responsibilities are distinct. Board members have the decision-making role set out in the Terms of Reference. Advisers and officers provide support and advice within their respective roles.

Gifts and hospitality

Board members should treat with caution any offer of a gift, favour, benefit or hospitality connected to their Board role, especially where the person or organisation making the offer may be seeking to do business with, receive funding from, influence or benefit from the Board or the Pride in Place programme.

Any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of £25 or more must be declared.

Members should also declare lower-value gifts or hospitality where accepting them could reasonably be seen to affect their judgement or public confidence in the Board.

Confidentiality and transparency

The Board will work with a presumption of openness and transparency.

However, some information may need to remain confidential, including:

- personal data
- commercial information
- legal advice
- live procurement matters
- sensitive discussions
- information that cannot lawfully or appropriately be published.

Members must not share confidential information outside the Board unless authorised to do so by the Chair, who will seek guidance from the Accountable Body as required.

Members should also take care when speaking publicly, including on social media, not to present personal views as agreed Board positions unless the Board has agreed them.

Decision-making and respectful challenge

Members should seek to reach decisions by consensus where possible.

Where there are different views, members should challenge constructively and focus on the issue, not the person.

Members should:

- listen before responding
- explain disagreement respectfully
- avoid personal criticism
- be willing to change their view in light of evidence or discussion

- support clear decisions once they have been properly made.

Where a member disagrees with a decision, this can be recorded through the proper meeting process where appropriate.

Complaints and concerns

Where someone believes that a Board member has fallen short of the standards in this Code, the concern should be raised in writing with Maidstone Borough Council's Information and Governance team via:

Information and Governance Team
Corporate Insight, Communities and Governance
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 6JQ

or

ComplaintsAndFOI@maidstone.gov.uk

The concern should explain:

- the nature of the issue
- how the Board member was acting in a Board capacity
- which part of the Code of Conduct may have been breached
- where relevant, which of the Seven Principles of Public Life may have been affected
- any relevant evidence or impact
- if the concern relates to a conflict of interest, how the conflict may have arisen and what impact it may have had.

Maidstone Borough Council, as Accountable Body, will agree the appropriate process for considering concerns with the Chair.

If the concern relates to the Chair, the Council will consider the matter through an appropriate route.

Where a breach is found, possible actions may include:

- advice or informal resolution
- a request for an apology
- changes to ways of working
- restrictions on involvement in a specific item
- removal from the Board where permitted by the Terms of Reference and the agreed process.

Where removal from the Board is considered, the member should normally be given clear written notice of the issue, the reasons removal is being considered, and a reasonable opportunity to make representations before a final decision is made.

Whistleblowing

Concerns about wrongdoing, fraud, misuse of public money, serious misconduct or other matters that may fall outside ordinary complaints should be raised through Maidstone Borough Council's relevant whistleblowing or reporting procedure: by email to Whistleblowing@Midkent.gov.uk or by calling the dedicated telephone number 01622 602059.

Review of this Code

This Code of Conduct is intended to apply throughout the life of the Board.

It should be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are changes to programme guidance, Board membership, delivery arrangements, declarations processes, Council requirements, or the Board's agreed ways of working.

Any changes should be agreed by the Board and Maidstone Borough Council.

Acceptance of the Code

By joining or continuing as a Board member, members agree to follow this Code of Conduct and support the Board to work in a way that is fair, open, respectful and community led.

Agenda Item 6

Park Wood and Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting

**22 September
2026**

Funding and Finance Update

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Neighbourhood Board's responsibilities in relation to the Pride in Place funding, a summary of the guidance on how funding can be used, and how this works in relation to Maidstone Borough Council's role as the accountable body.

It sets out the programme funding profile, and what has been received, spent, and committed to August 2026. At present, expenditure has only been made against the initial Capacity Funding payment of £150,000.

Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

1. Note the Pride in Place funding profile and requirements.
2. Receive the Capacity Funding financial position as of 31 August 2026, and raise any questions they may have.
3. Propose any changes to future financial reporting that may support the Board in their decision-making role.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Park Wood and Senacre will receive funding and support up to £20 million over a 10-year period, including early capacity funding for community engagement and the establishment of the Neighbourhood Board. As the accountable body, Maidstone Borough Council receives this funding and must provide an expenditure report and forecast to the MHCLG every 6 months.
 - 1.2 The Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) will make the full annual payment as published in the funding profile (Section 2 below), at the start of the financial year. These annual payments will not be adjusted, regardless of what the Neighbourhood Board forecasts to spend that year.
 - 1.3 It is possible to roll over underspend into the following financial year, and if the Board forecasts that they will not spend their full allocation of delivery funding in the first investment period, that money can be rolled into subsequent investment periods.
 - 1.4 Within each investment period, the Board must forecast to spend at least 25% of the cumulative allocation for that period. By the end of Year 7, the Board must have spent at least 50% of the cumulative total allocation. The three investment periods are set out in the funding profile below.
 - 1.5 In the 2025/26 financial year, Maidstone Borough Council received £150,000 early revenue funding or Capacity Funding to support community engagement and the establishment of the Neighbourhood Boards. In the current financial year, we have also received £117,604 capital funding and £273,462 revenue funding (this was made in two payments, the second of which was released on 11 August when the Board and Boundary submission was approved).
 - 1.6 This early delivery funding, received before the Neighbourhood Board has put together the Pride in Place plan, is intended to support the Neighbourhood Board's engagement with the local community, build the capacity of the Board and local voluntary and community sector, develop the Pride in Place plan and deliver any quick wins.
 - 1.7 As the attached Capacity Funding financial position shows (Appendix 1), expenditure has only been made against the Capacity Funding. The main revenue and capital funding to date remains for the Neighbourhood Board to invest. A high-level investment plan for the first four years must be submitted with the ten-year vision in November 2026.
-

2. The Pride in Place Funding Profile

Pride in Place Funding Profile: Phase 2												
Grant type (£000s)	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
Revenue funding	150	273*	692	692	767	767	767	767	767	767	767	7,174
Capital funding	0	118	668	1,455	1,455	1,455	1,455	1,455	1,455	1,455	1,455	12,426
Total	150	391	1,359	2,147	2,222	2,222	2,222	2,222	2,222	2,222	2,222	19,600
	Investment Period 1					Investment Period 2			Investment Period 3			
Funding post financial year 2028/29 will be reviewed at the next Spending Review.												
*Revenue funding paid across two tranches in Year 1 (2026/27) of the programme – 50% at the start of the financial year, and the remaining 50% on approval of the Chair, board membership, and boundary change.												
Values are rounded.												
Funding will be split 63% capital and 37% revenue.												

3. The Use of Pride in Place Funding

- 3.1 The programme guidance sets out a list of potential initiatives that Neighbourhood Boards can choose to fund. This isn't a fixed list, and other ideas can be delivered (following the agreement of MHCLG) if there is a clear business case. There are activities that cannot be funded, for example, political and religious activity or paying for things a council or public body is already legally required to provide. The link to the full list is provided below.
- 3.2 The Board can choose to fund initiatives across their agreed area or to target funding towards specific areas within it. This will depend on the priorities identified by community engagement, and local data on need and deprivation. Spending should mainly benefit the people and places within the boundary, but is possible to invest in assets which lay outside, if they are used by those living within the boundary and there is clear evidence that this is supported by community feedback.
- 3.3 The programme guidance requires the Board to consider what resource is required to support day to day programme management, compliance and assurance, in discussion with Maidstone Borough Council, whilst also making sure that a significant proportion of delivery funding is retained to deliver projects that address the local community's priorities and needs.
- 3.4 The Board can decide to use a proportion of their funding towards management costs. This can include delivering the Secretariat function, programme delivery, and project development/selection. Management costs must be proportionate and kept to the minimum required to support effective delivery of the programme.

- 3.5 When thinking about the use of resource over the lifetime of the programme, the Board may also wish to bear in mind the requirement to move towards an entirely community led model by the end of Year 3.
-

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

- Note the Pride in Place funding profile and requirements.
 - Receive the Capacity Funding financial position as of 31 August 2026, and raise any questions they may have.
 - Propose any changes to future financial reporting that may support the Board in their decision-making role.
-

5. Links to Programme Guidance

[Pride in Place Delivery Guidance](#)

[Indicative list of potential projects and initiatives that can be funded](#)

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Capacity Funding Financial Position as of 31 August 2026

Appendix 1: Pride Place - Capacity Funding as at August 2026 - Financial Year 2026/2027

Account(T)	Budget for Year (1)	Budget YTD (2)	Actuals to August 2026 (3)	Variance YTD (4)	Brief Description	Forecast to March 2027
Employee Costs	£56,100	£16,830	£14,702	£2,128	Funding Community Development Manager to 31 March 2027 - (9.5 months)	£56,470
Equipment Purchase	£300	£300	£159	£141	Mobile Phone	£300
Equipment Maintenance	£0	£0	£242	-£242	IT Licences	£240
Printing	£5,000	£3,125	£756	£2,369	Printing of programme materials including workshop resources and flyers	£5,000
General Expenses	£1,700	£1,700	£203	£1,498	Venue Hire	£1,700
Professional Services	£81,020	£50,638	£36,698	£13,939	Independent organisations commissioned to recruit the Neighbourhood Board and deliver a deliberative resident engagement process	£65,200
				£0	Additional community engagement activity, outreach & 'quick wins' - proposed from September 2026	£23,460
				£0	Secretariat Support from MBC: proposed from September 2026	£2,450
Mobile Telephones	£0	£0	£33	-£33	Initial mobile phone bill	£200
Direct I.T. Purchases	£3,000	£1,500	£895	£605	Laptop	£2,000
Non-Staff Advertising	£250	£250	£250	£0	Social Media advertising for Neighbourhood Board recruitment	£350
Training	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£2,000	To support the further development of the Board if required	£2,000
Controlled Running Costs	£93,270	£59,513	£39,237	£20,276		£102,900
Govt Grants	-£149,370	-£74,685	-£53,929	-£20,756		
External Interest received			-£7,281	£7,281	Interest calculated to August 2026, these will be additional monies that can be spent	-£10,000
Controlled Income	-£149,370	-£74,685	-£61,210	-£20,756		-£10,000
	£0	£1,658	-£68,481	£8,929		£149,370
Spend in 2024/2025	£630	£630	£635	-£5	Ipsos Mori workshop expenses - venue hire, promotion and resources	£630
	£150,000	£76,973	£54,574	£22,399		£150,000

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- (1) This is the full budget for year - 2026/27
- (2) This is the profiled cumulative budget to any point in time.
- (3) Actuals to any point in time.
- (4) Variance compared to the profile budget

Date	Description	Amount
Received		
30/04/2026	Capital amount (MQ97)	£117,604
		£117,604
28/01/2026	Capacity Funding	£150,000 balance not yet spent at end of Aug - £95,426
19/03/2026	Tranche 1	£135,000
14/08/2026	Tranche 2	£138,462
		£423,462
Unallocated Revenue		£273,462

Park Wood and Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting

**22 September
2026**

Community Engagement Update and Review of Resident Feedback

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

This report provides the Neighbourhood Board with an overview of the community engagement activity undertaken to date and outlines engagement activity planned between now and November 2026.

