PRIDE IN PLACE
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Proud of **Blacon** Neighbourhood Board

Terms of Reference

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These Terms of Reference set out how the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Board operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.

This document reflects the governance requirements as set out in guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and should be read alongside other associated documents including the Code of Conduct.

1. Purpose

The Board brings together those with a deep connection to Blacon including residents, local businesses, educational institutions, elected members and community leaders to provide collective strategic leadership to improve and drive forward Blacon.

The Board will be representative of Blacon and will oversee key funding and investment streams which will primarily consist of up to £20m funding allocated through the Governments Pride in Place Programme. The Board will serve as a platform for collaboration, decision-making, and the development and delivery of initiatives covering three strategic themes:

• To create thriving places: Focus on economic growth, sustainability and enhancing public spaces to create vibrant, inclusive neighbourhoods.

• To build stronger communities: Promote social cohesion, support community-led initiatives and strengthen local networks and partnerships.

• To empower people to take back control: Empower residents to influence decisions and address local priorities effectively

The Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will develop, agree, publish and deliver a ten-year Regeneration Plan for the Pride in Place area of Blacon.

2. Membership

The Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board will have cross sector representation with a focus on the local community. The representation includes:

- Chair
- Member of Parliament
- Local Authority Representative – Senior Executive Officer / Director
- Nominated Ward Councillor
- 51% Board Members with local connection

An up-to-date list of members will be held and reviewed annually by the Board including monitoring of attendance. Board members should attend at least 75% of meetings, substitutes are not permitted. Named individuals (not organisations) hold seats on the board unless otherwise agreed.

Board Membership term is initially 3 years. If a Board member wishes to resign, they should do so in writing to the Chair.

For a new member to be recruited to the Board, they should be interviewed by two members of the Board (at least one is Chair or Deputy Chair), two independent references obtained, and the Board should agree with the appointment.

Board Members are also required to participate in a range of sub-groups whose Terms of Reference will be determined on establishment.

All Board members will be expected to attend relevant training, development and awareness sessions. What that training will be is to be determined once the Board is established.

To maintain high standards for the operation of the Board, members will act in accordance with the agreed governing documents including the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest guidance *(to be adopted when the Board is created)*.

Each member will also adopt the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the principles of Civic Leadership:

- Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- Integrity -They should not place themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to influence them improperly.
- Objectivity - Decisions should be made impartially, fairly, and on merit.
- Accountability - They are accountable to the public for their decisions and must submit themselves to scrutiny.
- Openness - They should be as open as possible about decisions and actions, giving reasons where appropriate.
- Honesty - They must declare any private interests and take steps to resolve conflicts.
- Leadership - They should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

3. Governance Structure

Members of the Blacon Pride in Place Board will be expected to share the views of the community in the context of being community representatives and should not only represent personal or professional views.

Members will be expected to have a reach into the community and to communicate within their respective relevant organisations and networks to ensure they can provide effective representation on the Board.

The positions of Chair and Deputy will be appointed in collaboration with the MP and the Board. The Board will be supported by relevant Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWC) officers as necessary in its role as the accountable body.

4. Responsibilities and Duties

Board Members have a responsibility to uphold high standards of integrity. Their responsibilities and duties will be further developed throughout the operation of the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

- Develop, oversee and deliver the implementation of a 10-year Regeneration Plan and initial 4-year Investment Plan
- Bring the local community agenda to the forefront and respond to any changes or challenges that the communities of Blacon face
- Engage with the community to co-produce plans and empower local action
- Demonstrate engagement with the community and stakeholders, keeping them informed about the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board's activities and progress
- Allocate resources to agreed priorities and monitor progress
- Report outcomes in a timely way and maintain transparency
- Inform the Council and partner organisations by sharing insights, to influence and support future investment and interventions
- Enable CWC to meet its responsibility as accountable body by meeting deadlines and providing information in a timely manner
- Monitor the progress of the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board's initiatives and projects, ensuring they are on track and achieving desired outcomes
- Encourage and facilitate training and development opportunities for board members to enhance their capabilities
- Lead investment efforts and pursue additional opportunities for investment and resources
- Mediate conflicts and disputes that may arise among board members or between the board and other parties
- Ensure that all conflicts are resolved fairly and transparently, maintaining a positive and collaborative board environment
- Facilitate and encourage more local Community Inspirers to influence change across Local Government, academia and other spheres
- Recruit additional Board members as and when required

By fulfilling these responsibilities, the Board plays a crucial role in guiding the delivery of priorities and activities associated with Pride in Place and ensuring that it operates effectively and in the best interests of the community.

These principles serve as a solid foundation for the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board to operate as a dynamic and effective local strategic partnership, driving positive change and development within the community.

