PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board
Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the governance arrangements for the Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

1.2 These arrangements reflect the requirements of the Neighbourhood Board as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

1.3 The Neighbourhood Board's Code of Conduct is a separate document.

2. Background

2.1 The Pride in Place Programme is a UK government funded programme, targeted at some of the most in-need neighbourhoods in the UK. It gives communities control of up to £20 million over the next 10 years, to be spent on projects that will make a real difference to the neighbourhoods they live in. This long-term funding is intended to support communities in shaping their place and Neighbourhood Boards, made up of local people, will decide how to invest this funding, supported by their MP and the local authority.

2.2 The Pride in Place Programme is, at its core, a partnership between the Neighbourhood Board, local government and local MPs, with the backing and support of central government. To deliver the greatest impact, Boards are encouraged to focus the funding and interventions on those communities within their boundaries that have the greatest need.

3. Legal Status

3.1 The Board is not a corporate body nor is it a legal entity.

3.2 The Board is not the Accountable Body for the Pride in Place Programme. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council shall act as the Accountable Body, retaining responsibility for the receipt, administration, financial control and monitoring of all programme funding, and for ensuring compliance with all applicable legal, financial, governance and audit requirements.

3.3 The Board is the principal forum for community-led programme decision-making, including agreeing local priorities, developing the Pride in Place Plan and selecting interventions.

3.4 The Board acts in its own capacity in carrying out its role under the Pride in Place Programme. However, as the Board is not a legal entity, any decision requiring the exercise of legal powers, the commitment or payment of funding, or entry into a contract, grant agreement or other legally binding arrangement must be implemented through the Council as accountable body.

3.5 In implementing Board decisions, the Council must ensure compliance with its statutory duties and applicable legal, financial, governance and assurance requirements, including procurement, subsidy control, equalities and the proper management of public funds.

3.6 Where the Council considers that a Board decision cannot be implemented lawfully or compliantly, it will explain the reasons to the Board and work with the Board to identify an appropriate alternative wherever possible.

4. Membership

4.1 Neighbourhood Boards must have at least eight members, to ensure a broad range of voices and perspectives.

4.2 Each Neighbourhood Board will be led by an independent Chairperson, appointed and approved by the local authority and the Member of Parliament. The Chairperson should act as a champion for the place and provide leadership for the Board, ensuring it is community-led and embedded within the local area.

4.3 At the discretion of the Board, a Vice-Chair may be appointed to support the Chairperson.

4.4 The majority, being at least 51%, of Board members should live or work within the agreed neighbourhood boundary. The membership should broadly reflect the range and diversity of people who live in the area.

4.5 The Board must include the:

- the relevant Member of Parliament (a nominated parliamentary representative may attend Board meetings and vote on matters on behalf of this person);
- At least one ward councillor; and
- An independent chair.

4.6 All Board members have an equal right to vote, subject to the provisions relating to conflicts of interest.

4.7 A representative of the Member of Parliament may attend as a voting substitute.

4.8 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will provide secretariat support and Council officers may attend meetings as advisers or observers but will not be Board members and will not vote.

4.9 With the agreement of the Chair, advisers, delivery partners or other external parties may be invited to attend for particular items. They will not be Board members and will not vote.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The role of the Rhondda Fach Neighbourhood Board is to:

- Develop and agree, with the local community, a Pride in Place Plan for Rhondda Fach comprising the 10 year vision and four year investment plan;
- Define and agree a programme of community engagement and consultation through which to 'test and develop' the priority projects/programmes;
- Identify opportunities for match funding and leverage philanthropic investment which supports delivery of the Pride in Place Plan.
- Monitor the progress, milestones, budget, risks and issues throughout the delivery of the Investment Plan;
- Work closely with local people to consult and engage with local residents, businesses and organisations throughout the delivery of the Investment Plan;
- Ensure diversity in its engagement with local communities, stakeholders and businesses;
- Celebrate the achievements of the investments and agree a communications protocol to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach.
- Review and approve information relating to the Board's work for submission to MHCLG, with formal monitoring returns being submitted by the Council as accountable body.
- Ensure that decisions are informed by meaningful community engagement and reflect local priorities.
- Maintain oversight of programme risks, delivery, expenditure and outcomes
- Ensure that decisions are taken transparently and in accordance with the Nolan Principles and the Board's Code of Conduct.