It includes the Resident Roadmap developed by local residents through a deliberative engagement programme led by an independent community engagement organisation.

Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

1. Note the engagement and insight gathering activity undertaken to date and planned, and raise any ideas for future engagement activity based on their local knowledge and experience.
2. Receive the Resident Roadmap and consider its findings, including how these will be used in the production of the Pride in Place plan, and how to feedback to the Resident Panel.
3. Note the planned programme of engagement leading to submission of the Pride in Place Plan and consider the role of Board Members as the programme develops.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A core principle of Pride in Place is that local people should shape the future of their neighbourhood. Community engagement is a mandatory part of the development of the Pride in Place Ten-Year Plan, which must be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 30 November 2026. Local people should also be involved on an ongoing basis to support the development, delivery and impact assessment of community initiatives.
 - 1.2 Over recent months, engagement activities have been undertaken to understand local priorities, identify opportunities, and ensure that the Pride in Place plan will reflect the experiences and aspirations of people living and working in Park Wood and Senacre.
 - 1.3 This work has focussed on high-quality, in-depth engagement that also builds stakeholder relationships and the capacity and interest of local residents to get involved. This supports the longer-term aim of embedding ongoing involvement in the programme, as well as informing the local vision for Pride in Place.
 - 1.4 The most significant element of this work was the independent resident deliberative programme delivered by Engage, Consult, Facilitate (E.C.F), Demos and the Centre for Thriving Places, commissioned using the Capacity Funding. This brought together a demographically reflective panel of local residents to explore the Pride in Place aims in-depth, and establish a legitimate community mandate to guide long-term investment decisions. The resulting Roadmap is attached for the Board's consideration as Appendix 1.
 - 1.5 Other activity undertaken and planned is summarised below. The full results of these will be shared with the Neighbourhood Board and summarised for discussion at the October meeting.
-

2. Community Engagement Activity to Date

- 2.1 In addition to the deliberative engagement programme undertaken by ECF, additional engagement activity undertaken so far has included:
 - Two half-day resident workshops run as part of an Ipsos MORI pilot – focussing on early priority identification and options for 'quick wins'. These were featured within the Community Engagement best practice toolkit shared by MHCLG.
 - Community conversations undertaken as part of general Pride in Place promotion, Neighbourhood Board recruitment and outreach activity.

- Open and ongoing engagement through the Pride in Place page on the Let's Talk Maidstone online hub asking 'What Would You Change', with the ability to comment and mark locations on the area map.
 - Stakeholder discussions with around 25 different organisations working within the neighbourhood, identifying interest in the programme, opportunities for future collaboration, and what they have heard from the community through their own insight-gathering.
 - Ward walks and local conversations to identify community assets, challenges and opportunities.
 - Ongoing awareness-raising through Council communication channels and partner networks.
- 2.2 This activity is building a strong evidence base and has generated valuable insight into the issues that matter most to residents and stakeholders. In addition to this, we have undertaken an asset mapping process and collated neighbourhood data from a range of sources to support the overall picture of the place and its people. This includes the data pack provided by MHCLG and a Pen Portrait of the area pulled from a range of Maidstone Borough Council data.
-

3. Planned Community Engagement Activity and the Neighbourhood Board

- 3.1 The Board has an important role to play in supporting community engagement, and is asked to consider how this could develop in the future. Board members are uniquely placed to act as ambassadors or champions for the programme and help share information and strengthen connections between the Board and the wider community.
- 3.2 Members may wish to note the following planned activity:
- A September stakeholder sounding board with local voluntary and community, public sector, faith and other partners.
 - Further engagement with residents to review and rank the priorities that have emerged to date.
 - A review of the responses to Maidstone Borough Council's borough-wide Resident Survey undertaken in August 2026, with data filtered to Pride in Place area post codes.
 - Targeted engagement with young people, whose voices are currently underrepresented, delivered through local youth providers.
 - Providing Board members with Community Conversation cards to help them capture informal feedback they hear when out and about.
-

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

- Note the engagement and insight gathering activity undertaken to date and planned, and raise any ideas for future engagement activity based on their local knowledge and experience.
 - Receive the Resident Roadmap and consider its findings, including how these will be used in the production of the Pride in Place plan, and how to feedback to the resident panel.
 - Note the planned programme of engagement leading to submission of the Pride in Place Plan and consider the role of Board Members as the programme develops
-

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Resident Roadmap

The Pride in Place Roadmap.

**A resident-led roadmap for the Park Wood,
Senacre, Mangravet, Shepway, Loose and
Linton Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board**

Prepared by

ECF and Demos, with the Centre for Thriving Places, for
the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board

Date

14 September 2026

Executive summary.

This roadmap is the product of four deliberative workshops with residents of Park Wood, Senacre, Mangravet, Shepway, Loose and Linton, referred to throughout as "the area". The panel was recruited through a type of civic lottery process. In this case, every household in the area was invited to participate, and panellists were drawn at random from those who registered, balanced by age, background, housing and neighbourhood.

Maidstone Borough Council commissioned the process to give the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board a resident-led starting point for its ten-year vision and first four-year Investment Plan. That vision will inform the plan submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Panellists were told that the programme provides up to £20 million over ten years.

The panel met on four Wednesday evenings in August and September 2026:

- Workshop 1: an introduction to Pride in Place and a learning session on how the local economy works
- Workshop 2: Building Thriving Places
- Workshop 3: Strengthening Communities
- Workshop 4: Giving Communities Ownership

Between sessions, panellists did tasks that brought in the views of family, friends and neighbours. This included a personal story, a walk with fresh eyes and a camera, a kitchen conversation, and a short survey shared through their own networks. Around 25 people were involved through the kitchen conversations and 54 answered the survey associated with Workshop 4. The roadmap draws on all of it, with the panel's own deliberation prioritised in our process.

We found panellists want clean, friendly, safe neighbourhoods where people know and support one another. They want the buildings that already exist opened and used, things to do for every generation, and fresh food and green spaces they can enjoy within walking distance. They want local people to help shape what happens, and they want improvements looked after and still standing long after the money has been spent.

Six findings run through the four workshops.

- 1. Open the buildings that already exist.** At every workshop, accessible places for people to meet, and the community to access was the top priority. Residents want a network of spaces, spread throughout the neighbourhoods in the area, drawing on existing vacant, derelict or underused buildings, rather than new flagship facilities. Inside them, they want things to do for teenagers and adults as well as small children.

- 2. Pay the people who make a building work.** A paid, visible, local coordinator and proper youth workers are important to make this work. The same ten volunteers driving any process tend to burn out, so somebody has to carry the safeguarding, and local jobs are a benefit in themselves.
- 3. Fix things people can see, early.** Repaired parks, fly-tipping dealt with, named sites improved. Most of the panel treated feeling safe as the condition for using anything that opens. Views differed on cameras, and on whether this fund should pay for them.
- 4. Put regular things on, close to home, open to everyone.** Activities, mental health and family support, learning, fresh food. Nothing that marks people out as needing help. Each neighbourhood should shape its own activities.
- 5. Keep residents in the room.** Panellists want to be told what happened to this roadmap, to watch Board meetings, and to have a hand in delivery. They proposed a resident delivery group as one way of doing that. It is a proposal for the Board, not an agreed arrangement.
- 6. Earn trust through delivery, transparency and permanence.** Residents want clear explanations of what the money can fund, who is responsible and how improvements will survive beyond the programme. Their test is simple: deliver something tangible before celebrating it. The survey said the same from outside the room. Asked when they had felt powerless, most respondents described being told late, told nothing or told and ignored, not losing an argument.

The sections that follow explain these findings workshop by workshop. The appendices hold the method notes, the ranking records, the site list and the pilot comparison. Workshop materials are on the project hub at piphub26.co.uk.

The project team thanks the panellists. Discussions were constructive, people turned up week after week, and they argued with each other well. We facilitated the discussions and brought this document together. The experiences, ideas and priorities are theirs.

How to read this roadmap.

The panel advises. The Board decides. Panellists were told this from the start. Not everything in here will happen. What the panel was promised is that this document would record what it concluded, clearly and without spin, and that the Board would consider it alongside other evidence.

Rankings are by table, not by vote. The panel worked at three or four tables and each table produced its own ranking. "All three tables" means an idea was near the top everywhere. "Two of three tables" and "one table" mean what they say. There was no vote across the three pillars, so there are no percentages and no

agreed funding split. Where one table ruled something out, that is one table's decision, not the panel's.

Disagreements are reported as they were. A Board that knows where residents differ can make better decisions than one handed a false consensus.

Places are as residents described them. Ownership, condition, access and availability have not been checked. Appendix 2 is a record of what panellists said, not a site survey.

Costs and eligibility were not tested. The panel argued at every session about what the fund can pay for, with only a printout to go on. Where a proposal may fall to another organisation, the roadmap says so once and moves on.

The wider voices in this report are brought in through the panellists' own networks. The kitchen conversations and the survey broaden the evidence base for the report, but they are not representative samples, and the roadmap does not treat them as one.

Nobody is named. Quotations are anonymous and personal details have been removed. We said we would respect the privacy of panellists, and we have through this report.

The Panel's Vision.

The vision below is built from what panellists said at the workshops and wrote in the pre-tasks. Quotation marks show their exact words.

In ten years, Park Wood, Senacre, Mangravet, Shepway, Loose and Linton are places where people can "turn a house into a home, and a street into a community".

