

## Cabinet

<b>Report Title</b>	Pride in Place Impact Fund Implementation
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	11 March 2026
<b>Report Author</b>	Santokh Singh, Neighbourhood Services Manager
<b>Lead Officer</b>	James McLaughlin, Assistant Chief Executive  Alan Lunt, Executive Director – Place
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Councillor Suzanne Hartwell Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community
<b>Why is this a key decision?</b>	1. Expenditure over £1 Million+ <b>Yes</b>  2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards <b>Yes</b>
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All (All Wards);
<b>Identify exempt information and exemption category</b>	Public
<b>Is the report urgent?</b>	No
<b>Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	None

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the £1.5m Pride in Place Impact Fund to be allocated on a basis of £250,000 per town across the borough. The report also seeks in principle approval for the local projects to be funded by the Pride in Place Impact Fund. These have been identified through Neighbourhood Services collating and sharing local issues during walkabouts, ward partnership meetings with councillors and other local organisations, as well as follow-up consultations with Members of Parliament.

## 2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in the report, Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the allocation of funding on the basis of £250,000 per town across the borough from the Pride in Place Impact Fund.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and the Assistant Chief Executive, subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community and the Town Leads, to approve the final projects associated with the use of the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

## 3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 3.1 Splitting the monies from the Pride in Place Impact Fund equally would offer the potential to bring forward interventions based on town-level priorities. This might involve a range of lower value spend interventions which could potentially increase the impact of the funding.

### Background

- 3.2 In late September 2025, the Prime Minister launched the Pride in Place Strategy and Programme to empower local communities, particularly in more deprived areas, to take control of local regeneration, high streets, public spaces and community assets. Sandwell has been selected as one of the 95 locations across England for this programme.
- 3.3 As part of the Programme, the Pride in Place Impact Fund will provide £1.5 million over two years to enable immediate work to make sure that the places and spaces valued by communities are improved.
- 3.4 The Pride in Place Impact Fund grant determination letter and MoU were received, signed and returned to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the deadline of 7 November 2025. At its meeting in December, Cabinet formally resolved to accept the Pride in Place Impact Fund Grant and this report follows on from that decision.

### Objectives

- 3.5 The funding is focused on 3 key objectives:
  - 3.5.1 **Community spaces** – Investing in community facilities gives local people greater control over the spaces that matter to them. Refurbishing or taking ownership of underused but valued buildings enables communities to create welcoming places for connection, support and shared activity. This builds local pride, strengthens relationships and gives communities a stronger voice in shaping their future.
  - 3.5.2 **Public spaces** – Enhancing the physical environment helps communities feel safer, more connected and prouder of where they live. Improvements to green areas, play and leisure facilities, and thoughtful design features such as seating, signage and public art make spaces more inclusive and inviting. These changes encourage

people to spend time outdoors, build relationships and take part in local activities, strengthening community spirit and wellbeing.

- 3.5.3 **High street and town centre revitalisation** – Revitalising high streets makes them more attractive and welcoming, encouraging people to come together and boosting local pride. Improvements to buildings, streets and the public realm supports footfall, helps small businesses thrive and creates opportunities for social and cultural activity. By investing in these areas, communities can shape vibrant, inclusive places that support local economies and strengthen community identity.
- 3.6 The [PiPIF Prospectus](#) was released following the Prime Minister's announcement. A list of example activities has been provided by government, together with reporting metrics (these can be seen in the Prospectus' appendices). Interventions do not need to deliver on all objectives.
- 3.7 The approach proposed for the allocation of the funding to each of the six towns is recommended in recognition of the longstanding approach on the part of the Council to provide opportunities in every part of Sandwell. The recommended approach is also intended to align with the neighbourhood working model that the Council launched in 2025.
- 3.8 The consultation undertaken and feedback received, which are set out elsewhere in this report, provides an insight into the further conversations that are required in formulating the projects that will deliver Pride in Place. It is for this reason that in principle approval is sought at this stage for the proposals. It is further recommended that authority is delegated to the Executive Director of Place and the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community and the relevant Town Leads, to confirm final projects.

#### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 The funding requirements are prescriptive about aspects of the approach to governance, which has restricted alternative approaches to that set out within this report.

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Pride in Place Prospectus declares that local authorities are asked to engage with and seek support from a wide range of local stakeholders to identify priorities and deliver the Pride in Place Impact Fund, including Members of Parliament.

##### **Members of Parliament**

##### **Antonia Bance MP, Tipton and Wednesbury**

- 5.2 The Member of Parliament for Tipton and Wednesbury, Antonia Bance (Labour), was consulted on 12 December 2025. She agreed to the principle of £250,000 funding allocation per town, with some flexibility depending on the priorities for each town. The key areas for the Member initially were developing children's play areas, revitalising shop fronts, and supporting artisan businesses such as butchers and bakers to thrive in Tipton. She also

suggested the adaptation of premises around Union Street to bring them back into use (e.g. installing a lift).

- 5.3 On 30 January 2026, the following projects were agreed to be the MP's definite priorities:
- Improvements to the Sheepwash Nature Reserve (Tipton).
  - Improvements to the play area on the Tibbington Estate (Tipton).
  - Improvements to Brunswick Park, including renovation of the Lodge (Wednesbury).
  - Improving the Milky Open Space signage (West Bromwich).

#### **Sarah Coombes MP, West Bromwich**

- 5.4 6.4 The MP for West Bromwich, Sarah Coombes (Labour), was consulted on 18 December 2025. She had no concerns about £250,000 being allocated per town and was happy with the approach of the Neighbourhood Services Team pulling together list of projects based on feedback from Ward Members. She was keen to see any projects that could be delivered in Oldbury Town Centre, as they haven't had any regeneration funding in the past. The MP was consulted again on 16 January 2026 to further discuss projects:
- Restoration of the metal sign on Birmingham Street (Oldbury).
  - Improvements to Windsor Play Park and Cornfield Play Park (Rowley Regis).
  - Refurbishing the swings in Charlemont Park Farm and making it more teenager-friendly (West Bromwich).
  - Making Kenrick Park and making it more teenager friendly (West Bromwich).
  - Refurbishing the play equipment in Livingwell Street play area (Greets Green Park) and making it more teenager friendly (West Bromwich).
  - Repainting and improving lighting in St Margaret's subway. The Neighbourhood Services Team are already completing consultation about lighting here (West Bromwich).

- 5.5 A site visit has been booked for the MP in Oldbury Town Centre on 12 February with Regeneration officers, Police Partners, Ward Members and the Neighbourhood Services Officers working closely in the area. The purpose of the visit is to identify potential ideas for projects here.

#### **Alex Ballinger MP, Halesowen**

- 5.6 The MP for Halesowen, Alex Ballinger (Labour), was consulted in a meeting on 8 January 2026. He agreed to the principle of the equal split of funds across the Borough. The Member raised several issues he was interested in seeing addressed:
- Renovation of Haden Hill adventure play area (Rowley Regis).
  - Regeneration of Cradley Heath and Old Hill high streets (Rowley Regis).
  - Potential extensions to Bearmore Playing Fields' car park to increase parking spaces for users and reduce parking disruption in the area (Rowley Regis).

#### **Gurinder Singh Josan MP, Smethwick**

- 5.7 The MP for Smethwick, Gurinder Singh Josan (Labour), had a discussion on 17 December 2025 as regards the Impact Fund criteria.

- 5.8 Officers are in the process of arranging a meeting with the MP to discuss priorities within his constituency. There are currently a number of projects that have been ongoing and raised at ward meetings for some time. These will potentially be those he would also want to prioritise:
- Improvements to Victoria Park (Smethwick).
  - Renovation of the bandstand in Lightwoods Park (Smethwick).
  - Installation of lighting in Britannia Park (Rowley Regis).

### **Other Stakeholders**

#### **Residents**

- 5.9 Existing insight is available on residents' views to support the identification of priorities including the residents' survey, SHAPE survey, recent Design Code consultation, localised survey work, and insight through ward and town level discussions.
- 5.10 Findings from the residents' survey (2025) and SHAPE survey (2024) provide strong messages in support of localised interventions that improve safety. In response to questions about their local area, SHAPE survey respondents listed cleanliness and litter, safety and more or better shops as key priorities.
- 5.11 Early insight from consultation undertaken to support the Design Code indicates some variances in towns but with common themes around the quality of open and green space (including green space in town centres), availability of parking, developing community spaces and developing heritage assets.

#### **Ward Members, Services and Partners**

- 5.12 Building on the foundations of these priorities, initial lists of potential projects for each ward in each town were drawn up by Ward Coordinators, supplemented by the outcomes of continued and detailed discussions over two years with Elected Members at a ward and town level; partner organisations; service areas and residents. These were collated in December 2025.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 In 2025, MHCLG announced £1.5m new funding to be awarded to the Council in the form of the Pride in Place Impact Fund. This funding has been added to the Council's approved Capital Programme.
- 6.2 Projects to be funded from the £1.5m total allocation are still to be costed but will be contained within the Council's local allocation of £250,000 per town. The total cost of all projects will not exceed £1.5m. No capacity building support is available.

### **7. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 7.1 The proposals within the report set out the governance arrangements for decisions regarding the Pride in Place Funding allocation and appear appropriate, particularly as the Council has responsibility as accountable body for the funding allocation.

- 7.2 Any allocations must be subject to relevant and appropriate due diligence and comply with the requirements of the funding allocation, including any necessary documentation.
- 7.3 Legal advice should be sought regarding any documentation including any Memorandum of Understanding which should be reviewed by Legal Services prior to signing.
- 7.4 The grant determination letter and MoU has been received. The deadline for signing the MoU was 7 November. Cabinet approval will be required to accept the grant, and this was included in the Q2 budget monitoring report due at Cabinet in December.
- 7.5 In the event of splitting the funding at town level, consideration will need to be given to any delegated decision-making arrangements to fit this model.

## 8. Risks

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood/Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation and Control</b>
PIPIF funding is not spent effectively.	Unlikely/Major	Consult key stakeholders and ensure that all proposed PIPIF interventions are in line with engagement feedback and Council priorities.
Negative publicity	Unlikely/Moderate	To ensure engagement and clear communication with residents, businesses and stakeholders on the PIPIF programme.
Successful projects do not deliver intended outputs / outcomes.	Unlikely/Major	Effective programme partnership management will be key to the successful delivery of PIPIF interventions. Resource working across PIPIF are experienced in delivering grants, managing multiple projects, working with local businesses and funders.

## 9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 Any project proposals that result from the PiPIF will conduct an EqlA/screening as required as part of the project development process.

## 10. Other Relevant Implications

### Health and Wellbeing

10.1 Health and Wellbeing considerations will be identified as part of the project development process.

**Social Value**

10.2 Social Value will be embedded into any contracts let as result of the Pride in Place Impact Fund interventions.

**Climate Change**

10.3 Climate change considerations will be identified as part of the project development process.

**Corporate Parenting**

10.4 Corporate Parenting considerations will be considered as part of the project development process. Youth voice (as expressed through the Shape survey findings) indicates that a focus on interventions based on safety should be prioritised.

**11. Background Documents**

11.1 Not applicable.

**12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?**

12.1 The proposals set out in this report supports delivery against a range of objectives linked to all strategic themes –

- A wider range of interventions created by equal funding across all six towns would enable greater focus to deliver against the strategic themes of Growing Up in Sandwell, Living in Sandwell, Healthy in Sandwell and Thriving Economy in Sandwell, along with One Council One Team.