

FELIXSTOWE

TOWN COUNCIL



Business Plan 2016 - 2020

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Mayor's Foreword



I am very pleased to be introducing our first ever Business Plan for Felixstowe Town Council for the period May 2016 – April 2020.

This document provides a summary of the main aspirations of Felixstowe Town Council (FTC) for the next four years. It will determine how your council will plan and achieve these objectives with review and input from the appropriate Committees. We hope that it will enable you to understand the council's aims, policies and governance arrangements and help inform as to what might be expected from the Town Council during that period.

Our Business Plan should also give you the confidence that your town is being supported in an efficient, forward-thinking, and effective way. However, the work of the Town Council is not limited by the aspirations and objectives of its Business Plan and we are always ready to consider new projects, take on new challenges and listen to your ideas. The Council understands that community engagement and involvement is key to our success and therefore we would welcome your comments and suggestions as we move forward.

Jan H. Garfield

**Cllr Jan Garfield
Mayor of Felixstowe
May 2016**

Introduction

1. What is a Town Council Business Plan?

- 1.1 Felixstowe Town Council's Business Plan is a statement of the Town Council's vision for the town, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities.
- 1.2 The business plan details what Felixstowe Town Council intends to focus on over the next four years. It gives details of projects for the town that cover the short, medium and long term.
- 1.3 This Plan will drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and the resources of the Council, particularly through the budget process.
- 1.4 It is a document that sets out what Felixstowe Town Council itself can achieve, either directly or through its influence with relevant delivery bodies, such as Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council.
- 1.5 The aim of the Business Plan is to give a clear understanding of what the Town Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver this. It is our 'action plan' for the next four years.
- 1.6 The detailed content of the Plan will be strongly influenced by other work and will accordingly be reviewed and updated regularly. Internal pressure will largely arise from plans to improve service quality and the availability of resources. External pressure will arise particularly from our partnership work, other strategic plans and Government legislation.

2. Why has Felixstowe Town Council decided to produce a Business Plan?

- 2.1 Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The Business Plan has been developed with community engagement and involvement and will allow the Town Council to become more confident and proactive in its decision-making.
- 2.2. It helps the council minimise risks, it clearly justifies the budget and the council's actions to all parties. It provides a benchmark for reviewing the council's performance and shows that the council has planned its activities with care. The plan provides a basis for additional decision making and it provides clear guidance to councillors, the clerk and other staff.
- 2.3. At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Town Council does and also to clarify what it doesn't do; and to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council.
- 2.4. It is a 'live' document which the Town Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. The Business Plan will be publicly available, hence residents will also be able to monitor progress. Regular reviews of the Business Plan will ensure that objectives stay on track. It will provide guidance to the Council's decision making process.
- 2.5 The Business Plan helps ensure that the Council can take a planned and consistent approach to:
 - The design and delivery of services.
 - The identification of improved facilities and services
 - The prioritisation and allocation of resources.
 - The achievement of value for money and best practice.

3. Community Involvement in the Business Plan process

- 3.1. To ensure that the Business Plan truly represents Felixstowe's best interests, the Town Council invited the local community to help identify priorities for the town.
- 3.2 In October 2014, a questionnaire was sent to properties in every street in Felixstowe, with completed surveys analysed covering a range of age groups~~every street in Felixstowe, completed surveys were analysed, and covered a range of age groups.~~
- 3.3 There is no Neighbourhood Plan proposed for Felixstowe. However, the development of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Area Action Plan for the Felixstowe Peninsula has been achieved with significant input from the Town Council and local residents. This Area Plan provides a suite of local planning and development policies as part of the District's Local Plan. In addition, the Town Council is a co-sponsor of Felixstowe Forward, a local, place-based initiative which has been set up to support the delivery of a community-enabled action plan.
- 3.4 By working with these agencies and maximising opportunities for community engagement, Felixstowe Town Council is well-placed to support the key plans and policies that will shape Felixstowe in the future.

4. Monitoring the Business Plan

- 4.1. Council will evaluate progress against the agreed Action Plan (as at Appendix 1) in accordance with defined milestones. The whole Business Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.
- 4.2. The Business Plan will be available on the Town Council website, with hard copies available to view at the Town Hall. Individual printed copies will be provided for a small charge to cover the administration cost.
- 4.3. The Business Plan will continue to be the main way of telling the community what we are doing to meet their needs. It's a two-way process. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know.

Enquiries should be directed to:

Ash Tadjrishi
Town Clerk
Felixstowe Town Council
Town Hall
Felixstowe
IP11 2AG

Email: townclerk@felixstowe.gov.uk

5. The Town Council

5.1 There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities.

- Felixstowe Town Council is the first and most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the town, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community.
- Suffolk Coastal District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including car parking, housing and street cleaning.
- Suffolk County Council's responsibilities include highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

5.2 Felixstowe Town Council has sixteen elected Councillors representing 5 Town Wards who are elected every four years. The Town Council elects the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Felixstowe from its Councillors annually at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Felixstowe and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and to do business. Elections were last held in May 2015 and are scheduled to be held next in May 2019 and again in 2023.

5.3 The full Council meets bi-monthly in the Council Chamber. All meetings are open to the public with a period of time set aside at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to put questions to the Council.

5.4 Felixstowe Town Council appoints Members to the following Committees:

- Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Assets & Services Committee
- Civic & Community Committee
- Planning & Environment Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Appeals Committee
- Youth Forum
- Highways Advisory Committee

The **Finance & General Purposes Committee** is authorised by Full Council to take responsibility for the preparation of the Council's annual precept, review of the longer term strategy of the Council, monitoring and scrutinising of the budget. In addition, the Committee takes responsibility for the regular review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Insurance, Risk Management, Policies and Terms of Reference. It has delegated responsibility to make expenditure against the Council's Administration Budget. The Committee monitors Council's Monthly Accounts Reports and takes appropriate action to ensure compliance with budget. The Finance & General Purposes Committee meets bi-monthly in the Council Chamber and meetings are open to the public.

The **Assets & Services Committee** oversees the management and maintenance of Council's land and property assets and those related services directly provided or commissioned by the Council. It has delegated responsibility to make expenditure against the Council's Assets & Services Budget. It makes recommendations for annual budget estimates for the Assets & Services Budget to the Council's Finance & General Purposes Committee. The committee monitors the financial performance, quality and effectiveness of service provision, reviews and set scales of Fees & Charges. The Assets & Services Committee meets five times per year in the Council Chamber and meetings are open to the public.

The **Civic & Community Committee** oversees, supports and develops opportunities for engagement with other community stakeholders and to raise the profile of the services provided by the Town Council. It has delegated responsibility to make expenditure against the Council's Civic & Community Budget. The Civic & Community Committee considers applications for and makes awards for Occasional Grants. It reviews the provision of Annual Grants and any expenditure of the Community Fund as may be authorised by Council and makes recommendations to Council on the future use of such funding. It undertakes Council's responsibilities with regards to Twinning arrangements, Civic events and other events supported or delivery by the Town Council. The Committee considers opportunities for participation with community projects or working in partnership for the benefit of Felixstowe and makes recommendations to Council. The Civic & Community Committee receives reports on matters related to recreation, leisure, tourism and sport and oversees the use of S106 or other funding related to the same. It governs policies for communications and media such as the Town Council website and newsletter. The Civic & Community Committee meets bi-monthly in the Council Chamber and meetings are open to the public.

The **Planning & Environment Committee** has three key roles: it reviews every planning application; considers applications for works to trees; and responds to various district and regional consultations where they relate to Felixstowe.

The Town Council is a statutory consultee, and reviews all planning applications and advises Suffolk Coastal District Council to seek to ensure that local requirements and aspirations can be met. However, it should be noted that Suffolk Coastal District Council makes the final decision on all planning applications, and is not duty bound to follow the Town Council's recommendations.

The Planning & Environment committee meets fortnightly in the Council Chamber with a short break at Christmas and is open to the public.

The **Personnel Committee** deals with matters relating to the recruitment, safety and management of the Council's employees. The Personnel Committee meets twice a year at the Town Hall.

The **Appeals Committee** acts as the second stage in grievance or disciplinary hearings for staff. It is also set up to receive any complaints from the public

and external organisations regarding the Councils administration. The Appeals Committee meets as and when required.

Youth Forum. The young people who attend the Youth Forum are representatives of the Primary Schools, The Academy and Level 2 Youth Project. The young people agree their own agenda, and are supported by their associates and the Town Council. The Town Council provides administrative support and a venue for the meetings. Youth Forum makes recommendations to the Civic & Community Committee on the use of any funding available in the Youth Forum budget for projects and activities for young people in Felixstowe. Youth Forum meets approximately five times a year during term time.

