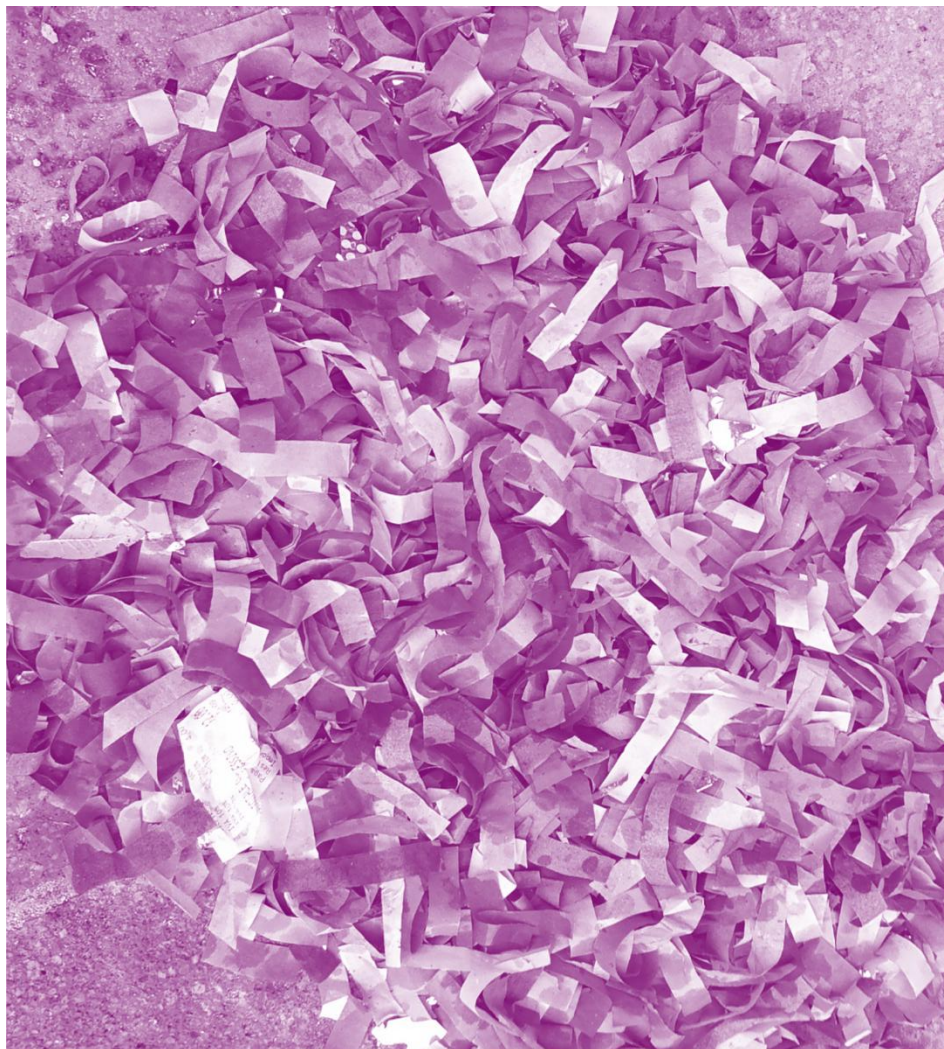


JN Working Paper #7:

PiPP Phase 1 - overview of past activity, board composition, engagement and community-led planning in England

July 2026



PiPP Phase 1 - overview of past activity, board composition, engagement and community-led planning in England.

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1. Introduction

This is the last in a series of working papers on neighbourhood scale planning activity across the UK, produced through the Just Neighbourhoods? research project (JN)¹. The paper accompanies JN Working Paper#6 (Parker *et al.*, 2026a), which set out to highlight where and how neighbourhood plans and community engagement at the neighbourhood level correspond with the recently announced Pride in Place programme (PiPP) areas (Phases 1 and 2). That paper highlighted how PiPP, as the latest government funded regeneration initiative to be rolled out, corresponds to pre-existing ‘community-led’ planning activity. This focus on current neighbourhoods policy remains pertinent to the JN work, given wider pressure from the VCSE and neighbourhoods themselves to engage communities more effectively in local priority setting. Meanwhile, the Pride in Place Programme (and accompanying prospectus) has positioned meaningful community engagement with residents at the neighbourhood scale as a defining feature, along with resident leadership and the ‘co-production’ of PiPP regeneration plans.

This paper offers one of the first reviews of the PiPP programme in real time². Presenting a desk study of the fifty-eight PiPP phase one areas in England based on accessible information. It reviews the presence or absence of past regeneration activity and community planning in each of the areas. It also provides an initial overview of how community engagement has been undertaken in the planning stages of the programme, particularly with regards to the development and practice of Neighbourhood Boards, a governance structure put in place to ‘co-produce’ the PiPP Plan in each area (see annexes). The research was conducted between May and July 2026 and Boards will inevitably publish additional documentation or updates. Nonetheless, the study provides a snapshot of the state of the Phase 1 PiPP Boards at a moment in time.

As such, the paper reports a desk review, which involved a time-limited, exploratory study of transparency and of what each Board had placed in the public domain at the time of the research. Its findings describe what could be found (and therefore cannot guarantee the totality of what has happened). That distinction is itself a finding. If a resident, researcher or journalist cannot locate evidence of engagement, then for practical purposes of accountability it is not visible to the community it concerns.

The paper concludes by pointing to further research avenues to help better understand the dynamics of PiPP, community-led planning and the role of local citizens in shaping their own future.

¹see: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/justclp/>

²Building on JN Working Paper #6, see: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/justclp/just-neighbourhoods/>

2. PiPP in overview

The Pride in Place programme was launched in Spring 2025 as the “flagship communities programme which empowers local people to shape the future of their neighbourhood” (MHCLG, 2026). PiPP has been described by government as a 10-year community-led programme focused on places that have been “overlooked and left behind,” with up to £20 million of funding provided per targetted area. The first tranche of areas across the UK (x75 total, x58 England) was a follow-on to the Long-Term Plan for Towns fund. One of the differences is the way in which PiPP has been framed with significant emphasis on community involvement. The PiPP prospectus asserts that:

“communities know what changes they want to see... Everyone should have a say in the future of their area, particularly those that have previously felt left out of decision-making... To make this happen, Boards must lead organising across their community, carrying out extensive engagement with the people who live there and use a range of approaches to involve different people in decision-making in a way that works for them.” (MHCLG, 2025b).

