Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group

Definitions
In this document the following terms have the meanings assigned to them below: -

Council:	Stapeley & District Parish Council
Steering Group:	Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group of the Council.
Member:	An elected or co-opted member of the Stapeley & District Parish Council.
Steering Group Member:	Any person appointed to the Steering Group in accordance with the section headed “Membership and Quorum.
The Plan:	The Stapeley and Batherton Neighbourhood Plan made in 2018, and any reviewed or replacement plan prepared under these Terms of Reference.
Neighbourhood Area:	The designated neighbourhood area for the Plan, comprising the parishes of Stapeley and Batherton, which together form the administrative area of the Council.

1. General

a) Stapeley & District Parish Council is to undertake a full review of the made Stapeley and Batherton Neighbourhood Plan (2018) and to prepare a new Neighbourhood Plan to replace it. The reviewed Plan will cover the Neighbourhood Area, comprising the parishes of Stapeley and Batherton.
b) The Council retains full responsibility for the Plan as the qualifying body, and in preparing the Plan will have regard to the views of the community and may draw on skills and expertise from outside the Council where appropriate.
c) A Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group will lead the review through to successful completion.
d) The Steering Group will operate as a committee of Stapeley & District Parish Council.
e) These Terms of Reference are in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders.

2. Purpose

The main purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee the review of the made Neighbourhood Plan and the preparation of a replacement Plan, so that it progresses to independent examination, a successful community referendum if required, and adoption. In particular, the Steering Group will:

a) Review the made Stapeley and Batherton Neighbourhood Plan (2018) and identify the policies and evidence that require updating, having regard to changed circumstances, the approaching end of the plan period, and the current development plan for the area.
b) Engage the local community, identifying ways of involving the whole community and gathering the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations as possible, so that the reviewed Plan is representative of the ambitions of the parishes of Stapeley and Batherton.
c) Liaise with, and direct the work of, consultants and specialists engaged to further the Plan as appropriate.
d) Consider the options and develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the Neighbourhood Area.
e) Be aware of the development areas identified in the Cheshire East Local Plan, including establishing further development areas if they are required.
f) Ensure the reviewed Plan is supported by effective ongoing programmes of communication and consultation with the community, Cheshire East Council, businesses, adjoining parishes, developers, and other key parties.
g) Identify and pursue sources of funding, including grant funding where available.
h) Liaise with statutory and other relevant authorities and organisations to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.

i) Determine the types of consultation and information gathering to be used.
j) Be responsible for the analysis arising from consultations and the production and distribution of the resulting reports.
k) Report back regularly to the Council on progress, significant issues, and budgetary implications.
l) Present key documents and the draft reviewed Plan for consultation with the Council, residents, Cheshire East Council, businesses, and the independent examiner, and assist in the arrangements for the referendum.
m) Agree, subject to resolution by the Council, a final submission version of the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Meetings

a) The Steering Group will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from its membership at its first formal meeting in the municipal year.
b) In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Steering Group will elect a chairman from the members present, for that meeting only.
c) The Steering Group will meet as required, with a minimum of once per quarter.
d) Convened meetings of the Steering Group will be called with the statutory three clear days' notice and conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
e) The Steering Group may also meet informally to discuss and progress its work. Informal meetings are for discussion only, and no decision or recommendation of the Steering Group may be made at an informal meeting. Any decision or recommendation of the Steering Group must be taken at a properly convened meeting, called with notice and an agenda and with a quorum present.
f) Decisions taken at a convened meeting will be by consensus where possible. Where a vote is required, each Steering Group Member will have one vote, a simple majority will be required to support any motion, and the Chairman will have a casting vote.

4. Decision Making

a) The Steering Group has full delegated authority from the Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Steering Group will report to the Council on the progress of its work. The Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan before publication for consultation and independent examination.
b) The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation, and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Council via the Steering Group, with appropriate recognition of the Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

5. Finance

a) Funding, including grants, will be applied for and held by the Council, which will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan review work.
b) The Council will allocate a Neighbourhood Plan cost centre within its budget with a resolved amount.
c) All financial decisions and any proposed expenditure will be presented to the full Council for consideration and formal resolution before any commitment or expenditure is made. The Steering Group may make recommendations to the Council, but it has no delegated authority to commit the Council to financial expenditure.

6. Sub Working Groups

a) The Steering Group may establish sub working groups for dealing with specific issues, made up of Steering Group Members and volunteers from the community, to aid it in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
b) Each sub working group will have a lead person from the Steering Group.

7. Membership & Quorum

a) The Steering Group will be comprised of serving members of Stapeley & District Parish Council only, appointed by full Council. The Steering Group will consist of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 members.
b) Any convened meeting shall be quorate with the presence of half of the membership, and in any event no fewer than 3 members.
c) The Steering Group may co-opt additional support to carry out specific tasks as required. Co-opted advisers are not Steering Group Members and have no vote.
d) Membership is voluntary.
e) All Steering Group Members must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by the Steering Group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of or interest in land or a business, or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken.
f) A person will cease to be a Steering Group Member on notification to the Chairman in writing of their wish to resign, or on ceasing to be a member of the Council.
g) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are ex-officio members of all committees, which entitles them to attend meetings and participate in the work of the Steering Group but does not confer voting rights unless they are appointed members of the Steering Group.

8. Administrative Support

a) The Clerk to Stapeley & District Parish Council will provide support as appropriate.
b) If the Clerk is not available to attend a meeting, a Steering Group Member will be required to take minutes.

9. Conduct

a) It is expected that all Steering Group Members abide by the principles and practice of the Council's Code of Conduct, including in relation to conflicts of interest, particularly regarding development.
b) Whilst Members as individuals remain accountable to the Council, the Steering Group is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the reviewed Plan reflects their collective expectations.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

a) These Terms of Reference may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a convened meeting of the Steering Group, and with the approval of the full Council.
b) These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually by the Council, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or Council governance arrangements.

11. Dissolution

a) The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained, or when at least two-thirds of its members and the Council consider that its services are no longer required.
b) The Steering Group will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by grant funders and in the best interests of the Council.

These terms of reference were adopted by the Council at the meeting held on the 21st September 2026.