The **Highways Advisory Committee** reviews and recommends highways improvements for the town and considers opportunities for collaboration. It receives reports on matters related to local highways services and makes recommendations to Suffolk County Council Highways in relation to the delivery of its services in the town. The Highways Advisory Committee meets twice a year in the Council Chamber and comprises members from Suffolk County Council and Felixstowe Town Council.

5.5 Council and its Committees are also authorised to set up working groups to consider specific matters as they emerge and these Groups are permitted to include non-Council Members if deemed appropriate to the subject matter.

5.6 **Member Development**

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the table. However both local government and the business world are fast changing. In recognition of this, the Council introduced a formal Introduction Programme for Members in 2015 and encourages Members to undertake training based on the following approach:

- Seminars & Workshops to raise general awareness of topical issues.
- Briefings and awareness sessions prior to making a key decision or policy changes.
- Skills development for individual members or groups of members.

5.7 Many Councillors are provided additional opportunities to gain greater experience of local matters through their work as Council-appointed representatives to the following organisations:

- Felixstowe & District Council for Sport & Recreation
- Suffolk Libraries Industrial & Provident Society
- Felixstowe Nightsafe
- Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan Working Group
- Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association
- Felixstowe Ferry Fairways Committee
- East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership
- Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- Felixstowe Fairtrade Forum
- Felixstowe Forward
- Felixstowe Wesel Association
- Felixstowe Freight Quality Partnership
- Felixstowe Travel Watch
- Felixstowe Salzwedel Partnership Association
- Port of Felixstowe Local Authority Liaison Committee
- Haven Ports Welfare
- Landguard Partnership
- Police Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Emergency Schemes
- Orwell District Scouts
- Level Two Youth Project

Appointments are confirmed by Council each year at its Annual Meeting.

5.8 The Town Council was accredited with the Foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme. The Council is currently working towards the Gold Award.

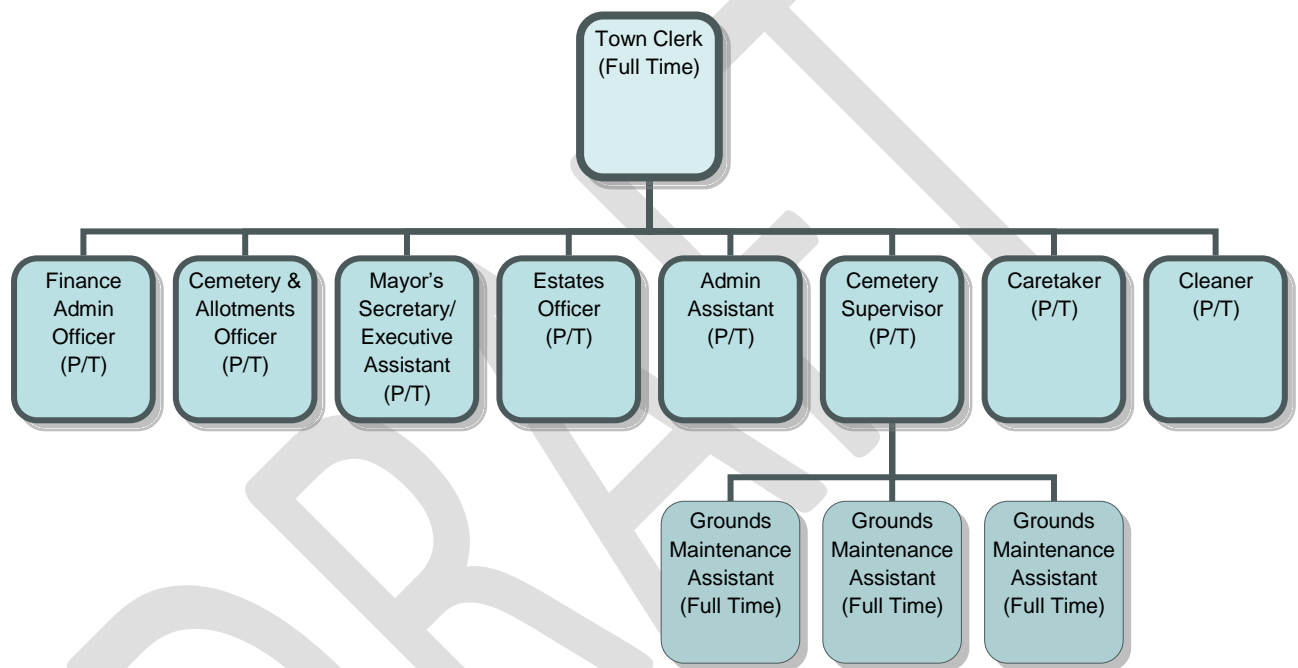
5.9 The Town has an electorate of 18,568 (2015). A boundary map showing the parish electoral wards is shown overleaf:

Map of Felixstowe showing civil parish electoral wards:



6. Town Council Staff and Management

- 6.1 The Council is supported by a small team of five full-time and seven part-time permanent staff with three other staff employed on a casual basis.
- 6.2 The administration of the Town Council is carried out by a qualified Town Clerk, Mr Ash Tadjrishi who is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Town Clerk carries out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and issues all statutory notifications.
- 6.3 A diagram of the current management/staff structure is shown below:



- 6.5 Staff work to personal and team targets, related to Business Plan objectives. An appraisal system is well established and staff attend regular team meetings.
- 6.6 The Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff, by providing a satisfying, flexible working environment with opportunities for personal development.
- 6.7 The Council has developed an annual training plan based on the needs identified from appraisals. Staff are provided with essential and Health & Safety training, sector-specific training on IT and council administration complemented by a wide-range of individual courses tailored to their needs.

7. Felixstowe Town Council's Main Areas of Responsibility

The Town Council is responsible for:

- The management, maintenance and development of the Town Hall, Walton Community Hall and Broadway House.
- The management, maintenance and development of Felixstowe Cemetery,
- The provision of allotments across five separate sites.
- The management, maintenance and development of Peewit Hill.
- The provision of Christmas lighting.
- The provision of town floral displays (Felixstowe in Flower)
- The upkeep of the War Memorial and Flood Memorial
- Enabling sustainable communities, through initiatives such as Felixstowe Forward
- The funding and delivery of town events (and support and facilitation of groups providing town events).
- The provision of Occasional and Annual Grants.
- Submitting comments on all planning applications in Felixstowe as a statutory consultee of the Local Planning Authority (Suffolk Coastal District Council).
- Working together with the Planning Authority (SCDC) to seek suitable sites for affordable local housing.

8. Who else has Responsibility for Service Delivery in Felixstowe?

- 8.1 **Suffolk Coastal District Council** is responsible for environmental services (refuse, recycling and litter, including dog fouling), operating the majority of the town's car parks, the maintenance and upkeep of the beach and shoreline (along with the Environmental Agency), public convenience provision, business support and the provision of housing services (along with Housing Associations).
- 8.2 **Suffolk County Council** is responsible for highways matters, signage, lighting and coordinating public transport (along with service providers). The County Council is also responsible for health and social care, library services and education.
- 8.3 **Suffolk Constabulary** is responsible for on-street parking enforcement, policing the town and working with other responsible authorities in order to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Felixstowe.
- 8.4 Where services are provided by others, the Town Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

9. Corporate Vision and Objectives

9.1 The Town Council's vision is for Felixstowe to be:

A successful, vibrant, attractive town, where people want to live, work, study, visit and play.

9.2 Felixstowe Town Council's Mission Statement:

Felixstowe Town Council aims to improve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Felixstowe by ensuring that the town is a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live.

It does this in a number of ways:

- Encourages open dialogue with residents to understand their needs, and endeavour to address these within the resources and powers available to the Town Council.
- Where services are provided directly they are managed to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost.
- Where services are provided by others Felixstowe Town Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.
- Felixstowe Town Council provides a democratic and representational voice for the community
- Felixstowe Town Council informs residents of its activities through its website, its bi-monthly newsletter, notice boards and the local press.

9.3 The Key Objectives of Felixstowe Town Council are:

- To serve those who live, study and work in Felixstowe and those who visit the town.
- To promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, county, regional and national level.
- To provide high standard, cost-effective services and amenities to help meet the needs and wishes of residents.
- To work in partnership, or otherwise, with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses and individuals to ensure an improving standard of services and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of the residents of Felixstowe.
- To achieve a greater degree of influence over service delivery and development in the town to ensure that the best interests of Felixstowe are taken into account.
- To seek a fair share of investment in the town by district, county and regional authorities.
- To encourage the devolution of services to the Town Council where they can be delivered more effectively and efficiently, minimising the cost to local tax payers.
- To enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Felixstowe and safeguard its unique identity and its natural and built environment.
- To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of Felixstowe and to strive for a pleasant, clean and safe environment throughout the town.
- To promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs that seek to assist residents and visitors to Felixstowe.
- To be a professional, competent and caring Town Council.
- To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.
- In all its deliberations, the Council will take into consideration environmental, sustainable and ethical issues.
- Felixstowe Town Council is committed to examining and reviewing its responsibilities and settling a viable development plan for the future.

