

Council responds to 'transparency' concerns over £19.6m Pride in Place programme

by Sam Hawcroft

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EAST Riding Council has moved to reassure residents that a £19.6 million regeneration programme for Withernsea East and Patrington will be open and community-led after concerns were raised over transparency and the make-up of its new board.

Patrington resident Lynn Massey-Davis wrote to interim board chairman Jayne Nendick and the East Riding Pride in Place team after discovering that the inaugural meeting of the Withernsea East and Patrington Pride in Place Board, due to take place at the Shores Centre on Friday, would not be open to the public.

In her letter, which has also been shared publicly on social media, Mrs Massey-Davis said she was "shocked and disappointed" that members of the public would not be able to observe how the board operated, given its role in overseeing investment in local communities over the next 10 years.

She said: "As this board is tasked with overseeing the allocation of £19.6 million of public money over the next 10 years, a closed-door approach to decision-making sets a worrying precedent that directly undermines public trust."

Mrs Massey-Davis said she accepted that advisory partnerships might not be bound by the same statutory open-meeting duties as local councils and other public bodies, but argued that the "spirit" of the Pride in Place programme required community oversight.

She also questioned the selection process for community representation on the board, having applied for a place and not been appointed.

Mrs Massey-Davis cited her experience as a long-standing resident of South East Holderness, her background in regeneration and grant assessment, and previous public sector board roles, and asked whether seats were being filled on the basis of "political alignment".

She called for the board to publish a transparency protocol, a conflict-of-interest register, the assessment criteria used to select members, a guarantee of ultra-local procurement where possible and a strategy to recruit staff from within the local community where possible.

In its response, East Riding Council said Friday's board meeting would be its first and was being held in line with guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and in keeping with how other Pride in Place boards were operating.

It said the meeting's main purpose would be to introduce members, outline the programme and begin early discussions.

The council said governance arrangements, including draft terms of reference, a code of conduct and declarations of interest, were among the key items due to be considered.

It added that, because the first meeting had not yet taken place, no minutes or decisions were available to publish.

Responding to concerns over the board selection process, the council said this had been undertaken by an independent panel in line with criteria agreed with the MHCLG.

It said all applications had been carefully considered against those criteria.

The council also noted that Mrs Massey-Davis had been invited to be involved in sub-groups as the programme develops, with further opportunities expected for a wider range of stakeholders to contribute.

A statement from Regeneration and Funding said: "The Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board is not a formal public decision-making committee, but a partnership body responsible for coordinating and overseeing delivery of the programme. As such, it is not required to operate in the same way as statutory council committees."

However, the council stressed that transparency and community engagement were important to the programme.

It said agendas and minutes would be published, and the board would be expected



KEY DECISIONS: The new board for Withernsea East and Patrington Pride in Place will hold its first meeting on Friday

to maintain ongoing engagement with local communities. The board would also determine its governance arrangements collectively, including how openness would be achieved.

The council added that the board might also invite stakeholders or accept questions where appropriate as part of its developing approach to engagement.

A dedicated Pride in Place page has already been created on the East Riding Council website where key documents are being made available.

The council said further protocols, including transparency arrangements and a conflict-of-interest register, were expected to be developed and agreed ahead of the board's second meeting.

Dates for future meetings have not yet been agreed and are due to be discussed by the board.

No projects have yet been identified and no funding decisions have been made.

The council said it agreed strongly with the importance of supporting local organisations and delivery partners, maximising local employment opportunities and ensuring investment delivered

sustainable community benefit.

It said these were likely to form core principles within the regeneration plan, which would be shaped by the board with "significant community input" over the coming months.

The council said public engagement was already under way, including a live survey and outreach across parishes.

It said 24 engagement activities had taken place so far across all parishes in the Pride in Place area, with more than 800 responses received.

The statement added: "To address concerns raised about how the board may operate, we would like to assure you that guidance set out by MHCLG is being followed to ensure transparency in line with the principles of public life and that the local community can hold the board to account."

"This programme represents a significant opportunity for South East Holderness."

"We are keen to ensure it begins positively and constructively, and we would welcome your continued involvement in helping to achieve successful outcomes for the area."

Work experience success 'highlights strong links with employers'

by Gazette Reporter

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HOLDERNESS Academy is celebrating the success of its year 10 work experience programme after 96 per cent of students secured and completed placements this year.

At a time when schools nationally are facing increasing challenges in sourcing meaningful work experience opportunities for young people, the



CAREER OPTIONS: Left, Charlie A and Jaydon H at Hedon Primary School; above, Katie B, Gracie S and Charlotte W at Hedon Nursery School; right, Alfie J-C at Inmans Primary School

academy said the figure reflected the strength of its careers education and links with employers.

The programme gave students placements across a range of sectors including education, engineering, business and energy, helping them to develop employability skills, confidence and a better understanding of future career options.

The academy said the work also supported the nationally recognised

Gatsby Benchmarks for careers education, particularly Benchmark 6: Experiences of Workplaces, which forms part of the Government's updated careers guidance for schools.

Carl Derbyshire, careers lead at Holderness Academy, said: "Each year our work experience programme grows from strength to strength due to the support from both internal and external providers. A special mention goes to Inmans Primary School, QPD

and Centrica for taking several learners during the course of the week in May.

"I'm incredibly proud that our Year 10 cohort care about their futures and actively seek placements that match their own career aspirations and ambitions."

The academy also thanked local employers and partners including Inmans Primary School, QPD and Centrica for supporting the programme.

Recent national research from

the Careers & Enterprise Company has highlighted the importance of employer encounters and workplace experiences in improving young people's career readiness and reducing the risk of students becoming NEET – not in education, employment or training.

Holderness Academy said it would continue to strengthen links with employers and industry partners to help students prepare for their next steps.

