



NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk: Shannon Smith

Chairman: Cllr T Lawrence



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You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the Needham Market Town Council to be held on **Wednesday, 15th January 2025 at 7:30 pm in the Green Room of the Needham Market Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market.** Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

Shannon Smith

Town Clerk

09.01.2025

AGENDA

The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Town Clerk. Please switch all mobile phones off or to silent.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of Town Council held 11th November 2024.



3. INTERESTS

To receive any declarations of interest that Members may wish to give notice of on matters pertaining to any item on this agenda.

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

An opportunity to enable members of the press and public present to comment.

Order Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is designated for public participation time with no individual speaker exceeding three minutes unless otherwise granted an extension by the Chairman.

5. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

To receive the Town Clerk's report on matters arising ([attached at page 4](#)).

6. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER' REPORT

To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's report on matters arising (attached at page 7)

7. INTERNAL PASSWORD PROCEDURE

To review the internal password procedure ([attached at page 8](#)).

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following committee reports

- a) Community & Assets - To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.
- b) Finance & Governance - To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.
- c) Planning - To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

9. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

To receive reports from County and District Councillor's.

10. SKATEPARK

To receive a verbal update.

11. BUDGET/ PRECEPT

To discuss and approve the proposed 2025/2026 budget and precept ([attached at page 10](#)).

12. VAT

To receive a verbal report.

13. HEADSHOTS

To receive a verbal report.

14. CCTV

To receive a report ([attached at page 12](#)) and consider the proposal.



15. BANK SIGNATORIES

To amend the council's existing bank signatories.

16. STAFFING/ COMMITTEE MATTERS

To receive a verbal report.

17. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE/ MEMBERS

To receive a report ([attached at page 13](#)).

18. DONATION REQUESTS

To receive and consider any donation requests.

19. STRATEGIC PLAN

To receive a report ([attached at page 15](#)).

20. STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND

To note the above Government consultation so councils can sustainably provide decent public services and shape local places, and elected representatives can be fully accountable to the public they serve. To view the consultation –

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england?fbclid=IwY2xjawHSTbdleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHVzL_EJNePvjEmvESIK-4IMbzVWfVxR4-YBcy03GzEmj9Lqb6wPoSfVsPQ_aem_6-cV-kKKB0XxT2Bs9vRtQ

21. NEWSLETTER WORKING GROUP

To ratify the creation of a newsletter working group, appoint members and to receive a verbal report.

22. MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY MEMBERS

This is an opportunity for members to raise any matters for consideration for future committee meetings. ***Please note this is not an opportunity for discussion or debate.***



ITEM 5

Town Clerk's Report

Grant process and policy

To make members aware a new grant process and policy will be being brought to the next meeting of the Community and Assets committee meeting.

A town council that awards grants should have a grant awarding policy to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in the distribution of funds. The policy outlines clear requirements for organisations to comply with when applying, helping to prevent misuse of public funds, ensure consistency in decision-making, and provide a structured process for assessing applications.

It also helps organisations understand the expectations and eligibility criteria, ensuring that grants are awarded to projects that align with the council's priorities and benefit the community.

Devolution White Paper Update

The Government has published its White Paper on devolution, proposing the reorganisation of local government and support for unitary councils. While there are no specific proposals for Suffolk, the document invites reorganisation proposals for two-tier areas, such as ours.

The Government's goal is to implement Mayoral Strategic Authorities and unitary councils across England by the end of this parliamentary term. These authorities would have devolved powers in areas like housing and infrastructure. The White Paper emphasizes strengthening community engagement in reorganisation, and further details will be reviewed in January 2025.

New National Planning Policy Framework

The Government has increased annual housing targets for local areas, including Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Babergh's target rises from 416 to 775 homes, and Mid Suffolk's from 535 to 734. The Town Council is encouraged to develop an up-to-date Neighbourhood Development Plan to have a statutory influence on local development. Locality provides support and funding for such plans, with up to £10,000 available in grants.

