

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 14TH JULY 2026 AT 7.00PM

Present: Mr A Stohr – Mayor of Sudbury, in the CHAIR
Mrs M Barrett Mr A Osborne
Mr N Bennett Mrs J Osborne
Mr S Hall Miss A Owen
Mr J Jeager Mr T Regester
Ms E Murphy Mr A Welsh
Mr N Younger (from 7:14pm)

In attendance: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk
Mrs C Morgan – Deputy Clerk and RFO
Ms L Smith – Babergh District Councillor and Suffolk County Councillor (until 8:30pm)

Before the start of the meeting, the Mayor informed the council of the death of Mr Graeme Garden, who had been Mayor of Sudbury in 1987 and asked everyone to observe a minute's silence.

1. **APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Apologies were received from Town Councillors Ms J Carter, Mr K Graham and Suffolk County Councillor Mrs K Turner.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

Councillor Mrs M Barrett declared an interest in item 13 as she was on the board of the Quay Theatre, so she did not intend to speak or vote on this item.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

No declarations of gifts or hospitality were made.

4. **REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

5. **TO CONFIRM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the extraordinary full council meeting held on 8th July 2026 are an accurate record and are to be signed by the Chairman.

The council agreed to bring forward item 13 as a group of representatives from the Quay Theatre had come to present and explain the current situation.

13. TO AUTHORISE A ONE-OFF PAYMENT OF £6,000 TO THE QUAY THEATRE TO ENSURE THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO CEASE TRADING IN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS

The Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Quay Theatre gave a presentation showing how the grant income from Babergh and Sudbury Councils had reduced over the previous decade. Babergh District Council had given an average of over £32,000 each year between 2016 and 2023, but this had dropped to on £10,000 in 2024 and nothing had been awarded for the current year. Over the same period, Sudbury Town Council had given the Quay Theatre an average of under £7,000 each year, which had reduced to £3,750 in 2025. This level of grant funding had allowed the Quay Theatre to operate with an income which was often £20,000 per year less than expenditure. The deficit for the current year was predicted to be over £23,000 and the Quay Theatre were asking Sudbury Town Council to make up this shortfall in full. The Board of the Quay Theatre were working hard to raise funds from other sources and planned to carry out a financial review at the end of the year. However, similar levels of support funding might be required in the following 2 years whilst the operating model was refined to bring income and expenditure closer together.

Members expressed their support for the Quay Theatre, but were concerned about taking on a long-term commitment of this scale. The greatest concern was that the Quay Theatre would reach the limits of its overdraft facility over the summer, before the receipts from ticket sales for autumn shows came in. Councillors considered that £6,000 would cover a quarter of the annual deficit and so keep the theatre solvent until the more profitable pre-Christmas period. This would allow the council time to have a deeper look at the theatre's financial position and any proposed changes to the operating model. To facilitate this, members wished to have a town council officer working closely with the Quay Theatre management team over the next few months to better understand the future viability of the theatre. Although the Town Council were not promising further funding, this could be considered in the autumn once the position was fully understood.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.144, members agreed to approve the expenditure of up to £6,000 excluding VAT for a one-off payment to the Quay Theatre to ensure that they do not have to cease trading in the next 3 months.

That the Business Manager work closely with the Quay Theatre management team to understand the financial viability of the theatre and report back to the council.

Councillor Mrs M Barrett asked for the record to show that he had not spoken or voted on this item.

6. QUESTIONS AND REPORTS

- a. Public Forum – two members of the public remained after the Quay Theatre team had left and one asked the following questions.
 - What could the Town Council do to bring more people back into Sudbury and increase footfall in the town centre? Businesses had been damaged by the increase in parking charges and the council should be providing free parking to encourage town centre shopping and socialising in Sudbury.

- Could a splash park be provided for children in Belle Vue Park? This would also help bring families back into the town centre and have a positive effect on local businesses.

Members were sympathetic, but noted that both parking charges and Belle Vue Park were controlled by Babergh District Council, who often took a different position to the town council. Members considered what changes might be within their power that could contribute to improving life in Sudbury.