One of PiPP’s most striking features is its approach to governance. Governance, including decisions over how the money is spent locally, is routed through Neighbourhood or Town Boards - legacies of the superseded ‘Long-term Plan for Towns’ and ‘Plan for Neighbourhoods’³ working closely with local authorities and MPs. Considerable weight is placed on the chair and the wider membership of the Board to oversee deep engagement with the local community to design and develop a plan to regenerate the area. The Chair and Board are then tasked with taking that plan forward and putting it into action.

The associated engagement is required to align with the MHCLG listed 10 best practice principles of:

<i>Engage from the start</i>	<i>Effective community organising</i>	<i>Focus on those less likely to be heard</i>	<i>Build on existing assets & connections in the community</i>
<i>Involve people in decision-making</i>	<i>Make time for meaningful engagement</i>	<i>Actively listen to the local community</i>	<i>Invite challenge and scrutiny</i>
	<i>Get out into the community & be creative</i>	<i>Delegate roles to community groups</i>	

The Chair leads on the recruitment of Board members. Typically comprising 8-10 people, including non-elected/non-political, and at least 50% of members should live or work within the boundaries of the neighbourhood. According to national government guidance, Neighbourhood Boards should reflect the range and diversity of the area, while

³see: MHCLG / DLUHC, 2024

also being expected to comprise local elected politicians, community leaders, and representatives from business, education and the police.

Neighbourhood Boards are expected to submit evidence showing that they have delivered a programme of community engagement in the design and development of their areas' PiPP regeneration plan. Requirements for deep and authentic community engagement are reiterated in the updated government guidance on the process for developing PiPP regeneration plans. It states that:

*“Neighbourhood Boards must work with local people and the local authority to draft a Pride in Place Plan...the Plan should outline the community’s overarching vision for change over the next decade to deliver the strategic objectives of the Programme, **developed through grassroots engagement to reflect local people’s priorities.** This Plan **must be co-produced by residents in the neighbourhood with meaningful community engagement** such as listening campaigns, community conversations, community workshops or resident forums” (MHCLG, 2026, no pagination, *our emphasis*).*

MHCLG have expressed an aim for the PiPP / regeneration plans, that:

*“Residents will be supported to identify local needs and make decisions about the future of their neighbourhood, and to develop local partnerships and achieve their goals... and **ensure communities have the support to take the lead on issues that matter to them**” (MHCLG, 2025b: para. 153-155).*

There has been significant research and evidence on the limitations of community engagement approaches in previous regeneration programmes, as discussed in JN WP#6. For example, lessons from the New Deal for Communities programme highlighted the importance of:

*“allowing time for the magnitude of ‘setting up’ tasks involved in regeneration schemes, to ensure better outcomes at the end of a decade of investment. This means setting aside funding and time to ensure that the foundations of the Programme are secure, including employing the right people, selecting effective management systems, **and establishing processes for community involvement.**” (PiPP plans guidance, MHCLG, 2026).*

In response to evidence and evaluation from the New Deal for Communities, as well as other previous neighbourhood regeneration initiatives, PiPP is intended to give time and resources for genuine community engagement and leadership. The PiPP explanatory material is explicit about this community emphasis:

*“Policies are too often done ‘to’ communities, rather than ‘with’ them. This results in a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach that doesn’t meet the different needs of places and the people who live in them. We want to empower people across the country to take back control of the decisions that impact them, with local residents able to actively drive positive change in their communities. That is why we are committing to **giving communities new tools and powers to shape their areas** – so that they can play a part in improving the very places that they are so passionate about.” (MHCLG, 2025b: para. 134, *our emphasis*).*

3. Desk study

3.1 Limitations

There are three issues of scope and limitation to be noted. First, this is a product of desk research conducted over a ten-week window; Boards were not contacted directly, and no inference about the quality of unpublished activity should be drawn from its absence online, or what was found during the desk research. Second, PiPP is at an early stage, and much of the activity reviewed pre-dates the government's 2026 guidance (as set out above). Third, the work is a snapshot and boards will continue to evolve and publish, and some findings will date quickly. Within those limits, the review shows what a member of the public seeking to understand their local Board would find at the time of writing.

3.2 Findings

In a recent internal exploratory work by 3ni on the progress within and across Phase 1 PiPP areas, it was identified that there were:

- Significant levels of inconsistency
- Variable governance models and ways of working
- Prioritisation of physical regeneration
- Community engagement saw pockets of good practice but at the time the research was carried out, this was often light touch and weak (3ni, October 2025, internal working paper).

The stage of the study set out in this paper examines past neighbourhood activity in the area, the make-up and practice of each area's Neighbourhood Board, and community inputs to the PiPP regeneration plan in each English neighbourhood (n=58) in PiPP phase 1.

In this stage of the work, we wanted to understand what had been involved, observably, in preparing the regeneration plans in each area and, more specifically, what level of community involvement there had been in designing and developing them. We also wanted to map out what community planning activity was present prior to the PiPP programme inception in Spring 2025. We have set out what we have learned below (and see [annexes](#) for further information). This is followed by a short reflection and conclusion which sets out some next steps for research.