Local Government Funding Settlement

The Local Government Funding Settlement, expected on 18th December, will help finalize budgets for 2025/26. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have already discussed provisional budgets, and further information on their plans can be found on their websites.



Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) Updates

SALC has set up a dedicated information page for the Devolution White Paper and will provide updates as activities progress. They are collaborating with Suffolk County Council, Babergh/Mid Suffolk, and other councils to keep town and parish councils informed. SALC has also been in contact with MPs to ensure they are up to date on town and parish council views.

Suffolk County Council will hold an extraordinary full council meeting on 9th January, which will be live-streamed. Further information on accessing the meeting can be found on SALC's website.

Request Regarding Fence at Crowley Park

A resident has contacted the Town Council regarding the fence at Crowley Park, which backs onto the property of their elderly mother at Gilbert Close. The resident is concerned that footballs from the park are hitting their mother's window, causing her distress and fear.

They are also worried that, if the situation worsens, the elderly woman could be injured in her garden. The resident has requested that the Town Council investigate the issue and take appropriate action to address the problem. A response by email has been requested.

Pension Transfer Request

Needham Market Town Council has received a request to investigate the transfer of a pension from Witham Town Council into the Suffolk Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of the Town Clerk.

However, as the Town Council is not currently a member of this scheme Suffolk Pensions are unable to process the request currently. To proceed, Needham Market Town Council would need to apply to become a participating employer in the Local Government Pension Scheme and pass a resolution to allow the transfer.

Vandalism of Town Council Facilities

There have been multiple incidents of vandalism at local Town Council facilities, including the children's park and public toilets, over the past couple of months. The council needs to consider appropriate action to address these ongoing issues and prevent further damage.

Update on Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are in the process of undertaking a new Joint Local Plan in response to changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, which now aims to address the Government's target of building 1.5 million new homes during this parliament.



Part One of the Joint Local Plan was adopted in November 2023, setting annual housing targets of 416 homes for Babergh and 535 homes for Mid Suffolk.

However, the Government's recent announcement has increased these targets, raising Babergh's requirement to 775 homes per year (an 86% increase) and Mid Suffolk's to 734 homes (a 37% increase). To meet these new requirements, the councils must demonstrate a sufficient "housing land supply" for the next five years.

As a result, the councils have decided to formally review the Joint Local Plan to align with the new housing targets. This review will involve gathering additional evidence and further community engagement. A revised timetable for the review process will be published by March 2025.

Until the review is complete, Part One of the Joint Local Plan remains in effect and continues to influence planning decisions, alongside Neighbourhood Plans and national policy. Updates will be provided on the councils' websites.

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RFO Report for Meeting held on 15/01/2025

1. Barclays interest rate. Changing from 1.40% to 1.35%
2. Expenditure over £500 Year to date (document)
3. Income & Expenditure Year to date (document)
4. VAT Returns for Q1 and Q2 Submitted and refund received in December
5. VAT Return for Q3 ready to submit upon final check over 16/01/2025

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ITEM 7

Internal Procedure for Password Keeping Needham Market Town Council

Purpose:

This procedure outlines the process for securely storing and managing passwords related to the operations of Needham Market Town Council. The objective is to ensure that passwords are safely kept and can be accessed by authorised personnel in the event of an emergency, while maintaining the security and privacy of Council systems and data.

1. Responsibilities:

- **Chair of the Council:** Responsible for maintaining the secure location of the password storage and overseeing the procedure's adherence.
- **Office Staff:** Responsible for ensuring passwords are updated and maintained according to the procedure and informing the Chair when changes occur.

2. Secure Storage of Passwords:

- All critical passwords, including access to council systems, websites, email accounts, and financial tools, will be stored in a secure location.
- The passwords will be stored on a physical medium or within a secure password manager with encrypted access. The specific medium will be agreed upon by the Chair and reviewed annually.

3. Secure Location:

- The password storage (physical medium or access to the password manager) will be kept in a secure location, accessible only by the Chair of the Council.
- The secure location will be agreed upon, ensuring that the place is locked, and access is limited to only the Chair.
- The Chair must inform the Office Staff of any updates to the location or changes in access procedures.

