Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board in Raffles and Morton

Advisory and Partnership Group

Terms of Reference

1. Name

The group shall be known as the Pride in Place Raffles and Morton Advisory and Partnership Group, referred to in these Terms of Reference as "the Group".

2. Establishment and status

The Group is established by the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board for Raffles and Morton ("the Board").

The Group is an advisory and partnership forum. It is not:

- the Neighbourhood Board;
- a decision-making body;
- a legal entity;
- a funding or grant-awarding panel; or
- authorised to commit expenditure, enter into contracts or make commitments on behalf of the Board, the accountable body or the Pride in Place Programme.

The Group has no delegated authority unless the Board expressly agrees a specific and limited delegation in writing. Any such delegation must comply with the Board's governance arrangements, the requirements of the accountable body and applicable Pride in Place Programme guidance.

Advice, recommendations and expressions of support made by the Group are not binding upon the Board.

Responsibility for Pride in Place priorities, plans, funding recommendations and other formal decisions remains with the Board, subject to the role and legal responsibilities of the accountable body and any approvals required under the Programme.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Group is to bring together public, voluntary, charitable, community and other relevant organisations that serve, support or have responsibilities affecting Raffles and Morton.

The Group shall provide a structured forum through which those organisations can:

- Contribute knowledge, evidence and professional or organisational perspectives;
- advise the Board on local needs, opportunities, risks and existing services;
- comment upon emerging plans, priorities and project proposals;
- help identify gaps, duplication and opportunities for better coordination;
- connect the Board with communities, service users and groups that may otherwise be underrepresented;
- identify opportunities for collaboration, additional funding, shared resources and coordinated delivery;
- assist the Board in understanding how proposed activity may interact with existing services, statutory responsibilities and other local plans;
- support the development and delivery of the Pride in Place Plan where appropriate; and
- strengthen long-term relationships between the Board, local organisations and institutions.

4. Guiding principles

In carrying out its work, the Group shall:

- support the community-led purpose of the Pride in Place Programme;
- recognise that the priorities and experiences of local residents remain central to the Programme;
- respect the authority and accountability of the Neighbourhood Board;
- act collaboratively and in the interests of Raffles and Morton as a whole;
- promote equality, accessibility and inclusion;
- encourage constructive challenge and the open exchange of views;
- operate transparently and with integrity;
- distinguish between organisational positions, professional opinions, service-user feedback and personal views; and
- follow the spirit of the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

5. Relationship with community engagement

The Group shall contribute to, but shall not replace, direct engagement with residents.

The Board shall not treat participation by organisations in the Group as sufficient evidence that the wider community has been consulted.

Members may assist the Board to engage with their service users, tenants, beneficiaries, members or communities. Where they do so, the method used and the nature and number of people engaged should be made clear.

A member shall not claim to represent the views of a group or community unless they have an appropriate mandate or reasonable evidence on which to do so.

The Group may advise the Board on groups, neighbourhoods or communities whose voices are not being adequately heard and may help design appropriate engagement activity.

6. Functions

The Group may undertake the following functions:

Advice on the Pride in Place Plan

- Review and comment on evidence, emerging priorities and draft proposals.
- Identify relevant strategies, data, services and planned investment.
- highlight potential impacts, dependencies, risks or unintended consequences.
- identify opportunities for alignment with existing local initiatives.

Advice on individual projects

- Comment on the need for, feasibility and potential impact of proposed projects.
- identify statutory, operational, safeguarding, equality, property or delivery considerations.
- suggest potential partners, delivery routes and sources of specialist advice.
- assist the Board in understanding how projects may affect different communities.

Partnership development

- Encourage cooperation between organisations working in or serving the neighbourhood.

- identify opportunities to share information, expertise, facilities or resources.
- support joint working and coordinated responses to local issues.
- identify external funding, investment or support that may complement Pride in Place resources.

Delivery support

- Identify organisations that may be capable of supporting or delivering approved activities.
- assist with introductions and partnership development.
- provide specialist knowledge or practical assistance where voluntarily agreed.
- support communication and engagement concerning approved projects.

Participation in the Group does not appoint an organisation to deliver a project and does not confer any preference or advantage in relation to grants, contracts, commissions or other funding.

7. Monitoring and learning

The Group may:

- receive appropriate updates on the progress of the Pride in Place Plan;
- offer feedback on implementation and emerging local circumstances;
- identify lessons and opportunities for improvement; and
- help the Board understand the wider effects of its work.
- The Group shall not replace the Board’s formal performance monitoring, scrutiny or financial oversight arrangements.

8. Membership

Membership shall be by invitation of the Board.

Members should normally be nominated representatives of organisations that:

- operate within Raffles and Morton;
- provide services to people living or working in the neighbourhood;

- hold relevant statutory, public-service or community responsibilities; or
- possess knowledge, networks or resources relevant to the Pride in Place Programme.

Membership may include representatives from:

- housing associations and housing providers;
- Cumberland Council and other relevant public bodies;
- police, fire and community-safety organisations;
- health and social-care organisations;
- schools, colleges and education providers;
- charities and voluntary-sector organisations;
- community centres and community organisations;
- organisations supporting children, young people, older people, disabled people or other communities;
- faith-based organisations providing relevant community services;
- environmental, cultural, sporting or heritage organisations; and
- other appropriate anchor institutions or service providers.

General business representation shall normally be considered through any separate Pride in Place Business Group or business-engagement arrangements. A business or commercial body may nevertheless be invited to attend a particular meeting where its expertise is directly relevant to an agenda item.

The Board shall seek a balanced membership and shall avoid the Group becoming dominated by any single organisation, sector or interest.

The Board may invite additional individuals or organisations to attend for a particular item or period.

Attendance by an invited guest does not make that person a member of the Group.

9. Appointment and term of membership

Organisations shall be invited to nominate a suitable representative with sufficient knowledge and authority to contribute meaningfully.

Appointments shall normally be for a period of three years and may be renewed.

An organisation may nominate an appropriate substitute where its usual representative cannot attend.

Members must notify the Chair or secretariat if they cease to represent the organisation through which they were appointed.

The Board may review, suspend or end membership where:

- the organisation is no longer relevant to the Group's work;
- the member repeatedly fails to attend or engage;
- the member breaches applicable conduct, confidentiality or conflict-of-interest requirements;
- continued membership risks undermining the Group's effectiveness or reputation; or
- a change is required to maintain a balanced and representative membership.

Before ending membership on grounds relating to conduct, the member should normally be informed of the concern and given a reasonable opportunity to respond.

10. Chairing

The Group shall be chaired by a member of the Neighbourhood Board appointed by the Board.

The Board may appoint another Board member to act as Deputy Chair.

The Chair shall:

- approve meeting agendas;
- ensure meetings are constructive, balanced and inclusive;
- ensure that different views are heard;
- manage conflicts of interest;
- clarify the advisory status of discussions;
- summarise advice and recommendations for referral to the Board; and
- maintain an appropriate relationship between the Group and the Board.

If neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair is present, the meeting may be postponed or a Board member present may chair the meeting with the agreement of those attending.

11. Meetings

The Group shall normally meet at least quarterly.

Additional meetings or workshops may be arranged where required to consider the Pride in Place Plan, significant project proposals or other time-sensitive matters.

Meetings may take place in person, remotely or through a hybrid arrangement.

Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that meetings are accessible.

As the Group has no formal decision-making authority, no statutory or decision-making quorum shall apply. The Chair may postpone or limit a meeting where attendance is insufficiently broad to provide meaningful advice.

The attendance and range of organisations represented shall be recorded alongside any advice or recommendation referred to the Board.

12. Agendas and papers

The agenda shall be agreed by the Chair.

