

Slade Green and Crayford Marshes Pride in Place - Neighbourhood Board

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Governance Framework and Supporting Documents

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Purpose: To seek approval and adoption of the governance framework and supporting documents for the Neighbourhood Board within the Pride in Place Programme.

1. Purpose of the Report

This report asks the Neighbourhood Board to review and adopt the governance framework that will support the operation of the Slade Green and Crayford Marshes Pride in Place Programme.

The Pride in Place Programme is a Government flagship initiative that will invest

£20 million over ten years in Slade Green and Crayford Marshes. The Neighbourhood Board has been established to provide community leadership for the programme, develop a long-term vision and investment plan for the area, and oversee investment decisions informed by priorities identified through community engagement.

Government guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) requires each Pride in Place area to have appropriate governance arrangements in place. The attached documents establish how the Board will operate, how decisions will be made, and how public funds will be managed transparently and responsibly.

The governance framework has been developed having regard to the Government's Pride in Place Programme Prospectus and Pride in Place Delivery Guidance. These documents set out the purpose of the Programme, the role of Neighbourhood Boards, the responsibilities of Accountable Bodies and the governance arrangements expected for Pride in Place areas.

For ease of reference, Board members may wish to review:

- Pride in Place Programme Prospectus:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-programme-prospectus>
- Pride in Place Delivery Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-programme-prospectus/pride-in-place-programme-delivery-guidance>

Approval of the attached documents will enable the Board to operate in accordance with Government guidance and provide the governance framework required for the Pride in Place Programme.

2. Background

The Neighbourhood Board brings together residents, businesses, community organisations, elected representatives and partner organisations to help shape the future of Slade Green and Crayford Marshes.

The governance framework has been developed to:

- Clearly define the Board's purpose, role and responsibilities.
- Set standards of behaviour expected of Board members.
- Ensure actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest are identified and managed appropriately.
- Clarify the relationship between the Neighbourhood Board and the London Borough of Bexley as the programme's Accountable Body.
- Provide assurance that public funds are managed appropriately and that suitable checks are undertaken before funding is awarded to external organisations.

The adoption of these documents will help ensure that the Board is properly constituted and operating in accordance with Government guidance and recognised principles of good governance.

3. Documents for Consideration

3.1 Core Governance Documents Required by MHCLG

The following documents are required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of the governance arrangements for Pride in Place Neighbourhood Boards and form the core governance framework for the Programme:

- Appendix A – Terms of Reference
- Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Policy
- Appendix C – Declaration of Interests Form
- Appendix D – Code of Conduct

Together, these documents establish the Board's purpose, membership, decision-making arrangements, expected standards of behaviour and arrangements for identifying and managing conflicts of interest. Collectively, they provide the governance framework required to ensure that the Board operates in accordance with Government guidance and the community-led principles of the Pride in Place Programme, whilst maintaining high standards of transparency, accountability, stewardship of public funds and compliance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

3.2 Additional Supporting Governance Documents

The following good practice documents have been developed locally to provide additional clarity regarding the operation of the programme and the relationship between the Neighbourhood Board and the London Borough of Bexley as Accountable Body:

- Appendix E – Memorandum of Understanding
- Appendix F – Due Diligence Policy for Funding Recipients

Whilst these documents are not specifically required by MHCLG, they support effective governance, accountability and stewardship of public funds, and provide greater clarity regarding partnership working and the funding arrangements that will apply to Pride in Place investment.

4. Summary of the Documents

Together, these documents explain how the Board will operate, how decisions will be made, the standards expected of Board members and how public money will be managed responsibly.

4.1 Terms of Reference (Appendix A)

The Terms of Reference establish the purpose, membership, responsibilities and decision-making arrangements of the Neighbourhood Board.

Key points include:

- The Board is the strategic, community-led decision-making body for the Pride in Place Programme.
- The Board is responsible for developing the Pride in Place Plan and its long-term vision for Slade Green and Crayford Marshes.
- The Board oversees programme delivery, monitors outcomes and considers investment proposals.
- Community leadership sits at the heart of the Board, with at least 51% of members required to live or work within the programme area.
- The Board is chaired by an Independent Chair.
- Membership includes residents, businesses, community representatives, elected representatives and partner organisations with some Board Members being mandatory appointments under MHCLG guidance documents. There are a minimum of 8 Board members and a maximum of 20.
- The Board determines local priorities and makes recommendations regarding the use of Pride in Place funding, but any expenditure remains subject to the Council's governance and approval processes in its role as Accountable Body.
- The Board will seek consensus wherever possible and has clear arrangements for meetings, voting and decision-making where agreement cannot be reached by consensus.

4.2 Conflict of Interest Policy (Appendix B)

The Conflict of Interest Policy explains how interests will be identified, declared, recorded and managed.

Key points include:

- Board members must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.
- All Board members must complete a Declaration of Interests Form upon appointment.
- A Register of Interests will be maintained by the Secretariat.
- Declarations of interest will be considered at every Board meeting.
- The Chair will determine how conflicts of interest should be managed.
- Members may be required to withdraw from discussion or voting where a conflict exists.
- The policy promotes transparency, accountability and public confidence in Board decisions.