9.4 Key Processes

The successful achievement of the Council's core objectives is dependent on the Council and its Officers performing certain key projects, process and activities exceptionally well in order for us to be confident that we are well-placed to be achieving the objectives set out above.

The Council has highlighted the below six processes as being crucially important:

- Developing Capability of Council Staff
- Liaising with and influencing, other key bodies
- Long term and tactical planning
- Knowledge Management
- Developing Policy
- Community Engagement

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10. Meetings of the Full Council

The Town Council meets on 2nd Wednesday in the months of June, July, September, November, January and March. Meetings are held at 7.30pm. The Annual Council Meeting is held on the second Wednesday in May each year directly after the Annual Town Meeting. In an election year, the Annual Meetings are held on the Wednesday falling 13 days after the election. At the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected.

Members of the press and public are very welcome to attend and the Town Council promotes public participation with a public participation session at the outset of each ordinary Council meeting and most committee meetings. At the Annual Town Meeting all electors are able to attend and are free to raise any matters they wish, relevant to Felixstowe. The Town Council hosts this meeting, which is chaired by the Mayor of Felixstowe, and undertakes to follow up key issues of local importance.

The most significant decisions, such as setting the Town Council's budget and precept (local council tax), are taken by Full Council.

To help run council business more effectively, the Town Council delegates the authority to its committees to manage elements of its work. These committees have the authority to commit expenditure against their own individual budgets as set by Council. Council receives copies of all meeting minutes and considers recommendations from its committees and/or working parties as necessary.

Full Council carries all statutory functions reserved to Council, including but not limited to:

- Setting the Annual Budget and Precept demand.
- Approving expenditure against General Fund/Earmarked Reserves and any transfers across committee budgets.
- Reviewing and amending the Standing Orders and the functions and constitution of committees.
- Approving the schedule of meetings of the Council and its committees.
- Appointing committee Members and Council representatives to outside bodies.
- Taking any appropriate action on the recommendations of its committees or working parties as it deems necessary.
- Approving the payment of accounts.
- Authorising the sealing of legal documents, leases, contracts and licences where authority to do so is not provided elsewhere.
- Responding to major consultations and those outside of the scope of other committees.
- Receiving the External Audit report and approving the Annual Return.
- Considering all other matters outside of any other committee's Terms of Reference.

10.1 Financial Information - General

The annual budget is set by Council. The Council's annual budget gives an estimated detail of income and expenditure for the year and this is published on the Council's website. Management of income and expenditure is delegated to its various Committees, monitored by the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Council as required.

10.2 Income

The majority of the Town Council's income is through the annual precept. This is the local tax levied by the Town Council which is collected on its behalf by Suffolk Coastal District Council as part of the annual Council Tax bill. The Council receives no funding from local business rates, nor directly from central government. In January 2016, Felixstowe Town Council voted to freeze its portion of the council tax for the financial year 2016/17 at £67.35 for the year (based on Council Tax Band D rates).

Expenditure in 2016/17 is budgeted to be £537,347. This is funded via the income received from Council's services, a Local Council Tax Support Grant (LCTS) and the precept. Income from Council services is mainly generated from the cemetery, allotments, wedding venue and hiring of rooms and halls. The Council may also receive sponsorship and donations for initiatives such as Felixstowe in Flower alongside other events and projects.

The Council will seek to maximise its trading income and regularly consider retention of assets which may be surplus to requirements.

10.3 Expenditure

Income and Expenditure is split between three main Committees:

- Finance & General Purposes (approx. 40% of budgeted expenditure)
Includes Civic administration, Insurance, Staff, Public Works Loan
- Assets & Services (approx. 42%)
Includes the Town Hall, Walton Community Hall, Broadway House
Felixstowe Cemetery, five Allotment sites
- Civic & Community (approx. 18%)
Includes Civic Events, Grants, Christmas lights and events, town floral displays (Felixstowe in Flower), Town Twinning events, CCTV, bus shelter cleaning, litter and dog waste bins

Council considers provisions for longer-term expenditure requirements and a small proportion of the budget is allocated to its Earmarked Reserves for these purposes (see 10.4).

The Council takes a balanced approach to its capital expenditure in respect of the procurement of new assets and the maintenance of its existing assets. The first priority is, however, to develop and maintain current assets in order to maximise existing opportunities.

The budget is fully allocated each year. Therefore, unless the Town Council is able to secure specific grant funding, any proposed new activities or services which require additional resources would need to be considered against any potential cost-savings, efficiencies or cuts to existing services, or funded from reserves. In certain circumstances, additional funding requirements may necessitate an increase in the precept. However, Council will undertake a thorough review of its needs before tax increases are considered.

If a net underspend is projected in any given year, Council will consider whether funds should be allocated to its Earmarked Reserves for specific purposes.

10.4 Reserves

Felixstowe Town Council adopts a risk-based approach to its levels of reserves which is reviewed at least once annually. Council aims to hold between 3-9 months average working capital in General Reserves at the start of any financial year. Any funds held above this limit are for specific, 'earmarked' purposes. Following transfers to Earmarked Reserves at the start of the 2016/17 financial year, Council's General Reserves stood at £212,024.

Council's Earmarked Reserves are held in order to provide a balanced approach to capital expenditure in respect of the procurement of new assets or the maintenance of its existing assets. Funds are earmarked for specific projects or for other projects or services that the Council aspires to provide in the future. Earmarked Reserves held as of 1st April 2016/17 are shown below:

Earmarked Reserve	Balance at 1/04/16
Election Expenses	9,500
Enhancement & Promotion	3,679
Felixstowe in Flower	8,428
Asset Repairs & Replacement	16,532
IT Replacement Fund	3,117
Recycling Credits	2,434
Cemetery Projects	146,807
Broadway House	60,000
Walton Community Hall	60,000
Town Hall Capital Refurbishment	7,821
Town Hall Maintenance	113,892
Play Equipment	27,000
Community Fund	179,589
Council Tax Localisation Reserve	12,565
CCTV	42,000
Staffing Reserve	25,500
TOTAL	£ 718,864

10.5 Allowances

Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties. However, Members of the Council may be reimbursed for expenses for travel and subsistence on Council business outside the parish of Felixstowe only, subject to approved budget provisions, for the following approved duties:

Attending council meetings, including committee and working group meetings (members of the relevant committee only), pre-approved site meetings, personnel arbitration and disciplinary proceedings, pre-booked conferences, seminars and other training, pre-approved meetings of other councils and their committees, meetings of those outside bodies to which the council appoints representatives; pre-approved attendance at courts of law, commissions of enquiry and the proceedings of other relevant bodies.

An allowance is given to the Mayor to meet any expenses involved in fulfilling the Mayoral duties. The allowance for 2016/17 was £7,000.

10.6 Accounting

For the purposes of the accounts, the Council functions are divided into three main budget headings, administered using RBS' Omega Accounting System:

- Finance & General Purposes
- Assets & Service
- Civic & Community

Within the period of this Plan, the Council will:

- Continue to improve the budget setting and monitoring process and to identify efficiencies.
- Ensure that monthly income and expenditure reports are regularly reviewed by Members and published online together with details of all expenditure over £500
- Ensure accounting and audit procedures are completed in a timely manner.
- Review and maintain an up-to-date and effective Risk Management strategy at least annually.

11. Finance & General Purposes

In line with its Terms of Reference, the Finance & General Purposes Committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas:

- Management of and expenditure against the Council's Administration Budget (approx. 40% of total budgeted expenditure)
- Monitor Council's Accounts Reports and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with budget.
- Coordination of Annual Budget Estimates from all Committees for recommendation to Council.
- Review, Implement or Recommend policies to Council on matters relating to:
 - Insurance
 - Risk management
 - Financial control/audits
 - Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
 - Investments
 - Loans
 - Long term plans and strategy
 - Legal issues
- Make recommendations to Council regarding policy and strategic matters relating to all of the above.

11.1 Audits

Council submits its Annual Return to the External Auditor each year. The most recent external audit of the accounts of Felixstowe Town Council, for the financial year 2014-15, was completed on 21 September 2015. The Council's external auditors, BDO LLP Southampton, have expressed the view that, on the basis of the annual return, in their opinion, the information is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. In addition, there were no other matters affecting their opinion that required the issue of a report or the further attention of the Council.

In accordance with Section 14 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the accounts and requisite information as defined by Section 13(4) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 were made available for inspection by local electors and are published on our website. A copy of the previous year's Annual Return and Audit Report is also published online.

In addition to the annual External Audit, Council commissions a quarterly Internal Audit. Internal Audit reports are published on our website and reported to the next available Finance & General Purposes Committee for review.

11.2 Town Council Governance

Good Governance Objectives

Felixstowe Town Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Town Council, to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure the rigorous and sound financial management of Town Council resources.

