PRIDE IN PLACE
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Whitehouse Neighbourhood Board
Minutes, Decisions Taken & Action Points

Date:	Thursday 13 August
Time:	18:00 – 19:30
Venue:	Westbourne Academy
Attendees:	Cllr Lucy Trenchard Cllr Tracy Grant Glen Chisholm Isaac Turay Jannice Simpson Jess March (Chair) Mahmut Ozturk Martin Bignell Martin Higgon Matt Mason Natalie Irish Patrick Spencer MP Sarah Battistetti Sean Fountain
Apologies:	Chrissie Geeson, Assistant Director – Programme Delivery, Ipswich Borough Council
Other Attendees:	Laura Meadows, Pride in Place Programme Manager, Ipswich Borough Council Sharon Earp, Office of Patrick Spencer MP

MINUTES	
1.	**Welcome and introductions** Jess March (JM) introduced herself as Chair and gave a short overview of Pride in Place. The group went around and introduced themselves, providing a short overview of their background and their interest in Whitehouse and Pride in Place. • Glen Chisholm: Local resident and former Councillor with mayoral experience. • Isaac Turay: Former resident, Manager of Castle Hill Community Centre, and presenter on Ipswich Community Radio. • Jannice Simpson: Manager of Highfield Children's Centre. • Jess March (Chair): Local resident, works for Mind, with a background in psychology, research, and community engagement. • Mahmut Ozturk: Local resident and business owner. • Martin Bignell: Local resident and Vice Chair of the Tenants Scrutiny & Complaints Panel.

- Westbourne Academy Representation: Martin Higgon (Principal) and Matt Mason (Community Inclusion Worker) will share a Board seat representing Westbourne Academy.
- Natalie Irish: Local resident with a professional background in social work.
- Patrick Spencer MP: Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich.
- Sarah Battistetti: Local resident and business owner.
- Sean Fountain: Local resident and Minister at Whitehouse Baptist Church.
- Ward Councillor Representation: The Board seat allocated to Whitehouse Ward Councillors will rotate between ward councillors. Final arrangements are to be confirmed.
    - Cllr Lucy Trenchard: Whitehouse Ward Councillor and organiser of the Whitehouse Community Network.
    - Cllr Tracy Grant: Whitehouse Ward Councillor and former resident.

Others present:

- Sharon Earp: Office for Patrick Spencer MP, supporting the Neighbourhood Board.
- Laura Meadows: Officer at Ipswich Borough Council, providing support to the Neighbourhood Board during its establishment and early development.

2. **Group guidelines and agreements**

The Board discussed the Board Member Code of Conduct, Whitehouse Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest Policy and Register of Interests.

JM asked whether something could be added to the Code of Conduct regarding meeting etiquette, ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute to the conversation. **AP1: Laura Meadows (LM) to liaise with JM to add an additional line to the Code of Conduct regarding meeting etiquette, ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute to discussions.**

> ***Post-meeting update –*** *an additional line has been added to the Code of Conduct, within the respect and behaviour section, as follows: You must ensure all voices are heard by listening respectfully, avoiding interruptions and encouraging fair participation in discussions.*

The group discussed the Terms of Reference and how frequently they would like to meet. Glen Chisholm (GC) suggested meeting monthly initially, with the frequency reducing over time as the group becomes more established. This suggestion was supported by the Board.

JM asked the group to check that the Register of Interests is accurate, as it will need to be published publicly. **AP2: All members to check that the Register of Interests is accurate and inform LM/JM of any required changes.**

	There were no further comments on the Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest Policy, or Register of Interests. LM noted that the documents are required for an imminent Government submission. Members were invited to provide any final feedback by the end of the week, after which the documents would be included in the report due to be submitted to Government the following week. The group discussed preferences for receiving Board information and favoured a combination of digital and printed materials.
3.	**Financial Overview** Laura Meadows (LM) provided an update on the current Pride in Place finances: • Revenue Funding: No expenditure has been incurred to date. A total of £135,000 is currently available. • Capital Funding: No expenditure has been incurred to date. A total of £117,600 is currently available. Approximately £2 million will be allocated annually over the 10-year programme. This funding will be split as follows: • Capital Funding: £1.26 million per year (63%) • Revenue Funding: £0.74 million per year (37%) LM noted that the prospectus contains extensive guidance on how the funding can be used. The key restriction is that funding cannot be used for activities or services that should already be funded through statutory provision. However, there are opportunities to support activities that go above and beyond statutory requirements. The £2 million allocated each year does not need to be spent within that financial year. Funding may be used for quick-win projects, or the Board may choose to retain funding for larger projects in future years. The programme is designed to provide flexibility, allowing the Board to determine how and when funding is invested to achieve its agreed priorities. Government has set expenditure expectations over the lifetime of the programme, but there is no requirement to spend each annual allocation within the year it is received. ***Post-meeting clarification –*** *Government guidance is as follows:* *'To ensure the Programme maintains momentum throughout delivery and demonstrates tangible change for communities as soon as possible, boards must have consideration for the following parameters:* o *within each investment period, the board should spend at least 25% of the cumulative allocation for that investment period* o *by the end of Year 7 (financial year 2032 to 2033 and the end of the second investment period), the board should have spent at least 50% of the cumulative total allocation*