3.3 General themes

Overall, there is limited detail or clarity on how PiPP is operating on the ground – immediately raising questions over transparency and the ability for local communities and others to understand what and why PiPP is operating as it is in each area. Despite this, we can distil a dozen main findings from the review such as:

- **It appears that a shift from physical regeneration to people-focused plans has taken place.** This will have been influenced by the Government's updated terms of reference for the Boards⁴.
- **Boards continue to be chaired by figures from education establishments, voluntary sector organisations and private businesses.** Since the first phase of PiPP research, there appears very little sign of a move towards full community governance on any Board at this stage – though some more explicitly recognise the need for better community involvement.
- When the Long-Term Plan for Towns became the Plan for Neighbourhoods, many boards changed their name from Town Board to Neighbourhood Board. The rebrand to Pride in Place has not had the same impact: **very few have changed their name to Pride in Place Board.** The labels of Town Board and Neighbourhood Board remain much more common.
- **There is a notable increase in professional consultants being commissioned by the boards to:** i. undertake public engagement, and ii. draft the strategy plan submission to MHCLG - compared to initial review work carried out by 3ni (2025).
- Whilst a bigger emphasis has been placed on people-focused initiatives, **town centre improvements are still a major concern** – and this is widely reflected in public engagement. Improvements to the public realm, bringing disused retail outlets to use and improving access to town centres are common aims.
- Across the sample, there is a focus on **young people, aspirations and skills**, with provision for young people – and specific consultation of young people through schools, youth groups and other settings – a feature of most strategic plans.
- **Tackling anti-social behaviour and improving community safety** appear paramount to residents and are widely reflected in investment plans. Making town centres safe is mentioned frequently. A focus on youth disorder is also common, with new youth activities often proposed as a solution.
- **Doubly disadvantaged areas⁵, and how to approach these, are not explicitly discussed** in any investment plan. Support or advice for Neighbourhood Boards would be helpful for them to better understand the concept and develop a response to it.

⁴see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-programme-prospectus/pride-in-place-programme-governance-and-boundary-guidance>

⁵Doubly disadvantaged neighbourhoods (DDNs) are those experiencing severe socio-economic deprivation, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), and a lack of foundational social infrastructure, as measured by the Community Needs Index (CNI). DDNs are those areas that fall within the bottom 10 per cent of both the IMD and the CNI.

- **Improved social capital and social infrastructure are rarely mentioned** in explicit terms, but the concepts do often manifest in Board objectives to establish more and better places for the community to meet.
- **There are some examples of innovative or novel approaches to public engagement** but, broadly speaking, online surveys are the most common form of engagement that Boards undertake. Generic resident audiences are the main focus of engagement; there is only one example of a Board which did not consult residents at all (focusing exclusively upon business instead).
- It is notable that **health and wellbeing are integrated into programmes**, for example in terms of improved access to health services, co-location of health services, or wellbeing and fitness opportunities being provided. This reflects greater recent emphasis on people rather than physical regeneration.
- There is a widely held view that **arts, culture and sport serve the dual purpose of fostering togetherness and civic pride**, as well as being worthwhile parts of a physical regeneration scheme. That is to say, there is a recognition that each of these will not only increase footfall on high streets (for example) but improve community relations.

3.4 PiPP neighbourhoods - past activity

In terms of past regeneration activity (and see [annex 3](#)), across the 58 English phase one PiPP neighbourhoods, we discerned that most had received funding from one or more of the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, the Future High Streets Fund, the Big Local programme, or funds specifically allocated for coastal communities.

26 of the 58 English Phase one areas were Towns Fund areas (a total of 101 areas received that funding), which involved the production of a town investment plan, with most receiving £20m+. We have identified that some boards appear to have switched over to manage PiPP following the policy shift under the change of government in 2024, and therefore a degree of retreading of pre-existing programme requirements may also account for some of the gap between PiPP expectations and early performance.

The Future High Streets Fund (FHS) was dedicated to the renewal of high streets, which involved public transport improvements, pedestrianisation, and the repurposing of vacant commercial space. Of the 58 PiPP areas in England, 8 received FHS funding (i.e. the town centres of: [Great Yarmouth](#), [Blyth](#), [Farnworth](#), [Grimsby](#), [Rotherham](#), [Barnsley](#), [Scunthorpe](#), [Ramsgate](#)).

The Big Local programme, although distinct from council-led capital funds, is of interest here due to the focus on the improvement of neighbourhoods through resident-led partnerships, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and supported by Local Trust. Fifteen PiPP areas overlapped with Big Local areas (including [Boston](#), [Canvey](#)

Island, Ladybrook (Mansfield), Jarrow, Clifton, Leigh West, Bradley, Keighley valley, Northwood Together (Kirkby), Dewsbury Moor, North East Hastings, Wargrave (Newton-le-Willows), Windmill Hill (Runcorn), Gannow (Burnley), and Dyke House (Hartlepool). Further research could be undertaken to understand the extent to which those involved with the Big Local resident-led partnerships (see Local Trust, no date) are active on the Pride in Place board.

Many PiPP areas have received Levelling Up Funding post-2020 to carry out large-scale projects such as creating transport links or improving cultural assets. It is worth noting that in September 2025 the government announced the consolidation of the Levelling Up Fund and the Towns Deals as the ‘Local Regeneration Fund’. A few areas were identified as receiving little or no national regeneration funding prior to PiPP, notably **Thetford, Washington, Spennymoor, Chadderton, Ryde, and Darlaston**.

3.5 Neighbourhood Boards

There has been a lot of interest in the composition and practices of the boards - given the stated aims of community involvement and co-production associated with PiPP (see section 2). Below we provide an overview of what is known about board operation.

- As noted above, Board Chairs continue to be drawn from education establishments, voluntary sector organisations and private businesses, with very little sign yet of a move towards full community governance.
- The boards were expected to feature strong community representation, but our review shows that where prior funding was present, i.e. Towns Fund, there was a board already established. These were often inherited by the PiPP initiative meaning that **many fall short yet of the intended PiPP governance aspirations**. As we outline in Table 1, the composition of the PiPP boards is variable, in terms of community representation. Board leadership is overwhelmingly drawn from business, further education providers, public services, established VCSE organisations and regeneration professionals. It will be interesting to see how composition could vary in Phase 2 areas of PiPP.

