

Neighbourhood Board Member

Role description and person specification

Neighbourhood area	[Luton, Chatham] [Twydall and Gillingham] [Rede Common, Strood]
Role type	Voluntary and unpaid.
Reports to	The independent Chair of the Neighbourhood Board
Term of office	Two years in the first instance, renewable
Time commitment	On average around one day a month
Closing date	10th Sept with possible extension

1. About Pride in Place

Medway has been awarded £60 million through the UK Government's Pride in Place programme. The funding is divided equally between three neighbourhoods, Luton in Chatham, Twydall in Gillingham and Rede Common in Strood, with each area receiving up to £20 million over ten years.

Pride in Place is a long term investment programme designed to tackle entrenched disadvantage. Its defining feature is that decisions about how the money is spent are made locally, by the people who live in each neighbourhood, rather than by the council or by central government.

Medway also received £1.5 million through the Pride in Place Impact Fund, which is already in delivery, and the programme sits alongside the wider regeneration activity set out in the Medway 2041 strategy.

2. About the Neighbourhood Board

Each of the three neighbourhoods has its own Neighbourhood Board. The Board is a partnership of residents, community organisations, businesses, public services, the local ward councillor and the local Member of Parliament, led by an independent Chair.

The Board is responsible for setting the direction of the investment in its area. Its first major task is to produce a Regeneration Plan, the ten year plan for the neighbourhood, which must be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 27 February 2027. After that, the Board oversees delivery, agrees the projects that are funded and holds the programme to account for what it achieves.

How Board decisions take effect

It is important that applicants understand this clearly. The Neighbourhood Board is not a legal body and does not hold or spend public money itself. Medway Council is the accountable body for the funding and is legally responsible to government for how it is used.

In practice this means the Board decides the priorities, the plan and the projects, and the Council then puts those decisions into effect through its own financial, legal and procurement processes. The Council will be

open with the Board where a decision cannot be delivered as proposed, and will explain why. This is a genuine devolution of decision making within a framework of public accountability, not a consultative role.

3. Purpose of the role

Board members bring the knowledge, experience and networks of the neighbourhood into the room where the decisions are made. Members are there to represent the interests of the wider community, not only their own household, street or organisation.

The role is about judgement rather than technical expertise. The programme will provide the data, the options and the professional advice. What it cannot provide, and what Board members supply, is an understanding of what will actually work in this neighbourhood and what local people will recognise as a genuine improvement.

4. What Board members do

Setting direction

- Agree the vision, priorities and investment themes for the neighbourhood.
- Contribute to the development of the Regeneration Plan and approve it before submission to government.
- Take decisions on which projects are funded, using agreed and published criteria.
- Balance short term visible improvements against longer term change over the ten year horizon.

Connecting with the community

- Act as a two way channel between the Board and local residents, groups and businesses.
- Support and take part in engagement activity, including events, surveys and consultation.
- Actively bring forward the views of people who are less likely to come forward themselves.
- Explain Board decisions locally, including decisions members personally disagreed with.

Overseeing delivery

- Monitor progress, spend and outcomes against the Plan.
- Ask constructive and searching questions of the Council and delivery partners.
- Review risks and agree changes where projects are not delivering as intended.

Upholding standards

- Declare interests openly and withdraw from decisions where a conflict arises.
- Comply with the Board's Code of Conduct and with confidentiality requirements.
- Treat other members, officers and members of the public with respect.
- Support decisions taken properly by the Board once they are made.

5. Person specification

No formal qualifications are required. Previous experience of sitting on a board or committee is welcome but is not necessary, and the programme will provide induction and training. What matters most is a real connection to the neighbourhood and a willingness to work with others.