It is an area where you can leave a spare key with a neighbour, and where you can knock on someone's door for sugar, or milk, and be sure of a positive reply.

It is a place you would describe as clean, friendly, tidy, respectful and safe.

It is a place where things are looked after.

It is a place where there is somewhere to go to feel part of the community, and you feel safe when you get there.

One where the buildings that exist are used and never left derelict.

One where there is a space for people who like "more relaxing kind of things" to come together, "because it is very hard for people to make friends nowadays".

It is a place where you can walk to buy fresh food, including food grown locally, and where the shops "cover everything" in the right proportions.

It is a place people invest in "when they see things are happening", and where residents "get behind it" because they are confident "it is going to stay around".

And it is a place that breaks the loop.

One in which the council has the confidence to invest because it knows things will get looked after, and one in which residents help with the upkeep because they feel they have lots to look after.

A place where the answer to "when was this area last invested in, and what happened to it?" is a list of things still standing.

That is the vision the discussions kept returning to.

Draft

Workshop 1: Introduction and Capacity Building.

The first workshop was held on Wednesday 12 August at Fusion Maidstone. It had two jobs: to introduce panellists to the project team, to each other and to Pride in Place, and to build a shared way of thinking about the local economy, with a learning session from the Centre for Thriving Places.

Each panellist told a short story about themselves and the place they live. Five themes ran across the stories:

- Community shows up in small acts, and people remember them precisely: a spare key with a neighbour, a housebound woman who set up her living room for Halloween so the children would not miss out.
- Park Wood's reputation and residents' experience of it do not match. Newcomers said the area was quieter and friendlier than they had been warned.
- Parks serve young children. There is little for anyone over eleven.
- Litter, dumping and poor maintenance wear away pride in the area.
- Health and the lack of fresh food nearby came up in the stories and never left the process.

At the tables, facilitators used prompt cards to explore how panellists felt the area was performing: influence on decisions, the local economy, culture and creativity, access to services. Two tables also scored the themes, so those scores are evidence from two tables only. Two things stood out.

- The gaps in provision locally are considered to be community space, affordable activities, fresh food and routes into work. The proposals to address this were also concrete. We heard ideas about a community gym run as a social enterprise at "a pound to get in rather than 45 pound a month", a hub "that does everything", growing and cooking projects, and older residents who can cook paired with younger ones who can teach technology.
- Participation looks different depending on where you live in the area, and how old you are. One panellist who helps run the monthly repair cafe said voluntary activity is thriving. An 18-year-old said the loud and popular stick together and the quiet get left out. A parent said information on how to take part "is not public, you have to dig for it". Park Wood has shops, a GP and two dentists within reach. In Senacre, "it's a different story".

The learning session used a leaky bucket analogy to explain how the local economy works. The exercise talked about what comes into the local economy (money, skills, time, buildings) and where it leaks out, with a private care home's profits as the worked example. Three levers were also explored to address this -

partnerships, community ownership of buildings and land, and jobs local people can get.

Panellists also questioned the Board chair about how the Board had been selected, what would happen to the panel's work, how the funding would be released and what role the council would play. The chair described the roadmap as one of the major inputs to the Board's planning. Questions about the council's role and long-term communication returned in subsequent workshops.

Nine themes from this first round went forward to the next workshop: places to meet, crime and antisocial behaviour, connections between neighbourhoods, residents' talent and business ideas, youth activities, awareness and upkeep of green spaces, skills for local work, intergenerational activity, and access to fresh food.

The discussion was broad, as an introductory session should be. The themes it produced were the ones the next three workshops built on.

Workshop 2: Building Thriving Places.

Background

- Held on Wednesday 19 August at Grace Community Church in Mangraves, this workshop focused on the Building Thriving Places pillar of Pride in Place.
- The question the panel worked on was as follows. How can this area become somewhere people want to live, work and visit?
- Before the session, panellists were asked to walk their neighbourhood with fresh eyes and photograph what looked good and bad. Three tables then discussed problem spots, assets and gaps, developed ideas and tested them against three questions: how would the idea improve the neighbourhood, who would benefit, and what might the knock-on effects be? An Ideas Pack was provided to stimulate discussion where useful.
- Each table then placed its ideas in a Diamond Nine, with the most important at the top. The Diamond Nine asks participants to place nine ideas at different priority levels, with one top tier priority, two second tier, three third tier, two fourth tier, and one fifth tier priority. The same exercise was used in Workshop 3. Tables ran it differently, and not all produced nine cards or agreed every position, so the roadmap reads the themes and the reasons alongside the rankings. Appendix 3 records the differences.

The panel's priorities

Somewhere to go, in buildings that already exist

Somewhere to go came through at all three tables. Community provision took the top positions, although one table placed the venue itself lower while it argued about whether the space or the activities inside it come first.

"It's the space, you need the space first." "It then leads to other things."

The panel did not ask for a new flagship. It wants the buildings it can already see brought back into use. Panellists named:

- The boarded former community hall by the Shepway shops
- The Phoenix Community Centre in Senacre
- Two shut car showrooms with their own car parks at the Sutton Road end
- An old building by Morrisons
- Heather House in Park Wood, which panellists described as rebuilt, used by a sports club from outside the area and not available for hire. They remembered it as a junior hall, a polling station, a nursery and a boxing venue, and pointed out that the area now has no nursery.

The message is that more space is needed for community use, and the buildings that exist are the place to start.

Things to do inside them, young people first but not only

This appeared in the top rows of all three tables. Suggestions included:

- A Youth Zone
- A Snap Disco of the kind hundreds of 11 to 17 year olds went to at the leisure centre a generation ago
- Community clubs
- Indoor markets, celebrations, crochet, cooking and fitness classes.

Two panellists who have worked with young people said what would make this last. "It's not just open a community centre, it's actually having proper youth pastoral workers." And activities must offer progression and a sense of achievement, "not a ping pong table".

One panellist reminded her table that adults need a reason to go out too: "as an adult, these green spaces and all of these things that we're talking about, there's nothing to attract me". That point came back at every workshop. Young people should be a top priority, but they are not the only priority.

Parks, play and green space

Parks and green space sat in the second or third row at every table. Panellists described new equipment in Senacre that nobody uses, a seventeen-year-old play park in Shepway North with nowhere for parents to sit, and the park by the Shepway shops as "a climbing frame and a swing".

They want an overhaul of the children's parks, with outdoor gyms and disabled access, landscaping and community gardening, and green spaces lit and made safe so they can be used for fairs and outdoor cinema.

Feeling safe

Two of three tables put community safety in their second or third row, meaning CCTV, regular policing, a neighbourhood watch that people know exists, and action on drug use.

The reasoning: "for all this to exist, if people feel safe, then they want to use it", and cameras give residents "the means to see and report" what happens, including fly-tipping.

The third table did not card cameras or policing at all, and put changing people's behaviour and the look of the place above surveillance. At this workshop and the fourth, panellists also asked whether Pride in Place money can be spent on CCTV and policing. Feeling safe is recorded here as the panel's priority. Who pays for what is for the Board to settle with other institutions.

Fresh food and health

Fresh food and health sit together because panellists kept linking them. One table placed them in its top two rows, and another put community growing on its map. One panellist measured the nearest fresh food from the Park Wood shops at about a mile, "a 30-minute walk, so an hour back".

Panellists want a greengrocer and butcher within walking distance, a monthly farmers' market, community growing, a health and fitness centre and another GP.

One table put life-saving equipment and training at number one after a panellist described cardiac arrests near a defibrillator that nobody could find. It is on the wall at Fusion, facing away from the shops, without a sign. He had asked in five nearby shops. None knew it was there.

Appearance, cleanliness and fly-tipping

This was raised at every table, usually in the middle or lower rows, and called "a given" by one panellist. A sofa and a bed on a corner. A builders' tip on the Mangravet green for most of a year. Rubbish and abandoned vehicles around Parkwood Field.

Panellists split on the remedy. Some wanted enforcement. Others wanted education, or design: a community skip on the same site every six to eight weeks, a Sunday litter pick with coffee afterwards, and bulky waste collection that does not cost £10 for a bed.

Support for vulnerable people

Pastoral support (mental health, addiction, mentors, a youth worker) sat in the second row at one table. Accessibility for disabled people sat in the third row at another, and "has got to come up", one panellist said.

Skills, education and generations mixing

Middle to lower rows at all three tables. A skills club, a library, adult education, and a skills exchange between older and younger residents. Panellists mourned the loss of school woodwork and car mechanics, and one noted that "a lot of girls would be only too happy to learn how to do maintenance on cars".

Jobs and enterprise

Lower rows at all three tables, because most panellists expect jobs to follow the rest. Empty shops back into use, help for the independent businesses in Senacre, workspace conversions. One table split on whether jobs belong above housing.

Transport, parking and housing

One table wanted buses brought up to the standard of the best routes. Another raised parking, time-limited bays and a yard for work vehicles. A third ruled

transport out as council business, over one panellist's objection. Housing was carded at one table only.

Where the panel disagreed

These are the trade-offs the Board will face, already argued from both sides by residents.

People or places first?

"If we don't work from the people, we change the behaviour of the people, horrors come from the behaviour of the people."

"If the area looks slightly nicer, we'd have more incentive to take care of it, because if it already looks bad, you think, oh, I don't care."

The panel did not settle whether change starts with people's behaviour or with the condition of the place. The kitchen conversations a week later leaned towards fixing the place first. The disagreement stands.

Safety: a precondition, or somebody else's job?

Two tables ranked cameras and policing. One did not. At the fourth workshop one table said cameras and policing are "not PiP money".

The same argument ran under everything the panel discussed about scope. "We can't put ideas forward that the council should already be doing." "This is what the money is for." "If you were going to spend the money doing what someone else has done, you wouldn't need us."

Feeling safe was a priority at every table. How it is paid for, and by whom, is for the Board to settle with the organisations responsible.

The space or what happens in it

One table spent twenty minutes on whether the venue or the activities inside it should sit on top. Nobody doubted the space was needed. The lesson for the Board is that a building and what happens in it have to be planned together.

What the panel ruled out

One table ruled out shop-front improvement grants, an idea from the Ideas Pack, because "the council's still going to charge them the rent". Cheap lets of unused buildings would do more, it said. Another table set aside the Ideas Pack altogether and refused, three times, to count the commercial shops as community assets. A motorbike track, hot desks, wedding venues and a resident discount card were raised and not pursued.