The Town Council aims to:

- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the town's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills, by undertaking appropriate training.
- Ensure councillors are given the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policies.
- Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for its staff.
- Continuously promote public participation in all town council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries, complaints and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently.
- Be an effective custodian of the council's property and documents.
- Continue to review its policies and procedures to ensure that the council is run in a legal and business-like manner.

Governance Activities:

To achieve the objectives detailed above, the Council will:

- Carry out annual policy and governance reviews with any recommendations for changes to be agreed **at the next annual Town Meeting-by Council.**
- Conduct a review of training needs of both Councillors and staff monitor this annually.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest at Town Council Meetings.

- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort.
- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees as and when required.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.
- Adopt a Constitution to aid the control of its policies and regulations.
- Promote the highest standards of openness and transparency by ensuring that as much information as possible is available online whilst protecting sensitive and confidential information through an effective Data Protection Policy.

11.3 Community Emergency Plan

The Town Council is developing a Community Emergency Plan (CEP) for Felixstowe.

The purpose of the CEP is:

- To document the actions to be taken and the resources to be mobilised by the Felixstowe Community Emergency Group when assistance is requested from the emergency services in response to a significant incident affecting Felixstowe or nearby communities. (Emergency Incident); and,
- To provide a list of local people and resources which may be called upon during incidents of lesser significance which would not normally trigger emergency plans but have the potential to impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents. (Community Incident)

This plan is intended to provide general guidance to the local community, outline actions to be taken by the Community Emergency Group, Councillors and volunteers and recognises that it is complementary to any County, District, or multi-agency emergency plans which are in existence.

To achieve this Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Develop and publish a Community Emergency Plan (CEP) for Felixstowe.
- Regularly review the CEP to ensure it remains valid and up to date.
- Engage with other agencies responsible for Emergency Plans affecting Felixstowe to ensure effective coordination.
- Identify opportunities to provide support and training on the CEP for key local stakeholders.

12. Assets & Services

In line with its Terms of Reference, the Assets & Services Committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas (approx. 42% of total budgeted expenditure):

- Town Hall
- Broadway House
- Walton Community Hall
- Felixstowe Cemetery
- 5 Allotment Sites
- Peewit Hill
- Play Equipment
- War Memorial

Throughout the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will engage with the community to identify priorities for the town's 'community assets' (key community buildings and land). The Town Council will advise Suffolk Coastal District Council on the 'Community Asset list' and consider what opportunities there may be to protect and enhance these assets.

12.1 Town Hall

Felixstowe Town Hall stands proudly overlooking the sea and has been a key feature of the town ever since it was built in 1892 for the Felixstowe and Walton Joint Board. It is a fine red brick and tile Victorian building on Felixstowe's seafront. It became the main base for the subsequently formed Felixstowe Urban District Council and then the newly-formed Felixstowe Town Council which was created upon Local Government re-organisation in 1974.

Suffolk Coastal District Council, which is based in Woodbridge, was also formed at the same time as Felixstowe Town Council. It took over some of the functions of the former Urban District Council and it became the owners of the Town Hall building. Some of the SCDC functions were administered from the Town Hall and it was the base for the local Magistrates Court and The County Council Registrar. Gradually, SCDC services were centralised, the Magistrates Court left the building at the end of the 1990's and the Town Hall became rather neglected and underused.

The combined effect of the deterioration of the fabric of the Town Hall, the advent of legislation requiring public buildings to be made accessible for disabled people and SCDC's wish to make the Town Council pay a modern occupational rent resulted in the Town Council deciding to buy the building back from SCDC in 2007 - made possible with finances raised via the Public Works Loan Board.

The Town Council subsequently embarked upon a major re-modelling and refurbishment project which involved re-roofing, re-wiring, re-plumbing and modernisation of the whole premises. The necessary adaptations required by the Disabled Discrimination Act were also put in place involving an internal lift, the creation of an accessible side access and various internal chair lifts to overcome the difficulty in accessing different floor levels within the Town Hall. This meant that members of the public were able to attend all the meetings held in the Council Chamber, which is on the first floor.

The Town is also licensed to hold marriages and Civil Partnerships.

The building is now once again a bustling civic hub used by the Town Council staff and Councillors, the Suffolk County Council Registrar, the Felixstowe Forward team and personnel involved in managing the Resort activities.

The Council Chamber is the venue for all the Town Council's Committee meetings and other civic business.



The Town Hall is a great venue for meetings and exhibitions and offers a range of conferencing facilities available including free Wi-Fi. The Town Hall has two large rooms and two smaller rooms available for hire for meetings, seminars or exhibitions. Since it was licensed, the Town Hall has become a popular venue for civil wedding ceremonies and has three rooms available to hire for the ceremony.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to carry out regular maintenance on the Town Hall, to ensure it is run in a safe and efficient manner.
- Ensure that all statutory testing is carried out on a routine and timely basis.
- Carry out an in-depth review of the operation of the Town Hall and endeavour to run it in the most cost effective manner for the benefit of local residents.
- Encourage, through promotion and advertising both locally and regionally, the usage of the function rooms by advertising on the Town Council website, newsletters and press.
- Consider community-focused events at the Town Hall in conjunction with other local organisations such as Felixstowe Forward.
- Continue to support local non-profit organisations by providing discounted venue hire.

12.2 Broadway House



Broadway House was completed in 2004 and was built on the site of the old Sailors' Reading Room. It is in the centre of Felixstowe on Orwell Road adjacent to Highfield Road car park.

The building comprises four social housing flats on the upper floors let to Orwell Housing Association and a community centre on the ground floor which is used as a drop-in centre for the elderly during the day and for other community uses in the evenings and weekends.

The community centre is managed on behalf of the Town Council by a local charity, Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association (FOPWA), which pay an annual lease to Felixstowe Town Council and is responsible for the day to day upkeep of the Hall. Felixstowe Town Council currently provides caretaking/cleaning for the building.

73% of participants from our survey feel that the Old Peoples Welfare Centre (Broadway House) is an essential service, and 83% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards the Old People's Welfare Centre (Broadway House).

Within the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to carry out regular maintenance on Broadway House, to ensure it is run in a safe and efficient manner.
- Ensure that all statutory testing is carried out on a routine and timely basis.
- Carry out an in-depth review of the operation of Broadway House and endeavour to run it in the most cost effective manner for the benefit of local residents.
- Encourage, through promotion and advertising both locally and regionally, the usage of the Hall.
- Organise events at Broadway House in conjunction with other local organisations, liaising with FOPWA.

12.3 Walton Community Hall



Walton Community Hall, a significant Victorian landmark on the High Street in Walton, was originally built as a meeting place for the Ancient Order of Foresters back in 1886. It has been used as a community hall for many local groups over many years.

Following on from the success of Broadway House, when the building developed some structural problems and became unfit for modern purposes, the Town Council embarked upon a major reconfiguration and refurbishment project of the premises which involved a partnership with Orwell Housing Association and local builders Elliston, Steady and Hawes.

Over a period of many months, the building was made safe and re-modelled internally resulting in the current arrangement of three social housing flats over two floors let by Orwell Housing Association and the Community Hall which is a large wooden- floored space equipped with a modern kitchen, toilets, a wet room and disabled facilities. It is used regularly by the local Scout, Cub and Beaver pack, various dance and exercise groups and is often the venue for local exhibitions and meetings. It is a great venue for parties and meetings and is available for private hire daytimes, evenings and weekends outside of regular bookings.

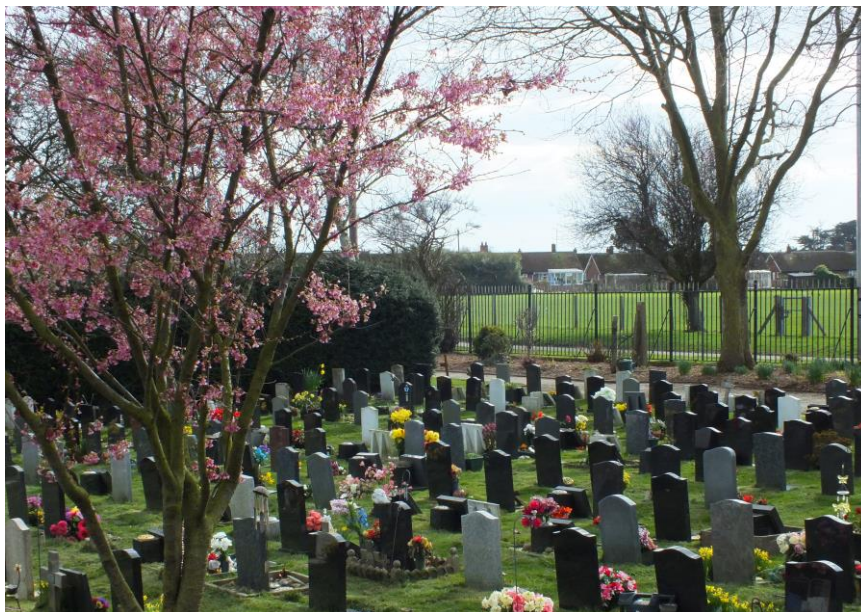
The Council generates a small rental income from hiring of Walton Community Hall, which almost covers the general running costs of the hall. For example, in 2014/15 expenditure against Walton Hall was £7,950, and income was £7,805.

