

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing – Richard Horniman Corporate Director of Environment, Communities and Culture – Geoff Field
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Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Development – Cllr Theo Furness Executive Member for Neighbourhoods – Cllr Ian Blades
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	8 April 2026
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Title:	Pride In Place Programme – Thorntree, Park End and Impact Fund
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Report for:	Decision
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Status:	Public
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Council Plan priority:	Safe and resilient communities
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Key decision:	Yes
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Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £250,000 and have a significant impact in two or more wards
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Subject to call in?	Yes
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Why:	Non-urgent decision
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Proposed decision(s)
<p>It is recommended that Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) approves the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place programme at Thorntree; b) approves the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place programme at Park End; c) approves the acceptance and allocation of the £1.5m allocation for Pride in Place - Impact Fund, for central Middlesbrough, subject to Andy McDonald MP giving consent for the proposals; d) notes that the Council's role is limited to that of secretariat support and Accountable Body;

- e) notes that engagement with the community, identification of priorities, the design of the Pride in Place Investment plan for each area, will be at the sole discretion of the respective Neighbourhood Board(s) of Thorntree and Park End;
- f) notes that officer resource for funding administration and secretariat support will be required from multiple services (and burdens to be borne by those services). Principally, this will involve the Growth and Assets, Neighbourhoods, Finance and Legal Services; and,
- g) notes that any Neighbourhood Board decision which has an ownership, adoption, land and assets, operational or financial impact upon Council services, will be brought back to Executive for consideration; and phased development and delivery of works to ensure that continuity of Community services are prioritised.

Executive summary

Three Middlesbrough areas have been allocated Pride in Place programme funding amounting to £41.5m.

Park End and Thorntree areas of Middlesbrough have been identified as Pride in Place Neighbourhoods in the second phase of the Pride in Place programme.

Each area has been awarded a funding commitment of £20 Million each over the next ten years, from April 2027, to deliver an Investment plan which is to be consulted, designed and delivered by a representative Neighbourhood Board to be convened in each area.

Between now and April 2027, the Chairpersons of the Neighbourhood Board are to be identified, followed by wider Board Membership. When the Neighbourhood Board is convened it will commence work to identify and consult upon 'hyper-local' priorities for investment and prepare an Investment Plan to Government by Winter 2026/27. In practical terms, there are few limitations as to how the funding can be used, other than strict capital and revenue apportionment.

In addition, Middlesbrough has been awarded £1.5 Million of Pride in Place – Impact Funds, which are targeted towards the enhancement of community areas and public spaces within central Middlesbrough. This funding is designed to deliver immediate impact and, therefore, does not require a Neighbourhood Board to be convened, rather it relies on the relevant Member of Parliament consent. In this case this is Andy McDonald MP.

Middlesbrough Council has two functions in these funding programmes. The first is that the Council is to be the Accountable Body for the Pride in Place funds. Secondly, the Council is to provide secretariat support for the delivery and administration of Neighbourhood Boards.

The Pride in Place Programme is designed to give communities the agency and resources to react to the most pressing issues in their immediate communities. As such, the Council has no formal decision-making role relative to this programme.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions
 - 1.1 This report sets out the opportunity and objectives associated with the Pride in Place and Pride in Place – Impact Fund programmes, as they relate to allocations offered to Middlesbrough.
 - 1.2 To unlock these funds, which have been identified to create opportunity in some of Middlesbrough’s most disadvantaged areas, Middlesbrough Council must assume the responsibility as Accountable Body for the funding programme.
 - 1.3 This report sets out the high-level funding expectations and the principles that the interventions arising from these funds are to be wholly determined and delivered at the Neighbourhood level, with Council influence restricted to being administrative and advisory.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	The Pride in Place Programme is designed to address issues at the neighbourhood level, with decisions made by the residents who live and work in these areas. This level of self-determination, and agency, has the potential to improve residents’ local pride, involvement in community life and investment in the amenities and services in their local area.
A healthy Place	The Pride in Place Programme allows for investment in local amenities and services which can improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Whilst it is for the Neighbourhood Board to determine the exact form of interventions, such activity is permissible under the terms of the funding.
Safe and resilient communities	The Pride in Place Programme allows for investment in local amenities and services which can improve the safety and resilience of communities. Whilst it is for the Neighbourhood Board to determine the exact form of interventions, such activity is permissible under the terms of the funding.
Delivering best value	The Pride in Place Programme requires the host Local Authority area to serve as the accountable body for the funding allocation(s). As such, it is the Council’s duty to ensure that there are arrangements in place for sound governance of the funding as well as ensuring that all financial regulations and safeguards such as proper consideration of Subsidy Control and Procurement regulations, are adhered to.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Executive:

- a) approves the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place programme at Thorntree;
- b) approves the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place programme at Park End;
- c) approves the acceptance and allocation of the £1.5m allocation for Pride in Place - Impact Fund, for central Middlesbrough, subject to Andy McDonald MP giving consent for the proposals;
- d) notes that the Council's role is limited to that of secretariat support and Accountable Body;
- e) notes that engagement with the community, identification of priorities, the design of the Pride in Place Investment plan for each area, will be at the sole discretion of the respective Neighbourhood Board of Thorntree and Park End;
- f) notes that officer resource for funding administration and secretariat support will be required from multiple services (and burdens to be borne by those services unless). Principally, this will involve the Growth and Assets, Neighbourhoods, Finance and Legal Services; and,
- g) notes that any Neighbourhood Board decision which has an ownership, adoption, land and assets, operational or financial impact upon Council services, will be brought back to Executive for consideration; and phased development and delivery of works to ensure that continuity of Community services are prioritised.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Working is a key strategy for improving outcomes for Middlesbrough's residents. The Pride in Place Programme is a considerable opportunity to improve local approaches for neighbourhood engagement. Over the medium-term, this has the impact of increasing local service efficiency and reducing demand pressures.
- 3.2 Pride in Place funding has been allocated to Thorntree and Park End based on indices of local deprivation, local satisfaction metrics and engagement in Civic society. As neighbourhoods characterised as 'Doubly-disadvantaged', this programme gives the local community the resources, agency and decision-making-powers to make generational changes in their local areas.
- 3.3 The delivery of the Pride in Place Programme for Thorntree and Park End is predicated on the Council taking the responsibility as accountable body. In the absence of the Council assuming this role, the funding allocations for these areas would be jeopardised.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 Three Middlesbrough areas have been allocated Pride in Place programme funding amounting to £41.5m.
- 4.2 Thorntree has been allocated £20m in the main Pride of Place Programme. Park End has also been awarded £20m (completely separately from the Thorntree allocation, from the main Pride in Place programme. A third allocation of £1.5m has been made to Middlesbrough Town Centre under the 'Pride in Place – Impact Fund', for immediate interventions to enhanced public and community spaces.
- 4.3 The Pride in Place programme is a selective, hyper-local funding programme which aims to give local areas the power and influence to make decisions in their local areas. Neighbourhood Boards will be convened to design, determine and deliver Neighbourhood Plans for their areas.
- 4.4 This commitment is backed by £20m of funding (approx. £2m per year for the next decade) to allow communities to deliver their Neighbourhood Plans. As Accountable Body for programme allocations, the Council has financial oversight but no formal decision-making powers.
- 4.5 The uses of the funding are, in practical terms, without any significant restrictions, allowing communities to invest in the priorities which matter to them. The funding is split approximately 63% Capital and 37% Revenue, meaning that both community infrastructure, amenities and services are all within the scope of Neighbourhood Plan investment.
- 4.6 The programme has been designed to target areas that are 'doubly disadvantaged' by both the highest deprivation levels and weakest social infrastructure, as indicated by – HMGov measurements.
- 4.7 Within Middlesbrough, the Thorntree and Park End areas have been identified. It should be noted that the identified areas of influence do not precisely mirror 'ward boundaries' as they would be recognised locally. Instead, they match Mid-layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs). Expressed in terms of local wards, the MSOAs overlap with the southern areas of Brambles and Thorntree (ward), southern areas of Berwick Hills and Pallister (ward) and all of Park End and Beckfield (Ward).

4.8 Pride In Place Boundaries Park End and Thorntree



4.9 The appointed Neighbourhood Board Members will have the opportunity to make a case to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for these boundaries to be subtly adapted to reflect local conditions, obvious infrastructure omissions and missed opportunities.

4.10 Both the Park End and Thorntree Communities are in Stage 2 of the Pride in Place programme, meaning that 2026 calendar year will be used to convene an independent Chair, Board and work completed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. The provisional timetable set out by MHCLG is set out below. The substantive investment and delivery phase will commence in Middlesbrough from April 2027.

