



SUBJECT: Further Community Involvement Proposal

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider how the Canvey Island Neighbourhood Board (the “Board”) should continue to engage with and involve the local community as it approaches the sixth month of Year 1 of the delivery phase of the Canvey Island Regeneration Plan (the “Regeneration Plan”).

2 LINKS TO THE CANVEY ISLAND REGENERATION PLAN

- 2.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Pride in Place prospectus sets out best practice for Neighbourhood Board’s to involve communities in decision making. Whilst it recognises that there is no single correct approach, best practices principles are set out an include:

1. Engage from the start
2. Effective community organising
3. Focus on those less likely to be heard
4. Build on existing assets and connections in your community
5. Involve people in decision making, taking a participatory approach
6. Make time for meaningful engagement
7. Actively listen to the local community
8. Invite challenge and scrutiny

9. Get out into the community and be creative

10. Delegate roles to the local community

- 2.2 An extensive programme of engagement was completed in October 2025 to inform the development of The Regeneration Plan. This engagement, the main element of which was delivered by Estuary Festival CIC, involved 14 group sessions in locations across Canvey and the community. A pop-up shop was also set up in The Knightswick Centre in the town centre during October half term week. This offered artist led activity centred around the “Postcards from the Future” theme and was well received by the local community.
- 2.3 Engagement was also carried out with children and young people in a school setting across the island (delivered by the Castle Point and Rochford School Sport Partnership) and with young people specifically at youth clubs and outreach services (delivered by Yellow Door).
- 2.4 A business survey was conducted by Castle Point Borough Council via its’ business newsletter and citizen space platform.
- 2.5 This engagement was used to inform the development of the Regeneration which was submitted to MHCLG in Autumn 2025.
- 2.6 Following submission of the Regeneration Plan, the Board asked the Schools Sports Partnership to facilitate the formation a Pride in Place Children and Young People Board. This Board is now established and is made up of 36 children and young people representing the schools of Canvey Island who applied to take part. The Children and Young People Board presented their initial input at the Neighbourhood Board’s July meeting providing valuable steer on their priorities and how they would like to participate and contribute further via community events and projects linked to the themes of the Regeneration Plan.

3 MATTERS FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER

- 3.1 The Board is asked to consider and take decisions on the following matters:
- (1) To agree to the organisation of Pride in Place engagement activities to take place in Canvey town centre during October 2026 half term week. The purpose of the activities would be to sustain and increase Pride in Place awareness in the local community and to continue conversations on key local priorities.
- (2) To agree to allocate £10k of capacity funding to deliver engagement activities

- (3) Agree to delegate authority to a subgroup of Board members to confirm the final content and style of the engagement content to allow preparation of materials to meet the target delivery period of October half term 2026.

4 PRIDE IN PLACE AWARENESS: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

- 4.1 In its April 2026 meeting, the Board reviewed Zen City sentiment survey data from MHCLG which provided insight into community awareness of the Canvey Island Pride in Place programme. Only 35% of respondents were familiar with the programme and the Board agreed and 65% of respondents answered that they had not been consulted on services or issues in their local area over the prior 12 months.
- 4.2 In this meeting the Board recognised the need to promote the programme and the activities of the Neighbourhood Board and commit to further engagement activities to ensure visibility and positive impacts of the funding.
- 4.3 Although the Board have set up the Children and Young People's Board and a community event is being organised to celebrate its investment in the Wellbeing Suite & Partnership Hub at The Paddocks there has not been a significant face to face engagement with the broader local community since the submission of the Regeneration Plan.
- 4.4 A further programme of engagement, based in a town centre location (most likely The Knightswick Centre), is now suggested for the October 2026 half term period to build on the conversations had to date and to mark the mid-point of Year 1 of the Pride in Place programme.
- 4.5 The October half term week is suggested as it provides an opportunity to reach families, young people and a broader cross section of the local community compared to a typical working week. Half terms typically see higher footfalls in town centres and people are generally able to commit more time to drop-in activities. Engagement carried out in the corresponding week in 2025 was well attended with over 50 visits a day to the town centre pop-up shop.

5 SUGGESTED APPROACHES

- 5.1 One option is a "***What have we done so far?***" approach to update the community on the journey of the Pride in Place Programme to date. This could, for example, involve the production of a summary snapshot of the work of the Board in the first six months of the delivery phase and what commitments have already been made. It could also serve as a "refresher" to remind the community of the agreed vision and priorities summarised in the Regeneration Plan.

