

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 13TH MAY 2025 AT 7.00PM

Present: Miss A Owen – Mayor of Sudbury, in the CHAIR
Mrs M Barrett (Until 9:42pm) Mr A Osborne
Mr N Bennett Mrs J Osborne
Ms J Carter (Until 8:26pm) Mr T Regester (Until 7:11pm)
Mr K Graham Mr A Stohr
Mr S Hall Mr A Welsh
Mr J Jeagar Mr N Younger (Until 9:30pm)
Ms E Murphy (Until 9:42pm)

In attendance: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk
Mrs D Deeks – Administration Manager and RFO
Ms R Price – Business Manager (Until 8:40pm)
Ms M Ketley – Operations Manager (Until 8:40pm)
Two members of the Administration Staff (Until 8:40pm)
Ms L Smith – Babergh District Councillor (Until 8:26pm)

1. **TO ELECT THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2025/2026 AND TO RECEIVE THE NEW CHAIR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Mr A Welsh be elected chair of the council for the year 2025/2026. There were no other nominations.

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Mr A Welsh be elected chair of Sudbury Town Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mr A Welsh made the declaration of acceptance of office as chair and took the chair.

2. **TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE YEAR 2025/2026 AND TO RECEIVE THE NEW VICE-CHAIR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The leader of the Conservative group asked the outgoing mayor, as leader of the Labour group, why the arrangement that had been agreed between the political groups after the 2023 elections to rotate the role of mayor between all the political groups was not being honoured. Why were the Conservatives being excluded from the role of deputy mayor? The leader of the Labour group said that she would give an answer after the meeting.

Both Councillors Mr A Stohr and Mrs M Barrett were proposed and seconded for the post of vice-chair of the council for the year 2025/2026. There were 8 votes for Mr A Stohr and 5 votes for Mrs M Barrett.

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Mr A Stohr be elected vice-chair of Sudbury Town Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mr A Stohr made the declaration of acceptance of office as vice-chair.

3. THE NEW CHAIR, AS TOWN MAYOR, TO MOVE A VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MISS A OWEN

Councillor Mr A Welsh, as the new Town Mayor, thanked the retiring Mayor, Councillor A Owen, presented her with a framed coat of arms and some flowers, and proposed a vote of thanks for all her tireless work to support the town and her chosen charities.

4. COUNCILLOR A OWEN TO REPLY

Councillor Miss A Owen replied to the vote of thanks.

5. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

RESOLVED

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mr T Regester, who had been present at the start of the meeting but had had to leave after the first item. Suffolk County Councillor Mr Philip Faircloth-Mutton had also sent in an email with his report and his apologies for absence.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Ms J Carter, Mr A Osborne, Miss A Owen and Mr T Regester declared that they were also Babergh District Councillors.

Councillor Ms J Carter declared that she was also a Suffolk County Councillor.

7. DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

No declarations of gifts or hospitality were made.

8. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensations had been received.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the extraordinary full council meeting held on 22nd April 2025 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

10. TO TAKE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Public Forum – About 10 members of the public were present.

- A member of the public asked, was the Town Council going to produce a local development plan for Sudbury? If the reason for not producing such a plan was lack of 'bandwidth', were the council interested in locals volunteering to help? The Chair of the Planning, Development and Highways Committee replied that this would be discussed at their next meeting on 19th May. Babergh District Council had offered to help with a neighbourhood plan, but some town council members believed that a supplementary planning document was the first step. Timings needed to be matched to the likely reorganisation of the county and district councils into a single unitary authority.
- A member of the public asked if the district council's car parking strategy included space at the Kingfisher for motorhomes overnight parking? This had been considered in a previous Babergh District Council paper about 5 years earlier and should boost tourism.

11. TO REVIEW AND RE-ADOPT THE STANDING ORDERS

The Town Clerk explained that the Standing Orders needed to be approved by the full council at least once every year. The only changes proposed by NALC this year were changing the word 'chairman' to 'chair' and mandatory changes to the details for public service contracts and public works contracts.

RESOLVED

That the revised Standing Orders at pages 372 to 393 be adopted for immediate use by Sudbury Town Council.

12. TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

The Town Clerk explained how the committee seats would be divided between the political groups if they wanted to have a mathematically fair distribution. This would divide the 37 seats available as follows;

Members	Party	Fraction	Number of Committee Seats
4	Independent	25%	9 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
3	Conservative	19%	7 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
3	Labour	19%	7 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
2	Lib Dem	13%	4 or 5 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
2	Green	13%	4 or 5 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
1	Reform	6%	2 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats
1	Vacant	6%	2 committee seats out of a total of 37 seats

The Mayor suggested that each political group should be represented on every committee, however there were 6 political groups and only 5 places on the HR Committee. This was to keep as many members as possible available to sit on disciplinary or appeal panels.

It was proposed and seconded to amend the size of the HR Committee to increase it to 6 members, still leaving 10 others for disciplinary or appeal panels. This amendment was debated before being put to a vote and defeated by 7 votes to 5.

