



KNARESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL



BUSINESS PLAN 2024 – 2027

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Foreword:

Knaresborough Town Council exists to serve the town and its residents by providing strong local leadership, supporting community life, and safeguarding the character and future of Knaresborough.

In fulfilling this role, the Council seeks to take a **balanced, responsible and forward-looking approach**, recognising the needs of today's residents while making decisions that support the wellbeing of **future generations**.

The Council's strategic aims are therefore guided by the following principles:

- Supporting a **healthy, inclusive and connected community**, where people of all ages feel valued and able to participate in town life
- Protecting and enhancing the **natural and built environment**, recognising the importance of biodiversity, heritage and responsible use of resources
- Encouraging a **thriving and resilient local economy**, including sustainable tourism and the vitality of the town centre
- Working in an **open, accountable and financially responsible** way, making best use of public funds and partnerships
- Collaborating constructively with residents, community groups, local businesses and partner authorities to achieve positive outcomes for the town

Together, these principles provide a clear framework for the six strategic aims that follow, ensuring the Council's activities remain locally **focused, realistic and deliverable**, while contributing positively to the town's long-term social, environmental and economic sustainability

Knaresborough Town Council carried out a major residents' survey which completed in January 2022, the results of which can be viewed on its website.

[Residents Survey](#)

The data contained in this survey is being continually assessed and has been used as a basis to formulate future plans for the Council's strategies, policies and procedures. All the Town Council's Standing Committees and Sub Committees are tasked to measure their aims and objectives to the final results of the survey.

The Council's six strategic aims can be summarised as:

- 1. Supporting a thriving Town centre and encouraging tourism**
- 2. Protecting the Town and its residents from the impact of environmental change**
- 3. Protecting Knaresborough's heritage**
- 4. Improving open spaces and recreational facilities**
- 5. Working to improve community safety and engagement**

6. Sourcing additional funding to facilitate further improvements in the Town

These aims are what the Town Council is working towards as detailed further in the following Plan.

Knaresborough in 2024:

Knaresborough is a market Town with a population of circa 16,000 located in the heart of North Yorkshire. The population increases during the summer months, as visitors come to the Town and the surrounding area. Knaresborough has a rich history, dating back to the Middle Ages and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Its castle dates back to Norman times.

A thriving market is held every Wednesday in the market place, which is central to the Town. An artisan market is held on the first Saturday of the month based in the larger area of the castle grounds. Both markets are well supported. As referenced by Visit Harrogate, there are many independent shops in Knaresborough, based on a long high street, with countless side streets and courtyards each offering their own wide range of goods representing a fantastic taste of Yorkshire retail.

Knaresborough has many pubs and restaurants offering food sourced from local produce together with delicious local ales. There is a great choice of accommodation in Knaresborough - B&B's, Air B&B's and two hotels.

Knaresborough is a popular tourist destination with much to see. The castle and its grounds provide a fascinating insight into medieval castle life and the courtroom museum (which features a Tudor courtroom) reflects a colourful history of the Town. The River Nidd runs through Knaresborough, with the nearby Nidd Gorge designated AONB status.

In terms of new housing there has been much expansion of the Town in recent years mainly centred around two sites - Boroughbridge Road and York Road – encompassing a number of development sites. Circa 800 new homes have been built in the last five years.

The Town has a thriving retail park and developing industrial sites at Manse Lane and Hambleton Grove.

Knaresborough's railway station sits on the main York to Leeds route with trains running regularly in both directions throughout the day.

There are four primary schools in the Town and one senior school which continues to be a 'Good' school as rated by Ofsted in January 2023. Knaresborough also has a specialist college for communication and interaction which supports the learning of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan from Early Years to Year 11 (3 – 16 years old).

There are many sports clubs, children's play areas and leisure facilities throughout the Town, with a new leisure centre with swimming pool and gym facilities that opened in December 2023.

Knaresborough has three GP surgeries, providing comprehensive primary care services.

There are many third sector organisations who contribute to the well being of the community and the Town – with Knaresborough Lions, Knaresborough Rotary, Knaresborough Together (Chain Lain Community Hub), and Knaresborough Connectors all providing volunteers to support many projects throughout the Town.

The River Nidd has been prone to flooding in the past and although flood defences were improved by the then North Yorkshire County Council working with the Environment Agency, particularly since 2015, the future of additional defences needs to be closely monitored. Various organisations are together working towards clean bathing water status for the River Nidd.

There are three allotment sites in the Town, two of which are owned by the Town Council but managed independently by Allotment Associations.