5. Meeting Protocols

In the first 6 months, meetings of the Blacon Pride in Place Board will be held at least monthly and will usually be held face to face. With the board's permission, a member may on occasions be able to attend meetings virtually.

The quorum for any meeting of the Board will be 66% of the membership and needs to include either the Chair or Deputy Chair.

Members will endeavour to attend all meetings of the Blacon Neighbourhood Board. However, if they are unable to attend any meeting then they should submit their apologies to the Chair at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Actions and minutes of each meeting will be tracked and the headline discussion points captured which will then be circulated after each meeting, once approved by the Chair. Once minutes of a previous meeting have been agreed by the Board, they will be published on the relevant Board webpage, for public view and transparency.

Each Board member shall have one vote with the details of decisions presented to members and agreed on a majority vote of the members present. In the event of an equal number of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

Meetings will be held in private unless determined otherwise by the board members with the agreement of the Chair. Any public meetings held by the board will be deemed extraordinary.

Members will declare any conflict of interest at the beginning of each meeting and cannot vote on matters of conflict but may present their perspective as a community representative able to articulate the needs of communities. The Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest guidance will set out the expectations of all members on the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

Organisations that have representatives on the board should still be allowed to be involved in specific projects; from providing meeting space, or volunteering opportunities, through to applying for funding. This assumes that declarations are submitted, and voting may be restricted if conflicts of interest arise.

With the Board's permission, and by invitation of the Chair, individuals who are not members of the Board may at times attend a meeting for specific items of relevance to them.

6. Communication and Reporting

In line with the principles of public life, it is important that there is transparency around the operation of the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board.

Wherever possible, the agenda will be circulated digitally to each board member no later than five days before the date of the meeting and any supporting reports and/or papers will be sent to board members at the same time. They should not be circulated beyond Board Members.

Board Members, and any non-members permitted to attend, are required to keep exempt papers confidential. The proceedings and resolutions of meetings of the Board, including the names of those present and in attendance, will be recorded.

The draft notes of each meeting, once approved by the Chair, will be circulated promptly to all members of the Board. The meeting notes will remain in draft until approved by the next meeting of the Board, at which point they will be published on the relevant website.

Additional reporting will be required for the governance of specific funding and investment streams in accordance with relevant grant conditions for the Pride in Place Programme.

As the Accountable Body, the Council must ensure that public funds are used effectively and comply with requirements relating to procurement, subsidy control, audit, transparency and managing public money. The Board must fully comply with providing any information required to ensure that annual expenditure profiles and updated forecasts are submitted. Robust financial controls, clear appraisal processes and ongoing risk management will be essential.

7. Subgroups

At the discretion of the Board, thematic subgroups may be established to expedite particular matters, which require focused activity or where a more specialist membership is required. These subgroups could include people and organisations outside of the membership of the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board as agreed by the Board members.

The Board will nominate a lead for each subgroup. This will allow for wider engagement outside of the Board to support the on-going development and delivery. The subgroups will not require voting mechanisms and are advisory to the Board on specific matters. Sub-groups will be approved by and report to the Board, and members of the sub-groups will adhere to the Code of Conduct set out in these Terms of Reference.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation
Any KPI's, programme outputs and outcomes will be decided by the Board and will be defined as part of the development of the Investment Plan and Board development during 2026/27. Reports to MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government) will be required and Council Officers will update the Neighbourhood Board when these are needed.

9. Review and Revision
Membership will be reviewed annually by the Board. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually or by exception should circumstances change or at the request of the Board.

10. Chairs Working Relationship with Accountable Body Cheshire West and Chester Council
MHCLG have at the outset stated that Local Authorities will act as the accountable body for Pride in Place funding programme in each town. Cheshire West and Chester Council role is to act as the accountable body, and it has a key role in establishing the Neighbourhood Board alongside the Local MP.

Capacity funding can be used to enable sufficient capacity from Cheshire West and Chester Council to fulfil the accountable body role, this will be agreed with Chair, MP, Board as appropriate.

Support may include:-

- Support recruitment of board members for Neighbourhood Board.
- Support Neighbourhood Boards to develop plans and build capacity
- Co-ordinate Training for Chair and all Board Members (i.e. Operating Boards, Conduct at Boards, Finance, Procurement, Communications) also sharing information and possible visits from other Pride in Place areas to share learning and good practice.
- Help co-ordinate Neighbourhood Board meetings - secretariat.
- Assist the Chair and Neighbourhood Board with their report submissions to ensure MHCLG return deadlines are met.
- Provide relevant financial, legal and procurement guidance and advice to ensure that the board operates in a compliant and transparent manner.
- Work with Boards to embed community-led decision making

<u>See also</u>

Code of Conduct, Declaration of Interest Form and Register, Social Media Guidance