
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

20 May 2026

Council

Title: Pride in Place

Purpose: To seek approval for the appointments of the respective new Chairs for the Irvine and the Three Towns Neighbourhood Boards and delegated authority arrangements.

Recommendation: That Council:

- a) Notes the update on the Pride in Place Programmes for Irvine and the Three Towns;
 - b) Approves the appointment of the Irvine Neighbourhood Board Chair;
 - c) Approves the appointment of the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board Chair; and
 - d) Provides delegated authority to the Executive Director (Communities and Housing) to prepare the required information for submission to UK Government in consultation with both the Irvine and the Three Towns Neighbourhood Boards.
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In September 2025, UK Government's Pride in Place Programme (PiPP) was published to update and replace the previous 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' programme. The new phase of PiPP includes the Three Towns, along with Irvine, which was previously announced in September 2023.
- 1.2 The Three Towns Neighbourhood Board requires to be formed by 17 July 2026, in line with UK Government requirements. The Neighbourhood Board will be led by an independent Chair, appointed by the local authority acting as accountable body, and the local MP. UK Government guidance states the Chair should be selected through public competition.
- 1.3 The Irvine Neighbourhood Board Chair resigned in early 2026 for personal reasons. In line with the approach taken above in the Three Towns, the new Chair is to be appointed through a public competition.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the recruitment process for the role of Chair for both Boards and seeks approval to appoint the preferred candidates.

2. Background

- 2.1 The UK Government's Pride in Place Programme (PiPP) was published on 25 September 2025, building upon the previous 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' programme currently being delivered in Irvine and selected areas across the UK. PiPP is a UK-wide programme providing a ten-year investment to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This new phase of PiPP builds on the existing programme which is providing 75 towns across the UK with up to £20 million each, totalling £1.5 billion over ten years. The programme aims to build strong, resilient and integrated communities, with this phase providing additional 169 neighbourhoods across Great Britain with £20 million over ten years.
- 2.2 The funding requires to be managed by a partnership between the:
- Neighbourhood Board, responsible for co-producing the Pride in Place Plan for their place, which constitutes a ten-year vision and four-year investment plan and delivering in the interests of local people to improve the physical and social infrastructure of their community.
 - Local Authority, who will support the Neighbourhood Board to develop and deliver the plan, and act as the accountable body at the start of the programme.
 - MP, who has a key role in supporting the Chair and the Neighbourhood Board informing the work and in engaging the community it represents.
 - Local community, to shape the place's priorities.
- 2.3 Each Neighbourhood Board will be led by an independent Chair, appointed and approved by the local MP and local authority. The Chair will act as a champion for the place and local people, organising engagement that reaches out into the community, to ensure decision-making is community-led. The Chair will lead the process of recruiting and convening the Board, with the support of the local authority and the local MP. In line with UK Government requirements, the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board membership requires to be confirmed by 17 July 2026.
- 2.4 The recruitment of the Chairs was undertaken through a public competition, as required by the UK Government Guidance. An expression of interest process was undertaken for any prospective candidates to apply for the role. A shortlisting exercise was conducted by Council Officers. Candidates were scored against the requirements of the role and those who met the essential criteria were invited to interview.
- 2.5 Each panel consisted of the respective MP, Chair of the respective LPP and the Chief Executive. Due to late diary changes/availability the MP and Chief Executive met with the shortlisted candidates for the Three Towns. For Irvine the Chair of the LPP and the Chief Executive met with the candidates, the Chief Executive subsequently confirmed agreement of the preferred candidate with the MP. A verbal update of the preferred candidate for each position will be provided to Council at the meeting.
- 2.6 Following appointment of the Chair, Officers will work with the new Chair to form the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board, ahead of the deadline for submission to the UK Government in July 2026. This will be developed in line with the guidance outlined in the PiPP Prospectus. The Prospectus outlines that Boards must have at least eight members, with at least 51% living or working in the neighbourhood and membership should reflect local diversity. Required representation includes the relevant MP and,

where applicable the MSP, at least one ward councillor, and a wider majority of non-elected community representatives drawn from local groups, businesses, cultural organisations and anchor institutions. The boundary of the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board covers two Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies and two local Council Wards (eight Elected Members). This will require further consideration in forming the membership of the Board. Similarly to the Irvine Neighbourhood Board, the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board will operate as a sub-group of the Locality Planning Partnership. The proposed membership of the Board will therefore be developed and considered at the forthcoming Three Towns Locality Planning Partnership meeting and will be the subject of a future report to Council in June 2026. A proposal will be submitted to the Locality Planning Partnership recommending the Three Towns Board be established to include the MP, The Chair, two MSPs, three Ward Members and six Community Representatives.

