

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - FULL COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday **13th January 2026** at 7pm at The Cabin, Northstowe.

Members: 15 (Seats: 15)

Quorum: 5 Members

Present: 9 Members: Cllr Bros Sabría (Mayor); Cllr Birr-Pixton (Deputy Mayor); Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen; Cllr Hodgson, Cllr Hughes, Cllr Hunter, Cllr Rashid; Cllr Demir.

Town Clerk and Locum Town Clerk,
Cllr Luis Navarro.

The meeting was opened at 8:00 PM; Cllr Bros Sabria assumed the Chair.

228/25-26/FC APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Standing Item)

To record apologies for absence received prior to the meeting.

The Council noted apologies from Cllr Cattaneo and Cllr Bostock.

229/25-26/FC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Standing Item)

- 1) **To consider any declarations of interest and any requests for dispensations in respect to business on the agenda.**

None received.

230/25-26/FC PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Standing Item)

To allow members of the public and Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to business to be transacted at this meeting (maximum 3 minutes per person; up to 15 minutes in total).
Cllr Luis Navarro used this opportunity to provide a report to the Town Council.

231/25-26/FC MINUTES OF PREVIOUS FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS (Standing item)

- 1) **To receive minutes of the 16th December 2025 Full Council meeting and to resolve to accept these as a correct record.**

RESOLVED: It was agreed by a majority, with two abstentions, to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

232/25-26/FC 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR BUDGET AND PRECEPT.

- 1) **To approve the recommendation that Northstowe Town Council set their Precept for the 2026/2027 Financial Year at £227,626 with a matched budget of £458,426 as deferred from 213/25-26/FC.**

The Council noted the report prepared by the Locum Clerk, with the two budget options being presented. Option one was unchanged from the previous Full Council meeting and option two was changed to reflect actual core costs to the Town Council.

There was a discussion around the risk of the Unity Centre and what reserves have been put in place to cover some of the risks that there may be with the new building. There was a concern over revenue costs, insurance concerns and concerns raised over not knowing the actual costs for the supply media.

There was a discussion had on maintaining a steady increase in the Band D equivalent to ensure there are appropriate reserve funds to deal with the demands of taking on a large asset. Discussion was also had on the utilisation of S106 monies for the Unity Centre to their full effect rather than increasing the Precept by a large amount to cover any unforeseen expenditure. It was noted that the £60,000 of S106 monies was able to bid on for the Unity Centre and the Youth Centre however it has been prudently budgeted to allocate £30,000 only within the current year budget.

The Locum Clerk advised the Town Council that they need to be mindful of their income aspirations for the Unity Centre and need to understand the risks associated with setting a high income aspiration.

It was proposed to amend the motion to approve that Northstowe Town Council set their Precept for the 2026/2027 Financial Year at £191,732 with a matched budget. This is a 7.5% increase on a Band D Equivalent. An amount of £13,666 would be budgeted in a reserve fund budget code for 'New Projects'.

RESOLVED: It was agreed by a majority, with one abstention, to approve the amendment to the motion and to set the Precept for the 2026/2027 financial year at £191,732. It was further agreed to move £25,000 from the current in-year budget projected underspend to a new EMR entitled 'New Projects'. It was also further agreed to move £25,000 from General Reserve to the 'New Projects' earmarked reserve.

Financial Year	2024/2025 AGREED	2025/2026 AGREED	2026/2027 PROPOSED
Precept Required	144,786.44	169,586.96	191,732.00
Increase per year (£)		24,800.52	22,145.04
Increase per year (%)		17%	13%

ADJUSTED BASIS	2024/2025 Financial Year	2025/2026 Financial Year	2026/2027 Financial Year AGREED	Difference vs Previous Year
Band D Equivalents	1472	1605	1,688	83
Precept per Band D Equivalent (£/annum)	£98.36	£105.66	£113.59	£7.93
Precept per Band D Equivalent (p/week)	188.64	202.64	217.84	15.2
Increase per year (% per annum)		7%	7.5%	

233/25-26/FC PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

1) To consider the Town Council's response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

The Council received the document created by Cllr Birr-Pixton and that had been informed by Town Councillors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve the comments as appended to the rear of these minutes.