Table 1: Breakdown of types of people chairing PiPP Boards

Sector	Profession / Status	Count
Public sector	Education	8
	Local government (retired)	3
	Fire service	1
	Medicine	1
Private sector	SME	19
	Business development	6

	Sports organisation	2
	Professional chair	1
	Consultant	1
Third/Civil sector	VCS organisation	4
	Housing association	3
	Civic society	3
	Charity	2
	Resident	1

**Note: at the time of publication, there was one vacant Board Chair position due to a resignation.*

There are some exceptions, notably **Ramsgate**, where residents from each ward within the programme geography are explicitly represented. **Rotherham** is chaired by a local resident, while **Darlaston** has six resident board members. **Hartlepool** has a three-layer community-led framework informed by Asset Based Community Development. **Spalding** has a broader range of community organisations represented than other areas. Otherwise, the level and degree of community governance across the sample reviewed in this paper is opaque. In many cases, **published board compositions appear to lack direct community representation altogether.**

Through the process of exploring the board make-up, it was further identified that previous regeneration infrastructure appears to shape PiPP governance. In several areas this was clearly evident, as displayed on local authority websites. Although this may provide capacity and continuity, it does highlight whether the current iteration of neighbourhood regeneration reflected in PiPP will go on to reproduce governance relationships that are not resident-led.

In some areas, minutes of meetings are unavailable, meetings have been stalled, activity is irregular or published information gives very little indication of how community inputs influence decisions.

What is even less clear is how inputs are enabled or dealt with and how decisions will be agreed with the community. This should form part of further research. Indeed, as we discuss below, the credentials of engagement and future action are important components to help address and meet the stated objective of community governance, as outlined earlier.

3.6 Participatory credentials

Across PiPP areas, performance in relation to the extent that members of the local community have been involved in the design and development of regeneration plans, is greatly varied. We reviewed activity and categorised participatory efforts by type (see also **annex 1**), and this gave us an initial insight into the extent to which Boards had organised and committed to community participation.

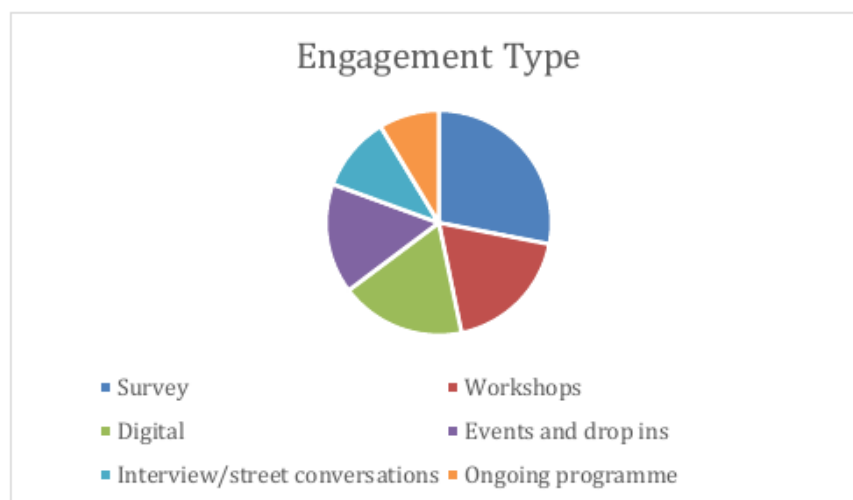
Figure 1: Participation / Input types to the PiPP Plan

Figure 1 above and [annex 2](#) indicate how the available sample of 58 PiPP phase one area performed. No information was found on three of the areas. Thirty of the 58 assessed (51%) had no stated, or only a vague commitment, to future engagement. Of the remainder, only 3 had a detailed strategy, and a further 7 had a clear plan. In terms of methods or type of engagement, thirteen (22%) of the neighbourhoods had claimed an ongoing programme of engagement. The most common engagement method was surveys, used by two-thirds of the PiPP areas (39). Many have used several forms of engagement (see Annex 2 for specific details and [annex 2](#) for evidence of engagement and participatory credentials of PiPP areas).

The degree to which each board has demonstrated the best practice in community engagement, as expected in the PiPP guidance, is variable. The depth and nature of discussions with local people in the community, as well as the end result of engagement, remains unclear. Some areas, including [Thetford](#), claimed a wide reach (of 70,000 people in their consultation), while [Dudley](#) reached over 2,000 people and used 15 community researchers, which involved around 1,000 people. [Scarborough](#) combined 2,000 responses to a survey with in-person engagement, reaching 1,046. In [Clacton-on-Sea](#) there were 600 respondents to the survey and [Great Yarmouth](#) had 700 participants, whereas in [Spalding](#) 190 responses were received, alongside some consultation with local groups. In one area, public engagement was in keeping with the theme of this being an economic growth focused plan the consultation prioritised “key local public and private sector stakeholders”, with most of the engagement (i.e. the survey) being targeted towards businesses (71 in total). For some areas, although there was some evidence of consultation or engagement, there was little information available.

Some areas developed a more targeted approach to engagement. [Ramsgate](#), [Isle of Wight](#), [Carlton](#), [Chadderton](#), [Scarborough](#) and [Royal Sutton Coldfield](#) explicitly identified

young people, disabled or neurodivergent people and ethnic minority communities as people to reach and engage with in the design and development of the area's plan.

It appears that some areas have relied upon previous engagement efforts (such as through the Towns Fund, or other local projects) to garner local peoples' opinions and ambitions, rather than conducting PiPP specific activities. It is not clear whether ongoing engagement is leading to influence over decisions being made, with some having participatory infrastructures. How community input is translated into priorities, investment decisions, or changes to plans also remains opaque.

4. Reflections, conclusion and further research

The launch of PiPP has left questions regarding the basis for prioritisation of areas and extent of community engagement initiatives. There have also been concerns regarding whether sufficient efforts were made to **develop or orient civic infrastructures** prior to its launch.

What our snapshot review demonstrates is that while national government aimed for high and sustained levels of engagement in and with communities. MHCLG have invoked the concept of **co-production**, but at the time of writing this is yet to be widely achieved in PiPP phase one areas, and the full ramifications of the more recent PiPP guidance are as yet unclear.