Members may propose agenda items through the Chair or secretariat.

The Board may refer matters to the Group for advice.

Wherever practicable, agendas and supporting papers shall be circulated at least five working days before a meeting.

Urgent matters may be considered with shorter notice at the Chair's discretion.

Papers may be withheld, redacted or considered confidentially where they contain personal data, commercially sensitive information, legally privileged material or other information that should not be publicly disclosed.

Advice and recommendations

- The Group shall ordinarily seek to identify areas of agreement through discussion rather than formal voting.
- The Chair may use a show of views or indicative vote where this would help clarify the balance of opinion. Any such vote shall be advisory only.
- Where members hold materially different views, the differing positions shall be recorded rather than presenting an artificial consensus.

Any advice submitted to the Board should make clear:

- the matter considered;
- the organisations represented;
- the principal points raised;

- areas of agreement;
- significant concerns or differing views; and
- any recommended next steps.

The Board shall give appropriate consideration to the Group's advice but is not required to accept it.

Where the Board reaches a materially different conclusion, it may provide an explanation to the Group where appropriate.

13. Conflicts of interest

Members shall comply with the Board's Conflict of Interest Policy insofar as it is applicable to the Group.

Members must declare:

- the organisation they represent;
- any personal, professional, financial or organisational interest relevant to an item under consideration; and
- any involvement their organisation may wish to have in the funding or delivery of a proposed project.

The Chair shall determine the appropriate action following a declaration. This may include:

- allowing the member to provide factual information;
- allowing participation while recording the interest;
- excluding the member from part of the discussion; or
- asking the member to leave the meeting for the relevant item.

A member whose organisation may benefit from a grant, contract, commission, partnership agreement or other decision must not use their position within the Group to obtain an unfair advantage.

Participation in early discussions or consultation does not guarantee eligibility for, or appointment to, any subsequent delivery role.

All funding, procurement and commissioning decisions shall be undertaken through the appropriate Board and accountable-body procedures.

14. Conduct

Members shall:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- listen to and consider differing views;
- avoid discriminatory, intimidating, abusive or disruptive behaviour;
- act honestly and in good faith;
- avoid using the Group primarily to promote their organisation;
- protect confidential information;
- comply with relevant safeguarding and data-protection requirements; and
- support constructive working between organisations and the community.

The Chair may issue a warning, require a member to withdraw from a meeting or refer conduct concerns to the Board.

15. Confidentiality, information and communications

The Group should operate transparently wherever reasonably possible.

Members must respect the confidentiality status of information provided to them.

Confidential information must not be shared outside the member's organisation unless authorised.

Members may brief appropriate colleagues within their organisation where this is necessary for effective participation, provided that any confidentiality requirements are observed.

Members must not make public statements on behalf of the Group, the Board or the Pride in Place Programme unless authorised to do so.

Members may describe their own participation and organisational views but must not present those views as agreed Board policy.

16. Administration and records

Administrative support shall be provided by the Pride in Place secretariat, staff team or another body agreed by the Board.

A proportionate written record shall be maintained containing:

- attendance;
- declarations of interest;
- the principal matters discussed;

- advice or recommendations made; and
- actions agreed.

Meeting records shall be provided to the Board and may be published, subject to appropriate treatment of confidential information and personal data.

The Group shall periodically receive information about how its advice has been considered and about relevant decisions taken by the Board.

Resources and expenses

- Membership of the Group is voluntary and unpaid unless the Board expressly agrees otherwise.
- Members would normally be expected to participate as part of their role within their organisation.
- Any reimbursement of expenses shall be subject to the Board's approved expenses policy and prior authorisation where required.
- The Group shall have no independent budget.

17. Review and amendment

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Board after the Group's first year of operation and at least every two years thereafter.

The Board may amend, suspend or replace these Terms of Reference at any time.

The Board may dissolve the Group where it considers that the Group is no longer required or that another arrangement would better support the Pride in Place Programme.