234/25-26/FC MHCLG ANNOUNCEMENT ON LOCAL ELECTIONS

1) To consider the announcement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on local elections and consider whether to raise any comments on the issues raised within the letter.

The Council noted that South Cambridgeshire District Council have expressed a desire to press ahead with their elections this year.

235/25-26/FC DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Standing item)

• Full Council Meeting: Tue 27th January 2026, 7-9 pm; The Cabin, Northstowe.

[Final versions of motions & papers to be received by 20/01 at the latest].

• For all Council meetings and annual meeting schedule, see www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk
This item was noted.

236/25-26/FC To resolve to move into a closed session and exclude the public and press, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, due to the sensitive and/or commercial nature of business to be discussed under the below items.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to exclude the public and press from the below agenda items.

237/25-26/FC UNITY CENTRE

1) To formally approve the Agreement to Lease for the Unity Centre and to execute the document.

The Council noted that the Agreement for Lease cannot be signed due to the subsidiary documents not being available for the Town Council, as per the advice from the Solicitor. A draft copy with comments has been circulated to all members from the Town Council's solicitor with some proposed amendments.

It was proposed that to express positive intent to consider and execute the agreement, subject to final wording at the meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 27th January 2026 and to demand full and final agreements for inclusion at the same Full Council meeting, no later than Tuesday 20th January 2026.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve an amendment to the motion to include reference to 'Satisfactory Property Search Results'.

The motion is therefore now, To express positive intent to consider and execute the agreement, subject to final wording and satisfactory property searches, at the meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 27th January 2026 and to demand full and final agreements for inclusion at the same Full Council meeting, no later than Tuesday 20th January 2026.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed approve the amended motion and to press ahead with ensuring the agreements are finalised.

2) To receive an update on the Legal Agreements for the Unity Centre, including any amendments requested at the previous Full Council meeting on 25th November 2025.

The Council noted the update from the Town Council's Solicitor and agreed with the proposed changes to the other agreements.

238/25-26/FC UNITY CENTRE CAFÉ TENDER

1) To consider the draft Lease Agreement for the Unity Centre Café.

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

239/25-26/FC NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL STAFFING STRUCTURE

1) To consider any recommendations from the Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 13th January 2026.

The Locum Clerk provided an update for the Town Council.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve the recommendation to remove the post of the Deputy Town Clerk and proceed with staffing structure 'B' as per the LGA report.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 9:08pm.

Signed.....

Chair of Northstowe Town Council.

Date.....

Northstowe Town Council Comments on Local Plan

Topic: Policies

WS/CF: Community, Sports, and Leisure Facilities &

WS/NC: Meeting the needs of new and growing Communities

The policies do not identify any demographic groups (including young people, older people, vulnerable adults, families, or disabled residents) and age-specific needs that should be catered for; this is particularly important in new developments for young people.

WS/HD: Creating healthy new developments

1.a. We propose that the following text should be added:

The design of new developments should include appropriate and sufficient seating spaces in open spaces, play areas, and footpaths alongside the development as well as ensuring there are public toilet facilities spread across the development.

1.g. We propose that the following text should be added:

The design of open spaces of new developments should encompass climate change mitigation measures at early phases of development where tree canopy has not yet developed sufficiently to provide shelter.

Open spaces should include public drinking water fountains to facilitate healthy habits across the entire population, including those most at risk of being affected by dehydration in heat waves such as older and younger population.

H/AH: Affordable housing

6. a-c. Considering that new affordable homes should be “tenure blind in design so they are indistinguishable from any other housing tenures and well-integrated with market units on site” (as per point 5c. of this same policy) – we object to any grouping or clustering. The distribution of affordable housing should avoid concentrating affordable housing in a single street or section of the development. Ideally, within a development, an equivalent proportion of affordable homes should be in “prime” locations (e.g. close to open spaces or parks) compared to market properties.

6. Notwithstanding the above comment, which takes priority, an additional sub point should be added as follows:

6. d. Where a larger site has been subdivided into smaller development parcels, the clustering requirement will apply to the site as a whole.

(Background: at Northstowe, the clustering requirement in the Phase 1 S106 was broken by joining provision across two adjacent parcels. This must not happen in the future.)

GP/QP: Establishing high quality landscape and public realm

1. **c. ii.** In our experience at Northstowe Phase 1, native varieties are often now unsuitable and experience high failure rates in the recent hot, dry summers, wet winters, and clay soil. We would encourage the LPA to emphasise the second clause in this point. Establishment must be improved via careful species selection at the design stage, maintenance during the first years after planting, with a backstop of robust planning enforcement when schemes are not effectively implemented.

Topic: S/NS Northstowe

Figure 76. Dedicated, direct, frequent, reliable and affordable connections should be provided connecting Northstowe with Cambridge North, and Northstowe with Cambridge City Centre. For the avoidance of doubt the current Guided Bus provision is unacceptable, see later comments.

2.102. We would like to underline the timescale for delivery of traveller pitches and add the requirement that such pitches may come only when a comprehensive set of facilities, strong community cohesion, and adequate provision of local services (policing, fire, healthcare, leisure, employment, etc.) are fully in place. Otherwise, there is a risk of repeating the dis-integrated results seen at sites elsewhere in the county.

3.3.67. A typo here predicts 1,018,000 homes; this should read 10,180.

3.3.69. 7. The ratio of employment capacity to dwellings falls below other comparable settlements:

Settlement	Homes	Employment floorspace	m ² per dwelling	Reference
Northstowe	10,180	47,000 m²	4.6	link
Cambourne	~4,300	~47,300 m ²	~11	link - link
Graven Hill	~1,900	~100,000 m ²	~52	link
NW Cambridge	~3,000	~100,000 m ²	~33	link
Waterbeach (planned)	~6,500	~31,500 m ²	~4.8	link

Without additional employment space Northstowe will be a permanent dormitory town and with more people commuting this may put more strain on the roads and public transport.

3.3.69. 7. While these uses are described using planning Use Classes, in addition it would be desirable to use plain language to describe what this means in practice. We would like Lab space to be specifically noted here, as it is in short supply locally.

3.3.69. 7.a.i. We note that Northstowe Phase 1 was delivered with zero self/custom build homes. There are three plots coming forward presently in the first parcel of Phase 3B, but we would welcome an additional target being recorded here so progress toward it can be tested against future planning applications.

3.3.69. 8. We are now far beyond "early occupation" and all involved parties have failed to deliver "Temporary (...) healthcare facilities" and indeed are in default on the Phase 2 S106 planning obligation requiring permanent healthcare facilities.

3.3.69. 8.f. It is unfortunate that the existing established S106 obligations provide for land for faith and cultural use, but failed to provide for any monetary or in-kind contributions to realising facilities on that land. It is regrettable that providing facilities in a new and master-planned development has fallen solely on the shoulders of religious and community groups. This contrasts with Cambourne, where a S106 agreement provided for monetary contributions toward delivery of a church.

3.3.69. 10. & 11. We welcome and support this clear re-statement that Northstowe will be separated from adjacent settlements. This separation must be retained and neither Northstowe *nor the adjacent settlements* should be developed into the gap. An **updated inset map is required** which reflects this, as the provided one does not reflect the established green separation provided for by existing outline planning consents. Any update or refresh on the outline planning consents must then carry forward the same or greater green separation. We note the Northstowe "Defined Development Extents" map more closely matches our expectations of the extents of the built environment for Northstowe, but also is not included as an inset map.