- 2.7 The Regeneration Plan for Irvine was submitted to the UK Government on 28 November 2025 and approved by Cabinet on 2 December 2026. The Plan includes a ten-year Vision document and a four-year investment plan developed through a process of ongoing public consultation and engagement, including online surveys, community outreach and public consultation events. Confirmation was received of the UK Government's strong endorsement of the Plan on 22 March 2026. Following appointment, Officers will support the new Chair and the Board to progress delivery of the approved Plan.
- 2.8 Following the formation of the shared Economic Development Service between North and East Ayrshire Councils, the Regeneration Team, who lead the delivery of the two PiPP workstreams for North Ayrshire Council as the accountable body, will move to the Communities and Housing Directorate from 1 June 2026. Delegated authority is therefore requested for the Executive Director (Communities & Housing) to prepare the required information for submission, by the July 2026 deadline, to UK Government in consultation with the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That Council:
- a) Notes the update on the Pride in Place Programmes for Irvine and the Three Towns;
 - b) Approves the appointment of the Irvine Neighbourhood Board Chair;
 - c) Approves the appointment of the Three Towns Neighbourhood Board Chair; and.
 - d) Provides delegated authority to the Executive Director (Communities and Housing) to prepare the required information for submission to UK Government in consultation with both the Irvine and the Three Towns Neighbourhood Boards.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 The total award per neighbourhood has been confirmed as £19.509m. The Financial Assistance power under Section 50 of the UK Internal Market Act will be used to fund the neighbourhoods directly.

Human Resources

4.2 Additional staff resource, in line with the Irvine Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Officer, may be required to support the delivery of the Three Towns PIPP and the development of a Regeneration Plan. The cost of this will require to be met by the targeted capacity revenue funding provided under the Programme.

Legal

4.3 The legal implications of the Pride in Place Programme will be considered through its development and Legal advice taken as necessary. Legal agreements will be developed on a project-by-project basis as required with support from Legal Services. Negotiation in relation to any land and building acquisitions will be undertaken as necessary with support from the Council's Legal Services and Property Management and Investment Service.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Fund aims to support town centre regeneration and promote economic development. The development and implementation of both Pride in Place Plans will provide opportunities to:

- Reverse economic, social and physical decline and reduce socio-economic disadvantage within neighbourhoods.
- Tackle long term vacant and derelict land and buildings thereby reducing their levels and impact on the community; and
- Build community wealth and tackle local deprivation through the regeneration of the neighbourhoods by maximising the potential of land and assets.

An initial screening will be undertaken to establish if an Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment is required for individual programme elements on a case-by-case basis.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The development and delivery of Regeneration Plans for both Irvine and the Three Towns will enable the delivery of projects aimed at revitalising the areas. This could include promoting and improving active travel, reducing vacant and derelict land and carbon reduction measures. This aligns with the priorities of the Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy and the commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

Key Priorities

4.6 The development and implementation of the two programmes will support a number of the Council Plan's priorities and strategic aims of:

- Wellbeing: To transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
- Communities and Local Democracy: We will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- Climate Change: To achieve net-zero by 2030.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 PiPP has the local community at the heart of its methodology. It aims to ensure investment is targeted at local priorities and will empower local communities to contribute to the regeneration of their areas. A Community Wealth Building approach will be adopted to the development of the Regeneration Plans to ensure delivery contributes across the pillars of:

- Land and Assets: by supporting equitable land development and the development of underutilised assets for community use.
- Procurement: through the inclusion of appropriate community benefit of local supplier clauses within projects; and by creating local supply chain opportunities and supporting delivery by smaller scale and local contractors where appropriate.
- Fair Employment: by supporting the creation of employment opportunities particularly within the construction sector. Where North Ayrshire is procuring services, through our enhanced Community Benefits approach we will seek to ensure the creation of local training and work experience opportunities. Consideration will also be given to delivery through employability programmes where appropriate.
- Financial Power: by investing in the town centre and leveraging additional external investment.

Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)

4.8 None.

United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

4.9 None.

Consumer Duty

4.10 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 The PiPP aims to ensure that local people are at the heart of decisions, through direct membership of the Neighbourhood Board and through a requirement to engage widely on the regeneration plans. The Regeneration Plan for the Three Towns will therefore follow the approach taken in Irvine and be developed through co-production with the Neighbourhood Board and extensive engagement with stakeholders. This approach has been informed by engagement with Connected Communities. It will build on work to date, Locality Partnership's priorities, the Regeneration Delivery Plan and previous consultation exercises.

5.2 The Regeneration Plan for Irvine was co-produced with the Neighbourhood Board and informed by extensive engagement with the public and stakeholders. It builds on work to date, the Locality Partnership's priorities, the Regeneration Delivery Plan and previous consultation exercises. An online survey was used to further test the support of the Irvine community for the plan and to ensure that it is representative of the

priorities identified by the community. Consultation with Irvine Locality Partnership has been formalised, with regular updates at both meetings, which will continue throughout the delivery phase.

- 5.3 Updates have been provided to the Three Towns Locality Partnership on the Programme. Through this, agreement was obtained alongside approval for the interim governance approach and the formation of the Board as a sub-group of the Locality Partnership. Representation on the Neighbourhood Board will be informed by engagement with the Locality Partnership and Connected Communities. Regular updates will be provided at Locality Partnership meetings throughout the Programme.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Claire Fitzsimmons, Senior Manager Regeneration**, on **01294 315305**.

Background Papers

Cabinet Report – Long-Term Plan for Towns, 5 December 2023

Council Report – Irvine Town Centre: Long-Term Plan for Towns, 18 September 2024

Council Report – Irvine: Plan for Neighbourhoods, 14 May 2025

Cabinet Report – Pride in Place Programme, 2 December 2025