4.11 MHCLG Indicative Pride in Place – Phase 2 – Timeline

Winter 2025/26	Neighbourhood Boards and local authorities receive a tailored data pack detailing metrics across the 3 strategic objectives, and polling on local sentiment around investment priorities for their area
Spring 2026	MHCLG issues 2026 to 2027 capacity and capital funding payment to all places

Summer 2026	Neighbourhood Boards to confirm finalised membership and any proposals to alter the ‘default’ area boundary to MHCLG by 17 July 2026
Autumn 2026	MHCLG to review membership and boundary proposals and confirm to places whether acceptable
Winter 2026/27	Neighbourhood Boards submit their Regeneration Plan to MHCLG for assessment and approval
Spring 2027	MHCLG approve regeneration plans First substantive delivery funding payment to be made to local authorities, commencement of delivery phase

- 4.12 The Council’s role is exclusively based on administrative and secretariat functions. A key principle underpinning this programme is the strict expectation that Neighbourhood Boards and Neighbourhood Plans must be locally led and determined.
- 4.13 Member of Parliament involvement is mandated. In the case of both Thorntree and Park End, the constituencies of both Andy McDonald MP and Luke Myer MP overlap with both of the Pride in Place areas. So, both MPs will have involvement in both Neighbourhood Boards. The MP’s initial task is to appoint Chairperson(s) for both Boards. An open process has commenced to seek expressions of interest from the respective communities, and an interview process will follow.
- 4.14 From 27 March 2026, a process commenced to invite expressions of interest for the two Chairperson positions for the Thorntree and Park End Neighbourhood Boards, respectively.
- 4.15 Community stakeholders will be invited to nominate themselves for consideration for the Chairperson roles by briefly setting out their involvement in the community, their ambitions for the area, and how they could secure the trust and backing of the community.
- 4.16 Nominations will close on Friday 24th April 2026 and, subject to approval of this report, the two local MPs and the Mayor of Middlesbrough will shortlist and interview for the respective posts.
- 4.17 A similar process, codesigned with the appointed Chairperson(s) will be conducted to identify with wider board members. Board makeup must be agreed by MPs and with consent of Chair. Board MUST include respective constituent MP(s), at least one Ward Member and must contain at least 50% represented by residents of the eligible areas. Mayors have been granted membership in other areas, and this will apply in Middlesbrough. Other Board members do not have to reside in the eligible area but must have clear and tangible links to the area i.e. head teachers.

- 4.18 Capacity and Capability resources have just been received at £150,000 per area. This can be used by the Board for staffing, engagement and capacity, as well as engagement with the community to seek ideas, priorities, membership and interventions.
- 4.19 Boards should aim to be independent of Council support by year three of delivery – save for accountable body duties and oversight. Council will continue to voluntarily offer support and advice beyond this period, should the Board require.

Pride in Place- Impact Fund

- 4.20 In addition to the main Pride in Place Programme areas, £1.5m of Capital has been allocation for the Pride in Place - Impact Fund, targeted for Town Centre interventions
- 4.21 The funding interventions will be directly delivered by local authorities, with the aim of building strong, resilient, prosperous, and inclusive communities.
- 4.22 Whilst the Pride in Place Programme will target transformation over the longer term, it is recognised that there is also a need for immediate support to ensure other areas are able to deliver visible improvements to high streets and improve places and spaces of community value.
- 4.23 In Middlesbrough, this is identified to enhance community facilities and public spaces such as parks, playgrounds and helping to improve health and well-being, bring people together and strengthen communities. The funding is designed to quickly mobilise interventions to delivery immediate impact.
- 4.24 The Council will directly administer and deliver the interventions associated with the £1.5m allocation and proposals will secure the consent of the relevant MP, being in this case, Andy McDonald MP.
- 4.25 Provisional proposals, subject to MP approval, are:
- a) the acquisition and enhancement of the pond area in Centre Square, reclaiming the area as a community asset and ensuring visitors and residents can enjoy an attractive public space in the heart of Middlesbrough;
 - b) tidying up run down Town Centre areas which are a poor reflection on the town;
and,
 - c) enhancing public spaces and town centre areas with a programme of public art installations.
- 4.26 Andy McDonald MP's has been briefed on the headline proposals in advance of this report. Formal approval will be of the recommendations for intervention will be secured from Andy McDonald, following determination of this Executive decision.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

- 5.1 Ward Members have been briefed on the Pride in Place guidance to date.
- 5.2 Neighbourhood Boards must include representation from, at least one Ward Member from the respective areas, albeit the selection of such is a choice for the Board Chairperson(s).

