

Minutes of the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2026 at 6pm at Slade Green Community Centre, Chrome Road, DA8 2EL

PRESENT: Cllr Stefano Borella, Cllr Donna Briant, Patricia Calera-Marco, Sophie Chaise, Sandra Fox, Daniel Francis MP, Melanie Hudson, Cllr David Leaf, Temitope Makinde, Kevin McLaren (Chair), Afia Owoyale, Jonathan Smith, Andre Squire, Sujatha Thaladi, Paul Wellington

IN ATTENDANCE: Rubina Arthur (Observer), Rebecca Barut (Head of School HR and School Governance – LBB), Diana Braithwaite (Bexley Place Executive Lead – SE London Integrated Care Board), Chris Clarke (Sonar), Caroline Lancett (Clerk – LBB), Julia Owen (Head of Strategy & Performance – LBB), Annie Norton (Interim CEO – Bexley Voluntary Service Council), Sanaa Shaikh (Placemaking Project Manager – LBB), Paul Thorogood (Chief Executive – LBB)

The meeting commenced at 6pm and was quorate throughout.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Icebreaker

The Chair welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Slade Green Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board and thanked members for giving their time to support the programme.

Board Members introduced themselves and briefly outlined their connections with Slade Green, their professional and community experience and their reasons for joining the Board.

Members highlighted a strong sense of community within Slade Green and a shared desire to improve both the area itself and external perceptions of it. Particular interests included community development; opportunities for children and young people; support for older residents; safety and crime; health; sport; heritage; regeneration; access to services; community engagement; and ensuring that local residents had a genuine voice in decisions affecting the area.

The importance of recognising the heritage and identity of Slade Green, including its railway and agricultural history, was also highlighted.

Members reflected on the improvements already seen within Slade Green over a number of years but acknowledged that challenges remained. There was a strong shared ambition for the Pride in Place programme to leave a tangible and sustainable legacy which residents could identify with in ten, twenty and thirty years' time.

Daniel Francis MP welcomed the establishment of the Board and the opportunity presented by the £20 million Pride in Place investment. He emphasised the importance of achieving a lasting legacy for the community.

Councillors and representatives of the London Borough of Bexley (the Council) similarly welcomed the programme and stressed the importance of collaboration between the Board, Council and partner organisations to maximise the impact of the funding.

A Board Member expressly noted that Slade Green extended to the Frobisher Road/Frobisher Estate area and that the needs and experiences of residents across the whole community must be represented. Particular concerns were raised regarding crime and drugs in that part of the area.

The Chief Executive – LBB expressed thanks to Council Officers for the significant amount of work undertaken over the summer to establish the Board and meet Government's initial programme requirements.

The Board was advised that the Council had undertaken a steering group role with the MP, interim Chair and Ward Councillors during the establishment phase. Now that the Board had formally been established, the steering group had ceased. The Chief Executive – LBB would continue as an adviser to the Board for the initial twelve-month period.

The Council was currently the accountable body for the Pride in Place funding and therefore retained responsibility for ensuring appropriate governance and reporting to Government. The initial programme requirements were submitted by the 28 August 2026 deadline. The next significant milestone was 26 February 2027, by which time a ten-year vision and four-year investment plan would need to be submitted to Government.

Representatives from the South-East London Integrated Care Board and Bexley Voluntary Service Council also introduced themselves and outlined the health and voluntary-sector perspectives and expertise they would bring to the Board.

2. Standing Procedural Items

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Approval of Governance Documentation of the Neighbourhood Board

The Board considered the suite of governance documentation prepared to support its operation, including:

- Terms of Reference;
- Code of Conduct;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Declaration of Interests Form;
- Memorandum of Understanding; and
- Due Diligence Policy for Funding Recipients.

It was explained that robust governance arrangements were an important requirement of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and were linked to the release and appropriate management of future funding.

The documents had been cross-referenced against Government requirements and had also been subject to legal review. They established the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Council and the arrangements for decision-making, conflicts of interest, accountability and transparency.

Advisory members and the Clerk were confirmed as non-voting participants.