RESOLVED

To appoint the members listed below to serve on the committees.

<u>Human Resources</u>	<u>Finance</u>	<u>Planning, Development and Highways</u>
Mrs M Barrett Mr N Bennett Ms J Carter Mr K Graham Mrs J Osborne	Mrs M Barrett Mr N Bennett Mr S Hall Mr J Jeagar Miss A Owen Mr T Regester Mr N Younger Vacant	Mr N Bennett Ms J Carter Mr S Hall Mr A Osborne Miss A Owen Mr T Regester Mr A Stohr Mr N Younger
<u>Leisure and Environment</u>	<u>Policy and Resources</u>	
Mr P Beer Mr S Hall Mr J Jeagar Mrs J Osborne Miss A Owen Mr T Regester Mr A Welsh Vacant	Mrs M Barrett Mr P Beer Mr K Graham Mr S Hall Mrs J Osborne Mr T Regester Mr A Stohr Mr A Welsh	

13. TO AGREE THE TIME AND PLACE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS UP TO AND INCLUDING THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Members reviewed the time and place of the ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting in accordance with Standing Order 5(J) (xxi).

RESOLVED

That the ordinary meetings of the full council for this mayoral year will be held in the Town Hall starting at 7:00pm on the following dates:

Tuesday 10th June 2025

Tuesday 8th July 2025

Tuesday 9th September 2025

Tuesday 7th October 2025

Tuesday 11th November 2025

Tuesday 13th January 2026

Tuesday 10th February 2026

Tuesday 10th March 2026

Tuesday 7th April 2026

Tuesday 12th May 2026

14. TO RE-ADOPT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) MODEL COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were requested to re-adopt the Local Government Association (LGA) Code of Conduct. There had been no changes to this document since the council had adopted it for the previous year. A copy is shown at **minute pages 394 to 409**.

RESOLVED

That the Local Government Association (LGA) Code of Conduct be adopted by Sudbury Town Council.

15. TO ADOPT THE INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT

The Chair of the Finance Committee explained the purpose of the internal control statement and recommended that the council adopt the Internal Control Statement and that it be signed by the Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Control Statement as shown at minute pages 410 to 411 be adopted and signed.

16. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR FY 2024-2025

The Chair of the Finance Committee explained that the internal audit report for FY 2024-2025, which is shown at minute pages 412 to 427, had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and that it was a very good report. There were only two minor comments to be addressed.

- When it was necessary for the council to go into closed session for HR and contract issues, the minutes should always record the basic reason for excluding the press and public, to avoid questioning of the legitimacy of the exclusion and to prevent uniformed speculation.
- If the terms of reference for the committees have been reviewed, the date of review should be added to the documents.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Audit Report for FY2024-2025 be received and noted.

17. TO CONSIDER, APPROVE AND SIGN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR FY2024-2025

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement for FY2024-2025, which is page 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), and is shown at minute page 428.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Governance Statement for FY2024-2025 be approved and signed by the Town Clerk and the Mayor.

18. TO CONSIDER, APPROVE AND SIGN THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR FY2024-2025

The Chair of the Finance Committee read out the figures from the accounting statements for FY 2024-2025 for members to consider before voting to approve the accounting statements, which is page 5 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), and is shown at minute page 429.

RESOLVED

That, having considered the Accounting Statements for FY 2024-2025, they be approved and signed by the Mayor.

19. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

Planning, Development & Highways Committee on 22nd April and 6th May 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Leisure and Environment Committee on 29th April 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Finance Committee on 6th May 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

Policy and Resources Committee on 24th April 2025 – The Chair recommended noting the minutes.

It was RESOLVED to note the minutes.

HR Committee on 6th May 2025 – The Chair said that she would give a brief summary of the minutes during the private and confidential section.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL ON HR MATTERS

RESOLVED

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in item 20 as the publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

To extend the meeting by 30 minutes to enable it to continue until 9:30pm

To extend the meeting by 30 minutes to enable it to continue until 10:00pm

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex at pages 430 to xxx.

The meeting re-opened to the public at 9:50pm for item 21.

21. TO APPROVE THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Members discussed whether it would be more appropriate for each committee to elect its own chair, or for the committee chairs to be appointed by the full council. After some discussion, it became clear that there was majority in favour of appointing the committee chairs immediately.

Both Councillors Mr K Graham and Mrs M Barrett were proposed and seconded for the post of chair of the HR Committee. There were 5 votes for Mr K Graham and 2 votes for Mrs M Barrett.

RESOLVED

To appoint Cllr K Graham as the Chair of the HR Committee.

To appoint Cllr N Bennett as the Chair of the Finance Committee.

To appoint Cllr N Bennett as the Chair of the Planning, Development and Highways Committee.

To appoint Cllr S Hall as the Chair of the Leisure and Environment Committee

To appoint Cllr M Barrett as the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9:54 pm.

Chairman