An Overview of Knaresborough Town Council:

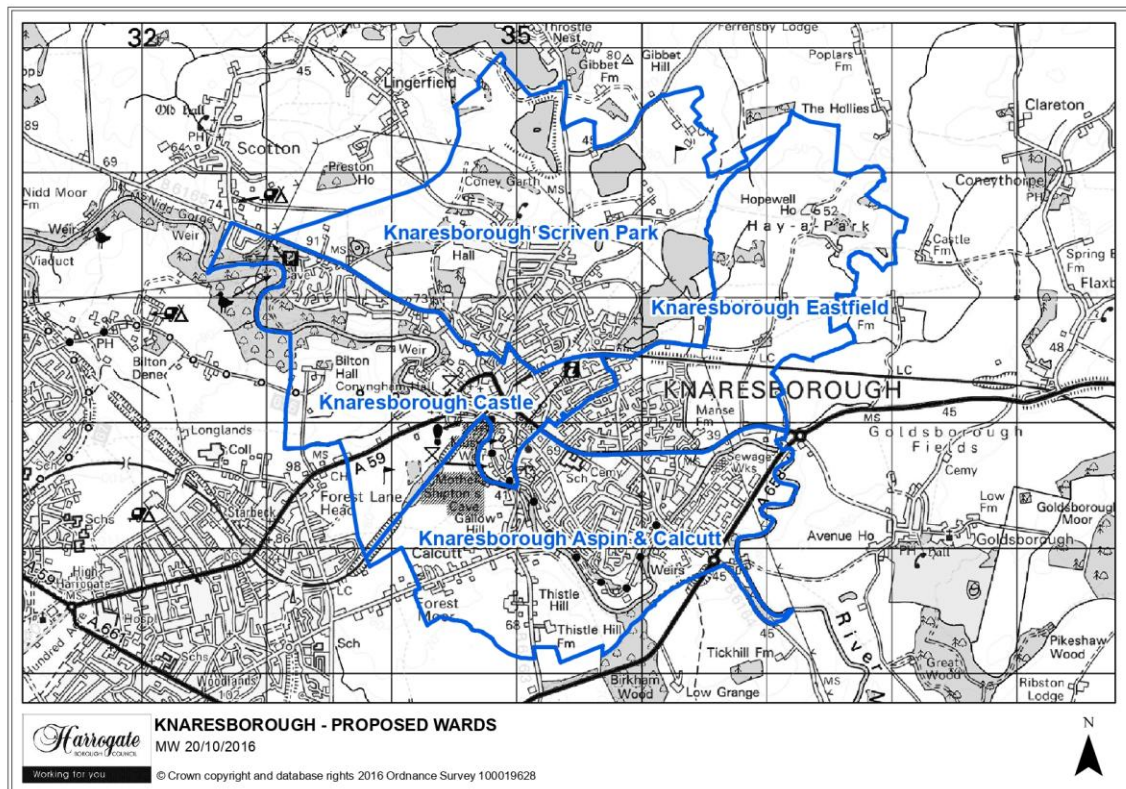
Parish and Town Councils are democratically elected local authorities with duties and privileges conferred by Act of Parliament.

Knaresborough Town Council is a local authority first tier statutory body with perpetual succession which came into being in 1974 as a successor to the former Knaresborough Urban District Council. It has resolved to be known as a Town Council, which carries the right to a Town Mayor instead of a Chairman. Although it is styled as a Town Council, it has the same right in law as a Parish Council.

The Town Council has sole responsibility for the services it provides; it formulates policies for action and decides how to raise and spend money on behalf of the local community. The Town Council is the tier of local government closest to the people and consists of individual Councillors who contribute to the work of the whole Town Council.

Management Structure:

Knaresborough Town Council has 12 Councillors, operating in four Wards and has a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor.



Elections to Knaresborough Town Council are held every four years with the next being held in 2027; they are keenly contested by all major political parties as well as Independents.

The Councillors appoint one of their number to serve as Mayor for a one-year term of office – chairing full Council meetings and acting as the civic head representing the Town throughout the area.

The Town Council is managed by two part time qualified staff – a Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Deputy Clerk. Council engaged a Community Projects Officer in March 2024 and has recently engaged a Town Development Manager.

Knaresborough Town Council is funded by its parish precept which forms part of the Council Tax. This income is used to fund community projects, to provide small grants to local community groups as well as running the Council office.

The Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications in Knaresborough and through its planning committee reviews around 150 applications annually providing recommendations to North Yorkshire Council. Knaresborough has developed a Neighbourhood Plan which was formulated over many months following wide and varied consultation with the community – physical questionnaire, drop-in sessions, seminars etc. The Planning Inspector has reviewed the document giving recommendations which have been agreed by both Town Council and by North Yorkshire Council Planning, and when the draft document has been updated accordingly and approved by NYC Executive, it will go out to the public vote.

The Town Council holds foundation level accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme.