Draft

Workshop 3: Strengthening Communities.

Background

Held on Wednesday 26 August at Fusion Maidstone, this workshop focused on how Pride in Place could help to create a connected, resilient community. We asked panellists to consider what would help people know one another well enough to ask for help, and trust one another enough to give it. Resilience was discussed as the ability to maintain those connections when things go wrong.

Before the session, panellists had a Kitchen Conversation with friends, family or neighbours about what would strengthen the sense of community. Around 25 people contributed through written submissions and accounts brought back to the room.

Three tables then ranked proposals in a Diamond Nine, using different mixes of printed and self-written cards. Appendix 3 has the records.

What friends and neighbours told us

In one set of thirteen interviews, nine people chose "convenient" to describe the community as it is now. Others chose litter, speeding, unsafe, unsociable. Asked for the community they would love to be part of, they said clean, friendly, tidy, respectful and safe. The aspiration that comes through is modest and focuses primarily on upkeep and facilitating courtesy throughout the community.

Asked who might be lonely here, people named older residents living alone, disabled people, people with poor mental health, single parents, new parents, teenagers and newcomers without English. One answer was "everybody, because they don't know who to trust". What they described pointed to provision that is welcoming and open, where you can take part without first having to say you need help.

Asked where they go locally to meet people, the answer was "nowhere". People travel to town, Bluewater or Coxheath. They asked for a place for coffee and cake, craft groups and a space for adults. One handwritten account described a community that is "nonexistent, backstabbing" and asked for one that is "supportive, open, honest", ending: "the future is in your kids so that's where the support needs to be". One panellist knocked on four doors. One neighbour refused and two ignored her.

Three needs came through everything: somewhere to go, someone to hold it, and feeling safe when you get there. The tables reached the same three.

The panel's priorities

Bring existing buildings into community use

All three tables put community space at the top, for the same reason as the week before: the buildings exist, so refurbish them and hand them over, with community ownership as the ambition. Panellists named the Phoenix Community Centre on Reculver Walk, The Manor Youth Club on Cumberland Avenue, empty shops and garage blocks. One table wrote "base: community owned" and left it at that.

A building being in the area is not the same as the community being able to use it. Panellists listed venues that are closed, keyholder-only, let to outside clubs or used for one purpose. A rebuilt hall now fenced and let to outside sports clubs. A church garden has been closed in practice to non-congregants. A skills centre is running as pupil referral provision. Each one signals to residents that promises about place are not always kept. Any assessment of community space needs to look at availability, access and cost, not only bricks and mortar.

Paid, visible, local people

All three tables came to the conclusion that some form of paid coordination was needed, each reaching it separately. This showed up as ambassadors, champions, "a director of fun", or a coordinator people know by sight. Three reasons were provided as to why. The same ten volunteers burn out if you rely on this approach. Someone has to carry safeguarding and liability. And paid local jobs are a benefit of the programme in their own right.

Opening a building is the first step. Panellists wanted the Board to think from the start about who keeps it open, makes people welcome and builds the programme over time.

Support hubs that are open to everyone

Support hubs sat in the upper half of every table's ranking: mental health support, family help, an expanded family hub, life skills, social prescribing. Bringing support into a familiar local space makes it easier to find and easier to use. A hub "shows we actually care".

The panel was firm about stigma. One table rejected a community kitchen the moment it sounded like "basically a soup kitchen". Shared food, yes. Designated charity, no. Provision should be open to everyone, so that nobody using it is marked out.

Regular events, clubs and activities

A regular programme in community centres and libraries, support to set up local clubs, youth provision and things that bring the generations together. One table called it a "cruise ship" programme: plenty on, join what you like. Creative activities, cultural exchange, enrichment, allotments with produce going to the food bank.

Events were ranked unevenly. Festivals sat in the middle rows at some tables and were questioned at others. The common thread throughout was that small, repeated and local events, beat large and annual gatherings for the panellists, although a blend could be pursued.

Adult learning and support for families

Life skills, learning between generations, parent-to-parent connection and support in the first year of a new baby. Family hubs bring these together. The panel treated the family as the unit of change: support for parents, practical learning and opportunities for children reinforce each other, and adults need reasons to use the spaces too.

Support the conditions that make volunteering possible

Volunteering groups, neighbourhood watch and the maintenance of community spaces were placed lower when they stood alone, because they depend on somewhere to meet and someone to organise them. The panel wants volunteering supported, with clear expectations and a paid person coordinating it, not used as a substitute for staff.

Communication through people and regular activity

Noticeboards, digital or physical, came last wherever they were ranked. Communication itself ran through everything. The panel thinks of it as a job done by people including a known face, a timetable that repeats, a friend bringing a friend.

Two weeks later the survey underlined point as well. Forty-four of its 54 responses arrived through a named person and, therefore, word of mouth. Eight arrived through every online channel put together. Word of mouth and a visible presence are important in this area.

Celebrate once something has been achieved

One table placed celebrating local champions last, on purpose. The view is that this programme, and community, needs to earn it first. Panellists want to see a building opened, an activity running or a problem fixed before anyone is asked to celebrate the impact of the Pride in Place programme.

Where the panel disagreed and what it ruled out

One table ruled out gallery and exhibition hosting, cultural festivals, interfaith events, a stand-alone volunteer group and a local choir, and held subsidised tea and coffee mornings in reserve. Some felt shared cultural exchange is better than a single-culture showcase. There was definitely a desire to celebrate culture among the panellists.

What this means for the roadmap

This workshop confirmed buildings and spaces as the priority, and from a different starting point. The group also added a piece the first workshop lacked in requiring paid people to make the building work. The session also established building a network of modest spaces close to where people live, not one flagship as the preferred approach.

Workshop 4: Giving Communities Ownership.

Background

Held on Wednesday 2 September, the fourth workshop asked how power could be shifted to local people in a way that lasts beyond the workshops. The programme calls this pillar Taking Back Control but the workshop was entitled Giving Communities Ownership to avoid any risk of politicisation.

Before the session, panellists shared the "You and Your Community" survey through their own networks. It ran from 27 August to 9 September and collected 54 responses from 52 people, 42 of them before the workshop. The headlines were presented on the night. The full analysis is a companion report and is summarised later in this section.

The session began with panellists reflecting on the process. Tables then tested seven ideas from the earlier workshops against three levels of involvement outlined as being informed, influencing, deciding. Each table then shaped a way for residents to stay involved.

What panellists said about the process

Every table said they had enjoyed the process and it had helped to build confidence. It had helped to generate pride in an area that some had never seen as coherent previously. For some, it was the first experience of being asked, and one that they would like to repeat.

"Met as strangers, leaving as friends."

Every table wants the process of engagement to carry on, and named how. They would like to see a presentation back from the Board, a check-in every quarter or so, and have a seat at the side of the room at Board meetings. The view of panellists is that participation has to lead to lasting relationships, not end with a report.

How residents could be involved in different proposals

The panel did not ask for control of everything. It drew a line by the type of idea. Residents should set the purpose, professionals handle the technical and regulatory work, and residents check the result.

Paid ambassadors and local roles

It is the view of the panel that projects should involve the community from the start, often through identifiable roles. Roles should be local, trained and accountable to residents as well as to the Board, open to people without degrees, with coordinator roles as a ladder. Tables differed on who selects any one that is recruited into a paid position. It could be the Board, a resident delivery group, or the community within agreed parameters and possibly by vote.

Community spaces

Residents should decide what a space is for. Professionals handle surveys, regulation and the business model. Community ownership is the ambition, and "rent first" was one table's advice on how to get there. The space has to pay for itself.

Healthy food

Existing growers should lead any effort to increase access to healthy food locally. The Board should allocate some space for this to happen, and experts advise on how to make it work. Options included a community shop, a van or a market, and ask people about dietary needs before designing the offer.

Feeling safe

Residents should map where they feel unsafe. Anonymous reporting and a neighbourhood watch should contribute to this. Cameras and policing stayed contested during the workshop session, particularly whether this was a suitable use of Pride in Place funding. Local knowledge of the places concerned was seen as the starting point for any attempt to tackle safety concerns through the funding.

Support hubs

Residents should be involved in the design of these from the start, because needs differ between estates and local people know who needs help. Professionals design the referrals. One table warned that youth groups have their own cliques and rivalries, and one offer will not work the same way everywhere.

Green spaces

Residents should tell the Board where efforts to improve green spaces should be prioritised. Volunteers and local businesses use and look after the spaces after they have been improved.

Events

Residents decide the purpose of events, local organisations run the logistics and bring outside money in.

A proposed role for residents in delivery

One table proposed a three-tier model and the whole room adopted it in the closing discussion:

- The Neighbourhood Board would set strategy and hold the funding.
- An unpaid resident delivery group would provide practical oversight, with fixed terms of around three years or linked to a project. Panellists compared this with the role of a school governor or charity trustee, potentially organised by theme.
- Paid staff, partner organisations and volunteers would carry out the work.

The resident group would help write job descriptions, sit on interviews, get three quotes, look at risk assessments and food hygiene, and keep an eye on delivery.

The panel is proposing a role for people like itself, and said so. Panellists recognised the panel was "*not elected by the community to speak for them*". This is a proposal for the Board to consider, including how people would be selected, supported and held to account. It is not an agreed arrangement and not an automatic role for existing panellists.

The panel put the principle in six words: "*Set the parameters, hand over, check.*"

How residents could stay involved

Each table shaped one mechanism. Read them as a menu. The panel did not choose one.

- Neighbourhood workshops, roughly quarterly, with an annual gathering across the area. One table combined these with digital tools, QR codes, a postal address, a physical board, regular drop-ins and outreach through schools. Volunteering would follow discussion and relationships, rather than being the first request made of residents.
- Existing Facebook groups, supported by moderators, and a neighbourhood app. This approach also emphasised visible improvements before asking people to volunteer, and recruiting people for skills they already had. The MP's office was set aside as a route because it was considered too political.
- A standing pool of residents from which small, balanced groups could be drawn, with minimum participation from each estate. Suggestions alongside this included postal surveys, supermarket kiosks, bus adverts, partnerships with local services, business and youth panels, and resident observers at Board meetings.

No single channel reaches everyone. Older residents without smartphones, housebound people and some ethnic communities were named. Personal contact and offline routes have to sit alongside anything digital.

What the survey added

The survey asked six questions. This included a time you felt powerless over a decision affecting your neighbourhood, a time you saw a community take control of something, whether you have volunteered in the past ten years, what would motivate you, what support you would need, and what would stop you. Fifty-four responses came in from 52 people, reached through panellists' own networks. Five panellists gathered 35 of them. The survey is not representative and is not independent of the panel, and the companion report says so at length.

How it travelled is itself a finding. Forty-four responses came through a named person. Eight came through every online channel combined, including Facebook, Nextdoor and the council's own mailing list. That is the panel's Workshop 3 conclusion about communication, supported by the survey.

Powerlessness is about process, not outcomes. Forty respondents described a time they felt powerless. Planning and new development led, then roads, antisocial behaviour and estate management. Twenty-three described having no way in: not told, told after the fact, told a route existed and finding it did not, or told and ignored. Almost nobody described losing an argument. One account describes a scheme on a former garage compound where residents were shown plans, told what parking they would keep, and never told when the drawings changed. Engagement that stops when the scheme changes gets remembered as a promise broken.

Community control here is real, small and short-lived. Twenty-five of 54 could not name a time a community here took control of anything, and three said there is no community to do it. Where people could, they named crisis mutual aid during Covid, a flood or a fire, a community garden built with a landlord's permission and a £1,000 grant, street parties, litter picks. The only example with a building, a standing organisation and a maintenance responsibility was Downswood, which is outside the area. "Senacre should do the same," the respondent added. What was scarce in the most-cited example was permission and a room, not money.

Willingness to volunteer is not the problem. Thirty-four respondents had volunteered in the past ten years. One in 54 named money as a motivation. Barriers fall into two groups of roughly equal size, needing near-opposite things. One group is short of time, health or childcare and needs short defined tasks, stated hours, expenses and roles that fit around shift work. The other has concluded that effort here does not produce a result ("what's the point of doing

this, it'll all be back tomorrow") and needs to see something finished, with a paid person carrying the organising. The panel's call for paid, visible local people answers the second group. The first group's needs did not come up at the workshops, because panellists were paid and had their childcare and travel covered. The support people asked for is mostly inexpensive: an induction, a named person alongside them the first time, clear information about what is involved, hours that fit, travel costs, kit. One man who bought his own litter picker asked only for "some sort of official letter confirming that I'm not just a nutcase out to be laughed at".

The survey did not ask about the three-tier model, the ordering across pillars, the sites named or the Board itself. It cannot be read as wider public endorsement of the roadmap. Four responses attributed local decline to migration, asylum accommodation or social housing allocation. They are recorded in the companion report as remarks and are not treated as findings.

Across the pillars.

What connected the discussions

Each workshop had its own pillar, and the panel kept arriving at the same place. Community spaces are where activities, support and learning happen, and also where residents meet, organise and take ownership. Paid local roles deliver services and are jobs at the same time. The survey confirmed three of the panel's conclusions from outside the room: a base, paid coordination, and communication done by people.

From the rankings and the reasons panellists gave, the order runs like this:

- A physical base first, in existing buildings, one per neighbourhood rather than one flagship.
- Paid local people to run spaces, and support volunteers.
- Safety, appearance and upkeep alongside, subject to who is responsible and what the fund can pay for.
- Then activities for young people and adults, support hubs, fresh food, parks and green space.
- Then what the panel expects to follow: jobs, enterprise, better shops, and connections between neighbourhoods.

This is the panel's reasoning, drawn together. There was no vote across the pillars, so there is no percentage split. Some of these have to happen together, and the order is not a delivery timetable.

Questions that cut across the pillars

What the funding can pay for

Cameras, policing, transport, shop rents, potholes, services other organisations should already provide. The panel argued about this at every session with nothing to go on but a printout. A plain-English statement of what the fund can and cannot pay for would change the shape of several of its arguments.

How the programme adds to existing responsibilities

Where do the borough council, the county council and the housing associations stop, and where does this money begin? The fear is that the fund ends up paying for services residents already expect.

How health is addressed

Fresh food, the defibrillator, the missing nursery, another GP. The panel treated these as part of a thriving place and did not try to force them under one pillar. The Board will need the right partners at the table.

How each neighbourhood benefits

Residents do not experience the programme area as one place. Some did not know it was one. The panel's answer is a network of local provision with something visible for each neighbourhood. That is a principle about access and identity, not a formula for dividing the money.

How improvements last

"People would get behind it if they were confident that it was going to stay around." Buildings, activities and public spaces need staffing, maintenance and running costs planned past the opening day. The panel wants the ten-year vision to say how.

How this relates to the earlier Ipsos pilot

The Ipsos pilot in March 2026 brought around 25 residents together for two workshops. It mapped assets and issues, sketched a vision and voted on quick wins with tokens. The panel was recruited differently and deliberated in more depth.

The panel reached the pilot's five broad issue areas in its own discussions: safety and behaviour, cleanliness and the environment, infrastructure and public realm, children and young people, and community engagement. The pilot's issues list was not presented as a complete set, although its asset map was read at tables during Workshop 2.

The panel added detail about fresh food and diet, adult skills and work experience, and differences between neighbourhoods in access to everyday services. It also

questioned whether places listed as assets were available or useful to the community in practice. A building being present did not necessarily mean residents could use it.

On the first year, the two largely agree. Youth outreach, cleaning, repairs and skills sessions carry through. The panel puts more weight on opening existing buildings and on growing and food, and moves celebration and publicity to after delivery. Appendix 4 sets the pilot's thirteen proposals against the panel's view of each.

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Priorities.

This section sorts the proposals by place, by urgency, by timing and by the kind of spending involved, so the Board can set them against feasibility, cost and other evidence. The sorting has been conducted subsequently by our project team and reflects our objective interpretation. The panel did not assign the designations below.

Geographical priorities

The panel's preference was for provision that respected the identities of individual neighbourhoods. Panellists in Park Wood, Senacre, Shepway and Mangravet each identified places and needs close to home. Parts of Loose and Linton are also within the programme area, but the evidence does not provide the same level of site-specific detail for those places. The absence of named sites should not be treated as evidence that there is no need.

Park Wood

The shops, the walk to fresh food, Heather House, and rubbish and abandoned vehicles around Parkwood Field were items to address in Park Wood. Fusion is the one building everyone already uses, and the defibrillator on its wall is welcome. The new housing on Bicknor Road is going up opposite a primary school with no youth provision and no known plan for any, according to panellists and intervention here could help.

Senacre

The Phoenix Community Centre on Reculver Walk was named at two workshops as the first building to bring back into productive community use. The shops and the play area, the green space and garages behind them, the skills centre running as pupil referral provision. Senacre's population grew 44 per cent in a decade and its new estates have no shops, no play space and no facilities, so teenagers drift to the field and the parade.

Shepway

There were several spaces mentioned as a potential priority. The boarded former community hall by the shops, The Manor Youth Club on Cumberland Avenue, and the Drawbridge play park in Shepway North, where the equipment is seventeen years old and there is nowhere for a parent to sit. The parade draws teenagers and litter and offers little else.

Mangravet

The green, which has been a builders' tip for most of a year. The field, fly-tipped and unlit, and "a fantastic space" for fairs and outdoor cinema if it were safe. The

corner by the primary school on Mangravet Avenue: graffiti, parking "bedlam" at pick-up, and takeaways overwhelmed by teenagers.

Places serving more than one neighbourhood

Two shut car showrooms with their own car parks at the Sutton Road end, an old building by Morrisons, and empty shops and garage blocks across the area were all mentioned. Whether they sit inside the boundary, who owns them and what they would cost is not known. Appendix 2 lists every place named, including the ones outside the area that panellists used as comparisons.

Critical, urgent and nice to have

"Critical" means the conditions that make other proposals possible. "Urgent" means the early actions residents wanted to see. "Nice to have" means ideas that were secondary or depend on progress elsewhere. An idea can be both critical and urgent.

Critical foundations

Accessible community space. Paid local coordination. Proper youth-work skills. A clear statement of what the fund can pay for. Safety, accessibility and a credible plan for maintenance and running costs decide whether residents will use and trust what opens. The survey adds one more: an answer on the safety of residents who take named roles, before anyone is recruited into one.

Urgent and visible early actions

An existing building brought into use. The first local paid roles. Two or three named places visibly improved. The defibrillator signed and people trained. Practical answers on fly-tipping. A plain-English explanation of what the money can pay for. And, from the survey, the inexpensive things that turn willing residents into volunteers: an induction, a named contact, a written description of the role, hours that fit around work, travel costs and kit.

Secondary or dependent ideas

Celebration, publicity and recognition of local champions, placed after delivery. Larger events and some activity ideas with mixed support. Jobs and enterprise, mostly expected to follow other improvements, though some panellists argued for direct support for work. Lower does not mean unimportant.

Short-term and longer-term interventions

The first year

The first-year proposals provide a practical starting point for the Board's consideration:

- Open one named building early and make sure residents know it is open. The workshops identified candidates. The choice is the Board's.
- Pay the first local coordinator, ambassadors or youth workers, with clear roles and support, before asking volunteers to carry anything.
- Improve two or three named sites. The Drawbridge play park, the Mangravel green and the Senacre play area were among the examples, not an agreed shortlist.
- Sign the defibrillator, tell the nearby shops where it is and train people, once access is confirmed.
- Run a regular community skip and a Sunday litter pick with time to meet afterwards, alongside the waste services' own responsibilities.
- Explain what the money can and cannot pay for, and how residents' proposals will be considered.
- Do the inexpensive things behind volunteering: an induction, a named person the first time, a written role description, hours that fit, expenses. Put something official in writing behind residents who already act on their own, a letter or a badge, early and without ceremony.
- Hold the celebration until something visible has been delivered.

These sit alongside the pilot's youth outreach, cleaning, repairs and skills sessions. Their value is in showing that the programme follows through on what residents raised.

The first four years

The first four years move from early improvements to reliable provision across the area: a network of community spaces held by paid local people, with activities, support and food initiatives built around each neighbourhood's needs, and parks and public spaces improved and then looked after. The survey adds that community use of buildings and land is often a permission problem before it is a money problem. In the most-cited example, the blocker was a landlord's signature.