There is an understandable **gap between behaviour and the later published national policy intent** – set out by MHCLG in 2026. What is notable is there was little early engagement utilising the tools that were suggested in this later government guidance (MHCLG, 2026), including listening campaigns, community conversations, community workshops or resident forums, although we are yet to see how the Boards respond to this recent guidance. So far, there appears to be little evidence of residents being supported in identifying local needs, or supporting community members to take leadership on the issues that are deemed most important. There currently is very little evidence of co-production or deployment of a suitable range of approaches to actively listen and reach those who are less likely to be heard.

There is also an issue with **transparency**, such that we could not find information about some of the PiPP areas, and many had missing information on the participatory elements of the programme. As set out in the introduction, this review is a snapshot of what Boards have published, not a judgement of what they have done. Where little could be found, the question this raises is one of visibility and transparency – and that is a question for the programme's design, not for any individual place. A greater future emphasis on collaborative and more open ways of working would better enable effective public scrutiny, and support insight and learning around PiPP area progress. In this respect, this work demonstrates the need for **greater clarity** over how each PiPP board and governance arrangement corresponds to government requirements – particularly in respect to the role of the local community.

In terms of the means of participation and forms of engagement deployed, current evidence suggests that what has happened to date on the ground falls short of the recent PiPP guidance outlined in the opening sections of this paper - and ostensibly published to inform phase two PiPP areas. At the time of writing, it is apparent that few phase one areas have used meaningful, grassroots engagement techniques to identify local people's priorities.

The final report of the Just Neighbourhoods project and its executive summary (Parker *et al.*, 2026b) provide some helpful pointers,⁶ in relation to co-produced planning, which involved key areas of recommendation under the following headings (in precis form here only):

1. Budget holders and those commissioning plans need to re-examine terms of engagement and scope of hyper-local plans – these should be co-produced and mutually agreed, not imposed by national and local governments.
2. National governments should look at how place planning can be effective in conveying bottom-up knowledge and evidence, reflecting a ‘total place’ approach including the amendment or repurposing of existing tools.
3. Community planners – alongside intermediaries and local and national government – should ensure that the plans inscribe the issues being faced at scale and make clear linkages from issues to policy and on to action.
4. National governments should afford greater status to community-led plans as repositories of aims, issues and priorities that can feed into budget prioritisation, as well as be useful for informing stakeholders - at present plans are too often paid lip-service to but not fully considered by decision-makers.
5. National governments should resource intermediaries with neutral positioning vis-a-vis institutional actors and community interests, explicitly recognising that communities need (paid for) support in plan-making processes; this builds from experience of organisations such as social enterprise consultancies.
6. Support organisations and local authorities should recognise that there are community assets and leaders present within communities and ensure that they are supported to work effectively on both community-led plans and implementation with others; this reflects a recognition of the important role of non-elected, as well as elected, citizens in mobilising the voice of neighbourhood residents.
7. Local authorities and other institutional actors engaging with residents as volunteers need to adopt responsible agency and greater reflective practice; those tasked with supporting, co-producing or overseeing Community Led Planning should be mindful of how their actions affect longer term morale and likely future engagement of residents.
8. National Government could consider trialling special planning and associated institutional arrangements for deprived neighbourhood areas (e.g. Pride in Place neighbourhoods). This stems from established practices of intervention in the UK,

⁶<https://research.reading.ac.uk/justclp/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2026/03/JN-Final-Report-March-2026.pdf>

where regeneration of some areas is deemed necessary via special vehicles (such as local development corporations).

Further research in this space could therefore usefully explore:

- Actual experience of PiPP Plan preparation from the community perspective.
- Understanding and experience of the governance arrangements surrounding PiPP.
- Exploration of the use of prior knowledge and ‘existing assets’ i.e. existing evidence and plans / strategy that have had significant community input in PiPP areas.
- Communication issues - as part of the above, the approaches taken to communication and the influence of Big Local and other schemes on PiPP operation.
- Understanding of how prioritised actions will lead to change that impacts on the very basis of PiPP prioritisation i.e. linkage to socio-economic status of such areas.
- Linkage of PiPP action to other forms and tools of local governance - particularly local plans and related planning policy documents (and see [annex 5](#) for further information on the PiPP areas with Neighbourhood Planning activity).

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Annex 1: PiPP information and data scope

a. Board composition and operation

- Governance (including future plans for community-led governance) - updates relating to the governance of the Boards. Indication of whether discussions have started regarding community-led Boards.
- Summary of Plans - The content of the strategic and financial plans of the Boards.
- Public Engagement - How public engagement has been undertaken, any case studies of innovative practice.
- Doubly Disadvantaged Areas - how Boards that cover doubly disadvantaged areas deal with these areas.
- Social Infrastructure and Social Capital - references to social infrastructure or social capital – and how these appear in Board documents.

b. Understanding and measuring the levels of public engagement for comparison across areas.

1. Does the regen plan reference engagement via other schemes / plans (special attention to any mention of planning documents) informing the plan?

- o Reference other regeneration scheme engagement (e.g. Towns Fund, Big Local)
- o Reference a planning document
- o Detail of what planning document(s) involved.

2. Type of engagement – methods used?

- o Surveys
- o Interviews/street convos
- o Workshops/Focus groups
- o Events / drop ins
- o Digital
- o Ongoing programme.

3. Breadth of reach – who is engaged?

- o General public
- o Targeted groups
- o Underrepresented groups explicitly mentioned.

