Pride in Place — Bentilee & Ubberley Neighbourhood Board 5

Meeting: Pride in Place, Bentilee & Ubberley Neighbourhood Board Meeting 5
Date: 1 October 2026
Time: 1.00pm
Location: Discovery Academy — The Discovery Suite
Co-Chairs: Amy Harris & Simon French
Minute Taker: Waqas Butt

Attendees

Board

Simon French — Co-Chair
Amy Harris – Co-Chair
Cllr Sarah Jane Colclough
Cllr Lyn Watkins
Sha Owusu (Online)
Lee Jones Jr — Ten Count (Online)
Gareth Snell MP (Online)
Donna Firman

Others

Nicola Brown — Communities Manager, Office of Gareth Snell MP
Cassie Weaver — Partnerships & Collaborations Lead, VAST
Waqas Butt — Pride in Place Coordinator VAST
Andy Meakin — Chief Executive, VAST (Online)
Vicki Gwynne — Local Authority Accountable Body representative

Guests

Representatives of the MHCLG

Jas Dolphin
Matt Rudge

Apologies

Louise Davies
Tracey Johnson
Mereoni Jegesa
Steve Adams

Summary of Decisions

D1 Minutes of Board Meeting 4 were approved as an accurate record, subject to agreed corrections concerning, routes for young people outside mainstream school, amendments to the Staffordshire Police section and Making Great Places description.

D2 The Board agreed to continue working towards the 30 November submission for 10 year vision and 4 year plan while accelerating engagement, particularly with children, young people and underrepresented residents, before confirming the final priorities.

D3 The Board agreed that the small-grants programme would use transparent criteria linked to the emerging Plan, supported by a public communications event and an assessment subgroup.

D4 A budget allocation of £70,000 was approved for the first 12 months of the small-grants programme, subject to review.

D5 The draft policy suite was supported in principle, subject to tracked amendments, clarification of data-protection responsibility and final approval at the next meeting.

D6 The Board supported developing the website in the proposed style, with sections for engagement, meetings, policies, declarations of interest and community involvement.

D7 For current Board vacancies, the existing expression-of-interest list will be reviewed and proposed appointments brought to the next meeting for a Board vote; the wider recruitment approach will also be reviewed.

Minutes from the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Board reviewed the actions and wording from Meeting 4Members confirmed that costings and the basis for any engagement support must be clearly recorded. The previous minutes will be amended to reflect routes to young people who are home educated, in alternative provision, educated elsewhere or absent for medical reasons; to add the Staffordshire Police engagement contribution; and to clarify that Making Great Places is delivered in partnership rather than solely by the City Council.

November Submission — First Draft and Submission Timeline

The first draft of the investment plan was presented. Early evidence identified strong themes around community power, trust and belonging; children and young people; a safer neighbourhood; proud, green and welcoming spaces; and health and wellbeing. Members stressed that these themes remain provisional until wider engagement has tested them.

The engagement dashboard showed that most responses were from residents

and that participation from people aged 16–24 remained comparatively low. Members asked for more granular analysis by postcode and accessibility, including whether roads or other barriers affect access to parks and activities. The Board also asked for richer qualitative evidence on what children and young people want, rather than relying only on views about existing provision.

Schools, colleges, community organisations and upcoming events will be used to increase participation before the next meeting. The Board supported a focused push to secure substantially more responses and to validate or amend the emerging priorities before the submission deadline.

Small Grants — Criteria, Communications, Financial Allocation and Approval Mechanism

The Board confirmed the proposed grant levels of £1,000, £3,000 and £5,000. Applications will be assessed against criteria linked to the final Plan priorities. A communications event will explain the programme, eligibility and application process consistently to residents and organisations. A conflict-free subgroup will assess applications using a documented scoring mechanism before recommendations progress through the agreed decision route. Staffs Community Foundation will support non-constituted or newly formed groups where an accountable organisation is required. The Board approved a £70,000 allocation for the first year, to be reviewed after 12 months.

Policies — Agreement and Feedback

The Board reviewed the draft Code of Conduct, safeguarding, complaints, conflict of interest, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, data protection and scheme-of-delegation documents. Members will submit tracked amendments. The Board favoured using the accountable body's safeguarding arrangements, subject to confirmation, and agreed an escalation route for complaints and concerns from Board member or Secretariat to the Co-Chairs, accountable body and, where necessary, the Ministry. Responsibility for data protection will be clarified before final approval.

Policies Training Plan — Timetable

A programme of short training sessions will cover the role of a Board member, conduct, conflicts of interest, safeguarding, equality and inclusion, complaints, good governance and data protection. Sessions will be scheduled across future meetings and led by suitable contributors.

Financial Report

A verbal update was provided on the figures contained in the financial report.

£150k capacity funding (paid to VAST)

Not yet processed Sep costs, so as last month, spend **£18,762**, committed **£44,620**

Additionally, C&W engagement activity has been commissioned so additional spend **£20,760**

Remaining capacity funding **£65,858**

Revenue Funding £273k

Costs for Vicki Gwynne and team from April, **£4,131**

Capital Funding **£118k** No spend

Community Engagement & Comms

The Board previewed the Our Bentilee Our Future website and supported its clean, accessible design. Required content includes the survey, Board meetings, policies, register of interests, events and clearer wording inviting residents to get involved. Hosting, permissions, the domain and ongoing update arrangements remain to be finalised.

Carse Waterman will hold an engagement session at Alpha Academy on 15 October. Members also discussed coordinating the Winter Fayre and other community events so that responsibilities, security, promotion and Pride in Place branding are clear.

Work to establish local youth groups is progressing with Discovery Academy, Eaton Park, Maple Court, colleges and other education and youth partners. Each participating organisation will run its own group and nominate two ambassadors to the federated Youth Board. The first Youth Board meeting remains planned for December. Further effort will be made to involve settings that have not yet responded and young people outside school-based routes.

Meeting Date	Action	Owner	Progress
01/10/26	Increase engagement responses, including focused work with schools, colleges, young people and underrepresented groups;	**Waqas Butt / Cassie Weaver**	**Update next meeting**

	provide updated analysis by postcode and accessibility.		
01/10/26	Prepare small-grants criteria, scoring mechanism, governance route and communications-event material.	**VAST**	**Urgent; before programme launch**
01/10/26	Confirm the membership of the small-grants subgroup, ensuring conflicts of interest are excluded.	**Co-Chairs / Secretariat**	**Report next meeting**
01/10/26	Submit tracked amendments to the draft policies and clarify safeguarding and data-protection responsibilities.	**Board members / Cassie Weaver / Vicki Gwynne**	**Final sign-off next meeting**
01/10/26	Schedule the Board-member training programme, including a data-protection session.	**VAST / Secretariat**	**Plan across future meetings**
01/10/26	Share the latest finance statement with the Secretariat once September entries are processed.	**Vicki Gwynne**	**Pending finance update**
01/10/26	Finalise website hosting, permissions, domain, content structure and update process.	**Sven / Alpha Academies / VAST**	**In progress**
01/10/26	Coordinate the Winter Fayre and other engagement events with delivery partners.	**Waqas Butt / Cassie Weaver / Alpha**	**In progress**
01/10/26	Continue onboarding schools and youth organisations and confirm two ambassadors from each local youth group.	**Waqas Butt / Sha Owusu / Nicola Brown**	**Before December Youth Board**
01/10/26	Review the existing Board-member expression-of-interest list and bring proposed appointment(s) to the next meeting.	**Co-Chairs / Secretariat**	**Board vote next meeting**

Date of Next Meeting

Date: Thursday 15 October 2026

Venue: The Discovery Academy 4pm-6pm