Pace depends on the sites chosen, eligibility, partners and running costs. The panel did not write a year-by-year schedule. That is the Investment Plan's job.

The ten-year vision

Over ten years, panellists want stronger relationships, more for every generation and confidence that local people can change things. Jobs, enterprise and better shops are the benefits they expect to follow.

The test is whether it is still standing when the money ends. Nothing in the survey's accounts of community control had lasted ten years. The panel wants this programme to leave places, skills and relationships that do.

Capital and revenue interventions

The workshops did not examine the cost of proposals, or agree a capital and revenue split. The sorting below describes the proposals. It is not an eligibility decision.

Capital-related proposals

Bringing buildings back into use, refurbishing them, replacing play equipment, adding disabled access, lighting green spaces. How each is treated depends on the project, who owns the asset and the fund's rules. Cameras sit here too, with the eligibility question unresolved.

Revenue-related proposals

Coordinators, ambassadors and youth workers. Activities and support. Training, outreach, and keeping the lights on and the doors open. The panel's paid local people are a running cost and its first priority after the building itself, so revenue has to be planned with the capital, not after it.

Proposals requiring both

A hub, a food project, a park, a youth programme. Each needs money to build and money to run. The panel said it both ways. A building with nobody to run it will "just shut down again". Activities with nowhere to happen are a Facebook group, and "there's no physical interaction".

Panellists proposed income-generating assets, small charges, outside investment and community enterprise as ways of keeping provision going: a fifth of the fund set aside for an asset that earns, pitch fees, a pound-a-session gym. These came from panellists before the learning session had made the case. They are ideas to investigate, not a business case.

Next steps.

Consideration by the Neighbourhood Board

This roadmap informs the Board's ten-year vision and first four-year Investment Plan. It sits alongside other engagement, partner input and the technical and financial work needed to decide what can be delivered.

What the panel asked the Board to do

The panel asked for eight things. They are listed as the panel put them.

- Come back and tell us what happened to this roadmap. A presentation to panellists, then a check-in every quarter or so.
- Let residents sit in on Board meetings.
- Publish the terms of reference. Explain how the Board was chosen and why residents need one.
- Publish a communications plan that says how the Board will talk to residents for ten years, not only this autumn.
- Answer two questions in writing: can the council take a share of the money, and what does its role as accountable body involve.
- Let panellists keep the Facebook group they set up themselves.

Appendix 1: Method and interpretation.

[Summary to follow]

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Appendix 2: Places named by panellists.

What panellists said about places, as they said it. Ownership, access and condition have not been checked. Neighbourhoods are as panellists gave them. Home streets are not included. Two entries may be the same building under different names.

Site	Neighbourhood	What panellists said
Parkwood Field and surrounding streets	Park Wood	Rubbish and abandoned vehicles dumped at random spots, growing week on week, no enforcement
Park Wood shops	Park Wood	Community store grubby and unmaintained, old alcohol-control and drugs signs, kicked-in cash point, pharmacy sign falling off, dead planters, bent railings, no fresh food, benches removed. "An odd cocktail between modern and derelict"
Fusion Healthy Living Centre	Park Wood	A positive community asset. The area's only known defibrillator is on its wall, facing away from the shops, unsigned, unknown to staff in five nearby shops
Heather House	Park Wood	Rebuilt, let to a rugby club from outside the area, "not for private hire", nothing online. Formerly a junior hall, polling station, nursery and boxing venue. The area now has no nursery
Rebuilt hall in Park Wood	Park Wood	Fenced, keyholder-only, let to outside sports clubs
Senacre shops and play area	Senacre	New play equipment barely used, "a magnet of rubbish and antisocial behaviour", no cameras. Masonry falling from the flats above the shops. Takeaway oil dumped among the garages. One unit empty since Covid. Green space behind deteriorating. A hut between the shops and the playground "never open"
Phoenix Community Centre, Reculver Walk	Senacre	"The most rundown, unwelcoming-looking building we've seen." Named at Workshop 3 as the first building to bring back
New builds on the edge of Senacre	Senacre	No public facilities, no shops, no playgrounds, so teenagers drift to the field and shops
Former community hall by the Shepway shops	Shepway	Vacant, boarded, a container outside that children use to reach the roof. The newer building beside it barely used. Adjacent play park "a climbing frame and a swing"

Site	Neighbourhood	What panellists said
The Manor Youth Club, Cumberland Avenue	Shepway	Named at Workshop 3 as a building to bring back into use
Drawbridge play park	Shepway North	Equipment seventeen years old and unusable, no disabled access, nowhere for parents to sit, in a large close full of families
Flats behind the Shepway surgery	Shepway	"Soulless"
Mangravet shops	Mangravet	"The same" as Shepway: teenagers, litter, little else
Primary school corner, Mangravet Avenue	Mangravet	Outstanding school, double-gated, graffiti and antisocial behaviour on the corner, parking "bedlam" at pick-up, fast food shops overwhelmed by teenagers
Mangravet green	Mangravet	A builders' tip for most of a year, believed to be a holding site for construction elsewhere
Mangravet field	Mangravet	Fly-tipped, poorly lit, drugs and motorbikes. "A fantastic space" for fairs and cinema if made safe
Bicknor Road development	Park Wood	New housing going up opposite a primary school with no known long-term plan and no youth provision
Car showrooms, Sutton Road and Wallis Avenue end	Sutton Road	Two, shut and boarded, with large car parks. Candidate venues
Old building by Morrisons	Sutton Road	Candidate venue
Sutton Road lamp posts	Sutton Road	Christmas lights, as in town
Church-linked garden	neighbourhood withheld	Allotment fenced off, closed in practice to non-congregants
Skills centre	Senacre	Operating as pupil referral provision rather than as a community skills centre
Empty shop units and garage blocks	Across the area	Named at Workshop 3 as candidate spaces
Maidstone Leisure Centre	Outside the area	Former home of the Snap Disco for 11 to 17 year olds
Mote Park	Outside the area	Five minutes away, but everything is on the far side and parking is now charged

Site	Neighbourhood	What panellists said
Bearsted	Outside the area	The model: monthly farmers' market, annual carnival, pub, everyone on the green in summer

Draft

Appendix 3: Workshop ranking records.

These records retain the different ways in which tables prioritised ideas. Row 1 is the highest position, but the rows are not directly comparable across all tables. A theme not appearing on a sheet was not necessarily rejected. No numerical funding allocation can be derived from these records.

Workshop 2, Table 1

Method: silent writing of ideas, clustering aloud, a placed draft, then argument. Around thirteen items across five rows. The venue's row was set by a late addition ("vulnerable groups") rather than by argument. Rows partly facilitator-shaped: none settled by the facilitator.

Row 1: community groups and projects.

Row 2: activities for different age groups, pastoral support, skills club.

Row 3: venue, CCTV, green space, empty shops back into use.

Row 4: fly-tipping package.

Row 5: alleyway improvement, community reporting walks. Left beside the sheet: transport.

Workshop 2, Table 2

Method: each panellist wrote and placed their own sticky notes in whichever row they chose, with little challenge between panellists. Around 45 notes. Never reduced to nine. The only position agreed by the table is the top row. Read as an unranked clustering with one agreed top.

Row 1: entertainment and events centre, community hub and resource centre, community centre, dedicated space for classes, youth workers, work on the behaviour of the people, life-saving equipment and training.

Row 2: children's parks, safe school parking, community growing and allotment, farmers' market, fresh food market and butcher, fitness and health centre, events, maintenance, Christmas tree and lights.

Row 3: flower beds, wildlife care, graffiti and arts space, school exterior, parking and traffic, community website, health education, eco association, types of business allowed.

Rows 4 and 5: skills exchange, affordable amenities, hydroponics, clubs, children's choir, advertising boards, outdoor cinema.

Workshop 2, Table 4

Method: group brainstorm, clustering, rows negotiated. The closest of the three to the exercise as designed. Rows partly facilitator-shaped: "housing for community" (facilitator's label), row 5 placement of jobs (facilitator's "home before job" argument tipped a split).

Row 1: community (empty buildings, clubs and events, Youth Zone, Snap Disco, indoor markets, celebrations).

Row 2: green space and parks overhaul, community safety (CCTV, regular policing, neighbourhood watch, action on substance use).

Row 3: education and library, housing for community, accessibility.

Row 4: buses, cleanliness.

Row 5: jobs and workshops.

Workshop 3, Table 1

A mixture of printed and self-authored cards, clustered by the table.

- Row 1: Creating and refurbishing community centres (Phoenix, The Manor)
- Row 2: Unused buildings and community ownership. Communication, paid ambassadors and champions
- Row 3: Festivals including cultural. A "cruise ship" programme in centres and libraries. Social prescribing
- Row 4: Adult learning (life skills, intergenerational). Family hub
- Row 5: Volunteering groups

Workshop 3, Table 2

Printed cards only. The table recorded exclusions alongside its ranking.

- Row 1: Unused buildings back into community use
- Row 2: Community mental health hubs. Family hub and family help expansion
- Row 3: Cultural, heritage and creative event funding. Community ambassadors. Community ownership of assets
- Row 4: Youth clubs, libraries, hubs. Community-led child poverty responses
- Row 5: Digital and physical noticeboards

Workshop 3, Table 3

Self-authored cards. Celebrating local champions was placed last deliberately.

- Row 1: "Base: community owned"
- Row 2: Visible paid ambassadors. Hub for life skills and mental health support

- Row 3: Neighbourhood watch. Support to set up local clubs. Allotments to food bank
- Row 4: Enrichment activities. Refurbishment and maintenance
- Row 5: Celebrate local champions (deliberately last)

Table 2 put ambassadors in its third row, not its second. Paid coordination was near the top at every table. It was not in the same row at every table.

Draft

Appendix 4: The Ipsos pilot and first-year proposals.

The March 2026 pilot asked around 25 residents to allocate five tokens each across thirteen ideas. The scores below are token totals across five groups, not the number or percentage of residents supporting each idea. The panel used a different method, so the comparison is about the proposals and the reasoning, not like-for-like scores.