- An open day for young people to show them what was available in the town.
 - Moving Party in the Park to a weekday during the long summer holidays to give families the option of a good day out.
 - Focussing Sudbury on Show on activities for young people.
- b. Policing report – The police were not able to attend due to other commitments, but the Mayor read out the police report. Members discussed the merits of applying for some of the proceeds of crime and the Mayor could raise this when he met the locality inspector.
- c. Mayor's Announcements – The Mayor reminded everyone about his charity curry and quiz night at the Ballingdon Valley restaurant on Wednesday 29th July, for which tickets were still available at the Town Hall or online. This would raise funds for his two charities, the Kernos Centre and Number 72.
- d. County Councillors' report – Councillor Ms L Smith had sent in her report, which had been circulated before the meeting, and is shown at minute **pages 706 to 708**. The following points were raised for discussion.
- Suffolk County Council had issued a press release on 2 July saying that they committed to securing the future of Suffolk county farms by opposing future sales of its farmland. Whilst this might be a good thing in principle, Sudbury Town Council had been in discussion with SCC about purchasing a strip of county farmland in Chilton as the site for the new cemetery. It was hoped that this would be exempt as it was an existing plan to provide an essential service for local people.
 - Members were pleased to see that the repairs to the library in the old corn exchange building were nearing completion, but asked for confirmation that the memorial plaque to Lord Philips would be replaced when the work was finished.
 - Members queried the need for another consultation on the Sudbury bus station, having had a previous study in the not so distant past. This would be discussed again under item 15.

RESOLVED

That the County Councillor Ms L Smith be thanked for her report.

- e. District Councillor's report – Councillor Ms J Carter had sent in her report, which has been circulated before the meeting, and is shown at **minute pages 709 and 710**. The following points were raised for discussion.
- Members asked how much of the £250,000 allocated to Sudbury for bus improvements would be spent on consultants as opposed to physical improvement works.
 - Concern was raised about the cleanliness of buses, but this was not a district council matter.

RESOLVED

That District Councillor Ms J Carter be thanked for her report.

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

Planning, Development and Highways Committee on 15th June 2026 – The Chair summarised the minutes.

Finance Committee on 7th July 2026 – The Vice-Chair summarised the minutes.

Leisure and Environment Committee on 30th June 2026 – The Chair summarised the minutes.

Human Resources Committee on 11th June 2026 – The Chair confirmed that the committee had recommended two documents for adoption which would appear further down the agenda.

8. TO APPROVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS) RECOMMENDED BY THE LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Leisure and Environment Committee explained that his committee had revised their terms of reference and recommended them for approval by the full council.

RESOLVED

To approve the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Leisure and Environment Committee, as shown at minute pages 711 and 712.

9. TO APPROVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS) RECOMMENDED BY THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Human Resources Committee explained that her committee had revised their terms of reference and recommended them for approval by the full council.

RESOLVED

To approve the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Human Resources Committee, as shown at minute pages 713 and 714.

10. TO ADOPT THE REVISED PROBATION POLICY AS RECOMMENDED BY THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members reviewed the revised probation policy as recommended by the HR Committee.

RESOLVED

To adopt the revised probation policy, as shown at minute page 715.

11. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £4,000, EXCLUDING VAT, ON NEW OFFICE FURNITURE

The Town Clerk explained that new office furniture was required as the current desks could not accommodate the number of workstations required when the full number of staff were present. This would become critical at the beginning of August when the new Projects Manager was due to start. The current furniture was believed to have been donated by Babergh District Council when they moved out of their Corks Lane offices many years before. The staff had worked out the optimal layout of desks and searched the internet for suitably sized furniture. This would include a main desk with 7 workstations, a breakout table, under desk draws and document storage units. The current desk chairs were new and would not need to be replaced. The lowest online price came to about £3,500 excluding VAT.

Members asked the Town Clerk to obtain alternative quotes from local suppliers in Sudbury to see if they were able to source any of the items required within the margin allowed in the council's local purchase policy. Where the local prices were acceptable, local suppliers would be used.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.111, members agreed to approve the expenditure of up to £4,000 excluding VAT on new office furniture.

12. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £15,800, EXCLUDING VAT, ON AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS IN THE OFFICES AND PARLOUR IN THE TOWN HALL TOWN HALL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Mayor explained the need for air conditioning systems in the offices and parlour in the Town Hall and that the details had been fully considered by the Leisure and Environment Committee.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s.133, members agreed to approve the expenditure of up to £15,800 excluding VAT on air conditioning systems in the offices and parlour in the Town Hall Town Hall.

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 items 14 to 16 as the publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as the items would need to discuss the private personal information of identifiable individuals and potential future contracts.

14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MARKET ISSUES

RESOLVED

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex A, minutes page 716.