59% of participants from our survey feel that Community Centres are an essential service, and 74% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards Community Centres.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to support local non-profit organisations by providing discounted venue hire.
- Continue to carry out regular maintenance on Walton Community Hall to ensure it is run in a safe and efficient manner.
- Ensure that all statutory testing is carried out on a routine and timely basis.
- Encourage, through promotion and advertising both locally and regionally, the usage of hall by advertising on the Town Council website, newsletters and press.
- Carry out an in-depth review of the operation of Walton Community Hall and endeavour to run it in the most cost effective manner for the benefit of local residents.
- Organise events at Walton Community Hall in conjunction with other local organisations.

12.4 Felixstowe Cemetery



Felixstowe Cemetery is situated in Langley Avenue, Felixstowe and accessed via Grange Road. Our facilities are available to all and have plots for grave burial, interment of ashes and memorials.

The Cemetery opening hours are 8.30 to 4pm from 1st October to 31st March and 8.30 a.m. to 8pm from 1st April to 30th

September. The Cemetery is open to the public every day of the year.

Existing capacity at the Cemetery has been estimated to provide at least a further five years of grave burial space. However, before the end of this Plan period, a project to extend the Cemetery and provide additional burial space is expected to be developed.

84% of participants from our survey feel that the Cemetery is an essential service, 82% thought that the Town Council was responsible for the Cemetery and the same number thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards the cemetery.

Within the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to improve site maintenance at the Cemetery.
- Plan and develop for additional capacity at the Cemetery, taking in to consideration the affect this will have on the existing allotment provision at the site.
- Consider the value of digitising cemetery plans and burial records.
- Develop a management plan for the operation of the Cemetery.

12.5 Allotments



Councils have a statutory duty to consider the sufficient provision of allotments. The Town Council owns and manages five allotment sites in Felixstowe:

Cowpasture, Candlet Road (284 plots)
Ferry Road (92 plots)
Railway Hill, Coronation Drive (42 plots)
Cemetery Field, Langley Avenue (41 plots)
Taunton Road (18 plots)

Income generated through allotment rents goes towards the maintenance of the sites. When larger 'double' plots are given up or become vacant, Council sometimes splits these in to two single plots in order to offer flexible options for would-be tenant. Accordingly, the total number of plots is likely to increase over time.

32% of participants from our survey felt that Allotments are an essential service and 58% thought it was desirable. 67% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute the Allotments in the town.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Maximise opportunities for leasing allotment plots, maintaining regular inspections and taking any necessary remedial action if plots are found to be unused or in contravention to the rules of the lease.
- Regularly review allotment site waiting lists.
- Hold regular meetings with the Felixstowe Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (FSALG) to consider actions for improving the sites and to develop an Allotment Management Plan.-
- Liaise with the FSALG when plots become vacant in order to minimise waiting list times.
- Promote the availability of allotments, provide helpful advice and information on the terms and price of renting a Council allotment on the Town Council website.
- Maintain and improve security at each allotment site.
- Be vigilant to rubbish abandoned on allotments, in particular with asbestos and chemicals, and dispose in an appropriate manner, using specialist contractors if required.
- Analyse local demand for allotment plots and respond to the level of need

12.5 Peewit Hill



The Council owns a small area of woodland off Peewit Hill approximately 0.2 hectares (0.54 acres).

It is situated between Dock Gate 1 roundabout near McDonald's and the housing on Dovedale and Coronation Drive on the higher land behind.

The site acts as a green buffer between the commercial operations of the Port and the residential properties, and is a haven for the local flora and fauna. There is an open culvert and footpath at the bottom of the hill which subsequently runs alongside Peewit Caravan Park and rises near the Railway Bridge at the southern end of Coronation Drive. It is a popular route for walkers and cyclists connecting two distinctly different areas of the town. The footpath link is maintained by Suffolk County Council.

79% of participants from our survey felt that Parks and Open spaces are essential, and 91% thought that the Town Council should be responsible for or contribute towards Parks and Open Spaces.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Seek to introduce a management plan for Peewit Hill

12.6 Play Equipment and Parks

Play equipment and parks are generally the responsibility of SCDC but additional play equipment has been paid for by Felixstowe Town Council using funds derived from local development projects.

74% of participants from our survey feel that Children's Play Areas are essential, and 83% thought that the Town Council should be responsible for or contribute towards Children's Play Areas.

Felixstowe Town Council acknowledges the importance of well-kept parks for residents and visitors to enjoy and will strive to improve existing facilities in all parks where necessary. Felixstowe has a number of parks and play areas and the Town Council opened the Trim Trail at Sea Road in 2015.

During the Plan period, the Town Council will:

- Support Suffolk Coastal District Council to improve dog fouling enforcement in the town including all parks.
- Consider opportunities for improvements to existing play and leisure facilities throughout the town and investigate additional opportunities for the development of new creative play projects, in consultation with the local community.
- Support initiatives for improving teenage/young adult provision in all parks, in partnership with key local stakeholders. Promote information about the facilities available in the town's parks.
- Work with partners to improve existing sports facilities, such as the play equipment and the quality of the football pitches.
- Work with partners to ensure that play equipment provides a healthy and safe environment for users and local residents
- Aim to increase public participation in outdoor activities.
- Encourage local groups to help improve community areas
- Support Suffolk Coastal District Council with initiatives to reduce dog fouling

12.7 War Memorial and Flood Memorial

Felixstowe Town Council is responsible for the War Memorial on Undercliff Road West facing the sea, and also the Flood Memorial on Langer Road. The War Memorial monument is near the beginning of the northern sea front, close to the Town Hall. It is set in a thin strip of gardens, surrounded by flower beds, cut off from the sea by the promenade and with a road behind. Although modest in scale, its position emulates the Nelson Monument in Great Yarmouth, with the addition of a dove, the universal symbol of peace, seated on the funerary urn. The roll of honour for the World War I soldiers is set on plaques to the north and south and that for World War II on plaques set at an angle on the three steps leading up to the base. A full list of names can be found at www.roll-of-honour.com/Suffolk/Felixstowe

The Flood memorial contains a Memorial Wall and garden, and is located at the far end of the playing field attached to Langer Primary School on Langer Road. It is the location of some of the deepest flood water in the town at the time of the East Coast floods on the night of 31st January 1953 in which 41 people lost their lives locally. The memorial was unveiled at midnight on 31st January 2006, exactly 53 years after the devastating floods hit. The anniversary is marked at the wall annually by the laying of a floral wreath which is paid for by a local group of well-wishers and group of associated friends and family. The blue line at the top of the wall depicts the depth of the flood water that night and the plaque records the names of the victims. The memorial was constructed by local builders, Drake and Plant and was designed as a contemplative space by local artists Rosemary Humphries and Claire Curtis with the mosaic works being made by local school children. It was paid for by a combination of private donations and funds committed by Felixstowe Town Council and involved many contributions in kind to convert the concept of the actual memorial and the artists' cardboard model of the design into the physical structure. A hand engraved book of remembrance was opened and now resides in Felixstowe Library.

Within the period of this Plan, the Council will:

- Maintain and clean the memorials in a sensitive manner
- Support the continued remembrance for all those who gave their lives in active service and those who lost their lives in the floods of 1953

13. Civic & Community

In line with its Terms of Reference the Civic & Community Committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas (approx.. 18% of total budgeted expenditure):

- Youth Activities
- The Mayor and Civic Events
- Public Events & Tourism
- Christmas Lights
- Occasional and Annual Grants
- Communications
- Felixstowe in Flower
- Remembrance
- Community Safety

13.1 Youth Activities



Felixstowe's Youth Forum began in 1998 as a consultation group between Felixstowe Town Council and the two Felixstowe high schools (Deben and Orwell High Schools). Today it is a multi-representative group of young people nominated by school councils and youth projects in Felixstowe including representatives from primary schools and the Level

Two Youth Project. The Forum meets regularly with local Councillors and other local stakeholders at the Town Hall and meetings are chaired by the young people themselves on rotation basis. Debate is encouraged to enable a young person's perspective to be placed on issues which the children themselves bring up and is fed back to the local schools.

The Town Council acknowledges that young people often have limited opportunities to express their views in a constructive way to the wider community. They are generally under-represented at meetings when issues which determine the town's (and possibly their own) future are discussed. The Youth Forum provides a regular and genuine opportunity for the town's younger residents to comment, positively or negatively, on matters occurring within the town and to enable a greater understanding of how they can play a key role in influencing change.