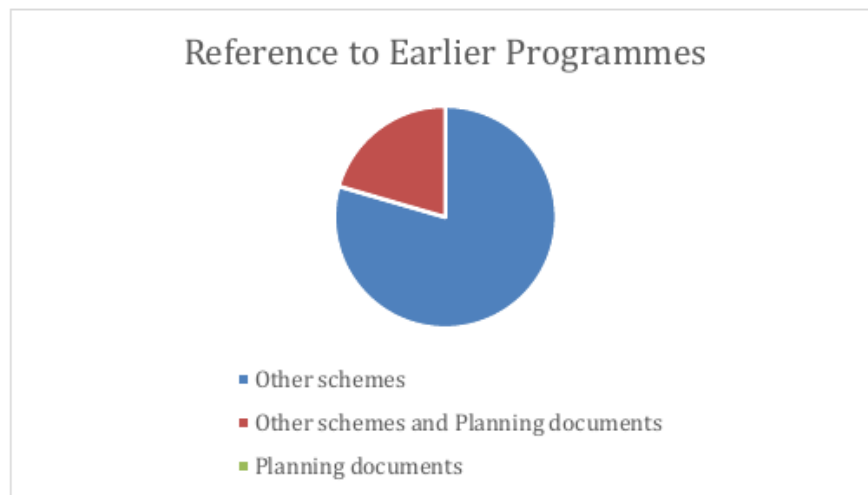
4. How well is future engagement described?

- o Not specified / vague
- o General statement (e.g. of 'we will')
- o Clear plan with methods and audiences described
- o Detailed strategy with a named programme.

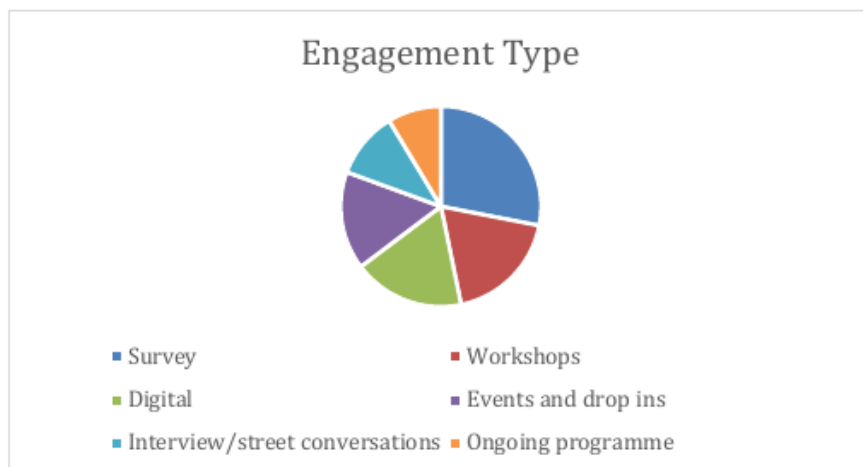
Annex 2: Participation credentials

This annex sets out how participation has been organised across the PiPP areas.

First, we wanted to see if **previous schemes were referred to**. Most Boards reference previous schemes (e.g. Levelling Up) and eight referred to both previous schemes and specific planning documents. No Boards appeared to cite planning documents without also referring to previous schemes:



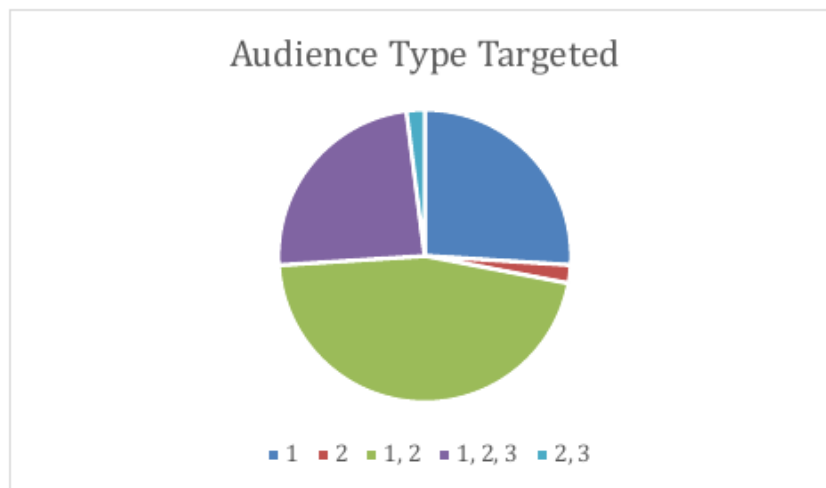
We also looked at what **methodology or type** was used to engage local opinion:



We found that only **four Boards used all six approaches**.

In terms of **audience types targeted**, three levels of audience types were considered:

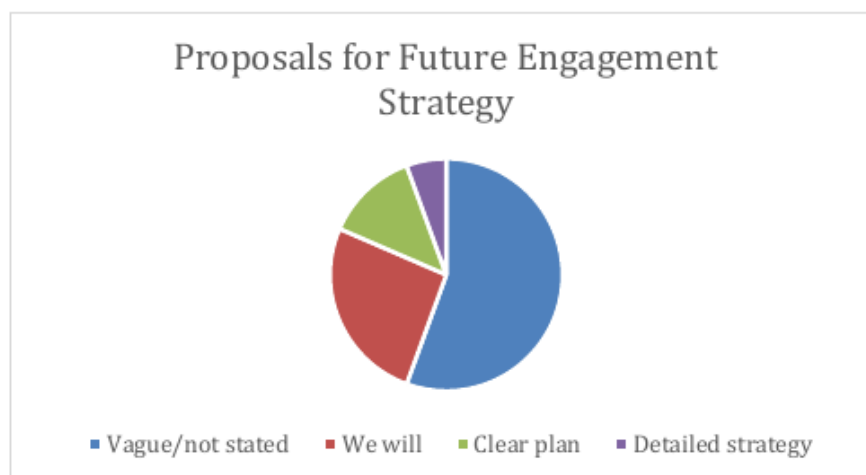
- 1 – general public
- 2 – targeted groups
- 3 – underrepresented groups



Examples of Boards that targeted all three audience categories (light blue in the above chart) tended to adopt an approach along the lines of, for example, (1) a general public survey; (2) a specific engagement approach for businesses; (3); specific workshops with faith, racial or LGBTQI+ groups. Almost half had targetted groups 1 and 2, a quarter group 1 only.

In terms of **future engagement**, we looked at how well future engagement is described and the breakdown was as follows:

- It is vague or not stated (30)
- There is a broad statement of, for example; 'we will...' (14)
- There is a clear plan (7)
- There is a detailed strategy and programme of engagement (3).
- No information found (4).