Where a place forecasts to spend less than these percentages in either their Pride in Place Plan or monitoring returns to the department, they may be asked to submit additional information to MHCLG to evidence that their forecast is credible and deliverable.'

Further information can be found at: Pride in Place programme: delivery guidance - GOV.UK

Cllr Tracy Grant (TG) asked what would happen if the Board wished to progress an opportunity that required funding in excess of its available budget at that time, and whether it would need to wait until the next £2 million funding allocation was received.

Post-meeting clarification – *Government guidance is as follows:*

'This programme affords significant financial flexibilities to Neighbourhood Boards to support with delivery.

In all cases, MHCLG will pay the accountable body the full annual payment as published in the funding profile, at the start of the financial year. MHCLG will not adjust its annual payments, regardless of what the board forecasts to spend that year.

The board can roll over any underspends from that financial year into the next financial year. Underspends will continue to automatically roll over until the final year of the programme, subject to two small parameters detailed below.

Funding cannot be drawn down from MHCLG earlier than the stated funding profile although the accountable body can advise places on how to leverage investment against the 10-year funding profile.'

Jannice Simpson (JS) expressed a strong interest in exploring match-funding opportunities and potential income-generating investments. LM responded that the Board could, and should, explore additional funding opportunities, as this would create further options for investment and help make the programme and its long-term impact in Whitehouse more sustainable.

Cllr Lucy Trenchard (LT) asked whether the Neighbourhood Board could invest money to gain a return. LM advised that the programme encourages Boards to explore opportunities that generate additional income and create long-term sustainability.

Patrick Spencer MP (PS) asked whether any income or returns from investments would be included in the Neighbourhood Board's budget.

Post-meeting clarification – *Government guidance is as follows: 'All income generated, including interest gained, from Pride in Place funding should be treated as part of the programme funding and goes back into the community via the Neighbourhood Board.'*

	The guidance is not explicit on whether programme funding can be invested in financial products to generate a return. However, it does encourage Boards to consider opportunities that create long-term income and sustainability for the community, including investment in assets or projects that generate revenue and attract additional funding. Any income generated from Pride in Place funding must be treated as programme funding and reinvested for the benefit of the community. It is also expected that Pride in Place funding is used to deliver benefits within the neighbourhood area and support the priorities agreed by the Board and local community. Sharon Earp (SE) offered data support from the House of Commons Library. The group discussed the evidence and emphasised the importance of ensuring that any decisions are made in collaboration with the local community. The group began discussions about how they would apply for funding and what the Board might look like in the future, for example, as a charity or Community Interest Company (CIC). SB commented that these arrangements can take time to establish, so it is worth considering them sooner rather than later. LM noted that this was not something to be concerned about at this stage. While the Government would like the Neighbourhood Board to take responsibility over the next couple of years, Ipswich Borough Council is in place to provide initial support while the Board becomes established. The first few months should focus on agreeing governance structures, undertaking initial community engagement, and developing ideas for future projects and activity. LT asked how LM's role would be funded in the future. LM responded that her role is currently funded through initial capacity funding provided to Ipswich Borough Council (IBC), acting as the Accountable Body, to support the establishment of the Board. LM's post is currently funded until the end of March 2027. After that, it will be for the Board to decide whether it wishes to continue this arrangement and fund the role from its budget, pursue an alternative arrangement, or take on these responsibilities directly. Mahmut Ozturk (MO) asked about timelines and how the Board would fund projects. LM provided an update on the next steps, explaining that the Board will work towards producing a four-year Investment Plan and a 10-year Vision, setting out a high-level overview of how it intends to invest the funding. These documents will be submitted to the Government in February 2027. JM added that the process would involve identifying the initial priorities emerging from engagement with the local community, along with ideas and potential projects that could help achieve these objectives.
4.	**Training** JM introduced the prospect of training opportunities for Board Members, both as part of their induction and to support development in areas of interest identified by the Board.