To extend the meeting by an additional 15 minutes so that it could continue until 9:15pm

15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STORY OF PLACE AND THE MASTER PLAN AND TO AGREE TO WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL AND MAKE A JOINT PRESS RELEASE

RESOLVED

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex A, minutes pages 716 to 719.

To extend the meeting by another 15 minutes so that it could continue until 9:30pm

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON OTHER PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL LEGAL, CONTRACTUAL AND HR MATTERS

RESOLVED

See CONFIDENTIAL Annex A, minutes page 717.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9:23pm.

Chairman

Report for July 2026 to Sudbury Town Council**From SCC Councillor Laura Smith****Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update**

Suffolk County Council has decided to proceed with a legal challenge against the government's decision regarding the proposed reorganisation.

The legal action has raised concerns among some councillors regarding potential costs to the public purse and the possible impact on preparations for the planned transition to the new unitary authorities.

Supporters of the challenge argue that it is important to test the legal basis of the Government's decision before the reorganisation proceeds.

The district councils could become 'interested parties' in this challenge, drawing these other councils into the action along with legal costs over and above the £500,000 identified from the county council's reserves to pay for it.

The council says it has taken all possible costs into account with the £500,000 figure.

Post-16 Travel Policy Agreed for 2026-27

At Cabinet on Tuesday 16 June, the council considered the proposed Post-16 Travel Policy for the academic year 2026-27. The council is required to publish an annual policy to set out the charges for students over 16, as it receives no funding from the government to provide travel for them – despite it now being a legal requirement for young people to be in education or training until they are 18. The council consulted on the new policy in March 2026, with no changes to charging proposed for the second year in a row. The charges therefore remain:

- £1,050 for a mainstream seat
- £780 for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- The 50% discount remains in place for:
 - Students from low-income families receiving Free School Meals
 - Students with an EHCP or SEND (including those without an EHCP but unable to travel independently due to disability) who also receive Free School Meals

There are currently 30,471 pupils in Suffolk who are eligible for Free School Meals, a 91% increase since 2020.

Some post-16 education providers also provide bursaries which can assist families on a low income with travel costs, and cheaper travel may also be possible via public transport in some cases, so parents and carers are recommended to look into these options too.

Increased Support for Apprenticeships

Businesses in Suffolk will now benefit from extra support to recruit and train their workers because of the expansion of the Levy Support Scheme, which will now enable large employers to transfer levy funds to other businesses. Major employers such as East Coast College and Suffolk County Council have already pledged or are planning to pledge unused levy funding so that micro-businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can train up their employees at reduced or no cost to them. The scheme was started by Apprenticeships Norfolk, who oversaw more than £6 million transferred to over 280 businesses. Businesses who are interesting in pledging unused levy funding can find out further information on the scheme at

<https://www.apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org/article/71670/Levy-Support-Scheme>

Businesses in Suffolk who want advice on apprenticeships and skills can contact Apprenticeships Suffolk by email on apprenticeships@suffolk.gov.uk

£3.6 Million Investment in New Fire Engines

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has invested over three million in a new fleet of fire engines across the county. The eleven new fire engines are in addition to the existing fleet and have been bought as part of the service's ongoing fleet renewal programme to make sure fire engines are up to date and reliable. The new engines will be delivered later this year and will be active at fire stations from November. The fire service is also celebrating the first anniversary of its new fire control room, which is based in west Ipswich. The new control system was recently shortlisted in the International Critical Communications Awards, the leading awards in the sector, in the category 'Best Use of Critical Communications in Public Safety'.

Suffolk Against Fraud Partnership Launched

Suffolk Trading Standards has teamed up with Suffolk Constabulary and businesses in the county to launch Suffolk Against Fraud. This means they will work together to investigate, share information and prepare campaigns to raise awareness and protect vulnerable people and small businesses from the effects of fraud, which now accounts for over 40% of criminal offences in Suffolk. Residents who think they may have been a victim of fraud should report it at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. If money has already been transferred, they should contact their bank immediately. In addition, Suffolk Trading Standards are very active on social media and will post information regularly about current scams that local communities and businesses should be aware of.