We set out below some examples where there is a **clear plan** by the Board:

- The **Bolton** Neighbourhood Board has set out plans for an ongoing process of neighbourhood co-design with its residents. 169 people who participated in an initial consultation have indicated a desire to be involved in future participation: simply by

asking this has enabled the Board to generate an audience to go back to for future co-production activities.

- The **Hastings** Neighbourhood Board has set out an ongoing and varied programme of workshops, surveys, participatory events and specific youth-focused engagement. This is presented as a rolling programme, which has continued since the Board first began to engage resident opinion.
- Examples of **Detailed Strategy Boards** were:
 - The **Wisbech** Neighbourhood Board presents a detailed strategy for both what it wants to do and how it will do it. This includes a programme in which town wardens will be asked to record feedback from in-person conversations; there will be individual consultations on discrete projects; and an annual consultation on general issues, which will be both in-person and online.
 - The **Burnley** Neighbourhood Board has published a full engagement strategy which outlines its approach to future public engagement. The strategy outlines seven audiences the Board wishes to engage, where it will engage them and potential barriers to overcome. This is aligned to a timescale and a series of methods that are broken down into the categories 'digital', 'digital – face-to-face' and 'face-to-face'.

Annex 3: Prior regeneration scheme overview

Table 2: Place based regeneration initiatives (England)

Initiative	Date	Funding / Focus	Target scale	Comments / evaluation
Urban Programme	1968-1977	Circa £2bn for local services (health and welfare, childcare, housing and education) and in 'immigrant communities'	Local Authority	Social pathology approach adopted and then seen as flawed (Harding et al., 2015; Shapely, 2017)
Urban Programme / UDCs	1979-1992	UDCs and EZ – land remediation, market readiness; deregulation	Specially designated areas	Redevelopment, deregulation to encourage private investment – but labour markets did not improve (Harding et al., 2015)
City Challenge	1991-1998	May 1991. central Government measure, designed to regenerate certain urban areas. £37.5m for each City Challenge area (x31)	Inner city neighbourhood scale	Some success due to combined area-focused teams with social, economic and physical aspects taken together (Healey, 1998; Russell et al., 2000)
Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)	1995-2002	£26bn Funding (different programmes across five govt departments) to support economic and social regeneration in deprived areas. Competitive bidding	99 most deprived LA areas (England); some funding to ward level.	SRB supported significant urban improvements, evaluations showed mixed results on whether the jobs and benefits truly reached the most deprived residents (Rhodes et al., 2005)
New Deal for Communities	1999-2011	£1.9 billion spent over 10 years in 39 deprived neighbourhoods - each received approx. £50m. Aimed at empowering communities through partnership boards (with residents and reps from delivery agencies) to develop local strategies tackling three place-related outcomes: crime, community, and housing and the physical environment (HPE), and 3 people-related outcomes: education, health, and worklessness.	Neighbourhood (1000-1400 households).	Positive change reported in all 39 areas - biggest improvements were people's feelings about their neighbourhoods. However, little change in people-related outcomes such as unemployment and education. Criticism that partnership boards were unrepresentative of populations (Lawless et al., 2010; Crisp et al., 2016).

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)	2022-2026	£2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025. Aimed to reduce economic disparities by investing in local priorities such as community infrastructure, skills training, and employment support, empowering local leaders to tailor interventions to their communities' specific needs.	Local Authority scale to spend on local projects via a board.	Evaluation is ongoing. Criticism involves i. the tight delivery timeframe. ii. allocations are largely based on the previous EU funding model, and iii. relied on outdated data from the early to mid-2000s, iv. lack of clear, upfront monitoring guidance (MHCLG, 2025a)
Town Deals and Levelling-Up	2019-2024	The Towns Fund was a £3.6bn fund for: £25m each (some £50m) - focus was to target income, skills, productivity and deprivation indices. Plus, Future high streets fund invested £830m for regen. high streets - Dec 2020 / May 2021.	Economic regeneration of deprived towns	centralised decision-making process, which some argued contradicted its emphasis on local empowerment (ICON, 2025).
Pride In Place programme	2025-2035	Ten-year programme allocating £20m over 10 years to each area. Total pot of £5.8bn.	284 neigh areas (Built-up Areas and MSOAs) in multiple phases	Via town and neighbourhood boards and regeneration plans (MHCLG, 2026). Speed of set-up may undermine community engagement and co-production credentials.

Annex 4: Evidence of engagement / participatory credentials of PiPP areas

This annex outlines thumbnail case studies, set out by region (Note: there is no South West case study listed because the region only has one PiPP area).

North East region

Eston

The TS6 Together Board that serves this part of Teesside has demonstrated excellent public engagement. The Board's website demonstrates evidence of ongoing surveying, including a general public audience and targeted audiences (e.g. children and families). There are also specific surveys around education, regeneration and community. In addition to these, the Board has held a community conference, focused workshops, community events, arts-based events, sports workshops, and meetings with identified stakeholders. There are also updates on the Board's work, in digital and 'analogue' forms.

Hartlepool

The Board has conducted a range of engagement activities that have helped them reach almost 2,000 people. This includes an online survey which reached 1,341 – but the Board has helpfully divided the responses by Council ward to show a geographic breakdown of issues. The consultancy Belong was commissioned to conduct a public consultation on behalf of the Board. This involved 50 structured interviews, 10 workshops/focus groups and 8 facilitated events. In total, this approach reached 470 people.

East Midlands region

Skegness

The Board has a stated commitment to ensuring that priorities and investment decisions are shaped by ongoing consultation with residents. It has stated principles that will guide its engagement: namely, that it should be easy, inclusive, meaningful, empowering, creative, listening and continuous. Thus far, the Board's engagement has included an online survey (generating 248 responses), an online survey for under 25s (generating 306 responses), a freepost return survey, feedback board for people to share thoughts, a feedback form on its website, and a competition for 4-16 year olds to draw their idea of an improved Skegness.