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

- 6.1 The only feasible alternative to assuming accountable body status for the Pride in Place Programme would be to reject the responsibility and jeopardise the allocations for the Thorntree and Park End areas of Middlesbrough.
- 6.2 To dismiss the opportunity for £40m funding in East Middlesbrough areas would represent a major missed opportunity and critical investment which can unlock civic engagement and pride in deserving Middlesbrough communities.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	<p>Financial risk – whilst the Government has made a £20m commitment over the next 10 years, this will be delivered via three, conditional funding Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs). There is a theoretical risk of decommitment at the period that each new funding MoU is renewed. Systemic controls for spending and commitments will be applied to ensure that the Neighbourhood Boards cannot spend beyond the available means.</p> <p>Resources - Early stages will be extremely resource intense and require hybrid-capacity from a range of Council services, and this burden has not been compensated in the funding settlement. The support of Council staff is likely to be required throughout programme implementation. Where possible and appropriate, the Neighbourhood Boards will be asked to offer financial support to Council capacity, albeit this is a decision entirely for the Boards.</p>
Legal	<p>To support the Council in its role as the Accountable Body, Council Legal Services will be on hand to advise over constitutional matters as the Neighbourhood Boards develop. Legal services will advise on governance arrangements, conflicts of interest, decision making processes and compliance with legal duties, including duties under equalities acts, however, the extent of the role is still to be determined, Legal advice should be sought regarding any</p>

	<p>documentation including any memorandum of understanding, which should be reviewed by legal services prior to signing.</p> <p>The council is to provide secretariate support for the delivery and administration of Neighbourhood Boards, the council will have no formal decision making role, the role of legal services will be to protect the integrity of the process rather than the substance of the decisions, stepping in only if a proposed action would be unlawful, procedurally improper or expose the council to legal risk. The extent of the role secretariate support is to be determined.</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p>Bureaucracy - Without proper communication and support for Neighbourhood Boards there is a risk that Council oversight and necessary procedures risk frustrating community ambitions and attracting criticism. This can be overcome by a comprehensive offer of support and advice to inform Board Members of the technical requirements which apply in terms of good governance, procurement timescales, transparency requirements, property ownerships and long-term adoption liabilities etc.</p> <p>Board recruitment – The 10 year duration of the programme may be off putting to some individuals as a personal and community commitment. This has been addressed in the Board recruitment process by inviting individuals to serve any length of membership without obligation to see the full 10 year period through.</p> <p>Project management - The Board has autonomy over how the schemes are delivered / commissioned i.e. it is not a given that Council teams will deliver the identified interventions. As such, for financial assurance and good governance, oversight will need to be retained on external contract delivery.</p> <p>Risks will be assessed on an ongoing basis as the Neighbourhood Boards develop the details of their Neighbourhood Plans.</p>
<p>Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion</p>	<p>There are no human rights implications. Intense, resident-led neighbourhood Working will aid community cohesion through working closely with residents and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Reducing Poverty</p>	

	Pride in Place Funding is targeted at some of Middlesbrough's most disadvantaged communities. The Neighbourhood Investment Plans which arise in these areas can include activities which reduce poverty. This will be for the Neighbourhood Board(s) to determine.
Climate Change / Environmental	Interventions designed to address Climate Change and Environmental issues, are permissible within the Pride in Place Programme, it will be for the Board(s) to determine whether this forms part of their Neighbourhood Investment Plans.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The objectives of the Pride in Place programme have the scope to provide a better community, with lower levels of crime and antisocial behaviour in which young people can thrive but also have greater focus on resolving complex cases involving young people and children.
Data Protection	There are no data protection issues envisaged.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Secure MP(s) agreement to the Board / Chair recruitment process.	Sam Gilmore	February 2026
Open advert for Chairperson roles for each area.	Sam Gilmore	March 2026
Chairs Appointed	Sam Gilmore	April 2026
Chairs to identify recruitment method(s) for Board Members – advertised and processed	Sam Gilmore	May 2026
Draft and submit alternative geography and combination of boards case to MHCLG – with Board and MP consent	Sam Gilmore	May 2026

Board Members interviewed and appointed	Sam Gilmore	June 2026
Board induction and inaugural meeting – outline programme, parameters, draft constitution and engagement methods to seek ideas	Sam Gilmore	July 2026
Resident survey and engagement – Summer 2026	Neighbourhood Boards	September 2026

Appendices

1	N/A
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A

Contact: Sam Gilmore – Head of Growth and Assets
Email: Sam_gilmore@middlesbrough.gov.uk