5.2 The role of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is to:

- Be the accountable body for funding and executing plans;
- Provide a secretariat function for the Board;
- Be the main point of contact with MHCLG;

- Coordinate the submission of monitoring and progress reports required by MHCLG;
- Lead on the preparation and submission of performance reports requested by MHCLG;
- Provide or arrange legal, financial, procurement, subsidy control, equality, governance and assurance advice as required;
- Give effect to Board decisions where they can be lawfully and compliantly implemented; and
- Maintain appropriate records, including the register of interests and decision log.

6. Board Vacancies

6.1 The appointment of the Chairperson and Board Members will be led by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in consultation with the local Member of Parliament and Chair of the Board.

Chairperson

6.2 In the event of a vacancy in the position of Chair, an open and transparent recruitment process will be undertaken. Existing eligible Board members may apply. Expressions of interest will be considered by the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Appointments Panel, which will include representation from the Council and local MP. The appointment must be agreed by the Council and local MP.

6.3 The Chair must not be in a position to obtain direct personal or organisational financial benefit from Pride in Place funding or be materially involved in an application for funding during their term. This does not prevent the Chair benefitting as a resident or member of the wider community from improvements delivered through the Programme.

6.4 The Chairperson must be independent and must not be an MP, MS, councillor, local authority officer or civil servant.

6.5 The Council may recommend the removal of the Chair where there is clear evidence of sustained non-participation, an unmanaged conflict of interest, persistent failure to promote community involvement, serious or repeated breach of the Code of Conduct, or failure to uphold the Nolan Principles. Any removal requires the agreement of the local MP and approval by MHCLG.

6.6 Where the Chair resigns, written confirmation will be submitted to MHCLG and co-signed by the Council and local MP.

Vice-Chair

6.7 The Board may appoint a Vice Chair from the Board Membership from the community representatives (not a political appointment).

6.8 The Vice-Chair must declare and appropriately manage any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, including where they or an organisation with which they are connected may benefit from Pride in Place funding.

6.9 The Vice-Chair must be appointed from among the community representatives and must not be an MP or councillor.

6.10 Where there is a vacancy for a Vice-Chair, nominations will be sought from Board Members. Board members can nominate themselves. Should there be more the one candidate nominated, a vote will take place involving the remaining board members based on one vote per board member. The nominee receiving the most votes will be appointed as Vice-Chair. In the event of a tie the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

Interim Chair/Vice-Chair

6.11 Where an Interim Chair is required, the Board may nominate and appoint an eligible member from within its existing membership. An interim appointment should normally last no longer than four months.

Ward Members

6.12 It is mandatory for at least one local Ward Councillor to sit on the Neighbourhood Board. It is the responsibility of the Council Leader, within their Scheme of Delegation, to appoint the Ward Councillor(s) in consultation with the Chair of the Board.

6.13 In the event that there are more Ward Councillors expressing an interest in a vacancy than there are seats, Ward Councillors not sitting on the Board membership may be invited to observe meetings.

6.14 Ward councillors serving on the Board may provide appropriate updates to other local members, subject to the Board's confidentiality requirements.

Young Person Representation

6.15 Should the Board consider it appropriate to appoint a young person representative, expressions of interest will be sought through the County Youth Forum and the appointment made by the Rhondda Fach Neighbourhood Board Appointments Panel. Appropriate safeguarding and support arrangements will be put in place.

7. Code of Conduct

7.1 All members of the Neighbourhood Board shall observe the "Seven Principles of Public Life" (the Nolan Principles) as set out within the Board's Code of Conduct.

7.2 All Board members must confirm in writing that they will comply with the Board's Code of Conduct before participating in formal decision making.

7.3 Any alleged failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will be considered in accordance with the procedure set out in section 19 of these Terms of Reference.

8. Term of Office

8.1 At the first meeting of each municipal year, the Board will review and confirm the appointment of the Chair for the forthcoming year.

8.2 Board membership will be reviewed annually to ensure that the Board continues to meet programme requirements and remains representative of the neighbourhood. Continued membership may also be reviewed where concerns arise regarding attendance, participation, conduct, conflicts of interest or compliance with these Terms of Reference.

8.3 Non-attendance by a Board member at three consecutive meetings without an agreed reason will lead to a review of their membership.