NSIP Conference

Suffolk County Council welcomed representatives from councils all over the country to its fourth annual conference on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), which was held at The Hold in Ipswich on 17 June. There were speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, legal experts and industry organisations. The government was questioned on its plans to reform the NSIP system, as it is currently consulting on reducing the role of councils in the delivery of energy transmission projects. Other topics discussed included how communication by project promoters can improve relations with host communities, what local authority good practice looks like in dealing with NSIPs, and an update from Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council on the challenges so far with Sizewell C. Suffolk County Council is recognised as a NSIP Centre of Excellence in the UK, following experience of around 20 large scale projects in the county including offshore wind, solar developments and National Grid reinforcement projects.

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>
<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>



Babergh Report

July 2026

By Cllr Jessie Carter

Heating Oil Support

I'd like to highlight a new initiative from Babergh District Council, working alongside Mid Suffolk District Council and our local Citizens Advice teams, to help residents who heat their homes with oil access financial support they may not realise they're entitled to.

The campaign follows additional Government funding for low-income households that rely on heating oil. Eligible residents can apply for help through Suffolk County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund, which can provide support towards heating oil costs.

This builds on the excellent work of the councils' Cost of Living Team. Over the past year, they have contacted more than 650 households and helped local residents claim almost **£100,000** in benefits and other financial support that would otherwise have gone unclaimed.

Anyone who is struggling with heating costs, or isn't sure whether they qualify for help, is encouraged to get in touch with Citizens Advice, who can check their eligibility and help with the application process.

Given the number of homes in our area that rely on heating oil, particularly in our rural communities, this is a really positive piece of work that should make a genuine difference to residents who need extra support.

This should read comfortably in around a minute. If you'd like, I can also make it sound more like speaking notes rather than a written report.

New Sudbury Wellbeing Walk

I'd also like to mention a new weekly wellbeing walk that has been launched in Sudbury through a partnership between Abbeycroft's Feel Good Suffolk programme and Babergh District Council.

The free, guided 45-minute walk takes place every Friday at 2pm, starting from Kingfisher Leisure Centre and following a route through the Meadows and Belle Vue Park. It's open to everyone and is designed to provide a friendly, accessible way for people to be more active, improve their wellbeing and meet others in the community.

As many of us know, something as simple as a regular walk can have real benefits for both physical and mental health, and it's particularly valuable for anyone looking to get back into activity after illness or a period of inactivity.

It's great to see this initiative brought to Sudbury, where there previously wasn't a regular wellbeing walk, and I hope local residents will make the most of it.

If these reports are for your regular District Councillor update, this style should fit well alongside the heating oil report.

Sudbury Bus Station Improvements

Some good news for Sudbury's bus station. Babergh District Council has secured £250,000 in funding to improve the facilities and overall experience for passengers and bus operators.

The funding will be used to look at improvements such as waiting areas, passenger information, the layout of the site, safety, accessibility and toilet facilities, with the aim of making the bus station more welcoming and encouraging greater use of public transport.

Alongside these short-term improvements, Babergh and Suffolk County Council will also be carrying out a feasibility study to consider the longer-term future of the bus station, including options ranging from reconfiguring the existing site to possible relocation.

This investment forms part of a wider programme of improvements in Sudbury, alongside planned investment in Belle Vue Park and Kingfisher Leisure Centre, and reflects the council's ongoing work with partners to secure additional funding and investment for the town.

These three reports now have a consistent, conversational style that should each take around a minute to deliver at a Full Council meeting.



Sudbury Town Council

Leisure and Environment Committee - Terms of Reference 2026

Purpose of the Committee

1. The Leisure and Environment Committee is established to oversee business, environment and leisure matters on behalf of Sudbury Town Council.
2. The Committee will consist of eight members appointed by the Full Council. The Mayor will be an additional ex-officio member, without voting rights. The Committee will normally meet on the last Tuesday of every month (not August or December unless urgent business), commencing at 6.30pm.
3. The Committee may appoint working groups whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the Committee. Members of working groups may include non-councillors.
4. The committee has delegated authority from the Council to fulfil the following responsibilities (including spending within its approved budget):
 - a. **Business**
 - Understanding the Sudbury town centre businesses.
 - Encouraging and supporting commercial events in Sudbury.
 - The promotion of town centre businesses.
 - Overseeing the Town Council's own business activities, including;
 - Markets.
 - Burials.
 - Hire and commercial use of the Town Hall.
 - Allotments.
 - Services to other local authorities.
 - b. **Environment**
 - Crime, disorder and Community Safety.
 - Community Liaison.
 - Promotion of a sustainable local environment, including the operations of the council.
 - The maintenance, management and control of:
 - Town Hall.
 - Public seats.
 - Public conveniences.
 - Public clocks.
 - Public lighting.
 - Archives, insignia and pictures.