4. Emergency Access Procedure:

- In the event of an emergency (e.g., a key staff member is unavailable and access to critical systems is required), the Chair is authorised to provide access to the password storage.

5. Password Updates:

- Office Staff are responsible for keeping passwords up to date, especially when they are changed as part of regular security practices or due to staff changes.
- Whenever a password is updated, Office Staff will:
 - Ensure the new password is recorded securely in the password storage system.
 - Notify the Chair of the update and confirm that the updated password has been stored in the secure location.
- The Chair must confirm receipt of the updated password information and review the storage location annually to ensure it is secure.



6. Periodic Reviews:

- This procedure will be reviewed at least once every 12 months by the Chair and Office Staff to ensure it remains effective and aligns with best security practices.
- Passwords stored in the secure location will be reviewed annually for relevance and need, ensuring that only active and necessary credentials are retained.

7. Access Control and Audit:

- Only the Chair will have access to the password storage, except in the event of an emergency as outlined above.

8. Compliance and Confidentiality:

- All personnel involved in the handling of passwords are required to respect the confidentiality of the credentials stored and must not share them outside of authorised procedures.
- Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action.

Approval and Documentation

This procedure has been approved by the Chair of Needham Market Town Council and is subject to review and updates as required.

Date of approval: 15.01.2025

Reviewed: 15.01.2025

By adhering to this procedure, Needham Market Town Council will ensure that passwords are securely managed, and access to systems remains safeguarded while maintaining proper control in emergencies.

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ITEM 11

Precept Comparison 2025-2026

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| PRECEPT AMOUNT | £171,000 | £180,920 | £185,420 |
| ORIGINAL COUNCIL TAX COST P.A | £88.93 | £88.93 | £88.93 |
| NEW COUNCIL TAX COST P.A | £88.93 | £94.08 | £96.42 |
| PERCENTAGE CHANGE | 0% | + 5.79% | + 8.42% |
| MONETARY CHANGE P.A | £0.00 | + £5.15 | + £7.49 |
| MONETARY CHANGE P.M (OVER 10 MONTHS) | £0.00 | + £0.52 | + £0.75 |



Needham Market Town Council



| | Expenditure | Income | Budget |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Core Costs | £ 130,675.00 | £ 12,750.00 | £ 117,925.00 |
| Newsletter | £ 28,700.00 | £ 8,000.00 | £ 20,700.00 |
| Recreation (Service Costs) | £ 25,750.00 | £ 2,000.00 | £ 23,750.00 |
| Property and Environment | £ 10,800.00 | £ - | £ 10,800.00 |
| Planning | £ 10,000.00 | £ - | £ 10,000.00 |
| Climate Awareness | £ 2,245.00 | £ - | £ 2,245.00 |
| Totals | £ 208,170.00 | £ 22,750.00 | £ 185,420.00 |

Needham Market Town Council



| | Expenditure | Income | Budget |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Core Costs | £ 126,175.00 | £ 12,750.00 | £ 113,425.00 |
| Newsletter | £ 28,700.00 | £ 8,000.00 | £ 20,700.00 |
| Recreation (Service Costs) | £ 25,750.00 | £ 2,000.00 | £ 23,750.00 |
| Property and Environment | £ 10,800.00 | £ - | £ 10,800.00 |
| Planning | £ 10,000.00 | £ - | £ 10,000.00 |
| Climate Awareness | £ 2,245.00 | £ - | £ 2,245.00 |
| Totals | £ 203,670.00 | £ 22,750.00 | £ 180,920.00 |



ITEM 14

CCTV Proposal for Needham Market

Following recent discussions, the Town Council is presented with the following proposal for a 3-year CCTV contract to enhance surveillance in Needham Market:

Deployable CCTV System Costs:

- **£6,000 per annum** for 2 units (8 cameras in total), covering:
 - CCTV installation and power supply
 - Signage supply and installation
 - 24/7 maintenance and monitoring
 - Sim card data and router management
 - DSAR processing and redaction software
 - Privacy Impact Assessments

Maintenance Details:

- **Major Faults:** Fixed within 24 hours (e.g., loss of all images)
- **Urgent Faults:** Fixed within 3 days (e.g., loss of one image)
- **Non-Urgent Faults:** Fixed within 7 days (e.g., cleaning of lenses)
- All devices are upgraded to new technology at no extra cost as it becomes available.