Youth Council meetings are scheduled in conjunction with the schools' timetables and are held in January, March, May, June, October and November each year.

The Town Council is keen both to increase its own engagement with the youth of the town and also to encourage and facilitate improvements to services which meet their needs.

52% of participants from our survey thought that Youth Clubs are an essential and 43% felt that they were a desirable service. 76% of participants thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards Youth Clubs within the town.

During the Plan period, the Town Council will:

- Continue to promote the value of the Youth Forum with local schools and youth service providers.
- Actively encourage youth participation in community initiatives through the work of the Youth Forum.
- Raise the profile of the Youth Forum throughout the town.

13.2 The Mayor and Civic Events

The Mayor of Felixstowe is elected at the Annual Council Meeting in May each year. At this time, the new Mayor announces which charities they will be supporting during their mayoral year.

Every year the Mayor looks forward to a full year of fundraising activities and Mayoral engagements across the town. If residents would like the Mayor to attend a function in Felixstowe, or to simply ask them a question, they can contact by email mayor@felixstowe.gov.uk or leave a message at the Town Hall. If residents would like the Town Mayor to attend an event that they may be organising, Mayoral engagement forms can be downloaded from the website or completed at the Town Hall.

The Mayor hosts a number of wide-ranging events of their own choosing during the Mayoral year. The Town Council supports three regular events for the Mayor during the year which are:

- **Mayor's Civic Reception**
- **Mayor's Civic Service**
- **Mayor's Carol Service**

In addition to these events, the Mayor presents the Civic Awards and may choose to hold a number of other fundraising events for their chosen charities.

Details of charity events are published when confirmed.

13.3 Civic Awards

Felixstowe Town Council recognises contributions to the community made by individuals, young people and organisations in the town at its annual Civic Awards evening.

At the event, several awards are presented:

Mayor's Awards

Presented to up to 5 local people for their personal contribution to the community.

HMS Ganges Youth Trophy

Presented to a local young person (aged 21 or under) or an organisation supporting young people in Felixstowe.

The Community Award

Presented to recognise the contribution to the community by a local organisation.

It is at this event that the Mayor makes a presentation of the final amount raised during their Mayoral year to the chosen charities.

Nomination forms are available both on the website and at the Town Hall.

Within the period of this Plan Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Regularly review civic events to ensure their continued improvement.
- Support the community in celebration and commemoration of key local and national events.
- Promote the work of the office of the Mayor of Felixstowe.

13.4 Public Events & Tourism

The majority of events and festivals held in Felixstowe are organised by independent organisations. Through its work with Felixstowe Forward, the Town Council is seeking to support the development of a community-based organisation driven by key local stakeholders in order to promote public events and tourism. The Town Council retains a small budget to fund community celebrations/festivals with smaller amounts of funding made available through occasional grants for those projects which are felt particularly beneficial to Felixstowe's residents.

77% of participants from our survey thought that Tourism was essential to Felixstowe.

61% felt that events at the Triangle were desirable, and 67% felt that events at the Seafront were also desirable.

Our survey showed that 55% of participants felt that the Carnival was essential.

88% of participants from our survey feel that public toilets are essential.

During the Plan period, the Town Council will:

- Support the establishment of a local initiative to support safe and successful events and promote the town.
- Consider how best to fund and support community events.
- Host information about local clubs and societies on the Town Council website or provide up to date links to other websites which in order to promote local events, for example the Visit Felixstowe website.
- Work with Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council and other stakeholders to influence the improved scheduling of any externally run events and to encourage better management of problems/issues.
- Promote key local events through the Town Council's media channels.
- Monitor the provision of public toilets and work with SCDC to consider how facilities may be improved.

13.5 Town Twinning

The Town has been twinned with Wesel in Germany for over 40 years. There are close links with the town and regular visits are made both to and from Wesel. The Partnership provides cultural understanding and a beneficial exchange of ideas between the two towns.

From the beginning, the benefit of the Partnership was to be for all residents, and this aim has been well achieved with hundreds of exchange visits taking place. This long relationship has resulted in many friendships. Felixstowe Town Council has always been proud of this valued Partnership which is run by the Felixstowe Wesel Association.

Felixstowe has also been linked with Salzwedel for over 20 years. The Salzwedel Partnership is administered by the Salzwedel Partnership Association.

Both Associations have a varied programme of events and organise visits to Wesel and Salzwedel. Felixstowe welcomes visitors from both towns on a regular basis. Both Associations welcome new members; interested parties should contact the Secretaries for further information.

Felixstowe is a Fairtrade town and the Council supports the local Fairtrade Forum promoting the importance and value of Fairtrade to work towards better prices, decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.

77% of participants from our survey felt that Town Twinning is desirable.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will

- Continue to support the established Town Twinning Associations and Fairtrade Forum.
- Maintain and enhance existing relationships between the twin towns through the receiving and making of annual Civic visits.
- Promote cultural/school/educational/sporting links by local organisations and individuals.
- Raise awareness of twinning and Fairtrade throughout the town.

13.6 Christmas Lighting/Events

Christmas is a magical time of year in Felixstowe with thousands coming from across the region to see the Official Christmas Lights Switch on and Craft Market event held on the last Saturday in November each year. The fantastic event is organised by Felixstowe Lions Club and financially supported by Felixstowe Town Council. The Mayor attends to help turn on the Christmas Lights.

2015 was the first year that Felixstowe Town Council arranged for an ice rink to be brought to Great Eastern Square in the run up to Christmas. Funding towards the rink was supported by the East of England Cooperative Society and several District Councillors who allocated part of their individual 'Enabling Communities Budget' towards the venture. Other activities alongside the rink included rides for smaller children and a stall serving hot food and drinks. The Mayor formally opened the rink.

65% of participants from our survey feel that providing Christmas Lights in the Town is desirable and 62% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards the Christmas Lighting in the Town.

To support Christmas celebrations the Council will:

- Provide funding to the Felixstowe Lions Club towards the provision of the Christmas lights.
- Formally request Suffolk Coastal District Council to provide free car parking for the day of the Christmas light switch on event.
- Promote local Christmas events through all means available.
- Seek to provide an ice rink annually in the town centre in the run up to Christmas.

13.7 Occasional and Annual Grants

Felixstowe Town Council is committed to supporting and strengthening the many networks and community groups that help to make a positive difference to Felixstowe as a place to live, work and visit, for everyone. We know that the Council can make a difference through our grants process but it is also important that we seek a relationship with many of these groups to explore other ways in which they can develop and grow as they need to.

For the financial year 2016/17, a total of £15,000 was made available to support community organisations which are able demonstrate a clear need for financial support and which contribute towards the vision and aims for Felixstowe. Projects and activities must have a specific benefit to residents of Felixstowe.

Occasional Grant applications are considered twice a year by Council's Civic & Community Committee.

In addition, the Town Council provides regular annual support to a number of other local organisations. Details of all grant awards can be found on our website.

Grants can be given to a variety of different organisations. In our survey 63% of participants thought that community transport groups were essential, and 65% felt that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards community transport groups.

67% thought that events at the Seafront were desirable and 58% felt that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards these events.

Felixstowe Town Council will endeavour to support local non-profit organisations through its grants scheme and cost-effective venue hire. It will take actions to increase the impact the grants by:

- Regularly reviewing grant policy in terms of assessing the likely impact of the grant.
- Increasing active promotion of the Occasional Grants scheme on the Town Council website, in newsletters and in the press.
- Request feedback from successful grant applicants to evaluate the success of their projects.

13.8 Communications

Felixstowe Town Council recognises the role of regular and effective communication in building positive relationships with the public, local organisations and stakeholders.

Felixstowe Town Council publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, which is distributed to all households in the Town.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to develop the Town Council website providing information about the Town Council and also signposting people to other service providers.
- Post regular news of Town Council initiatives on the website and in the newsletters.
- Review and improve other methods of distribution for Town Council news.
- Provide an opportunity at each Town Council meeting for public questions and comments.
- Make updated versions of the Town Council Business Plan available on the Town Council website.
- Share a report covering Town Council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Meeting.
- Endeavour to maintain the current frequency and standard of the newsletter,
- Keep up a dialogue with local groups/associations/residents to obtain interesting and relevant articles for publication,
- Use the publication as a consultative document for any issues the Council wish to canvass opinion on.
- Continue to review the Council's Information and Communication needs
- Review and upgrade as necessary the Town Council's telecommunications systems and website to provide effective communication facilities.
- Regularly update the noticeboards with Town Council Communications.

13.9 Felixstowe in Flower

In 1985 Felixstowe Town Council first introduced Felixstowe in Flower as a scheme to involve the community of Felixstowe in improving its environment. In the first year, 60 hanging baskets were sponsored by local firms and organisations and from these small beginnings a comprehensive community scheme has developed.