Question 1: A Member queried the inclusion of "Crayford Marshes" within the formal programme title, noting that earlier discussions had only referred to "Pride in Place Slade Green", and they sought assurance that the funding would not consequently be diverted to Crayford. It was explained that "*Slade Green and Crayford Marshes*" was the geographical designation used by Government for the relevant statistical area. Locally, the programme would continue to be branded as **Pride in Place Slade Green**. The Government-defined boundary predominantly covered Slade Green but currently excluded the area around Lincoln Road. The Council had submitted a revised map to MHCLG seeking to include Lincoln Road area and was awaiting formal confirmation. It was confirmed that Crayford itself was not included within the geographical funding boundary.

It was further explained that funding could, where appropriate, be spent outside the defined geographical area where there was a demonstrable benefit to Slade Green residents. For example, where residents accessed services (such as health) located elsewhere in the Borough.

Question 2: A Member sought further assurance that the inclusion of "Crayford Marshes" in the formal Government title could not lead to a future interpretation that funding should be allocated to Crayford, for example if there was a change to personnel among Council staff in the future. The Chief Executive – LBB confirmed that the agreed geographical map would provide the basis for the programme. Once MHCLG had formally confirmed the amended boundary (to include Lincoln Road area), this would be circulated to the Board.

Action 1: The confirmed Pride in Place geographical boundary map to be circulated to Board Members once received from MHCLG (Responsibility: Council).

Question 3: A Member queried the Conflicts of Interest Policy and whether a Member with an interest in a particular area of activity could participate in the discussion even though they could not vote. It was confirmed that any and all potential conflicts should be declared. Depending upon the nature of the conflict, a Member could contribute to relevant discussion but would not participate in the final decision/vote where the conflict applied. Councillors would similarly declare their connection with the Council.

Question 4: A Member asked how changes to Board membership would be managed should a Member need to step down in future. It was confirmed that the Terms of Reference included provisions for ending appointments and that Board membership and the Terms of Reference would be reviewed annually each September to ensure that appropriate representation across the Board continued to be achieved.

Discussion followed regarding representation of children and young people. It was acknowledged that the Board would need to consider how younger residents' voices could be heard effectively, potentially through

a dedicated subgroup or other regular engagement arrangements. This would be particularly important if, in future, the Board moved towards an independent legal structure such as a charity or Community Interest Company, where age restrictions would apply to trustees/directors.

Members with existing links to children and young people confirmed that they would also seek to ensure that their views were represented.

Action 2: The Board to consider at a future meeting how children and young people should be formally engaged in and represented within the Pride in Place programme (Responsibility: Board Members).

The governance documentation was put to the Board for approval by a show of hands and was **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Members were asked to sign the Code of Conduct and complete their Declaration of Interests documentation, returning both to the Clerk.

Action 3: Members to sign the Code of Conduct and complete Declaration of Interests documentation, returning both to the Clerk (Responsibility: Board Members).

4. Pride in Place Funding

The Board received an overview of the Pride in Place funding arrangements.

Slade Green had been awarded £20 million over a ten-year period, broadly equivalent to £2 million per annum, subject to the ongoing requirements of the programme. Members were advised that the funding was divided between capital and revenue funding. Capital funding was subject to greater restrictions and would need to be used for qualifying capital investment. Revenue funding provided greater flexibility for projects, programmes and day-to-day activity.

The Board would therefore need to consider carefully how capital funding could be utilised. It was noted that a significant proportion of land and assets within Slade Green was owned by the Council and Orbit, and consideration could be given to involving Orbit in an advisory capacity in future discussions where this would be beneficial.

Approximately £270,000 had been made available during the initial year, primarily to enable the Council to establish the Board and develop the required ten-year plan. An appendix to the finance papers set out the expenditure committed to date, including the community engagement work.

The Council's Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Ross Brown, would have responsibility, as part of the accountable body arrangements, for signing off the Pride in Place financial returns and assuring himself that expenditure represented value for money and provided demonstrable benefit to Slade Green residents.

Question 5: The Chair asked what would happen if Ross Brown disagreed with a funding decision made by the Board. It was explained that the matter would be referred back to the Board if Ross Brown considered that expenditure could not properly be justified. The Board would therefore need to establish a clear audit trail demonstrating what it wished to fund, why the expenditure was proposed and what benefit or outcome was expected.

The Board would subsequently need to evaluate funded projects to establish whether the expected impact had been achieved. Where a project was not delivering the intended outcomes, the Board would be expected to reconsider continued funding.

Question 6: A Member queried why the figures within the indicative funding profile did not total £20 million. It was confirmed that this was because the initial programme funding had already been deducted from the overall allocation. Members were also advised that funding did not necessarily need to be spent within the year in which it was allocated and could, within the programme parameters, be rolled forward. This was likely to be particularly relevant to larger capital projects.

