Terms of reference

Our Bentilee Our Future Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board

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1. Purpose, Aims & Strategic Objectives

1.1 Purpose

The Bentilee & Ubberley Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board ("the Board") is established to provide strategic leadership, governance oversight and community stewardship for the delivery of up to £20 million investment allocated to the Bentilee & Ubberley neighbourhood over ten years, in line with the national Pride in Place Programme.

1.2 Aims

The Board will:

1. Co-create with residents a 10-year Pride in Place Plan (2026 – 2036) and initial 4-year Investment Plan, ensuring decisions reflect community priorities.
2. Provide clear, visible leadership and champion the local vision throughout the lifetime of the programme.
3. Ensure effective, transparent, and inclusive governance, in alignment with Pride in Place guidance and accountable body requirements.
4. Contribute to the Improvement of physical, social, cultural, economic and community infrastructure across Bentilee & Ubberley.

1.3 Geographic Scope

The Board's remit covers the government-approved Bentilee & Ubberley Pride in Place boundary, as confirmed through MHCLG boundary processes and local authority governance.

2. Functions and Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for:

2.1 Strategic Leadership

- Championing the programme locally and nationally.
- Setting, reviewing and communicating the long-term vision and measurable programme outcomes.

2.2 Programme Governance

- Ensuring activities comply with:
    - Pride in Place rules and funding conditions
    - Managing Public Money requirements
    - Subsidy control, procurement law, equality duties
- Providing assurance, risk oversight and performance monitoring.

2.3 Community-Led Decision Making

- Ensuring residents, businesses, voluntary groups, and community organisations shape priorities and delivery.
- Upholding the requirement that decisions reflect genuine local aspirations.

2.4 Scrutiny & Oversight

- Monitoring progress against:
    - Key milestones
    - Outcomes and benefits
    - Budget and expenditure, working alongside Stoke-on-Trent City Council as the Accountable Body
- Reviewing, approving or recommending project adjustments as required.

2.5 Partnership Engagement

- Working in partnership with the Local Authority (Accountable Body), the local MP, and other key stakeholders, e.g., VCSE, health service, education, social housing, etc.

2.6 Funding & Resource Assurance

- Overseeing development of Business Cases where required.
- Identifying opportunities for additional funding or aligned investment.

2.7 Programme Learning & Legacy

- Capturing lessons learned and supporting long-term community capability beyond the programme period.

3. Board Composition, Membership & Appointment

3.1 Required Membership (National Expectations)

Pride in Place requires every Board to include:

- An Independent Chair / Co-Chairs
- The Local MP
- At least one Ward Councillor
- Residents, community groups, grassroots activists, businesses, faith and voluntary sector leaders, workplace representatives
- A majority (minimum 51%) of members must live or work in the neighbourhood.

3.2 Minimum and Maximum Board Size

- Minimum: 8 voting members (based on public Pride in Place Board specifications applied by local authorities).
- Maximum: No nationally mandated limit; recommended 15–18 for effective and inclusive governance

3.3 Skills and Attributes

Members are expected to demonstrate:

- Local knowledge and community insight
- Experience working across diverse groups
- Strategic thinking and partnership skills
- Ability to champion community priorities and communicate confidently
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

3.4 Chair Requirements

The Chair or Co-Chairs must:

- Be independent, respected locally, and representative of the community
- Have strong leadership, governance, and partnership-building capability
- Be supported by both the local authority and the MP, per national guidance
- If both Co-chairs are not available, a Chair will be nominated from those members present

3.5 Board Vacancies

A vacancy shall arise where a Board member leaves their position for any reason, or where the Board resolves that an additional appointment is required to address a gap in representation, knowledge, skills, experience, or capacity.

Appointments will be made by the Board, or a panel appointed by the Board, against published selection criteria, having regard to the Required Membership, Minimum and Maximum Board Size, and the following considerations:

3.5.1 Recruitment and Appointment of Resident Members

Resident members will be recruited through an open and transparent process. Applicants must ordinarily reside within the Pride in Place boundary. Vacancies will be publicly advertised.

- Representation from different parts of the neighbourhood;
- Diversity of age, background, and lived experience;
- Skills and attributes relevant to the Board's functions (as set out above); and,
- Demonstrable commitment to the aims and values of the programme.

3.5.2 Recruitment and Appointment of Non-Resident Members

Non-resident members may be appointed where they bring skills, experience, organisational representation, or expertise that will support delivery of the Pride in Place Programme.

Recruitment may be undertaken through open advertisement, targeted invitation, or nomination by relevant organisations, as determined by the Board.

Non-Resident Board Members shall be expected to demonstrate both an understanding of local priorities and a commitment to community-led decision-making.