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LT suggested team-building activities to help members learn more about one another and understand different working styles.
JM outlined the culture she would like to foster within the Board, encouraging an informal and inclusive environment where Members feel comfortable participating, sharing ideas, and building relationships.
TG suggested introductory finance training to help members understand how funding will operate, including how to manage budgets and interpret financial reports.
JS recommended strategic planning training, focusing on long-term thinking, the wider context within which the Board operates, and key considerations for decision-making.
Martin Higgon (MH) asked whether the board could learn from other pilot groups. LM suggested organising visits to other areas and noted that funding could be used to visit comparable projects to share learning and best practice.
GC requested training on existing services, local issues, and the data available for the area to help Board Members better understand the local context. AP3: LM to invite Suffolk County Council’s Knowledge, Intelligence and Evidence team to a future meeting to discuss local data, evidence, and insight.

Sarah noted that Board Members would each bring different skills and experiences, and that it was not necessary for everyone to be knowledgeable in every area. AP4: LM to circulate a skills audit to identify existing knowledge and experience, understand the Board's strengths, and highlight any skills gaps.
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Communications
JM introduced a discussion on communications, highlighting the need for the Board to consider how it will communicate both internally, between Board Members, and externally, with the wider community. Key considerations included the launch and promotion of the Neighbourhood Board and its members, communication between meetings, and methods for engaging with local residents, such as social media, websites, and printed materials.

IT highlighted the importance of social media as a communication tool. JS noted the need to balance digital communications with more traditional methods, as some families in the area do not have access to smartphones, email addresses, or the internet.
Matt Mason (MM) suggested involving Youth Collaborators in social media activity. He also highlighted the need to consider platforms beyond Facebook, including TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram, particularly when engaging younger audiences. Using the example of the local Roma community, he noted that information is often shared more quickly through Snapchat and Instagram, whereas Facebook can be perceived as less engaging.
SB proposed making use of local schools to distribute information to parents and families, while MH noted that links and information could be shared through existing networks in the schools.

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	• TG suggested distributing newsletters through primary school book bags. JM noted that the Board would also need to consider how to engage people without children or links to schools. • GC stressed the continued importance of face-to-face engagement, noting that some of the people the Board most wanted to reach may be those who are currently disconnected from existing services and communication channels. • LT suggested placing banners in prominent locations around the neighbourhood, potentially including QR codes to direct people to further information. LT asked who would be responsible for managing communications. JM explained that the Board could choose to invest funding in a website or communications support, or manage communications directly. JM noted the importance of considering capacity, particularly where volunteers are involved and membership may change over time. PS commented that, if any staff or contractors were engaged to support communications, consideration should be given to recruiting someone from the local area. LT emphasised the need for an overall communications strategy. JM highlighted the importance of publicly announcing the formation of the Neighbourhood Board. A group photograph was a suggested and issuing a short announcement to introduce the Board to the community. • SB suggested working with Ipswich.Love to create a promotional video, potentially at a future meeting. Members also discussed opportunities to promote the Board through local radio channels. • It was suggested that, once a website is established, Board Member profiles and additional information about the Board could be included. JM proposed creating a WhatsApp group to support communication between Board Members between meetings. **AP5: JM to establish WhatsApp group for Board Members.**
6.	**Local insight** Not covered.
7.	**Future meetings** JS asked whether it would be possible to join meetings via Microsoft Teams when required. The group agreed that a hybrid option should be offered. MH also offered the use of a Meeting Owl at Westbourne Academy to support hybrid attendance.

	The group discussed holding meetings at different venues across the area, and Members agreed that they would like to move between locations and make use of a variety of community spaces. Members agreed that Wednesday evenings would be the most suitable time for meetings. It was agreed that meetings would take place on the first Wednesday of each month from 6.00pm to 7.30pm, with a Microsoft Teams option available for those unable to attend in person. Next meeting: Wednesday 2 September, 6.00pm to 7.30pm. Venue: To be confirmed. A venue with appropriate presentation facilities, including a projector, will be required. ***Post-meeting update –*** *The meeting will take place at The Flying Horse Café and Bar, 4 Waterford Road, IP1 5NW.*
8.	**Any Other Business (AOB)** LM provided information about an organised walkabout in the Whitehouse Pride in Place area with one of the IBC Housing Officers. The purpose is to look around the area and discuss resident engagement ideas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 2 September, 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

DECISIONS TAKEN

1. Future meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month from 6.00pm to 7.30pm, with a Microsoft Teams option available for those unable to attend in person.

ACTION POINTS

AP1: Laura Meadows (LM) to liaise with JM to add an additional line to the Code of Conduct regarding meeting etiquette, ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute to discussions.

AP2: All members to check that the Register of Interests is accurate and inform LM/JM of any required changes.

AP3: LM to invite Suffolk County Council's Knowledge, Intelligence and Evidence team to a future meeting to discuss local data, evidence, and insight.

AP4: LM to circulate a skills audit to identify existing knowledge and experience, understand the Board's strengths, and highlight any skills gaps.

AP5: JM to set-up WhatsApp group.