Question 7: A Member asked whether interest accrued while Pride in Place funds were held within the Council's account would be attributable to the programme. It was agreed that clarification would be provided at the next meeting. It was noted that funding would be received by the Council in regular instalments rather than as one lump sum, subject to successful completion of Government requirements.

Action 4: Clarification regarding the treatment of interest accrued on Pride in Place funding to be reported to the next meeting (Responsibility: Council).

The Board **NOTED** the funding arrangements.

5. Support to the Board

The Board received details of the Service Level Agreement for Governor Services.

It was explained that the former steering group had agreed to purchase governance support from the Council's traded Governor Services team. This reflected the importance of ensuring robust governance arrangements, effective support for the Chair and Board, appropriate record keeping and compliance with the programme's governance requirements. The service would remain in place for the foreseeable future, with an opportunity to review the arrangement after an appropriate period.

The current Clerk was introduced and it was confirmed that Rubina Authur, who would join the Council on 5 October 2026, would become the Board's principal Governor Services contact.

The Board **NOTED** the arrangements.

6. Pride in Place Initial Engagement

Chris Clarke of Sonar provided a verbal update on the initial community engagement undertaken to date. The work represented the first stage of a wider programme of engagement and was intended to provide an initial snapshot of residents' views, priorities and perceptions of Slade Green.

Initial activity had included stakeholder conversations followed by a detailed community survey. Incentives had been offered for the first responses to encourage participation beyond those residents who routinely engaged with consultations. Paper copies had also been made available to avoid excluding residents who did not have access to, or confidence using, digital technology.

The survey was due to close on 18 September 2026. At the time of the meeting, nearly six hundred responses had been received, significantly exceeding the initial target. The survey was open to people aged thirteen and above who lived or worked within Slade Green.

The emerging findings were described as encouraging. Responses indicated a strong sense of community and belonging, with more than 80% of respondents indicating that they expected or hoped to continue living in Slade Green in five years' time.

The positive themes most frequently identified included the strength of the community, local people and the area's village-like character.

Emerging concerns included:

- access to shops and local amenities;
- rubbish, litter and fly-tipping;
- traffic and roads;
- crime and anti-social behaviour;
- the quality of playgrounds and recreational facilities; and
- activities and opportunities for children, young people and families.

There appeared to be some distinction between residents' short and longer-term priorities. Immediate priorities tended to focus on improving the physical environment and addressing crime and anti-social behaviour, whereas longer-term priorities included activities and opportunities for young people and addressing underlying causes (of crime and anti-social behaviour).

Further qualitative engagement would follow, including targeted conversations with different sections of the community and groups which appeared to be underrepresented in the initial survey responses.

Question 8: A Member expressed concern that residents from the Frobisher area did not appear to be sufficiently represented within the emerging findings and requested that future reporting provided a geographical breakdown of responses. It was confirmed that a more detailed geographical analysis would be provided once the survey had closed. This would also help identify areas where further targeted engagement was required.

Action 5: The final engagement analysis to include a geographical breakdown of responses and identify areas/groups where additional engagement was required (Responsibility: Sonar/Council).

Members noted that an earlier survey undertaken by Daniel Francis MP had generated fewer responses but that its findings broadly reflected the emerging themes from the current exercise. Those earlier responses were also being considered as part of the wider evidence base.

Question 9: Members highlighted that conventional online surveys might not be the most effective means of engaging thirteen to seventeen-year-olds and suggested more direct engagement through youth clubs, Slade Green Knights and other groups attended by young people. Approximately twenty responses had already been received from thirteen to seventeen-year-olds. However, it was acknowledged that more bespoke engagement would be beneficial and that this would form part of the next stage of work. Schools would also be considered as part of the approach, although it was noted that there was no secondary school within the boundary area.

Question 10: A Member asked whether the survey was collecting wider demographic information, including disability and sexual orientation. It was confirmed that a broad range of demographic information was being collected to assess how representative the responses were of the local population.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring that engagement reflected Slade Green's diverse communities. It was noted that the current response profile overrepresented homeowners, graduates and White British residents. Further work would therefore be undertaken to engage underrepresented communities.