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- 5.2 Another option to combine into the follow-on engagement activities is to select a priority theme that arose from previous feedback to spotlight and focus on in more detail. This could take the form of an ***“You told us you x,y,z about x,y,z.....we’re following up to see what’s changed and what you think should come next”***
- 5.3 The top three themes from the October 2025 engagement were:
1. Access & Transport
 2. Young People’s Projects
 3. Canvey Town Centre
- 5.4 As above, a desire to improve **Canvey Town Centre** ranked highly in this prior engagement. In its 4-Year Investment Plan, the Board accordingly allocated funds to various projects connected to this theme such as a town centre event budget, funds for shopfront improvements and to enhance the market square.
- 5.5 In its April 2026 meeting the Board noted that wider thought on the overall approach to the town centre was needed before committing to specific projects. This engagement work would provide an opportunity to feed into this in more detail.
- 5.6 A focus on a specific theme could utilise participatory activities. For example, people are asked to consider a town centre vision in more detail to give further steer to the Board on the priority of potential projects such as improved safety, better lighting, an improved market square, diversity of shops, public realm etc. This could be in the form interactive activities such as:
- Town centre mapping exercise – where people are asked to use red dots to highlight problem areas, amber to show opportunities and green to mark things that work well
 - Lego/brick building activity – where the community can model desire layouts and components of their ideal town centre
- 5.7 The above examples are indicative suggestions. Any activities will require further development based on the Board’s feedback and direction.
- 5.8 There are four options available to the Board:
- 5.9 **Option 1: Do nothing:** The Board could choose to do nothing in relation to this proposal and plan no further engagement. However, good practice for Neighbourhood Boards, and for regeneration programmes generally, is to involve local communities in decision-making, make time for meaningful engagement and actively listen to communities. In doing nothing there is also a danger that awareness of the Pride in Place programme in Canvey declines

or remains static and the community do not feel they are involved in how the £20m funding is being spent.

- 5.10 **Option 2: Support the “what have we done so far” aspect of the engagement proposal** . For the reasons set out in this report, keeping the local community informed and involved in Pride in Place activities will be key to the success of the long-term programme. This option would provide the community with an update on progress since the main engagement undertaken in October 2025.
- 5.11 **Option 3: Support both the “what have we done so far” aspect and build on this with a focus on specific priority theme e.g. Canvey Town Centre.** For the reasons set out in this report, these two elements of work will complement each other to not only keep the local community informed but also continue and build on the conversations held to date on their areas of priority. This approach would also provide momentum to the Board to consider the next steps for the town centre focused projects outline in the Board approved 4 Year Investment Plan.

6 COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Pride in Place programme was established by Government as a community led regeneration programme and aims to empower local people to shape the future of their neighbourhood. The people who live in a community are the ones who know its priorities best and are best placed to drive changes forward and make the programme successful.
- 6.2 Building on existing engagement undertaken with the community, developing relationships and maintaining a two-way dialogue will be key to the successful delivery of the three objectives of the programme:
- Stronger communities
 - Thriving places
 - Taking back control

7 FINANCIAL AND COST CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Within the Investment Plan that sits alongside the Canvey Island Regeneration Plan, it was anticipated the Board would spend £30k on engagement throughout Year 1 of the four-year plan.
- 7.2 The Board is asked to commit £10k of the £30k capacity funding set aside in Year 1 for engagement activities.
- 7.3 This amount would allow for the development and delivery of an attractive and interesting engagement programme and related materials.

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- 7.4 This would leave £20k remaining to commit to further programme level and potential project level engagement activities for the latter half of the financial period.

8 OTHER RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The October 2025 programme of engagement was delivered in partnership with Estuary Festival CIC, Castle Point and Rochford School Sport Partnership, Yellow Door and Castle Point Borough Council.
- 8.2 Given the success of this previous exercise and the quality of information obtained, a similar approach is recommended for this next set of activities.

9 RISKS

- 9.1 Risk assessments will be conducted for the engagement activities as the proposals are finalised and locations, timings agreed to ensure the safety of those delivering the activities and those taking part.

10 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no specific legal considerations to consider as part of this proposal.

Report author:

