

Saxmundham Town Council Strategic Plan 2025-2030



FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce Saxmundham Town Council's new Strategic Plan that sets out our vision for 2025 - 2030. It provides a clear direction and strong commitment to the town's future and highlights our core values and key objectives.

In April 2025, we consulted the community on the draft plan to ensure that our priorities reflect the needs and aspirations of the town. Following this consultation, the Strategic Plan was formally adopted in May 2025.



The next five years will be a pivotal time for Saxmundham as we navigate several challenges:

- **Town Centre** – regeneration will bring enhanced economic sustainability, improve accessibility and movement, upgrade public spaces, and revitalise buildings and infrastructure.
- **Population Growth** – the development of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will increase the town's population by 40%, creating greater demand for local services.
- **Energy Projects** – our town may play a role in the national drive toward net zero, with potential onshore infrastructure near our parish border.
- **Local Government Reorganisation** – the proposed transition to a unitary authority, replacing county, district, and borough councils, will reshape local governance.

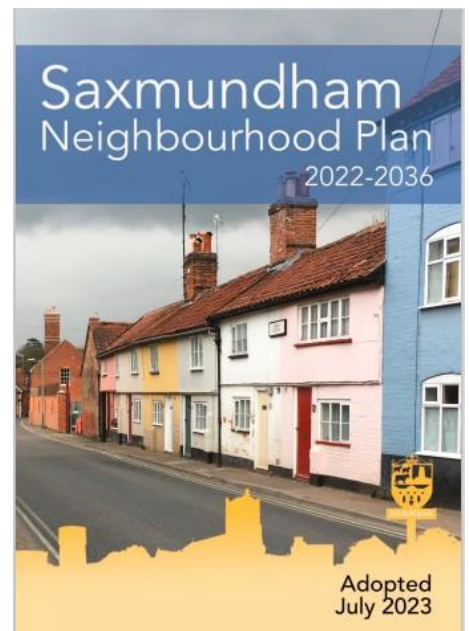
The Town Council is prepared to meet these challenges with confidence. With the addition of new members bringing fresh perspectives and a team of dedicated, qualified staff, we are stronger, more united, and more committed than ever to be an excellent local council, responsive to the needs of Saxmundham, delivering high-quality services.

Councillor John Findlay
Town Council Chair

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan sets out the Town Council’s priorities, providing a structured framework to guide the town’s future development. It builds on the foundations of the Neighbourhood Plan ensuring it remains responsiveness to evolving needs.

The Plan defines key areas of focus, concentrating on aspects where the Town Council has direct responsibility including community services, local infrastructure, and civic engagement. However, we recognise that certain responsibilities lie with other public sector bodies. In these cases, we will act as a strong advocate, working collaboratively to influence decisions and secure the best outcomes for Saxmundham’s residents.



By adopting this Strategic Plan, we reinforce our commitment to progress, service delivery, and town-wide improvements. Our goal is to enhance quality of life for all by driving positive change, fostering economic vitality, and promoting sustainability.

Our approach is rooted in Saxmundham’s community spirit, resilience, and practical mindset. We will collaborate with local authorities, businesses, and community groups to create a thriving and sustainable town that reflects Saxmundham’s heritage, character and aspirations. This Plan aligns with our unique identity of a connected community where everyone belongs.

Beyond setting our direction, this Strategic Plan also serves as an accountability mechanism, ensuring that the Town Council remains transparent, responsive, and aligned with the expectations of the community. To maintain its relevance, the Strategic Plan will function as a dynamic and evolving framework, with:

- Regular reviews by Committees to assess progress and refine priorities.
- An annual evaluation to adapt to new opportunities, challenges, and community aspirations.
- Ongoing engagement with residents and stakeholders to ensure our actions remain in step with the needs of the town.

Through this proactive approach, the Town Council aims to shape a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future for Saxmundham—one that honours its heritage, meets present needs, and lays a strong foundation for future generations.

OUR CORE VALUES

As we set our strategy and define our priorities, we believe it is essential to establish our core values. These values underpin our work, shape our culture, and reflect our ambition to be a leading Town Council at the forefront of local government.

1. **Serving our Community**

We are dedicated to serving Saxmundham's residents, surrounding rural communities, and visitors. We foster inclusivity, friendship and acceptance, ensuring Saxmundham remains a place where everyone feels they belong. Our goal is to enhance Saxmundham as an exceptional place to live, work, and visit.

2. **Openness and Transparency**

We are committed to open, transparent governance and strong democratic engagement. Our decision-making processes will be accessible for public scrutiny, and we welcome constructive challenge, discussion, and dialogue.

3. **A Strong and Respected Voice**

As the statutory representative of Saxmundham, we will ensure the town's voice is heard. We will stay closely connected to the concerns of our community, using this understanding to guide our decisions and advocate effectively.

4. **Delivering Quality and Value**

We will provide high-quality services that deliver real value for money. We will manage our share of Council Tax funds responsibly, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in everything we do.

5. **Collaboration and Partnerships**

We recognise the power of working together. By collaborating with statutory authorities, local organisations, and community groups, we can harness local skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm to achieve the best for Saxmundham.

6. **Creativity and Innovation**

We will embrace change while respecting our heritage. By fostering creativity, culture and innovation, we will celebrate Saxmundham's unique and quirky character while preserving its traditions.

OUR THEMES

This Strategic Plan sets out our overarching aims, aligning with our Neighbourhood Plan while introducing a new key focus area. It provides a clear framework for shaping the future of our town, ensuring that our policies and initiatives contribute to long-term growth, sustainability, and community well-being.

Our vision is structured around four key themes:

1. **A Thriving and Prosperous Town** – we aim to foster economic growth, support local businesses, and create opportunities for employment and investment. By enhancing infrastructure, attracting new enterprises, and promoting tourism, we will build a resilient and dynamic local economy.
2. **A Safe and Healthy Town** – ensuring the well-being of our residents is a priority. We will work to improve public safety, access to healthcare, and opportunities for recreation. Initiatives will focus on community well-being, crime reduction, road safety, and promoting active lifestyles.
3. **An Attractive and Distinctive Town** – we will protect and enhance the character of our town by preserving its heritage, improving public spaces, and fostering cultural and artistic initiatives. We will fiercely protect Conservation Area aesthetics and work to ensure Saxmundham is a town to be proud of. Advocating for high-quality urban design and maintaining green spaces will help create a vibrant and welcoming environment.
4. **A Biodiverse and Sustainable Town** – environmental sustainability is at the heart of our vision. We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint, enhancing biodiversity, protecting and championing the natural environment, and promoting sustainable practices and conservation efforts.



THEME 1 – A THRIVING AND PROSPEROUS TOWN

1. **Develop a Strong Marketing Strategy**

Create a comprehensive marketing strategy that highlights Saxmundham's key strengths, ensuring the town centre remains economically vibrant, residentially appealing, and affordable. Focus on fostering long-term mixed-use sustainability for residents, businesses, and visitors.



2. **Improve Accessibility and Connectivity**

Use the town's strategic road and rail connections to enhance economic growth and social vitality. Enhance parking availability within walking distance of the town centre by working with local authorities.

3. **Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Town Centre**

Support initiatives that make the town centre more inviting and accessible, with improved walkability from the station to Market Place, along High Street, and through to Fromus Square. Develop safe, welcoming gathering spaces that encourage social interaction.

4. **Establish a Collaborative Stakeholder Group**

Build on Saxmundham's strengths including its strong volunteer base, independent businesses, and vibrant cultural life. Form a partnership between local businesses, community organisations, and local authorities to drive a shared vision for Saxmundham.

5. **Strengthen Collaboration with Supermarkets**

Partner with supermarket retailers to develop initiatives that attract shoppers into the town centre, enhancing the overall retail experience while supporting independent local businesses.

6. **Revitalise Fromus Green and the High Street**

Identify and support projects that draw visitors beyond the supermarket area, transforming Fromus Green and the High Street into vibrant destinations for retail, recreation, and community engagement.

THEME 2 – A SAFE AND HEALTHY TOWN

1. Enhance Community Facilities

Advocate for the development of high-quality community facilities that promote health and wellbeing for all residents. This includes lobbying for improved medical services, a new indoor sports centre, and regenerated outdoor spaces for recreation, fostering healthier and more active lifestyles.

2. Develop Safe and Accessible Walking Routes

Establish well-signposted, circular walking routes throughout the town and parish. Improve accessibility by widening footpaths where feasible, maintaining public rights of way, and installing clear signage to encourage walking for leisure and commuting.

3. Improve Active Travel and Connectivity

Support initiatives that enhance infrastructure for walking, wheeling, and cycling. This includes connecting key public spaces and amenities, developing safe cycleways and footpaths to neighbouring parishes, and ensuring the availability of secure bicycle parking.

4. Strengthen Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Develop a comprehensive green infrastructure plan to improve access to nature and promote biodiversity. Collaborate with local authorities and relevant agencies to enhance green spaces and create diverse areas for recreation, wildlife, relaxation, and social interaction.

5. Enhance Road Safety and Traffic Management

Implement traffic-calming measures and support education and enforcement initiatives to reduce speeding, illegal parking, and congestion. Identify and implement solutions to minimise heavy traffic in the town centre, creating a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment while supporting local businesses.

6. Promote Community Safety and Resilience

Work collaboratively with emergency services, local authorities, and community groups to improve public safety and preparedness. Support initiatives such as enhanced street lighting, neighbourhood watch programmes, and emergency response plans. Encourage community involvement in crime prevention and disaster preparedness to build a safer, more resilient, and connected town.



THEME 3 - AN ATTRACTIVE AND DISTINCTIVE TOWN

1. **Celebrate Saxmundham's Historic Identity**

Identify and champion the town's rich history and unique character to boost civic pride and strengthen community spirit, while promoting sustainable heritage conservation practices.

2. **Revitalise our Historic Buildings**

Commission expert guidance to develop a vision for restoring and enhancing the Market Hall as a vibrant and multifunctional hub at the heart of the town. Ensure it remains a protected community asset that serves diverse cultural, social and economic purposes. Build on ongoing improvements to the Gannon Rooms, enhancing its potential as a welcoming community asset between the train station and the High Street. Invest in improvements that strengthen its role as a key focal point for community engagement and activity.



3. **Seamlessly Integrate the Garden Neighbourhood**

Support proposals that ensure the Garden Neighbourhood is physically, environmentally, and socially integrated with the existing town, fostering a fully connected community.

4. **Strengthen Community Engagement**

Actively collaborate with local stakeholders to identify and address community needs. Empower local groups to drive positive change, fostering a sense of belonging, wellbeing, and environmental responsibility.

5. **Enhance Cultural Identity and Public Spaces**

Develop well-equipped public venues and dynamic event programmes that celebrate Saxmundham's cultural identity. By harnessing community energy and creativity, we will strengthen the town's social cohesion and provide inclusive spaces for engagement and expression.

6. **Turn Challenges into Opportunities**

Mitigate any potential negative impacts by transforming them into opportunities that enhance community pride, reinforce Saxmundham's sense of place, and ensure a prosperous, sustainable future through eco-conscious initiatives and green infrastructure.

THEME 4 - A BIODIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE TOWN

1. Enhance Green Spaces and Natural Habitats

Protect and expand green spaces, woodlands, and waterways to support biodiversity and provide accessible nature-rich areas for recreation, relaxation, and wildlife conservation.

2. Promote Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency

Advocate for environmentally responsible building practices, ensuring new developments incorporate sustainable materials, energy efficiency measures, and green infrastructure to minimise environmental impact.

3. Encourage Sustainable Transport and Reduced Carbon Footprint

Support initiatives that promote walking, cycling, and public transport while reducing car dependency. Expand electric vehicle infrastructure and encourage low-emission travel options.