Question 11: Members asked that future engagement recognise diversity within broad demographic categories and, in particular, avoid treating "White Other" residents as one homogeneous group. As well as collecting data relating to neurodiversity in future surveys and questionnaires. It was explained that the questions had been designed broadly to reflect Census categories, although the comments regarding greater granularity were acknowledged and would be taken into account in future engagement work.

The Board welcomed the strong initial response and **NOTED** that the findings remained preliminary pending closure of the survey and completion of the wider engagement programme.

Procurement of Placemaking Team

The Board received additional papers regarding the proposed procurement of a specialist placemaking consultant to support development of the ten-year Pride in Place vision and four-year investment plan. Sanaa Shaikh, from the Council's Placemaking Team, explained that specialist consultants with expertise in areas including regeneration, community engagement, design, built environment, social research, strategy and plan-making would be invited to tender.

Given the requirement to submit the final plan by 26 February 2027, the timetable was extremely tight. The preferred consultant would therefore need to be appointed promptly to allow sufficient time for engagement, drafting, Board review and refinement before submission of the ten-year vision and four-year investment plan.

A placemaking consultant tender evaluation panel would include Council representatives and the Chair or other representative of the Board. A number of Board Members expressed an interest in participating in the evaluation process and it was **AGREED** that at least one of Andre Squire, Jonathan Smith, Sujatha Thaladi or Afia Owoyale would participate in the placemaking consultant tender evaluation panel once the evaluation date had been confirmed.

Action 6: Council Officers to liaise with the interested Board Members and confirm Board representation on the placemaking consultant tender evaluation panel (Responsibility: Council).

The Board **AGREED** to proceed with the proposed procurement process for a specialist placemaking consultant.

Clerk's Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Advisory Member Annie Norton (Interim CEO – Bexley Voluntary Service Council) indicated her keenness to participate in the procurement process for the placemaking consultant.

7. Next Meeting

The Board considered possible venues and dates for its next meeting.

Members agreed that it would be useful to hold meetings at different venues within the community where practical, both to engage with different parts of Slade Green and to increase Board Members' awareness of the facilities available locally.

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting would take place on:

Wednesday 7 October 2026 at 6.30pm at St Augustine's Church Hall.

There was a preference to retain Wednesdays as the regular meeting day for the Board where possible, avoiding clashes with Full Council meetings.

Action 7: The Clerk to prepare and circulate a proposed schedule of future Board meetings for consideration at the October meeting (Responsibility: Clerk).

The following potential items were identified for the October agenda:

- final/updated community engagement findings;
- draft evidence pack;
- update on the local issues log;
- Expenses Policy;
- information and learning from Phase 1 Pride in Place areas;
- outcome of the placemaking consultant procurement;
- methodology for assessing and prioritising projects/programmes;
- funding/budget profile;
- treatment of any interest accrued on funding;
- appointment of Deputy Chair; and
- development of the Board's logo/branding.

Julia Owen advised that an issues log was being developed to capture matters raised through meetings, engagement and local conversations which could potentially be addressed through existing Council, police, Orbit or partner activity rather than waiting for the longer-term Pride in Place programme. Council Officers would seek to follow these issues through and provide assurance that matters raised were not being lost.

The Board was also advised that a clear methodology should be developed to support the assessment, ranking and prioritisation of potential projects and programmes. Members recognised that it would not be possible to progress every proposal and that a consistent and transparent approach would therefore be needed to determine which projects should be taken forward.

It was suggested that potential projects could be assessed against agreed criteria, including the evidence of local need; the extent to which the proposal reflected priorities identified through resident engagement; the rationale for the proposed expenditure; the outcomes and benefits it was expected to achieve; value for money; deliverability; and the practical resources required to implement it. The emerging evidence pack, engagement findings and wider local data would help inform this process. A ranking or scoring

approach would enable the Board to compare proposals on a consistent basis and provide a clear rationale for its eventual funding decisions.

It was noted that the methodology would need to accommodate both longer-term strategic projects emerging through the placemaking work and smaller, more immediate initiatives which could provide visible “quick wins” for the community. A proposal for the prioritisation methodology would therefore be brought to the next meeting for the Board's consideration.

The Chief Executive – LBB also suggested the possibility of identifying dedicated Officer capacity within the Council, potentially for a couple of days each week, to provide practical support in progressing projects agreed by the Board and act as its “feet on the ground”.

Action 8: A proposed methodology for assessing, ranking and prioritising potential projects and programmes, including both longer-term strategic projects and potential “quick wins”, to be presented to the next meeting for the Board's consideration (Responsibility: Council).