Felixstowe in Flower has been gradually expanded to include a wide diversity of environmental improvements for the Town and to emphasise, above all, community participation, particularly by schools and young people in general.

Felixstowe in Flower is a partnership involving the whole community and which is funded by the Town Council and sponsorship. Participants include local businesses, societies, schools and individuals of all ages. Participation involves environmental projects and a wide range of competitions for gardens, allotments, floral containers, commercial premises, residential homes, public houses, hotel and guest houses, tallest sunflower, grow bags and schoolchildren's painting projects.



The Town Council arranges floral hanging baskets for business and private households throughout the town, Walton and the sea front. These ready-planted baskets are fully maintained, fed and watered all summer until the season ends in September.

Sponsors are named on plaques attached to the baskets and, as part of the scheme, are widely promoted across the town. All sponsors are also highlighted on our website and a link to their own business website can be included.

78% of participants from our survey feel that hanging baskets were desirable, and 59% felt that floral planting was also desirable.

78% of participants feel that the Town Council should be responsible for or contribute towards Floral Planting.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to investigate and contact any potential new sponsors in order to gain funds to enhance the flower provision within the Town.
- Investigate opportunities for further enhancements to the scheme.
- Seek to expand participation.

13.10 Remembrance

Felixstowe Town Council organises the annual Remembrance Service for the town. In 2016, the service is scheduled to be held at St. John's Church. The congregation will then walk to the War Memorial for the Act of Remembrance where wreaths will be laid and a two minute silence observed at 11am. It is finished with march past from Cadet Forces in the town.

On Armistice Day 11th November at 11am a two minute silence is also observed at the War Memorial. All members of the public are encouraged to attend these important events.

64% of participants from our survey feel that celebrating special commemorative events was a desirable service, and 71% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards special commemorative events.

Within the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Liaise with the local clergy and Royal British Legion to oversee the smooth running and organisation of the remembrance events.
- Publicise the event on the website, newsletters and in the press.
- Request that parking restrictions be lifted at the Pier Bight and Convalescent Hill car parks between 9am and 1pm for those attending the Remembrance Commemorations.

13.11 Community Policing and Safety

Felixstowe Town Council works closely with Suffolk Police on matters relating to Community Safety in a number of ways. Council representatives regularly engage with the Safer Neighbourhood Team. The Town Hall often hosts public meetings with the police and the Council supports the provision and maintenance of the town CCTV cameras. Councillors and staff regularly meet with local police officers to report matters of concern and discuss solutions to local issues.

Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings are attended by the local police, County, District and Town Councillors as well as representatives from health and educational organisations. Local priorities are discussed at these meetings and the Safer Neighbourhood Team keeps residents updated on progress related to priorities in the local area. They do this in a number of ways, including regular updates on their local website pages.

61% of participants from our survey thought that CCTV is an essential service, 68% thought that the Town Council is responsible for it and 74% thought that the Town Council should be responsible or contribute towards CCTV.

Within the period of this Plan, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Listen to residents and report their concerns to the Safer Neighbourhood Team.
- Work with the police to address the issues that have been identified.
- Keep residents informed of local policing matters.
- Continue to work with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Suffolk Constabulary to share information on local crime and safety issues. This includes Suffolk Constabulary being invited to attend Town Council meetings and the Town Council forwarding any enquiries and concerns submitted to them.
- Facilitate access to the Police by including Police contact information on the Town Council's website.
- Hold the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk to account by reviewing and responding to local policing strategies on behalf of local residents.
- Maintain and evaluate CCTV provision.

To achieve this, Felixstowe Town Council will continue to work in partnership with Suffolk Police and other organisations so that they are able to deliver a service that is visible, accessible and responsive to what local people need.

14 Planning & Environment

In line with its Terms of Reference the Planning & Environment Committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas:

- To comment on planning applications.
- To respond to consultations on matters relating to planning or the local environment.
- To receive correspondence relevant to the Committee.
- To comment on appeals lodged following the refusal of planning approval.
- To make recommendations to Council regarding policy and strategic matters relating to all of the above.

Felixstowe Town Council is a statutory consultee for any planning applications submitted within its parish boundary or within the wider area which may have an effect upon the town or its inhabitants. Suffolk Coastal District Council is the local Planning Authority and makes the final decision.

The Council's Planning & Environment Committee sits fortnightly to consider its comments on applications.

Planning applications that are to be considered by the Planning & Environment Committee are shown in the Agendas for the forthcoming meetings and these are posted on the noticeboard and on the website at least 3 clear days before the meeting. Comments made by the Committee on applications which it has considered are recorded in the corresponding Minutes for that meeting and are formally submitted to Suffolk Coastal District Council. If members of the public are interested in a particular planning application, they can attend the meeting or see our online records to find out how the Town Council considered the application or enquire directly at the Town Hall.

Although Town Planning and Development is managed by the Suffolk Coastal District Council, the Town Council is a key consultee and represents the interests of Felixstowe, its residents and businesses.

To achieve this, the Town Council will:

- Encourage local residents to participate in any strategic planning consultations which impact upon Felixstowe.
- Continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect Felixstowe, ensuring that the Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is taken into account in planning decisions.
- Review the way in which it currently considers and approves planning applications, ensuring that its recommendations are robust and clear
- Continue to establish close working relations with Suffolk Coastal District Council, in particular the Officers and Members on the Planning Committee, in order to ensure that the needs and best interests of Felixstowe are taken into account in planning decisions.
- Lobby regional, County and District authorities to ensure Felixstowe is fairly served in respect of urban, and other, infrastructure.
- Ensure that the Town Council's views are appropriately represented at the District Council's Planning Committee.
- Work with Suffolk Coastal District Council to review retail mix in Felixstowe.
- Consider options for proactively targeting specific new businesses which meet the needs of local residents and support the economic sustainability of Felixstowe.
- Work with Suffolk Coastal District Council to determine and ensure the best use of any retained business rate income in accordance with national policies.
- Make recommendations to Council as to the use of receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to enhance infrastructure facilities within the Town.
- Carefully consider applications for the work to protected trees and those within the Conservation Area.
- Seek to encourage the continuation of the Shared Space along Hamilton Road. The completion of this scheme within the town centre boundary will provide a continuous link between Hamilton Road and Bent Hill providing accessibility for all pedestrians, including older people, young families, those with mobility issues and cyclists.

15. Personnel

In line with its Terms of Reference, the Personnel committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas:

- To review the staffing structure and budget on an annual basis, making recommendations to Council.
- To review and authorise amendments to the staffing structure, grades and/or terms and conditions of employees in-year within the salaries budget set by Council or to otherwise make recommendations to Council.
- To oversee the management of Health & Safety and the Council's corporate responsibilities as an employer.
- Annual Appraisal of the Town Clerk.
- To review and approve personnel-related policies and procedures.
- To ensure compliance with personnel-related statutory requirements and legislation.
- To act as the first stage in grievance or disciplinary hearings.
- To make recommendations to Council regarding policy and strategic matters relating to all of the above.

The Personnel Committee meets on the second Wednesday in October and April and considers matters relevant to the Council's staff. Felixstowe Town Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff and to provide a satisfying and flexible working environment in which all staff have the opportunity to develop. Every staff member has personal and team targets which they work, related to Business Plan objectives. An appraisal system is now well-established and staff take part in regular team meetings.

Policies are approved by the Personnel Committee and an Employee Handbook, which is reviewed from time to time, is issued to all staff.

During the Plan period, the Council will:

- Review the management structure and staffing levels of the Council to better reflect the changing demands of services and the needs of residents and customers.
- Develop staff through induction, appraisals and approved training programme.
- Regularly review policies relating to staff and health and safety.
- Where possible, provide opportunities for apprenticeships.
- Consider what wider benefits the Town Council is able to offer staff in order to be considered an 'employer of choice' locally.

16. Highways Advisory Committee

In line with its Terms of Reference the Highways Advisory committee is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Council's Business Plan objectives in relation to the following areas:

- Sharing information relating to highways services delivered in the town.
- Making recommendations to Suffolk County Council Highways to improve the delivery of highways service in the town.

The Highways Advisory Committee is a partnership of members of the Town Council, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Highways. Town Councillors regularly bring items to the agenda on behalf of Felixstowe residents to assist Suffolk County Council in the prioritisation areas of highways work.

The Town Council is not directly responsible for the delivery of highways, transport, access or parking services in the town but strives to ensure that the relevant delivery bodies provide a good quality, affordable service which takes into account the needs and expectations of its residents and the town's employees and businesses. This includes road and pavement repairs, traffic flow, winter gritting and local considerations for scheduling of major road works.