24/7 Monitoring:

- Cameras will be monitored by SIA-licensed, police-vetted operators.
- Footage can be uploaded to the police cloud within one hour of request.
- The system complies with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and British Standard BS7958:2015.

Current CCTV in Needham Market:

- There are currently 4 cameras in Needham Market, set to be removed by March 31st, 2025. Images comparing day and night views have been provided.

Next Steps:

1. **Locate 2 lighting columns** and obtain permission from Suffolk County Council (estimated timeline: 10 weeks).
2. **Sign the contract.**
3. **Instruct engineers** to install the new system.

Council members are asked to review and discuss the proposal.



Report to Town Council: The Benefits of a Set Committee Structure and Limited Membership for Each Committee

Introduction

The Town Council plays a pivotal role in shaping policies, making decisions, and guiding the development of our local community. However, the current approach to council operations may present challenges in terms of efficiency, decision-making quality, and time management. A potential solution to improve the council's functioning is the adoption of a formalised committee structure with a set number of members per committee, as opposed to involving every councillor in each committee's work. This report outlines the benefits of this approach.

Improved Efficiency and Time Management

A more streamlined approach to decision-making can significantly enhance the overall efficiency of the Town Council. When all councillors are involved in every committee, meetings can become unwieldy, extending unnecessarily and reducing the quality of discussions. By limiting membership and assigning specific tasks to dedicated groups, meetings can be kept concise, focused, and productive.

Key Benefits:

- **Faster meetings:** With fewer members in attendance, meetings are more likely to run on schedule.
- **Increased council productivity:** Committees can complete their tasks without requiring the full council's presence, enabling the council to devote more time to other important issues.
- **Clear delegation of tasks:** Members are responsible for the success of specific committees, ensuring that all aspects of the work are properly addressed.

Effective Leadership and Accountability

A set committee structure with designated members fosters clearer leadership and accountability. Each committee can elect a chairperson to lead meetings, guide discussions, and report back to the full council. The limited size of committees makes it easier to track individual contributions and hold members accountable for the progress and outcomes of their committee's work.

Key Benefits:

- **Clear leadership:** A chairperson and vice-chairperson can provide direction and manage meeting flow, making meetings more organized.
- **Greater accountability:** With smaller committees, it is easier to monitor individual member contributions and performance.
- **Stronger ownership:** Councillors assigned to a specific committee are more likely to take ownership of the issues within their committee's scope.

Reduced Redundancy and Overlap

Involving all councillors in every aspect of every committee can lead to redundancy and overlapping responsibilities. The result is less efficient decision-making and the risk of duplication of efforts. By limiting



committee membership, the council ensures that work is divided more effectively, avoiding the overlap that often leads to wasted time and resources.

Key Benefits:

- **Streamlined processes:** Workload is distributed among fewer individuals, allowing for clearer roles and responsibilities.
- **Minimised duplication:** Committees can focus on specific tasks without overlapping with other committees, which improves efficiency.
- **Fewer redundant meetings:** Fewer people in meetings means fewer conflicting opinions and duplicate discussions.

Increased Member Engagement and Expertise

Limiting the number of councillors on each committee allows each member to take on more meaningful work within their area of interest. Rather than participating in all areas of the council's business, councillors can become experts in their specific committee's issues. This structure also encourages greater engagement, as committee members will feel more responsibility for the outcomes of their specific areas.