3.6 Removal of Board Members and Code of Conduct

The Board shall adopt and maintain a Code of Conduct setting out the standards of behaviour, accountability, and ethical conduct expected of all members.

A Board member may be removed from office by a resolution of the Board where there is evidence that the member:

- Has breached the Board's Code of Conduct;
- Has failed to declare or appropriately manage a conflict of interest;

- Has engaged in conduct that brings the Board, the Pride in Place Programme, or the wider community into disrepute;
- Has failed, without reasonable explanation, to attend three consecutive Board meetings;
- Is unable to fulfil the duties of membership due to incapacity or disqualification;
- Has acted unlawfully or in a manner inconsistent with the Nolan Principles of Public Life; or
- No longer meets the eligibility requirements under which they were appointed.

Before any decision to remove a member is taken, the member concerned shall:

- Be informed in writing of the grounds for the proposed removal;
- Be provided with any relevant evidence;
- Be given a reasonable opportunity to respond; and
- Have the right to address the Board before a decision is made.

A decision to remove a Board member shall require the support of not less than two-thirds of those voting members present and entitled to vote at a quorate meeting. The member concerned shall not participate in the vote relating to their removal.

The Board may establish procedures for investigation, complaints, sanctions, and appeals within the Code of Conduct.

3.7 Term Length

- Members are appointed for a four-year term, renewable once (maximum two terms).
- Interim appointments may be made where necessary

3.8 Voting & Advisors

- All members have one vote; Chair of the meeting holds a casting vote (in the case where there are Co-Chairs whoever is in the Chair for the specific agenda item will hold the casting vote).
- Advisors may attend but do not vote.

4. Subgroups & Working Groups

The Board may establish subgroups to deliver specific workstreams such as:

- Community engagement
- Built environment
- Youth voice
- Skills & employment
- Communications

Each subgroup will have a clear remit, membership, timescale, and reporting lines.

5. Meetings & Administration

5.1 Meeting Frequency

- The Board will meet at least bi-monthly.
- It is anticipated that more frequent meetings may be necessary during the establishment phase as determined by the Co-chairs.
- An extraordinary meeting of the Board may be called by the Co-chairs or by written request from at least three Board members, with at least seven days' notice. Normal quorum rules will apply as set out below.

5.2 Secretariat

The Board will appoint a body or individual provide Secretariat Support, the agreed Secretariat function will:

- Provide secretariat support
- Publish agendas and reports five clear working days before meetings
- Publish draft minutes within ten working days
- Maintain the public record of decisions and interests

5.3 Quorum

- A quorum requires at least 5 voting members to be present.

6. Code of Conduct & Ethical Standards

6.1 Nolan Principles

All members must uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, required by government:
Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership (summarised at Appendix 1).

6.2 Local Governance Standards

Members must comply with:

- The Board's Code of Conduct
- Local Authority policies on complaints, whistleblowing, GDPR, equality and finance

7. Register of Interests & Conflicts

7.1 Declaration Requirements

All members must:

- Complete a Register of Interests form before appointment
- Update their interests within 28 days of changes
- Declare interests at all meetings

Interests apply to:

- Employment, contracts, land, licences, corporate tenancies, securities

- Memberships of community, charitable, or policy-influencing bodies (Aligned to your supplied template and national standards.)

7.2 Management of Interests

- Pecuniary interests require withdrawal from decision-making
- Other interests may permit participation unless bias is reasonably perceived

8. Transparency & Confidentiality

8.1 Transparency

All agendas, reports and minutes will be published and made publicly available once approved unless they are commercially sensitive. Where appropriate, papers will be redacted where they contain personal data.

8.2 Confidentiality

Members must respect confidential papers, discussions and commercially sensitive information.

9. Accountability Body Responsibilities

Stoke-on-Trent City Council will act as the **Accountable Body**, responsible for:

- Holding and administering all programme funds
- Ensuring compliance with national rules, audit and financial management standards
- Supporting business case development and programme assurance

10. Amendments & Review

- These Terms of Reference may be amended by majority Board vote with 14 days' notice.
- They will be reviewed annually (each September).

Approved By: **Our Bentilee Our Future Neighbourhood Board**

Effective Date: **November 2026**

Review Date: **November 2027**

Appendix 1

The Nolan Principles of Public Life

All Board members must uphold and role-model the legally recognised Seven Principles of Public Life, which underpin all Pride in Place governance:

1. **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. **Integrity –** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. **Objectivity -** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. **Accountability -** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness -** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty -** Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. **Leadership -** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

These principles guide how public funds must be managed, how decisions are made, and how the Neighbourhood Board operates collectively.