4. Increase Community Involvement in Environmental Stewardship

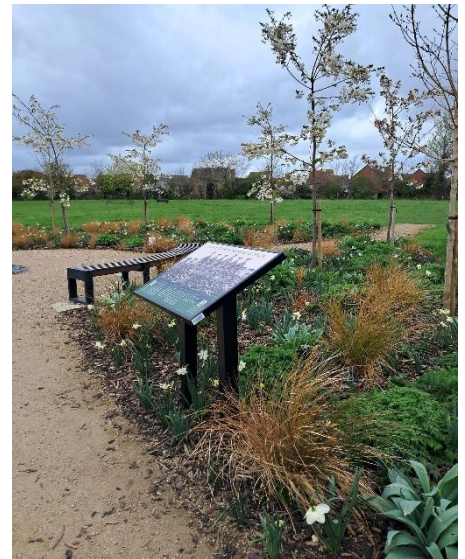
Engage residents, businesses, community groups and schools in conservation efforts, tree planting, and community-led sustainability projects to foster a collective responsibility for the town's environmental future.

5. Improve Waste Management and Circular Economy Practices

Support initiatives that enhance recycling, reduce single-use plastics, and promote circular economy practices such as repair cafés, community composting, and local reuse schemes. Encourage sustainable event management by minimising waste, using eco-friendly materials, and promoting responsible resource use at community events.

6. Strengthen Climate Resilience and Water Management

Implement measures to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as flood prevention strategies, sustainable drainage systems, and nature-based solutions to enhance water conservation and resilience.



DELIVERING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

To ensure the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan, we will develop a clear and structured roadmap that aligns with our vision and core values. This approach will allow us to deliver meaningful outcomes while remaining adaptable to emerging opportunities and challenges.

1. Annual Delivery Plans

Each financial year, we will produce an Annual Delivery Plan detailing specific actions that will contribute to achieving the objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan. The Annual Delivery Plans will:

- Set clear priorities and measurable targets for the year.
- Define the responsible Committee for each action.
- Outline key milestones and expected outcomes.
- Allocate necessary resources and partnerships to support implementation.
- Regularly reviewed to assess progress and ensure alignment with the town's evolving needs.

2. Governance and Oversight

Each action within the Annual Delivery Plan will be assigned to a designated Committee, which will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of assigned actions.
- Monitoring progress and addressing any barriers to delivery.
- Making strategic and policy recommendations to the Town Council.

For specific initiatives, informal working groups may be established, comprising Councillors and relevant stakeholders. These groups will provide expert input, conduct research, and report their findings to the appropriate Committee or directly to the Council for decision-making. The Town Council will have responsibility for coordination across Committees and maintaining a unified approach to delivering key objectives.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

To ensure transparency and accountability, we will implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress and measure impact. This will include:

- Annual reviews to assess achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Where possible, Key Performance Indicators to measure success against our strategic objectives.
- Public updates to keep residents and stakeholders informed about progress.

By continuously evaluating our actions, we can refine our approach and ensure that resources are directed toward the most effective initiatives.

4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

We recognise that collaboration with the community, businesses, and other stakeholders is essential for achieving our strategic objectives. To strengthen engagement, we will:

- Hold public consultations to gather feedback and inform decision-making.
- Establish partnerships with local organisations and businesses.
- Launch community-driven projects that encourage others to take an active role in shaping the town's future.
- Maintain open communication channels through newsletters, social media, and a dedicated website to keep the public informed and engaged.

By fostering a culture of participation, we can ensure that the town's development reflects the needs and aspirations of its residents.

5. Funding and Resource Allocation

Effective delivery of this Strategic Plan requires appropriate funding and resources. To support implementation, we will:

- Identify and apply for external funding opportunities.
- Ensure that the Town Council's budget aligns with strategic priorities.
- Leverage volunteer networks and local expertise to maximise impact without excessive financial burden.

By securing diverse funding sources and efficiently allocating resources, we can achieve sustainable and impactful outcomes.

6. Adaptability and Continuous Improvement

While we will outline specific actions in our Annual Delivery Plans, we recognise the need to remain flexible in responding to new opportunities and challenges. Any new initiative, issue, or external factor not explicitly covered by this Strategic Plan will be:

- Assessed for its relevance to our vision and core values.
- Reviewed for potential benefits, risks, and resource implications.
- Integrated into subsequent delivery plans if deemed appropriate.

This structured and responsive approach will ensure that our strategy remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the town and its residents.



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