8.4 Board membership may be refreshed at the end of the first 4-year investment period cycle. The process for re-appointment of Board members and the selection of new Board members as required, will be defined and agreed by the Board and led by the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Appointments Panel. Any membership changes will be notified to MHCLG and will be subject to appropriate conflict of interest checks.

8.5 A Board Member will cease to hold office where: -

- they give written notice of resignation.
- they die or become unable to continue in the role.
- they cease to hold the office or representative position through which they were appointed, or
- They are removed following a fair and proportionate process under these Terms of Reference.

9. Expenses and Remuneration

9.1 All Board positions are voluntary. Exceptionally, the Council may agree a modest payment to the Chair where this is necessary to enable an individual who would otherwise be unable to fulfil the role. Any payment must be agreed with the Chair, local MP and Board, notified to MHCLG and published transparently.

9.2 Board members may claim reasonable expenses necessarily incurred in undertaking Board business, including travel and caring costs where appropriate, in accordance with arrangements approved by the Council.

10. Neighbourhood Board Meetings

10.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will provide administrative support to the Neighbourhood Board and assist in co-ordinating meetings of the Board and venues.

10.2 Should any smaller working groups or sub-groups of the Board be established over time, these will normally be co-ordinated and facilitated by the Board.

10.3 Board meetings will ordinarily take place at least four times per year. Additional meetings may be convened by the Chair where reasonably required for timely decision-making or programme delivery, subject to the availability of secretariat support.

10.4 Where possible, Board meetings will take place in person at community venues within the Rhondda Fach area.

10.5 Meetings of the Board shall last no longer than three hours.

10.6 Meetings may take place on-line using the MS Teams or Zoom platform, with the agreement of the Chair.

10.7 The Board is not a committee or sub-committee of the Council and its meetings will not ordinarily be open to the public unless the Board determines otherwise. The Board will operate transparently through the publication of agendas, public reports, minutes and decisions. Information will only be treated as confidential where there is an appropriate legal, commercial, financial, personal data or other governance basis. A forward plan of meeting dates will be published on the Board's dedicated webpage.

<u>Meeting Agendas and Minutes</u>

10.8 The Chair will determine the agenda, having regard to the Board's work programme, the priority and urgency of proposed items and the time required for effective discussion.

10.9 Publication will be made following advice from the secretariat and in accordance with the Council's applicable governance and information-handling arrangements.

10.11 Agendas and public papers will be published on the Council's website 5 clear days before a meeting of the Board and the PDF agenda pack will be circulated by email to all Board members.

10.12 Commercially sensitive or confidential papers and information may be excluded from publication in accordance with the Council's governance and finance

arrangements. Minutes will provide a sufficient and proportionate record of the matters considered, decisions taken, reasons for decisions and any interests declared. The secretariat will prepare the minutes for approval by the Board.

10.13 To ensure transparency and provide a clear audit trail, copies of minutes and actions agreed, including any conflicts of interest reported, will also be made available on the Board's dedicated webpage on the Council's website.

10.14 Draft minutes of the Board meetings will be published within 10 clear working days of a meeting and approved minutes of the Board meetings will be published within 10 clear working days of formal approval at the next meeting of the Board.

11. Welsh Translation Services

11.1 All agendas will be made available in both English and Welsh.

11.2 Any reports, supporting documentation and minutes will be available in English only.

11.3 Simultaneous translation service is available to use at meetings of the Board, providing a minimum of 10% of its membership require use of the facility.

11.4 All official communications (press, public statements, social media) must be offered bilingually (ideally back-to-back in terms of leaflets) and agreed by the Chair in consultation with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

12. Quorum

12.1 No formal decision may be taken unless the meeting is quorate.

12.2 The quorum shall be no less than five voting members present, including an independent Chair or independent Vice-Chair for the meeting.

12.3 The secretariat will monitor the Board's continuing compliance with the requirement that at least 51% of its members live or work within the agreed neighbourhood boundary.

13. Declaration of Interests

13.1 All Board Members must complete a declaration of financial and non-financial interests on appointment and keep that declaration up to date. The Council will maintain a register of interests and gifts and hospitality. Appropriate information will be published where necessary to support transparency and accountability, subject to data protection requirements and any sensitive information considerations.