4.3 Declaration of Interests Form (Appendix C)

The Declaration of Interests Form supports the Conflict of Interest Policy and promotes openness and transparency in the Board's decision-making.

The form requires Board members to declare:

- Employment, business and professional interests.
- Community, voluntary and charitable roles.
- Financial interests that could benefit from Board decisions.
- Membership of relevant organisations and public bodies.
- Family or personal interests that could affect, or be seen to affect, decisions made by the Board.

Board members are expected to keep their declarations up to date and notify the Secretariat whenever circumstances change.

4.4 Code of Conduct (Appendix D)

The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all Board members and promotes integrity, transparency and accountability.

Key points include:

- Members must act in the best interests of the community and support the aims of the Pride in Place Programme.
- Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and participate actively in the work of the Board.
- Members must follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.
- Members must treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect and must not bully, harass, intimidate or discriminate against others.
- Members should promote equality, diversity and inclusion and support participation from all sections of the community.
- Members act as ambassadors for the programme and should represent the interests of the wider community rather than personal, political or organisational interests.
- Members are expected to participate in induction and development activities to support their effectiveness as Board members.
- Members must declare conflicts of interest and comply with the Board's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Members must support the responsible stewardship of public funds.
- Members must maintain confidentiality where required and act responsibly when using social media or speaking publicly about the programme.
- Once decisions have been made, members should support the collective position of the Board.

Board members will be asked to sign the Code of Conduct as part of their appointment to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with its requirements.

4.5 Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix E)

The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the working relationship between the Neighbourhood Board and the London Borough of Bexley as Accountable Body for the Pride in Place Programme. It is intended to support partnership working and does not create legally binding obligations.

Key points include:

- The Neighbourhood Board is responsible for determining local priorities, developing investment proposals and making recommendations on the use of Pride in Place funding.

- The Council, as Accountable Body, remains responsible for ensuring that all expenditure is lawful, affordable, properly authorised and compliant with grant conditions, procurement requirements, subsidy control requirements and the Council's governance framework before funding can be committed or released.
- The Board and Council will work together in accordance with principles including community leadership, openness, accountability, inclusivity and partnership working.
- The Council will provide programme management, governance and specialist support to assist delivery of the Programme. Such support may be provided directly by Council services or by external advisers where appropriate, with associated costs funded in accordance with Programme budgets and applicable Council arrangements.
- The Memorandum establishes a shared understanding of how the Board and Council will work together to deliver the Programme whilst maintaining appropriate governance and accountability arrangements.
- All expenditure remains subject to the Council's governance, assurance and approval processes, including compliance with the Council's Constitution, Financial Regulations, Contract Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation.
- The Memorandum sets out arrangements for financial management, monitoring, reporting, due diligence, procurement, subsidy control and the management of conflicts of interest.
- A staged dispute resolution process is included to support the effective resolution of governance or programme issues, including escalation to MHCLG where appropriate.

The Memorandum of Understanding supports a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities and helps ensure effective partnership working, sound governance and responsible stewardship of public funds throughout the life of the Programme.

4.6 Due Diligence Policy for Funding Recipients (Appendix F)

Due diligence means carrying out checks on organisations before funding is awarded, to make sure they are properly run, financially sound and able to deliver what they promise

As the programme develops, the Board may recommend funding for projects delivered by community groups, charities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and other organisations.

The Due Diligence Policy explains the checks that will be undertaken before funding is awarded. These checks help ensure that organisations are capable of delivering projects and that public money is protected.

Key points include:

- Organisations receiving funding must be appropriately constituted, have suitable governance arrangements and demonstrate the ability to manage public money responsibly.
- The level of due diligence will be proportionate to the value, complexity and risk of the proposed funding.
- Smaller grants will be subject to lighter-touch checks, whilst larger or higher-risk funding proposals will require more detailed assessment.
- Checks may include review of governance arrangements, financial information, organisational policies and project delivery plans.
- All organisations receiving funding will be required to enter into a written funding agreement.
- Funding applications will be risk assessed and may require review by policy, finance, legal and procurement specialists before funding is released.
- Where programme activities are commissioned through contracts rather than grants, procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.

The policy provides assurance that public funds will be invested responsibly and that funded organisations are capable of delivering agreed outcomes.

5. Recommendations

The Neighbourhood Board is asked to:

- Review the documents attached as Appendices A to F.
- Approve and adopt the following core governance documents required by MHCLG as the governance framework for the Neighbourhood Board:
 - Appendix A – Terms of Reference
 - Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Appendix C – Declaration of Interests Form
 - Appendix D – Code of Conduct
- Approve and adopt the following supporting governance documents:
 - Appendix E – Memorandum of Understanding
 - Appendix F – Due Diligence Policy for Funding Recipients

- Authorise publication of the approved governance documents on the Pride in Place webpage in the interests of openness, transparency and accountability.

Proposed Resolution

That the Slade Green and Crayford Marshes Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board approves and adopts the governance documents attached as Appendices A to F and authorises their publication on the programme website.