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- Miscellaneous property.
- Areas of public open space, including the Croft and Mill Acre.
- Cemeteries.
- Bus shelters.
- Litter bins.
- Dog bins.
- Flower beds, planters and hanging baskets.
- War memorials.
- Closed churchyards.

c. Leisure

- Entertainment, sporting and social activities.
- Cultural and artistic events.
- Historical and cultural heritage.
- The promotion of tourism.
- Work with the Common Lands Charity on improvements to the meadows.
- Christmas lighting.

5. The Committee must produce a budget each year to cover forecast expenditure for all these areas for approval by the Finance Committee and the Full Council. Any proposed unbudgeted expenditure will require approval of the Finance Committee.



Sudbury Town Council

Human Resources Committee - Terms of Reference 2026

1. The Human Resources Committee is established to set the policy for staffing matters, subject to budget and expenditure limits decided by the Finance Committee. The HR Committee is not involved in the management or discipline of the Town Clerk or any of the staff.
2. The Committee will consist of five members appointed by the Full Council. The Mayor will be an additional ex-officio member, without voting rights, unless he is substituting for an absent member. The Committee will meet only when required, with meeting times arranged by the Town Clerk to suit members' availability.
3. The Committee may appoint working groups whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the Committee. Members of working groups may include non-councillors.
4. The Committee has delegated authority from the Council to fulfil the following responsibilities (including spending within its approved budget):
 - a. Establish and review the staffing structure and make recommendations on staffing related expenditure to the Finance Committee for each annual budget.
 - b. Monitor, review and revise all policies for council staff.
 - c. Oversee the process for the recruitment of staff. Members will also be asked to form the panel for the second interviews of any manager roles.
 - d. Review salary scales for all council staff.
 - e. Review the standard structure and content of staff employment contracts.
 - f. Review the performance management system (including annual appraisals) and training programmes for all council staff.
 - g. Review and set the policies for staff working conditions, wellbeing and health and safety matters.
 - h. Monitor staff turnover and retention rates to ensure that Sudbury Town Council remains an employer of choice.
 - i. Review and set the training and development required for HR Committee members.
5. The Town Clerk works for the corporate body of the council, not the HR Committee. If any Committees or individual councillors have any concerns about the Town Clerk, these must be raised on a Full Council agenda.



Sudbury Town Council

6. All staff management and disciplinary matters will be dealt with by the Town Clerk and the senior management team. Where an issue needs to be escalated beyond the Town Clerk, an independent external panel will be assembled with the aid of SALC and the Town Council's HR advisors. This external panel will hear any cases that could result in dismissal and any associated appeals. The outcomes will be reported back to the HR Committee.
7. The total staff pay budget is shown in each annual budget and reported in the annual accounting statement. Any proposed staff pay expenditure above this figure will require the approval of the Finance Committee and Full Council.
8. All members of the HR Committee must maintain confidentiality concerning sensitive employee information in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.



SUDBURY
TOWN COUNCIL

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

PROBATION POLICY

1. Sudbury Town Council is committed to ensuring that all staff are suitable for their job roles. In order to achieve the best results new staff, or staff moving into new roles, will serve a period under probation.
2. New staff will normally serve their first 4 months on probation during which time they will remain on one week's notice.
3. New staff will be given induction training by their line manager and regular informal feedback on their performance. Small issues will be addressed on a daily basis to help the new employee settle in.
4. New staff will have a formal probation review with their line manager every month. During this review they will discuss what areas have gone well and what areas need to be improved. If the member of staff is not performing to the required standard, they will be given one week to address the issues before attending another review meeting. If the issues have not been addressed to the satisfaction of the Town Clerk, the member of staff under probation may be given notice that their employment will be terminated in one week. This whole process will be conducted internally by the Town Clerk and the line managers at the Town Council. Notes will be taken at these review meetings, a copy will be kept on the employee's file, and a copy will be given to them.
5. New staff will be required to produce references and these will be taken up. If the references raise serious issues about the suitability of the individual for the role, or contradict statements made at interview, the employment may be terminated with one week's notice.
6. If the new member of staff is off sick during their period of probation, the probation will be extended by the same number of days, up to a maximum of one calendar week.

Policy Name	Probation Policy
Current Status	Adopted by full council
Approved	14 th July 2026
Next Review Date	July 2031
Policy Owner	Deputy Clerk