Appointment of Deputy Chair

The Chair advised that a Deputy Chair would not be appointed at this meeting but he invited Members to consider whether they wished to put themselves forward for the role. Interested Members were asked to contact the Clerk. Where more than one nomination was received, an election could be held at the next meeting.

Action 9: Members interested in becoming Deputy Chair to notify the Clerk prior to the next meeting (Responsibility: Board Members).

8. Any Other Business

Pride in Place Logo

The Board considered the draft Pride in Place Slade Green logo which had emerged from earlier engagement sessions. Members expressed mixed views and raised concerns that the design did not sufficiently represent Slade Green's history, heritage and identity. There was strong support for involving the wider community in developing the logo, potentially through a community design exercise or competition involving local groups and young people. It was noted that MHCLG branding requirements meant that certain Pride in Place elements might have to be incorporated within the final design.

Action 10: The Council to confirm the mandatory branding requirements/parameters for the Pride in Place logo (Responsibility: Council).

Once the branding requirements had been confirmed, these would be used to develop a community design brief and invite submissions. It was **AGREED** that a small Board subgroup, comprising Andre Squire, Melanie Hudson, Sandra Fox, Patricia Calera-Marco, Paul Wellington, Afia Owoyale and Sophie Chaise would support the distribution of the brief within the community. Responses should be submitted to the Clerk.

Action 11: Following confirmation of the branding requirements, a community design brief to be prepared and circulated, with the Logo Subgroup supporting its distribution within the community. Responses to be

submitted to the Clerk and an update provided at the October meeting (Responsibility: Council/Logo Subgroup).

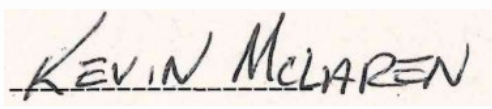
Question 12: A Member asked how Board business requiring action between formal meetings would be managed and whether an informal communication group could be established. It was acknowledged that subgroups were likely to be established as the programme developed and that appropriate matters could be delegated to them. Significant decisions would remain with the full Board. For genuinely urgent decisions which could not wait until the next meeting, the Terms of Reference provided delegated authority to the Chair. Any decision taken under this provision would subsequently be reported to the Board. It was emphasised that formal Board decisions should not be made through informal communication channels such as WhatsApp.

Question 13: A Member asked about confidentiality and what information discussed at meetings could be shared more widely. It was confirmed that the Board's minutes would be a public record and that, generally, matters discussed openly at meetings could therefore be discussed outside the meeting. Where an item or document was confidential, this would be clearly identified and Members would be expected to comply with the confidentiality provisions contained within the Code of Conduct.

Members were reminded to sign the Code of Conduct. Those unable to complete their Declaration of Interests Form at the meeting were asked to return this once they had the necessary information.

Action 12: Outstanding Codes of Conduct and Declaration of Interests Forms to be completed and returned to the Clerk (Responsibility: Board Members).

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 7.51pm.

Signed: 

Date: 7 October 2026

Summary of Actions

Action 1: The confirmed Pride in Place geographical boundary map to be circulated to Board Members once received from MHCLG (Responsibility: Council).

Action 2: The Board to consider at a future meeting how children and young people should be formally engaged in and represented within the Pride in Place programme (Responsibility: Board Members).

Action 3: Members to sign the Code of Conduct and complete Declaration of Interests documentation (Responsibility: Board Members).

Action 4: Clarification regarding the treatment of interest accrued on Pride in Place funding to be reported to the next meeting (Responsibility: Council).

Action 5: The final engagement analysis to include a geographical breakdown of responses and identify areas/groups where additional engagement was required (Responsibility: Sonar/Council).

Action 6: Council Officers to liaise with the interested Board Members and confirm Board representation on the placemaking consultant tender evaluation panel (Responsibility: Council).

Action 7: The Clerk to prepare and circulate a proposed schedule of future Board meetings for consideration at the October meeting (Responsibility: Clerk).

Action 8: A proposed methodology for assessing, ranking and prioritising potential projects and programmes, including both longer-term strategic projects and potential “quick wins”, to be presented to the next meeting for the Board’s consideration (Responsibility: Council).

Action 9: Members interested in becoming Deputy Chair to notify the Clerk prior to the next meeting (Responsibility: Board Members).

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