3.3.69. 57.a. Please strike "which will not undermine the vitality and viability of other nearby towns or compete with Cambridge;" **It is essential that Northstowe Town centre is allowed to compete with others in the area.** For this to happen it must have destinations as "anchors" – within the listed uses — which bring people to the town and make the Town Centre a viable proposition. It would be highly **inappropriate and unacceptable** for the LPA to neuter development of the Town Centre because it could compete with other areas.

Please also adjust "immediate surrounding area" to "wider surrounding area" for similar reasons.

3.3.69. 63. We support the principle of outdoor sports provision, but a bowling green is already provided in Northstowe with no further pressing need given the town's demographics. Would suggest padel or bocce is more appropriate for casual sports provision associated with a town park.

3.3.69. 63. It would be appropriate here to reference the close proximity of the secured swimming pool provision to the Town Centre.

3.3.69. 65. "Continue to offer recreational opportunities" please reword to "must offer water-based recreation opportunities in the future" as this is currently not happening.

3.3.69. 69.e. We note that while the relevant S106 payments have been made during the development of Northstowe, for example to fund the capital costs of the Guided Busway, **the current level of service provided to Northstowe residents in return is deeply unacceptable.** In addition, the charging model adopted by the operator and approved by CCC sees bus journeys commencing in Northstowe attract higher fares than the same bus being boarded in adjacent settlements.

3.3.69. 69.f. The AAP demanded 12 months subsidised/free bus travel, so this text is a significant weakening of that. In any case, this was not made available to later residents. We believe that no such subsidy exists currently. In fact, bus journeys boarded within Northstowe are priced higher than the same buses being boarded in adjacent settlements. This discourages use of public transport and locks-in private car use for Northstowe residents.

Topic: Infrastructure Delivery Plan

13.2.1. "Facilities such as [...] Northstowe Community Centre offer integrated services, including libraries, leisure, health, and Early Years provision." We do not recognise this description. We note that all parties are currently in default of a S106 obligation providing for health and library facilities in Northstowe.

15.2. We note that delivery of a Swimming Pool for Northstowe has been secured and are highly supportive of it being realised in line with the Phase 2 S106 agreement. We would welcome early engagement with SCDC as they form their strategy plan for delivery of essential infrastructure.

Topic: Housing Delivery Study

2.52 This strategy relies heavily on Northstowe continuing to deliver homes. That reliance must be matched by **equally clear, binding infrastructure delivery mechanisms** for items like public transport upgrades, social and civic facilities, and timely delivery of healthcare facilities as assured by S106 planning obligations.

Past and current failure to deliver these in line with obligations already jeopardises Northstowe's sustainability and ability to support future housing growth. The master developer must pursue a strategy that leads to timely, visible, and quality infrastructure delivery which - in conjunction with quality, affordable and desirable homes - will improve delivery rates.

Topic: A14 Distribution Sites

Drainage: The applicant for one of these sites attended a meeting of our planning committee, and it became clear that the official government "Flood map for planning" does not account for the flood protection measures provided for Longstanton during the Northstowe development (aka the Hatton Road ponds). It is **essential and mandatory** for any developments upstream of this to be designed and considered only against accurate and up-to-date hydrological information.

Traffic and transport:

The A1307 "Local Road": was provided so that the A14 could be designated a "Special Road" (therefore allowing a route for non-motorway and non-motorised users), and with the expectation that HGV movements would be for local access only. Using it for a site with significant HGV access requirements will put HGVs into conflict with vulnerable road users. In addition, the continuity of the cycleway must be retained and protected to avoid loss of priority. Therefore, we would require alternative access arrangements to be made for any development on the Slate Hall Farm location.

Uses supporting local needs for "last mile" delivery should be prioritised: A typical last-mile delivery to the Greater Cambridge area is currently served from a hub in Peterborough 33 miles away. Serving these from a more local hub would reduce traffic movements when viewed as a whole.