

Annual Town Meeting 2014 and Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Sir/Madam

You may have become aware that the Council in Needham Market has started to produce a neighbourhood plan for the town. Since the recent start, the Council has intended to include the voice of the various Local Community Groups or other Organisations serving Needham Market. The Council wants to do this in its information gathering stage to ensure that you have a proper say in the setting of the Council's policy making – before those policies have been created for the formal community consultation stage.

The approach the Town Council wishes to take, in the first instance, is to use the opportunity of the Annual Town Meeting, to be held on Monday 28th April starting at 7:30pm in the Burton Room, Needham Market Community Centre. Your Local Community Group/Organisation is invited to send representation to the Annual Town Meeting.

The aim is for representatives from Local Community Groups/Organisations to attend the Annual Town Meeting and share their feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan with us. Prior to that, we want to encourage Local Community Groups/Organisations to prepare for the meeting by stimulating thoughts by way of putting a number of questions to you. The questions are by no means exclusive and we fully respect there may well be other issues that are important from your perspective.

The proposed use of the Annual Town Meeting for Neighbourhood Plan consultation is a departure from our normal practice whereby Local Community Groups/Organisations present their Annual Reports. On this occasion, we are asking Local Community Groups/Organisations to submit their reports as usual (prior to the meeting if possible or, on the night) and they will be made available at the meeting for others to see as they wish and then held in the Town Council Office subsequent to the meeting, as normal. If there is any really burning issue a Local Community Group/Organisation wishes raise at the meeting then, of course, they will be free to do so. This will also apply to any members of the public attending although, in past years, members of the public have either been thin on the ground or, they attend because of a specific issue. The public will be fully included in Neighbourhood Plan consultation in due course.

The Council would welcome your views on a number of topics as it builds up a picture of how best to approach the future and the 15 years of the plan. They are:-

- Do you feel that your group/service/facility has a firm local bond with the town of Needham Market. If so what are those bonds?
- Is your group/service/facility working well? Are you sufficiently robust to last over the next, say, five years? If not, what help might allow your activities to be stabilised and maintained?
- Do you have any plans for expansion if the community grows? Do you think there are any issues that give cause for concern in the short term (next 5 years) medium term (5-10 years) and beyond?
- Do you enjoy support from the settlements that surround the town? If so, how far do people travel to take advantage of your group/service/facility?

As part of the national planning process, planning for the development of new homes, industry and services used to be done at both County and District levels. Their approach saw Needham Market designated a “Key Service Centre”. As the town had most of the services to help local communities to thrive it was considered an appropriate place to allow further development.

- Do you believe that Needham Market’s status as a “Key Service Centre” is still appropriate? Does this affect your group/service/facility in any way?

Apart from establishing the community’s perceptions of Needham Market we are keen to gather comments about specific services that your own group/service/facility may be involved with in the town.

- Please tell how you feel about shopping, recreation, health or other facilities in Needham Market
- Are there any services or facilities which are not fit for purpose or missing but which could benefit all?

Finally, there will be many challenges over the plan period. The savings in public expenditure needed to reduce national debt are likely to continue. Our pool of organisers and volunteers will age along with the general population and the places where our activities take place may also show the effects of time. Can the plan help in these matters?

- How can we best lever out funding or support for your activity?
- What sort of support do you think you could expect from the Town Council in maintain your service over the (15 year) plan period?

We are asking the same questions of each of our town’s Local Community Groups/Organisations and you may wish to consider your relationships with others too. These comments may be added at the end of the response sheets below along with anything not covered above but which you feel is important.

The Town Councillors would like to receive your comments at any stage over the plan preparation period – but if you want to influence our thinking at the first step

your response on 28th April (or please return your responses to the questions prior to the Annual Town Meeting if possible) will be appreciated.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Kevin Hunter
Needham Market Town Clerk

Qcg1	Do you feel that your group/service/facility has a firm local bond with the town of Needham Market. If so what are those bonds?
Qcg2	Is your group/service/facility working well? Are you sufficiently robust to last over the next, say, five years? If not, what help might allow your activities to be stabilised and maintained?
Qcg3	Do you have any plans for expansion if the community grows? Do you think there are any issues that give cause for concern in the short term (next 5 years) medium term (5-10 years) and beyond?
Qcg4	Do you enjoy support from the settlements that surround the town? If so, how far do people travel to take advantage of your group/service/facility?

Qcg5	Do you believe that this stance is still appropriate? Does this affect your group/service/facility in any way?
Qcg6	Please tell how you feel about shopping, recreation, health or other facilities in Needham Market
Qcg7	Are there any services or facilities which are not fit for purpose or missing but which could benefit all?
Qcg8 a&b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="347 1532 1410 1576">• How can we best lever out funding or support for your activity? Qcg8a <li data-bbox="347 1720 1410 1792">• What sort of support do you think you could expect from the Town Council in maintain your service over the plan period? Qcg8b