Boston

The Board's engagement plan is described as "multi-layered" and seeking "robust, meaningful and deep insight". It used co-design workshops with community groups and businesses, a youth council, a business forum, town hall meetings, meetings facilitated by partner institutions, and an online survey (generating 1,100 responses) to achieve this

multi-faceted approach. The Board also published the findings of these different aspects of their engagement strategy and demonstrated how these align to their aims (e.g. a focus on revitalising the town centre was a key finding).

South East Region

Ramsgate

Ramsgate's Board provides a clear breakdown of the diverse range of activities they have undertaken – and the large number of people (over 2,000) reached. This includes 28 'listening events', two online surveys (one of which generated 1,530 responses from among the general public), 96 businesses engaged via a specific survey, and 10 events organised by partner organisations. A second phase of engagement was then developed to consider targeted groups – and the Board consciously sought the opinion of young people aged 13-21; disabled and neurodivergent people; local business owners; and residents in a specific location.

Eastbourne

The Eastbourne Board is unique in its strong focus on economic regeneration and business. As a result, its engagement activities have also focused on businesses and what the Board calls "key local public and private sector stakeholders". 71 have been engaged via a specific survey tailored to developing an economic growth strategy. This is not necessarily highlighted as best practice, but as unique – or novel – practice.

East of England region

Canvey Island

Canvey Island is an example of a Board that has engaged widely and creatively, though mainly using external agencies to design and deliver this work. The Board commissioned Estuary Festival CIC to undertake the initial public engagement. They led 14 group discussions and set up a pop-up shop in the town centre which had more than 50 visitors per day. Visitors to the pop-up shop were asked to design a postcard illustrating their vision for Canvey, as well as completing a short tick-box survey. A consultancy was commissioned to undertake specific research among young people, whilst the Council conducted a survey of businesses. The strategy refers to engaging young people (through a Youth Board), older people and the Jewish community, and there are plans for biannual community engagement and reporting sessions.

Thetford

The Board has a detailed engagement strategy that outlines a programme of annual engagement activities taking place each summer. This included:

- A postal drop to every household in Thetford, including new-build properties on the Sustainable Urban Extension.

- An online survey and social media campaign through the For Thetford channels.
- In-person engagement embedded in events residents are already attending, rather than stand-alone consultation sessions.
- Dedicated sessions in schools and through youth organisations, using formats that work for younger residents.

So far, the Board claims it has reached 70,000 people (though it may be inflated by the use of digital metrics – i.e. social media engagement). It publishes a ‘You said, we did’ report following each consultation, to demonstrate that it has listened and acted.

North West Region

Leigh

The Board captured the views of over 1,500 people via a range of methods, prior to the submission of its strategic plan to MHCLG. Whilst an online survey generated the majority of responses, the Board also used drop-in events at education, community, retail and youth settings; town safaris – a process of observation by Board members; workshops for priority development; consultations with the voluntary sector and with the Leigh Youth Board; and drop-in sessions, which were used by 250 people.

Burnley

The Board used a range of methods to engage around 2,000 people. This included a survey that reached 1,800 respondents online; stalls in the town centre to seek opinion in person; workshops in the community, with specific groups; and a process of ongoing engagement with three stakeholder groups. However, Burnley also conducted a second online survey, after drafting its 10-year plan, to seek specific views on this strategy. This was a novel approach among the Boards.

Yorkshire and the Humber region

Rotherham

Rotherham commissioned Voluntary Action Research to undertake some of its public engagement work. This included targeted focus groups, on-street public events, facilitated workshops, and a digital survey. As a result, the Board has conducted 18 hours of stakeholder engagement, 11 hours of on-street consultation, an online survey lasting six weeks with 552 consultation responses.

Scarborough

The Board has undertaken extensive public engagement: it has taken the uncommon step of publishing, as a separate document, the evidence and analysis that it generated. It used a range of approaches, including an online survey (with over 2,000 responses) which targeted residents and businesses; in-person events which reached 1,046 people;

and a Let's Talk platform which captured public opinion on specific issues. Targeted activities were aimed at gathering the views of young people, older people, minority identities, and people with disabilities.

West Midlands region

Royal Sutton Coldfield

The Board conducted an initial quantitative survey to inform the remainder of its engagement. This was the basis of ward-by-ward engagement events, to understand specific local concerns. As a result, the Board established four thematic sub-groups to further public engagement. This is a clear example not just of how engagement influenced the strategic plan, but of how it evolved the Board's governance arrangements. There is clear evidence of the Board having engaged specific groups (young people, families, older people, and racial demographic groups), and of having a future engagement strategy which includes in-person events and a digital platform.

Dudley

The Board's public engagement approach stands out because of the emphasis placed on physical and in-person engagement. Whilst most Boards' feedback is from digital platforms, Dudley engaged over 2,000 people by hosting 10 in-person events across the area; posting 30,984 physical surveys to residents (1,032 of which were returned); hiring 15 community researchers to engage the views of around 1,000 people; and conducting an additional 25 in-person events, facilitated by these researchers.

Annex 5: Note on PiPP areas and Neighbourhood Planning

The context regarding PiPP and how it has been designed can also be usefully supplemented by recognising overlap with past neighbourhood activity in Phase 1 PiPP areas (and how they are operating given the existence of the programme). For information the prior review set out in JN WP#6 (Parker *et al.*, 2026a), identified **four Phase one PiPP areas** that also have a Neighbourhood Development Plan in England:

- Skegness (East Lindsey)
- Blyth (Northumberland) (at regulation 16 stage)
- Hartlepool (Tees Valley) (at regulation 16 stage)
- Torquay (Torbay)

A further **six areas** had evidence of existing neighbourhood planning activity. This included areas where a Plan was in progress, incomplete, or which had been registered as a neighbourhood plan and/or Neighbourhood Forum area, these were:

- Chadderton (Oldham)
- Bexhill-on-Sea (Rother)
- Hastings (East Sussex)
- Leigh (Wigan)
- Keighley (Bradford)
- Ramsgate (Thanet)