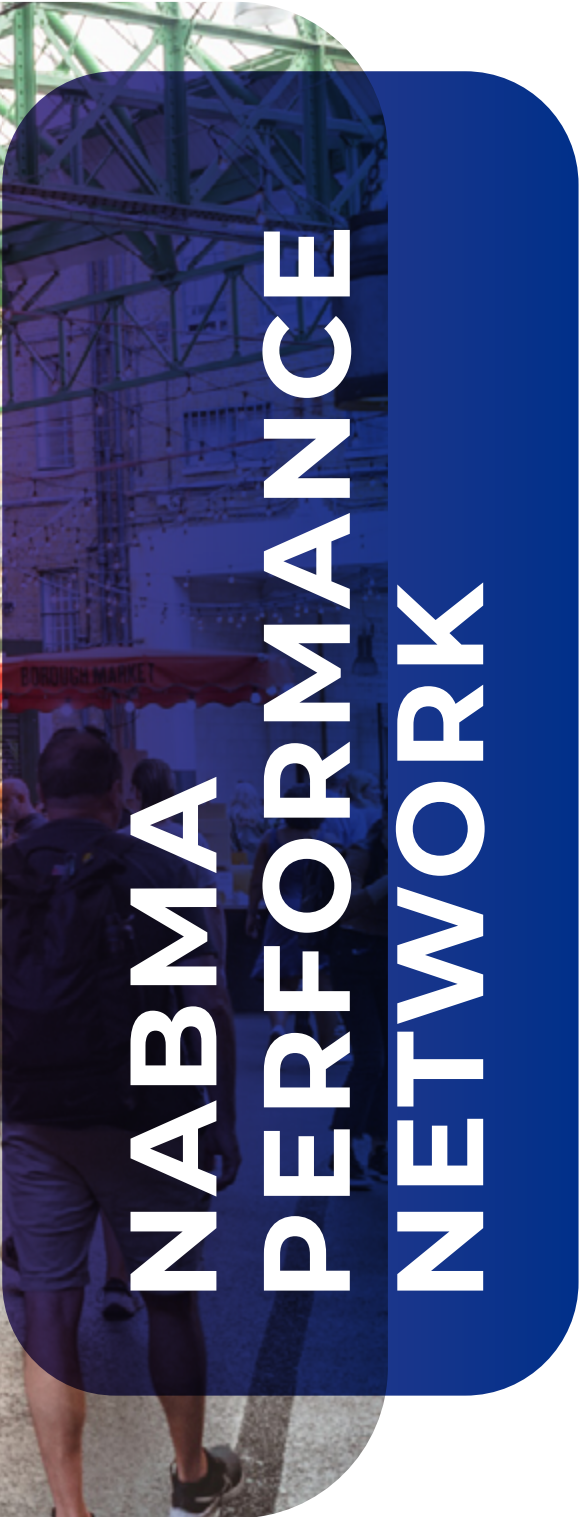


# NABMA

the voice of markets



March 2026

# INTRODUCTION

**Measuring performance is an important requirement for any organisation whether at national or local level. NABMA has been measuring performance of the markets industry for almost twenty years through a series of national surveys and this has helped us argue the case for Markets with government and other national bodies.**

At the same time NABMA has encouraged members to take part in benchmarking to view the performance of local Markets against what is happening in other Markets across the country. We were fortunate in partnering APSE in this work and in recent years we were delighted that APSE included Markets in the portfolio of local authority services that they officially recognised for benchmarking purposes.

Sadly, benchmarking was not the success we envisaged and therefore we decided to pursue an alternative model in 2024 that inspired more enthusiasm and support from our members.

NABMA has actively encouraged its members to participate in benchmarking, enabling local Markets to compare their performance with others nationwide. We were fortunate to collaborate with APSE and were delighted when Markets became part of APSE's officially recognised portfolio of local authority services for benchmarking. While benchmarking presented some challenges, it provided valuable insights, and in 2024 we embraced an alternative model that has inspired greater enthusiasm and support from our members, strengthening our commitment to continuous improvement and engagement.

The launch of the NABMA Performance Network in 2024 followed consultation with a group of senior market officers and listening to some of the comments of members who felt unable to engage with our original benchmarking strategy.

**NABMA is very grateful to EDGE IT Systems Ltd, a NABMA sponsor, who have been of enormous help in developing the software of the NABMA Performance Network.**

In 2026 we are undertaking another Performance Network Survey to build a clear evidenced based picture of the current markets industry. This collective intelligence will play a critical role in informing and underpinning an organisation review of NABMA itself as planned during the year to ensure our resources are targeted at the membership needs. As always, it will be a huge resource that we can use in our discussions with government and national partners about the economic, social and community benefits with markets as the anchor of many high streets.

**Thank you to all who supported the Network in 2024. Hopefully the revised framework will again encourage members to take part. We are hoping for a minimum of 100 participants in 2026. Please support us.**

# HOW WILL IT WORK?

**The NABMA Performance Network has some of the characteristics of benchmarking but the thirty or so indicators are largely taken from the five priorities of our Markets First campaign. We feel it is important to align the information collection with the questions we asked in 2024 to make easy comparisons and view trends.**

What are the important elements of the NABMA Performance Network?

- (A) Its free and part of NABMA member services.
- (B) It is accessed via the NABMA website with a password.
- (C) It is estimated that the thirty or so indicators can be answered in around thirty minutes.
- (D) Results of the data collection will be provided by NABMA free of charge to members.
- (E) Members will be able to see the performance of their Market(s) in the context of the national picture.
- (F) We will cover all levels of our membership so we are hoping that it will be possible to make comparisons regarding performance at the various tiers of local government and in respect of other market operators.