What we don't do:

Town Council has a broad range of powers to deliver for the community, but many Council services are the responsibility of the principal authority, North Yorkshire Council. These include highways, car parking, education, household waste collection, planning and licensing (including enforcement), environmental health, libraries, the majority of open spaces, births, marriages and deaths, adult social care, Council tax and business rates collection.

Town Council aims to work closely with the principal authority through the Councillors elected by the Town to North Yorkshire Council, both of which are currently also Town Councillors.

Strategic Vision, Aims and Objectives

1. Supporting a thriving Town centre and encouraging tourism

Supporting the Town centre means encouraging as many people as possible to shop local and support local businesses. We will continue to work in partnership with the Chamber of Trade and the Business Collective, with representatives on both bodies, to lead initiatives which aim to create footfall and entice new people into the Town centre.

Town Council has put forward a Business Case to North Yorkshire Council to consider taking over operation of the Wednesday market under double devolution. Negotiations are now in their final stages. This should lead to a more local, hands on, approach in the operation of this weekly hub of activity.

Town Council continues to fund the Christmas lighting scheme and hosts the annual switch on of the lights which is an event greatly valued by the community and attracts visitors to the Town centre.

Town Council purchased a mobile stage with a view to hosting future events similar to the Jubilee and Coronation Events held in 2022/23.

We work in conjunction with the Royal British Legion and other community organisations to plan the Remembrance Sunday commemorations.

The annual Festival of Entertainment and Visual Arts during the summer months has historically been supported by Town Council grant funding and will continue to be supported as appropriate.

Following Town Council support in recent years to stage the Bed Race, Knaresborough Lions are now looking for Town Council to commit to significant funding support for a five year period, and are producing a fully costed Business Plan to bring back to a council meeting.

Tourism is high on the agenda and in 2025 nine volunteer tourism guides were trained and achieved white badge status and now operate as the 'Mayor's guides' and they provide walking tours of the Town.

2. Protecting the Town and its residents from the impact of environmental change

Town Council has established a climate emergency sub committee which is working hard on different projects to promote biodiversity throughout the Town and to contribute to education on climate change. Knaresborough Town Council has adopted a Biodiversity Policy with specific aims and commitments.

Town Council works closely with the community anchor partnership and North Yorkshire Council's own Emergency Response Team to deal with emergency situations in the Town. An emergency resilience plan is currently being finalised.

3. Protecting Knaresborough's heritage

Town Council has a Castle sub committee which has already contributed significantly to the promotion of the castle and its grounds – castle lighting scheme, new interpretation boards and flags/flag poles. The group is now working towards celebrating the 900th anniversary of the castle in 2030 and was involved in the commemoration of the 255th Enclosure Act in summer 2025.

The castle is owned by the Duchy of Lancaster and is managed under lease by North Yorkshire Council. This lease is due for renewal in less than six year's time and through the Castle sub committee, Town Council is working hard to ensure a pivotal role for Town Council when the lease is renewed.

Town Council has and continues to support the Knaresborough Museum Association in its development as a complementary organisation to the NYC run museum in the Town.

4. Improving open spaces and recreational facilities

Knaresborough Town Councillors are trustees for the King George V Playing Field and are currently working with NYC officers in considering development of part of the area using commuted sums.

Town Council leases out the football pitch at the field to a local team and supervises maintenance of the pitch.

5. Working to improve community safety and engagement

Town Council has representation on many local community groups and will continue to offer advice/provide feed-back at source.

Town Council has seen members develop stronger links with the local police and youth groups with particular emphasis on tackling anti-social behaviour.

6. Sourcing additional funding to facilitate further improvements in the Town

Town Council has joined other community groups and benefitted from funding from The Mayoral High Street Fund through Eventure and has also been supported on other occasions by funding from other sources such as, for example, from The Rotary Club.

Finance:

Risk Assessment:

The Town Council has a robust financial risk assessment in place.

The majority of the Council's financial resource currently comes from the precept. However, with the opportunities which double devolution can bring, Town Council will look to generate additional income such as rents from weekly markets. For 2026/2027 the Council has set a budget of £351,924 resulting in a precept requirement of £280,351, which represents an increase of £5.91 from the previous year and equating to a payment of £42.89 for a Band D property.

Reserves:

The Town Council adopted a risk-based approach to its level of reserves in 2024 and this is reviewed by Full Council at least annually.

Governance and Accountability

Monitoring the Business Plan:

The Business Plan will be monitored using the attached Action Plan which will be evaluated and updated regularly and will be examined twice yearly at the Annual Town Meeting in March and when setting the annual budget in November. Residents will be able to monitor progress through the Town Council's website with hard copies available on request from the Clerk's office.

Town Council has restructured its committees to aid alignment to the delivery of the plan. All Councillors and staff will be aware of the plan and how their work is contributing to the Council's strategic aims.

Adopted: 2024

Last Reviewed: May 2026

Next Review: March 2027