Pilot idea	Pilot tokens	The panel's view
Employ dedicated youth outreach workers	23	Confirmed and strengthened. "Proper youth pastoral workers", trained for neurodiversity and behaviour, with activities that offer progression
Clean up the area	16	Confirmed. The panel adds a mechanism: a community skip on the same site every six to eight weeks and a Sunday hour's litter pick with coffee after. And a question: why bulky waste collection costs £10 for a bed
Fix up the area	14	Confirmed, with a site list. Appendix 2 names the play parks, greens, parades and buildings to start with
Start a Pride in Place awareness campaign	13	Reordered down. The panel wants communication done by people, not noticeboards, and wants delivery before publicity
Create a partnership of local community organisations	13	Not discussed as such. The panel wants paid coordination and is wary of the same organisations and voices dominating
Community skills sessions	12	Confirmed. Cooking, growing, life skills, car maintenance, a skills exchange between generations
A celebratory community event	11	Reordered down. Earn it first. A "winter event" rather than a Christmas one, and bring outside money in
Expand nursery provision in Park Wood	10	Confirmed by the observation that Heather House was a nursery and the area now has none
Start planning a new community hub	10	Reordered up, and changed. Not a new hub. Open the buildings that exist
Intra-neighbourhood transport	5	Buses raised at one table, ruled out at another as council business
Community gardening	4	Reordered up. Growing, allotments, produce to the food bank, teaching people to grow and cook

Pilot idea	Pilot tokens	The panel's view
Improve recycling	2	Not raised
Review how local spaces are used	2	The walkabout provided residents' observations about local spaces and their use. This developed the pilot proposal but was not a formal property or service audit.

Draft

Appendix 5: Contributions between workshops.

Panellists undertook four tasks before, and between sessions. This is what was asked and what came back. Where the online hub was not working, returns came by email, on paper and in the room.

Your story

Before Workshop 1, panellists were asked to bring a short personal story about their relationship with the neighbourhood. It could be a memory or a recent experience and was shared at the table rather than with the whole room. Twenty-one stories were recorded across four tables. They informed the vision and the introductory discussion.

Fresh Eyes Walkabout

Before Workshop 2, panellists were asked to walk for at least fifteen minutes at a time when they felt comfortable, notice what looked good and bad, and photograph what stood out. They could submit a map, screenshot or list of where they walked. Returns included photographs, written accounts, neighbours' observations and a role play. The final photograph count remains to be confirmed. The material informed the site list and discussion of assets and gaps.

Kitchen Conversation

Before Workshop 3, panellists were asked to speak with friends or family about what was needed to strengthen the sense of community. Prompts covered a neighbourhood story, three words for the community now and three for the community they wanted, who might feel lonely and where people met. At least four written submissions and verbal accounts brought around 25 additional voices into the process.

You and Your Community survey

Before Workshop 4, panellists were asked to share a survey, with six substantive questions, with people they knew. It asked for a time the respondent felt powerless over a local decision, a time they saw a community take control of something, whether they had volunteered in the past ten years, what would motivate them, what support they would need, what would stop them, and who sent them the link. It ran as an online form from 27 August to 9 September and collected 54 responses from 52 people, 42 of them before the workshop. The full analysis, coding frame and limitations are in the companion report, The Cascading Survey.

Workshop materials and funding information

Workshop materials are on the project hub. The Ideas Pack, the stimulus cards and the survey questions are kept as part of the project record.

Draft

Appendix 6: Neighbourhood context.

These figures come from the council's area profile and its 2024 residents' survey. They cover different geographies and dates, and none of them is a finding from the workshops.

The programme area

The programme covers the Park Wood and Senacre Middle Super Output Area, south-east of Maidstone town centre: eight Lower Super Output Areas crossing Park Wood and Mangravet, Shepway, Senacre, and part of Loose and Linton wards. The 2021 Census counted around 12,180 residents in 4,775 households. Residents identify with individual neighbourhoods, and some panellists did not know these formed one programme area.

Development of the area

Park Wood developed as social housing from the 1950s, bounded by the industrial estate. Golding Homes led £50 million of regeneration between 2006 and 2018, including Park Wood Parade's transformation into Wallis Fields. Senacre developed as a post-war council estate with green space and woodland. Its population grew 44 per cent between 2011 and 2021. Private housing at Langley Park and Sutton Road has brought a different demographic.

Population and differences within the area

Around 30 per cent of residents are under 18, and the largest adult cohort is 30 to 39. Park Wood ward's median age is around 29, compared with 41 borough-wide. The estate core is in England's most deprived tenth, and around 30 per cent of its adults have no formal qualifications. The profile describes a third of households as lone-parent families with dependent children. Black and Black British residents account for 3.9 per cent, EU-born residents for 6.5 per cent, and 46.6 per cent report no religion. Small-area differences are substantial: one LSOA is older and mainly owner-occupied, another is younger and densely populated with over three quarters of homes socially rented, and another has the MSOA's highest mental-health-related benefit-claim rate.

The council's 2024 residents' survey

Housing satisfaction was 66 per cent locally, compared with 79 per cent borough-wide. Strong belonging was reported by 18 per cent, and 21 per cent felt no belonging. Some 63 per cent would move if they could, compared with 40 per cent borough-wide, and 76 per cent felt unable to influence local decisions. Trust stood at 35 per cent for the borough council and 30 per cent for councillors, and

57 per cent reported no trust in the UK government. Separately, turnout at the 2022 local elections was 29 per cent.

Existing assets

Assets include the Park Wood, Shepway and Senacre shopping parades, two GP practices, primary schools and churches, Fusion, Heather House, the Rosemary Graham Centre, Shepway's Community Information Hub, the Maidstone Skills and Community Centre, the Park Wood Family Hub, playing fields and recreation grounds, and over 200 registered businesses. The council's assessment identifies poorly located or underused venues and a shortage of youth activities.

Anyone reusing these figures should carry the dates and the geographies with them. A list of assets says nothing about whether people can use them.

Appendix 7: Principles and terms.

The principles panellists developed

- Set the parameters, hand over, check.
- Local knowledge is estate-specific and cannot be skipped.
- Paid people should be local, trained and accountable to residents.
- Small, repeated and near beats large and annual.
- Use every channel, or you get the same people every time.
- Quick wins before asks.
- Design against stigma: universal offers, targeted benefit.
- Deliver first, celebrate after.
- The buildings exist. Unlock them.
- People will get behind it if they are confident it is going to stay around.

Terms used in the report

Civic lottery

Recruitment by invitation to every household and random selection from those who register, balanced so the group reflects the area

Deliberation

A process in which people receive evidence, discuss trade-offs and reach shared conclusions, as distinct from a consultation that gathers reactions

Diamond nine

A ranking exercise in which nine ideas are placed in a diamond, with the most important at the top and the least at the bottom. Tables adapted the exercise during this process, as described in Appendix 3.

Investment Plan

The Neighbourhood Board's plan for the first four years of Pride in Place funding

LSOA and MSOA

Lower and Middle Super Output Areas, the statistical units used for small-area data. The programme area is one MSOA containing eight LSOAs

MHCLG

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which funds Pride in Place

Neighbourhood Board

The resident-led body that directs Pride in Place funding for the area

Panel, panellists

The residents selected by civic lottery who took part in the four workshops

Pillar

One of the three Pride in Place aims: Building Thriving Places, Strengthening Communities, Giving Communities Ownership

Pride in Place Plan

The Board's ten-year plan for the area

Pre-task

A task each panellist did between sessions to bring in evidence from their own observation or their own networks

Draft

Agenda Item 8

Park Wood and Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting

**22 September
2026**

The Vision for Park Wood and Senacre: Pride in Place plans

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

We must produce a Pride in Place plan which sets out the local community's ten-year vision for change, and how the Neighbourhood Board will deliver this change.

This plan must be submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 30th November 2026, accompanied by a four-year investment plan which sets out at a high level how the funding will be invested across the priorities identified in the plan.

This report sets out the content that must be included, with comments on what we already have and what we are working on, and the key points for the Board to discuss and agree at the October Board meeting.

Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

1. Note the required content for the Pride in Place plan and how to access further context from government guidance if required.
2. Note the proposal that the Community Development Project Manager produces a first draft based on community engagement findings for the October Board meeting, to be updated following Board feedback and further community engagement.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 We must produce a Pride in Place plan which sets out the local community's ten-year vision for change, and how the Neighbourhood Board will deliver this change on their behalf.
- 1.2 This plan must be submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 30th November 2026, accompanied by a four-year investment plan which sets out at a high level how the funding will be invested across the priorities identified in the plan.
- 1.3 The plan is a chance to explain to people what Pride in Place will achieve in our area and can include quotes, diagrams and photos that help bring it to life. It will be published and widely shared with local people and organisations.
- 1.4 This paper shares the government template covering the content that must be included in this plan, with commentary on the information we already know, information we are still gathering, and the key points for the Board to discuss and agree.
- 1.5 The government guidance on the Pride in Place plans can also be accessed through the Neighbourhood Board's new SharePoint site, along with links to plans from Pride in Place Phase 1 places which have already been approved by the government and published. It is worth noting however that the guidance has changed for Phase 2, so their content is slightly different.
- 1.6 We propose to bring an early 'starter for ten' draft to the Board meeting in October, with questions and options highlighted for the Board. The vision and priorities will still be forming at this stage as community engagement is ongoing.
- 1.7 Section 2 below sets out what the plan must contain. The **required content according to national guidance is in bold** below. The information in blue [is commentary for the Neighbourhood Board](#).

1. The Content

Section 1: The 10-year vision *[Guide 250-500 words]*

Short vision statement for your place over the next decade:

- **What will the neighbourhood look and feel like?**
- **How will life be different?**
- **What will success look like?**

[A first draft will be produced based on the community engagement findings to date, to be discussed and agreed following Board feedback in October.](#)

Section 2: Place and people *[Guide 500-750 words]*

Each place will have its own interpretation of what is core to the identity of the area, and you should adapt the following suggestions according to what matters to your place.

- **You may wish to include a short description of your area**
 - **Its geography; history; identity; and story so far**
- **You must include a map of the agreed boundary**
 - **This must match the correct geographic boundary for your place, as agreed in your Neighbourhood Board and Boundary submission**

We have facts and figures on the challenges and assets in the area in the Pen Portrait produced by Maidstone Borough Council and the data pack provided by MHCLG. These documents are saved in the Neighbourhood Board SharePoint area for review before the October Board meeting. The iPSOS Mori workshops and the deliberative engagement workshops have explored the identity and story of the area with residents. Our boundary map, approved by MHCLG in August, is ready for inclusion.