	Essential	Desirable
Connection to the area	Lives, works, studies, runs a business in or volunteers in the neighbourhood, with real knowledge of the area and what matters to people in it.	Long standing involvement in local groups, schools, faith organisations, sports clubs or tenants and residents associations.
Community reach	Able and willing to listen to and speak for people beyond their own circle.	Established links with groups the programme finds harder to reach, including young people, older residents, disabled people, carers, private renters and minority ethnic and faith communities.
Working with others	Able to work constructively in a group, listen to different views, disagree respectfully and reach shared decisions.	Experience of chairing, facilitating or resolving disagreement between people with competing interests.
Judgement	Willing to read papers in advance, consider evidence and reach a view in the interests of the whole neighbourhood.	Experience of budgets, grant making, property, planning, health, skills, employment, culture or the voluntary sector.
Integrity	Prepared to declare interests, follow the Code of Conduct and act openly and honestly.	Understanding of how public money is accounted for.
Commitment	Available for the time commitment set out at section 8, over a two-year term.	Availability to join a working group on a specific theme.

6. Eligibility

To be considered for appointment you must:

- be aged 18 or over at the date of appointment;
- live, work, study, run a business or regularly volunteer in the neighbourhood area, or represent an organisation that delivers services there;
- be able to attend Board meetings and to prepare for them;
- be willing to complete a declaration of interests and to sign up to the Code of Conduct.

The majority of Board members will be people who live in the neighbourhood.

7. Board composition

The Board will have around 10 to 12 members in addition to the Chair/Co-Chair. We are recruiting to build a Board that reflects the neighbourhood as a whole, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, faith, disability, income and the different parts of the area.

Because of this, applications will be considered together rather than purely in order of merit. A strong application may not be successful if the Board already has good representation of that particular perspective, and we may approach applicants about a different role, such as membership of an advisory working group.

Seat	How it is filled
Independent Chair	Appointed on the joint recommendation of Medway Council and the local Member of Parliament.
Resident members	Open recruitment through this process. The largest single group on the Board.
Community and voluntary sector	Open recruitment, with organisations invited to nominate a named representative.
Business members	Open recruitment, including independent traders and larger local employers.
Local Member of Parliament	[Named MP for the constituency], sitting as a member of the Board by right under the programme guidance.
Ward councillor	One ward councillor for the area.
Public service partners	Invited representation, for example Kent Police, health services, housing providers and education. [Number of seats to be confirmed in the Terms of Reference.]
Council officers	Attend to advise and to service the Board. They are not members and do not vote.

8. Time commitment and term

The commitment is heaviest between appointment and February 2027, while the Regeneration Plan is being developed, and reduces once the Plan is submitted.

Activity	Expected commitment
Board meetings	Around every six weeks until February 2027, then approximately quarterly. Two to three hours per meeting, held in the evening or at a time agreed by the Board.
Preparation	One to two hours reading papers before each meeting. Papers are circulated at least five working days in advance.
Working groups	Optional. Members who join a working group should allow a further two hours a month.
Community activity	Occasional events, walkabouts and engagement sessions, usually at weekends or in the evening.
Induction and training	A half day induction on appointment, with further short sessions during the first year.

Members are appointed for two years in the first instance. Terms will be staggered so that the whole Board does not change at once, and members may be reappointed. Membership may end earlier by resignation, by sustained non attendance, or by removal for a serious breach of the Code of Conduct, following the process set out in the Terms of Reference.

9. Support, expenses and accessibility

- The role is voluntary and unpaid.
- Reasonable out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- Meetings will be held in accessible venues in or close to the neighbourhood.
- Papers will be written in plain English, and information will be provided in other formats or languages on request.
- Induction, training and ongoing support will be provided by the programme team.
- If there is anything that would make it difficult for you to take part, tell us and we will do what we can to remove the barrier.

10. Conduct, interests and independence

Board members are making decisions about substantial sums of public money. Everyone appointed will be asked to complete a register of interests on appointment and to keep it up to date.

Having an interest does not prevent you from joining the Board. Many of the people best placed to serve are already active in local organisations, and some of those organisations may later apply for funding. What matters is that interests are declared openly and that members withdraw from any discussion or decision where they, or an organisation they are connected to, stand to benefit. The Chair, advised by the Council, will determine how each interest is managed.

Board members are expected to act in the interests of the neighbourhood as a whole and not as delegates of any particular organisation, party or campaign.