13.2 Where an actual, potential or perceived conflict arises in relation to an agenda item, the Board member must notify the Chair and secretariat in advance or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

13.3 The Chair, supported by the secretariat and appropriate officer advice where required, will determine the proportionate arrangements for managing the interest. Where the interest could reasonably call the member's impartiality into question, the member must not participate in the discussion or decision and should withdraw for that item.

13.4 A member may be permitted to remain solely to provide relevant factual information before withdrawing from the deliberation and decision. The interest and the action taken will be recorded in the minutes.

14 Voting

14.1 All matters will be decided upon by a simple majority of those members present with voting eligibility.

14.2 In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair, or the Vice-Chair when presiding, will have a casting vote.

15. Sub-groups and working groups

15.1 The Board may establish a sub-group or working group for a specified purpose and will agree its membership, remit, duration and any delegated authority.

15.2 Unless expressly authorised by the Board, a sub-group or working group may develop proposals and make recommendations but may not commit expenditure or take decisions on behalf of the Board and may not exercise any function or commit any expenditure requiring action by the Council

15.3 Each sub-group or working group will report its activities and recommendations to the Board.

16 Urgent Decisions

16.1 Where an urgent decision cannot reasonably await the next meeting and a quorate additional meeting cannot be convened, the Chair may, following consultation with the Council, authorise the use of a written decision procedure.

16.2 The proposed decision, reasons for urgency and any relevant officer advice will be circulated to all voting Board members.

16.3 The decision will be carried by a simple majority of votes received, provided that at least the normal quorum responds within the specified period.

16.4 The written procedure will not be used for the adoption or substantial amendment of the Pride in Place Plan, appointment or removal of the Chair, or any matter which the Council advises should be considered at a meeting.

16.5 The decision will be entered in the decision log, published subject to lawful confidentiality requirements and reported to the next meeting

17 Website

17.1 The name, Board role and an appropriate basic profile of each Board member will be published on the dedicated Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board webpage to support transparency and accessible public engagement. Publication of a member's photograph will be optional and based on the member's consent.

17.2 Published profiles will be limited to information necessary to support transparency and accountability and will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the Accountable Body's privacy and retention policies.

18 Communications and Press Protocol

18.1 Press and media enquiries shall be referred to the Chair and the Council before any statement is made by individual members of the Board.

18.2 All Board members should act as a champion of the Board and the programme and behave in a manner which aligns with the Code of Conduct.

18.3 Nothing in this section prevents a Board member from expressing a personal view or representing their community, provided that they make clear when they are not speaking on behalf of the Board and comply with applicable confidentiality requirements.

18.4 All communications, publications, publicity materials and digital content relating to the Programme must comply with Government branding and grant acknowledgement requirements, including the use of approved logos and wording, as set out in the grant conditions and any subsequent guidance. The Accountable Body will be responsible for ensuring the Board complies with these requirements.

18.5 The Board will have a role in shaping and agreeing the strategic approach to communications and engagement for the Programme, including key messages, audiences and priorities. The Accountable Body will support

delivery of the communications plan where resources allow and will ensure alignment with corporate communications policies, risk management and statutory requirements.

19 Complaints and failure to comply

19.1 Complaints concerning the administration or activities of the Board will be managed by the Council as accountable body under its complaints procedure.

19.2 Any concern that a Board member may have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or these Terms of Reference should be submitted to the Board secretariat.

19.3 The member will be informed of the substance of the concern and given a reasonable opportunity to respond.

19.4 The concern will be considered by the Chair, supported by an impartial person appointed by the Council. Where the concern relates to the Chair, it will be considered by an impartial person appointed by the Council, with the local MP consulted where appropriate. The Monitoring Officer may provide advice where the matter concerns governance, probity or conflicts of interest.

19.5 Any action will be fair and proportionate and may include no further action, advice, an apology, training, a warning, removal from a particular role or working group, or, in serious or repeated cases, removal from the Board.

19.6 A Board member other than the Chair may be removed by the Council as accountable body following consultation with the Chair. The member will be informed of the proposed removal, given an opportunity to make representations and notified in writing of the outcome and reasons.

19.7 Removal of the Chair will be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 6.5.

20. Review of the Terms of Reference

20.1 These terms of reference may be reviewed at any time and may be amended by the Board with the agreement of the Council as accountable body. The local MP will be consulted on any material amendment affecting Board membership, the role of the Chair or programme decision-making. Any amendment must remain consistent with MHCLG guidance and applicable funding conditions.