**It is intended to collect the information required from April 2026** as we want to use the performance of the Market(s) in the previous financial year. We hope to publish the results before the Annual Conference with an opportunity to assess performance and take account of members experience in taking part and, alternatively, find out why some members have not contributed.

We have tried to make the indicators as straightforward as possible, and the next section of the guide provides some explanatory information on the information we are seeking.

If you operate Markets in different locations we would appreciate you completing separate details for each Market so we can view the overall picture. It is estimated that it will only take around a further ten minutes for each additional Market.



# THE PERFORMANCE NETWORK INDICATORS

**This is a general section enabling us to get an appreciation of the management arrangements.**

The 2022 National Survey suggested a reduction the number of stalls/stands/pitches on offer with many Markets undertaking redevelopment programme and reducing capacity at the same time. It would be helpful to see the current situation against the one that existed five years ago. We are keen to see what new initiatives are being introduced and, at the same time, be aware of Market closures or Market events that have been curtailed.

## Traders

This is split between Indoor and Outdoor Markets. We recognise that many Outdoor Markets operate on more than one day so we are hoping to get an indication of performance on the best and worst days so we can make meaningful comparisons.

Providing information on occupancy levels is probably one of the most important parts of the exercise and comparing current levels with two years ago to give NABMA and individual members important information essential for future arguments about Markets at national and local levels. Have you lost more regular traders than you have gained in the last year?



We also want to see the age profile of the trader community and whether we are making inroads into creating a new generation of market traders. We also want to know what encouragement is given to new traders.

## Market Management

This covers a miscellany of different issues, and we are keen to see whether your Market(s) is part of a wider plan for the area (s) where the Market(s) is situated. Further are charges and policies and procedures reviewed? Are the staff trained in their work and responsibilities? Does regular and active communication take place with traders?

## Market Budgeting

The 2022 and 2024 National Surveys produced some very alarming findings about the number of Markets operating at a loss and we are keen to explore this finding further and find out the true extent of the situation.

## Market Value

The extra “value” attributed to Markets has been evident for some time and this section seeks to identify how Markets have a wider impact both as a community asset and also engaging with schools and colleges. Footfall is also covered in this section.

## Register & Login

The Performance Network button is available in the Members Area of the NABMA website.

Before you can click the Login button for the Performance Network you will need to click the Register button to register your email with a password which will send you an email to verify your email address.



### NABMA PERFORMANCE NETWORK 2026

#### A New Era in Market Performance Measurement

The NABMA Performance Network is a free tool for members to benchmark and measure market success. With just a simple registration, members gain access to valuable performance insights.

#### Why Join?

NABMA has been a pioneer in market performance measurement, helping advocate for markets on a national level for almost two decades. This new model, developed with EDGE IT Systems Ltd and consultation with senior market officers, provides a fresh and accessible approach to benchmarking. NABMA aims to engage at least 100 members in the first year.

Explore how the NABMA Performance Network can support your market's success.

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# 2024 PERFORMANCE NETWORK HEADLINES

**This is what you told us 2 years ago. Is this still the picture?**

- 90% of the markets surveyed were managed by local authorities which had increased over the past 6 years from 82%
- 33% of respondents stated that the number of stalls had decreased over the last 5 years, while 23% thought that this had increased.
- Nearly half of respondents had introduced new markets, events or services in the last 5 years, including one day specialist markets and entertainment.

- 15% stated that they had closed markets, events or services over the last 5 years including a reduction in market days and the closure of specialist markets.
- Over two thirds stated that occupancy (indoor and outdoor) had either decreased or stayed the same in the last 5 years.
- Most markets had lost less than 10% of their Traders in the last 12 months and had gained less than 10% in the last 12 months which suggests stability in the number of Traders. The average age of the trader community remains high with 49% in the 40-50 age category and 30% in the 50-60 age category.
- Nearly two thirds provided incentives to attract new traders and of these, the main incentives used were business support and free rent.
- Over 80% actively try and attract new traders and the main methods used were advertising and social media, showing that modern communication methods were being actively used in the sector.
- Only 38% made a surplus, which had reduced from 46% in 2018 and 63% stated that their trading surplus had either decreased or stayed the same in the last 5 years.
- Over 85% use their market for wider community purposes and the main purposes were celebrating local events and supporting local charities.
- Community Asset and Heart of the Town were regarded by respondents as the greatest assets of their Market.
- Just over half of respondents work with schools and colleges to promote markets and market trading.

# CONCLUSION

**Hopefully this guide will have given you a summary of the NABMA Performance Network and attracted your interest.**

You might still have questions and, if so, please raise them by using the contact details at the end of this guide.

We have included the various indicators on the basis that they cover a wide cross section of market activity. Hopefully you will access to all the information we are seeking but, if not, please answer as many of the indicators as you can.

We trust this guide has provided you with an engaging overview of the NABMA Performance Network and inspired your enthusiasm to get involved. As valued NABMA members, your participation is vital in shaping the future of the market industry. By sharing your insights and experiences, you help drive innovation and ensure the sector continues to thrive for the benefit of all.

Should you have any questions or wish to contribute further, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact details at the end of this guide. Your feedback is invaluable, and together we can make a real difference.

We have included a range of indicators to reflect the diverse and dynamic nature of market activity. Your responses, however comprehensive, are crucial for building a clearer picture of our sector's strengths and opportunities. Please take an active role by answering as many indicators as possible. Every contribution matters and helps shape the market industry for the collective benefit of NABMA members.

**Thank you for your support and hopefully your participation.**





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## About Us

NABMA is the leading markets organisation in the UK. It has successfully promoted the interests of its members for over 100 years. Open to any public or private sector market operator it provides professional advice, networking and training opportunities and a voice in shaping the future of markets. NABMA is a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Markets Group and a strong voice on all high street matters.



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