Key Benefits:

- **More engaged councillors:** Councillors are likely to be more motivated and invested in committees where they can focus their efforts.
- **Expertise development:** Committee members can become more knowledgeable about their designated areas, enhancing their ability to contribute valuable insights.
- **Stronger commitment:** As committee members, councillors are more likely to take initiative and actively engage in shaping policies related to their areas.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Town Council consider implementing a committee structure with limited membership as outlined in this report. Specific proposals for committee assignments, size, and responsibilities will be put forward in the subsequent discussions.

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ITEM 19

Report to Town Council: Proposal for Developing a Strategic Plan

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to present the case for developing a comprehensive **Strategic Plan** for the town council and to outline the process by which individual committees can contribute their specific aims and objectives, ultimately bringing these forward for collective approval and collation.

Background:

Local councils often face complex challenges that require coordinated, long-term planning and alignment of resources. A strategic plan provides a clear framework for decision-making, ensuring that the council's goals, initiatives, and priorities are well-defined and achievable. While the town council may currently operate with some level of planning, the development of a formal strategic plan is necessary to:

- **Ensure Alignment and Coherence:** A strategic plan helps ensure that all council activities, from infrastructure development to community programs, are aligned with a unified vision for the town's future.
- **Provide Clarity and Direction:** It gives clear direction to council members, committees, and the community about where resources will be allocated and the long-term objectives the town is striving to achieve.
- **Enhance Accountability:** Establishing specific goals and timelines for achieving them holds both council members and committees accountable for their contributions to the town's development.
- **Strengthen Resource Allocation:** It supports better decision-making regarding the allocation of limited resources, allowing the council to focus on the highest priority projects and initiatives.

Benefits of a Strategic Plan to the Council:

- **Clear Vision for the Future:** A strategic plan will allow the town to identify its long-term goals, which can include growth, development, economic stability, environmental sustainability, and improved services for residents.
- **Coordinated Approach Across Committees:** With a strategic plan, committees will have a shared understanding of overarching goals and how their specific objectives fit into these broader aims. This helps prevent duplicated efforts or conflicting initiatives.
- **Measurable Success:** A strategic plan will include measurable outcomes and performance metrics. These metrics will allow the council to track progress over time and adjust strategies when necessary.
- **Improved Communication:** It provides a structured way to communicate the town council's priorities to the public and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and fostering trust in local governance.



- **Adaptability and Risk Management:** By identifying potential challenges and opportunities, a strategic plan will enable the council to proactively address risks, be adaptable to changing circumstances, and make informed decisions.

Process for Developing the Strategic Plan:

1. Initial Consultation and Framework Development:

- The council will first set up an overarching framework for the strategic plan, identifying key areas of focus such as economic development, housing, infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and community wellbeing.
- This will involve consultation with stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and local organizations, to ensure the plan reflects the community's needs and aspirations.

2. Committee Input:

- Each committee will be tasked with discussing and formulating its individual aims and objectives that align with the broader strategic framework.
- Committees will be encouraged to hold open meetings and engage with the public for input, ensuring that the strategic goals are based on the needs of the entire community.

3. Committee Reporting and Approval:

- Each committee will report its proposed objectives and priorities to the full council during regular meetings. These reports will include justifications, timelines, budget estimates, and potential challenges for each initiative.
- The council will review these proposals and provide feedback, making any necessary adjustments to ensure consistency with the overall strategic vision.

4. Final Collation and Approval:

- Once all committees have submitted their proposed aims and objectives, the town council will collate the information into a cohesive **Strategic Plan** document. This document will be presented for final approval.
- The strategic plan will outline the timeline for each initiative, along with key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success.

5. Ongoing Monitoring and Updates:

- The strategic plan will not be static; it will require periodic reviews and updates to remain relevant. Committees will continue to report on progress, challenges, and potential changes to their respective objectives during town council meetings.
- The council will adjust the plan as necessary to respond to new opportunities or challenges that arise.

Conclusion:

The development of a **Strategic Plan** is a crucial step in ensuring that the town council's activities are cohesive, transparent, and focused on long-term goals that benefit the community. By involving each



committee in the process, the council will create a plan that reflects diverse needs and perspectives while ensuring alignment with the overall vision for the town's future.

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