Section 3: Community engagement *[Guide 1,000 words]*

When writing this section, please explain the variety of ways that you have involved the community and local residents in developing your Pride in Place Plan. This might include some of the methods shared in the PiPP Community Engagement Toolkit, and is likely to include methods bespoke to your neighbourhood and community.

- **Who you engaged in the community**
 - **Consider residents, groups, geographies**
- **How did you engage?**
 - **Show how you have reached out to all parts of the community**
- **How have you reached seldom heard groups?**
 - **Were there any parts of the community who have proved more difficult to reach and how do you plan to address this?**
- **What were the key themes emerging?**
 - **You may want to summarise the key themes to refer back to in subsequent sections**

The Community Engagement paper also included in today's Board papers sets out a high-level summary of the engagement carried out and planned. We will expand on this for Section 3, and acknowledge that community engagement will be ongoing as the programme develops and throughout.

Section 4: What we learned *[Guide 1,000 words]*

This should reference evidence from your community engagement and may include information from the data pack and polling provided by MHCLG; and any additional local data, case studies, and stories you feel are relevant:

- **What are the most important challenges and opportunities facing your neighbourhood over the next decade?**

This section will be drawn from a summary of the community engagement feedback, including views from local organisations gathered at the stakeholder workshop. It will also include relevant data from the Borough wide Resident's Survey (where it was possible to map responses from Pride in Place patch postcodes). As noted above, we have the area Pen Portrait and MHCLG data pack.

Neighbourhood Board members are asked to consider any other sources of local information, existing Case Studies or findings that they feel will inform the local challenges and opportunities.

Section 5: Priorities for change *[Guide 500-750 words per priority]*

You should include details of what overarching themes you wish to prioritise, as identified by your community engagement and broader evidence base. For each priority, consider:

- **Why does it matter?**
 - **What challenge or opportunity is this priority responding to?**
- **How did residents shape this priority?**
 - **How did community engagement influence this priority and your proposed approach?**
- **What does success look like?**
 - **How will residents, businesses or communities experience the neighbourhood differently if this priority is successfully delivered?**
- **What is your approach?**
 - **What interventions, actions, or investments will contribute to achieving this priority?**

This section will be drawn from a summary of the community engagement feedback, including the roadmap provided by independent organisation E.C.F based on the deliberative engagement workshops.

Section 6: Delivering the vision together

Community leadership and continuous improvement *[Guide 500-750 words]*

This section may include:

- **How you will continue to engage and consult the local community and other relevant people and organisations to deliver this vision over the next 10 years**
 - **Including how residents will remain involved and priorities continue to be tested**
- **Whether the Board has started to consider plans for moving towards a community-led delivery model**
 - **This might include plans to work with an existing trusted organisation in your community, build leadership capacity in your Neighbourhood Board, map assets of community value or attract more funding through philanthropy or other grants. You might even be looking further ahead and exploring different legal structures that would enable you to generate revenue, take ownership of assets and employ staff. (There will be opportunities to learn more about these different models over the next couple of years.)**
- **How the Board will monitor progress, learn, and adapt over time**
 - **What plans does the Board have to review outcomes and progress; and refine priorities and approaches over time?**

Maidstone Borough Council's engagement team can support the Neighbourhood Board in developing a plan for ongoing activity that offers local people a range of options to be involved in the delivery of Pride in Place. This will include options to commission engagement activity and/or work with local organisations to develop local capacity for impact assessment.

Options for moving toward a community-led delivery model by the end of Year 3 do not need to be detailed at this stage; however the Neighbourhood Board may wish to consider its approach to exploring this.

6.2 Partnership working *[Guide 500-750 words]*

- **What role will local partners play in achieving the Pride in Place vision?**
 - **This may include community organisations, local businesses, public sector partners and other anchor institutions**

The ways in which local voluntary and community organisations and businesses can play a role in Pride in Place has been discussed in local briefings and partner updates since Spring 2026, and will also be explored at the stakeholder workshop in September. Ideas previously raised for the Board to consider include having thematic sub-groups, working groups and/or panels supporting planning and funding options, and continuing to build relationships with other local investment and engagement programmes.

Neighbourhood Board members are asked for any further suggestions relating to partnership working and collaboration.

6.3 Governance, accountability, and decision-making *[Guide 500-750 words]*

You should use this section to outline the governance arrangements including how decisions are made and who will be accountable for delivery. Consider:

- **The Board**
 - **Membership, leadership, ways of working, and distinction from the local authority**
- **The accountable body**
 - **The role the accountable body will play in financial management, assurance, and compliance**
- **Decision making and transparency**
 - **How will decisions be taken, and governance and transparency requirements be met?**
- **Investment and project selection**
 - **Give an overview of how projects for investment will be identified and selected**

The Pride in Place guidance gives us a clear steer in terms of the role Maidstone Borough Council plays as the accountable body. This alongside the governance documents supporting the Neighbourhood Board will cover much of this section.

The key area for future Neighbourhood Board discussion is investment and project selection. Approaches from other Pride in Place areas can be considered to identify learning or good practice we may wish to apply in Maidstone.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

- Note the required content for the Pride in Place plan and how to access further context from government guidance if required.
- Note the proposal that the Community Development Project Manager produces a first draft with headlines based on community engagement

findings for the October Board meeting, to be updated following Board feedback and further community engagement.

Agenda Item 9

Park Wood and Senacre Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting

**22 September
2026**

Communications Update and Discussion

Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

Effective communication will be key to the success and impact of Pride in Place.

Activity so far has been supported by Maidstone Borough Council, who are happy to continue to offer support if required, but the Board will wish to consider how they can best reach and involve a diverse range of residents.

This report provides an update on Communications activity to date and proposes some key discussion points for the Board, to help establish a way forward.

Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

1. Agree Communications as a key workstream for the project.
2. Note the communications activity already underway.
3. Discuss the key questions set out in this paper.
4. Identify Board members interested in developing a communications plan.

1. Introduction

1.1 Pride in place can only succeed if local people understand the programme, know how to get involved, and can see how their views are influencing investment decisions. Effective communication will:

- Raise awareness of Pride in Place.
- Reach and involve a diverse range of residents.
- Ensure residents and local organisations hear about engagement opportunities, funding opportunities and programme progress.
- Support transparency and accountability.
- Build trust and maintain interest over the ten-year programme.

1.2 Communications should therefore be viewed as a core part of delivery, rather than an add-on, and the Board will benefit from a clear communications plan setting out key audiences, messages, channels and responsibilities.

2. Communications So Far

2.1 Maidstone Borough Council's Communications Team has been supporting the programme during its set-up phase. Activity delivered and underway includes:

- Updating the Pride in Place webpage and developing it as a central source of information.
- Worked with designer to create initial digital assets.
- Organised a leaflet drop to the whole of the patch to introduce Pride in Place and promote engagement and Board recruitment
- Publication of a news article announcing the formation of the Neighbourhood Board.
- Maintaining the Pride in Place presence on Let's Talk Maidstone, where residents can access information and share feedback.
- Establishing a list of residents who have expressed an interest in the programme or been involved in engagement and wish to receive future updates.
- Proposing a second leaflet drop to households across the area to promote upcoming opportunities for involvement and feedback.
- Sharing updates through partner organisations and stakeholder networks, and the Maidstone Borough Council newsletters and social media accounts

2.2 Community engagement activity has also helped raise awareness of Pride in Place and establish the building blocks for ongoing involvement. This is covered in the Community Engagement Update and Review of Community Feedback

3. Questions for Board Discussion

3.1 The Board is invited to consider the following:

3.2 Reaching Residents:

- What are the most effective ways to reach people living in our Pride in Place communities?
- How do we make sure we are reaching people of all ages and backgrounds?
- Which communication methods are likely to reach people who do not normally engage with formal consultation, or prefer non-digital options?

3.3 Existing Assets: What assets do we already have? For example, this could include

- [Pride in Place webpage](#)
- [Let's Talk Maidstone platform](#)
- [The website hosted by E.C.F which will be handed over to the Neighbourhood Board once the deliberative engagement is complete.](#)
- Growing mailing list of interested residents.
- Board members with expertise in communications, marketing, media.
- Board member networks and community contacts.
- Partner organisations able to share information.
- Support from Maidstone Borough Council's communications team.

3.4 Additional Assets and Ownership: What additional assets and support might we need, and how should this be coordinated and overseen? This could include:

- Paid or voluntary communications support and expertise
- Community champion or Ambassador roles for Pride in Place
- Branding and communications guidance to ensure a strong identity for the programme and understanding of the Neighbourhood Board
- Focussed social media presence
- Printed material templates, banners, T-Shirts.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Given the breadth of this topic and the limited time available during Board meetings, it is recommended that:

- The Board recognises communications as a key workstream of the Pride in Place programme.
 - A small sub-group or task and finish group of two to three Board members be identified to support the development of a communications plan, with the initial support of The Council's Communications team.
 - The group brings proposals back to a future Board meeting for approval.
-

Agenda Item 12

Meetings will take place at various venues in Park Wood, Senacre, and parts of Mangravet, Shepway, Loose and Linton areas.

The board will need to agree the following proposed future meeting dates:

Date	Time
Wednesday 21 October	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday 17 November	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday 15 December	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 20 January	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday 23 February	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Pride in Place Forward Plan

Meeting date	Decision / Noting	Key items / decisions	Lead service / officer
22 September 2026	For Noting	- Funding and Finance Update - The Vision for Park Wood and Senacre: Pride in Place plans - Community Engagement Update and Review of Resident Feedback - Communications update and discussion - Training Plan for Board Members	Heather Brightwell, Community Development Project Manager
	For Decision	- Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct - Establishment of Working Groups - Future meeting dates	
October 2026	For Noting	Draft of 10-Year Plan	Heather Brightwell, Community Development Project Manager
	For Decision	- Vision, priorities and actions agreed - Recruitment of Young Person Board Member (18-25 yrs) - Quick-wins	
November 2026	For Noting	Feedback to the community on Pride in Place plan	Heather Brightwell, Community Development Project Manager
	For Decision	Final sign off: Pride in Place plan incl. 4-year investment plan	
December 2026	For Noting		Heather Brightwell, Community

	For Decision	• Planning for the delivery phase: priority projects and ongoing community engagement	Development Project Manager
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