In an effort to improve the management and maintenance of highways in the town, the Town Council will:

- Work with Suffolk County Council on a long-term plan for road and pavement repairs in the town, including effective maintenance of roadside verges and appropriate and well-maintained signage.
- Continue to collate and forward reports of dangerous kerbing or pavements to Suffolk County Council.
- Liaise with the County Council to influence scheduling of major road works so that, as far as possible, disruption to residents is minimised and peak visitor periods are avoided.
- Provide include clear information on the Town Council website to provide guidance on how to refer highways matters.
- Lobby the County Council to ensure that adequate budget is set aside for ongoing maintenance within any future capital works.
- Work with Suffolk County Council to supply and maintain an adequate number of winter gritting bins and advise on appropriate locations.
- Liaise with the County Council to introduce road and pedestrian safety schemes
- Identify areas where improvement of street lighting is necessary and liaise with Suffolk County Council to provide this; also to look at the energy efficiency measures for existing street lighting and consider alternatives.

16.1 Street Cleaning

Felixstowe Town Council strives to ensure the town retains a pleasant, clean and safe environment. While the Town Council itself is not directly responsible for delivery of environmental services, it works in partnership with the relevant delivery bodies to encourage a high standard of services that meets the needs and expectations of its residents, businesses and visitors to the town. Suffolk Coastal Norse are responsible for street cleaning in Felixstowe.

Within the period of this Plan, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Liaise with Suffolk Coastal Norse to improve the quality of the service provided

16.2 Litter, Refuse and Recycling

Suffolk Coastal Norse manages litter, refuse and recycling in Felixstowe on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council.

To support improved standards of cleanliness across the town, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of litter collection services in the town and raise any concerns with Suffolk Coastal Norse.
- Work with Suffolk Coastal District Council to ensure local complaints are directed to Suffolk Coastal Norse and addressed in a satisfactory time and manner.
- Promote and facilitate 'Beach Clean' days on the Town Council website and in our newsletters when applicable.
- Signpost interested community groups and individuals to Suffolk Coastal District Council for support with community litter picks.

16.3 Public Footpaths

There are many public rights of way covering the civil parish of Felixstowe.

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Liaise with relevant partners, such as Suffolk County Council, to improve the signage and quality of public footpaths and rights of way.

16.4 Public Transport

Oversight of public transport is the responsibility of Suffolk County Council with delivery effected by rail franchisee and local bus companies. The Town Council is a consultee on Public Transport issues and currently has no functions as such. Felixstowe Town Council wants to secure a more effective and affordable public transport service which better meets the needs of Felixstowe's residents and workers.

As such it will:

- Liaise with suitable partners, such as Suffolk County Council and the bus operators to improve services
- Consider the provision of bus shelters if a need is identified.
- Lobby for improvements to the passenger rail service, directly and through its membership on the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership.
- Work with the local Travelwatch group to identify issues and opportunities for public transport improvements.

16.5 Parking

Suffolk Coastal District Council owns, or is responsible for, most of the 'off-street' car parking in the town (i.e. car parks). Felixstowe Town Council does not receive any income from the parking charges or fines. Suffolk Constabulary is responsible for the enforcement of 'on-street' parking.

93% of participants from our survey felt that car parks are essential.

In representing the interests of both residents and local workers, the Town Council strives to protect residents' needs for street parking and to seek affordable car parking for residents, local workers and visitors. To do this the Town Council will:

- Monitor car parking tariffs and lobby for reasonable rates.
- Encourage Suffolk Coastal District Council to operate an affordable parking permit scheme for residents, where necessary.
- Encourage Suffolk Coastal District Council to ensure Felixstowe car parking income is used to the benefit of Felixstowe.
- Consider how planning for any future housing developments includes adequate provision for parking.
- Advise event coordinators to consider parking provision when holding events.
- Support Suffolk Coastal District Council in the devolvement of parking enforcement from the County Council.

17. Felixstowe Forward

Felixstowe Forward is a local initiative set up and funded by Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council in partnership with local community representatives to focus on a broad range of key local matters (i.e. economy development, tourism and community projects).

The Felixstowe Forward Sponsor Group meets regularly to consider its programme and is supported by a small team of officers based at Felixstowe Town Hall.

The aim of Felixstowe Forward is to develop a collective approach to tackling the town's key challenges and opportunities. Engagement with a wide range of business and community groups is central to developing a plan of action which will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Felixstowe.

The work of the team is guided by the Felixstowe Forward Sponsoring Group which consists of Town, District and County Council Members, businesses and community representatives.

Among its aims, Felixstowe Forward is working in the heart of Felixstowe to:

- Oversee the development and delivery of further economic growth;
- Seek and support new developments and projects;
- Promote Felixstowe as a high quality destination town;
- Preserve and promote the heritage of the town;
- Support and develop an enterprise and entrepreneurship culture;
- Support and contribute to the skills, education and employability of young people.

17.1 Town Improvement Plan

Since its creation in 2015, Felixstowe Forward has invited people, businesses, community organisations and town centre retailers to advise on priorities for the town.

The group has held question and answer sessions, workshops and made presentations to local organisations. The result is an informed Town Improvement Plan which sets out how it will tackle the town's key challenges and bring in improvements.

The Town Improvement Plan is focused around their key objectives:

1. Oversee the development and delivery of further economic growth by:
 - Supporting the development of the local business associations
 - Maximising the Town centre potential
 - Maximising funding and investment in the Town
2. Seek and support new developments and projects by:
 - Mapping our community organisations
 - Supporting community organisations to work together and find new ways of strengthening relationships
 - Promoting the consultation of the Felixstowe Area Action Plan
3. Promote Felixstowe as a high quality destination town by:
 - Building on the 'Visit Felixstowe' brand
 - Developing a coherent marketing plan
 - Reviewing visitor information
 - Working with partners to protecting our natural environment
4. Preserve and promote the heritage of the town by supporting ongoing projects including:
 - Restoration of the Felixstowe Seafront Gardens
 - Landguard Fort
 - Landguard Reserve
 - Felixstowe Museum
 - Martello Park
 - Martello 'P' Tower
 - Pier Head Development

5. Support and develop an enterprise and entrepreneurship culture by:
 - Exploring innovative and sustainable solutions to maximise the events programme in Felixstowe
6. Support and contribute to the skills, education and employability of young people by:
 - Working with partners to realise the full potential of young people locally

During the Plan period, Felixstowe Town Council will:

- Work closely with Felixstowe Forward to achieve their current objectives.
- Work with Felixstowe Forward and any other representative body to improve access to external funding.
- Work closely with neighbouring bodies and organisations to promote the town and area as an exciting visitor attraction.

17.2 Economy and Development

Felixstowe Town Council encourages and promotes the economic and commercial vitality of the town to support its future prosperity and sustainability.

Felixstowe Town Council Economic Development Objectives

In terms of economic development and planning, the Town Council is guided in its activities and decisions not only by its Corporate Objectives (listed on page 16) but also by the following specific economic development objectives:

- To support a balanced approach to economic growth, ensuring the sustainability of the town while safeguarding Felixstowe from inappropriate development.
- To support the development of tourism, recognising that this is one of the main drivers of the local economy, while at the same time encouraging wider economic development which safeguards the sustainability of Felixstowe as both a Port and also a service centre for its residents and the neighbouring parishes.
- To support and strengthen Felixstowe's 'independent' retail offer but not at the total exclusion of larger multiples that meet the everyday needs of Felixstowe residents.
- To encourage a vibrant retail mix and in particular to do what it can to encourage and support new businesses which meet the needs of Felixstowe residents (while at the same time not pursuing such a restrictive policy that the number of empty retail units is increased).
- To support the provision of good quality, well-managed events and festivals in the town, with its own financial support focused on community celebrations/events.
- To support the concept of a 'Town Team' or Business Improvement District for Felixstowe, to facilitate coordination of town centre initiatives working in partnership with Felixstowe Forward

Although the Town Council's own funds are limited, it works in partnership with appropriate agencies and organisations in order to encourage and facilitate any opportunities:

- To develop commerce and light industry for enhanced employment opportunities in the town.
- To promote and support entertainment and the arts.
- To promote the town and encourage tourism (including the promotion of Felixstowe as a 'great day by the sea').

Next Steps

The key milestones for achieving the objectives of this Business Plan from 2016-20 are set out in the Action Plan in Appendix 1, below.

Council will ensure that the goals and actions set out are delivered and properly resourced as the action plan progresses.

Council has adopted a performance management approach and will review progress against the Business Plan regularly at its Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings.

Council is keen to consider new opportunities at any time and, as such, the Business Plan should not be seen as a limit to the Council's endeavours over the four years.

In May 2019, as Council enters the final year of this Plan, local elections are due to be held. The new Council will continue to engage with the community and comprehensively review its objectives during the 2019/20 Municipal Year in order to both evaluate the success of this first Plan and to draft the next four-year Business Plan for the period May 2020-May 2024.

The Town Council would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Business Plan.

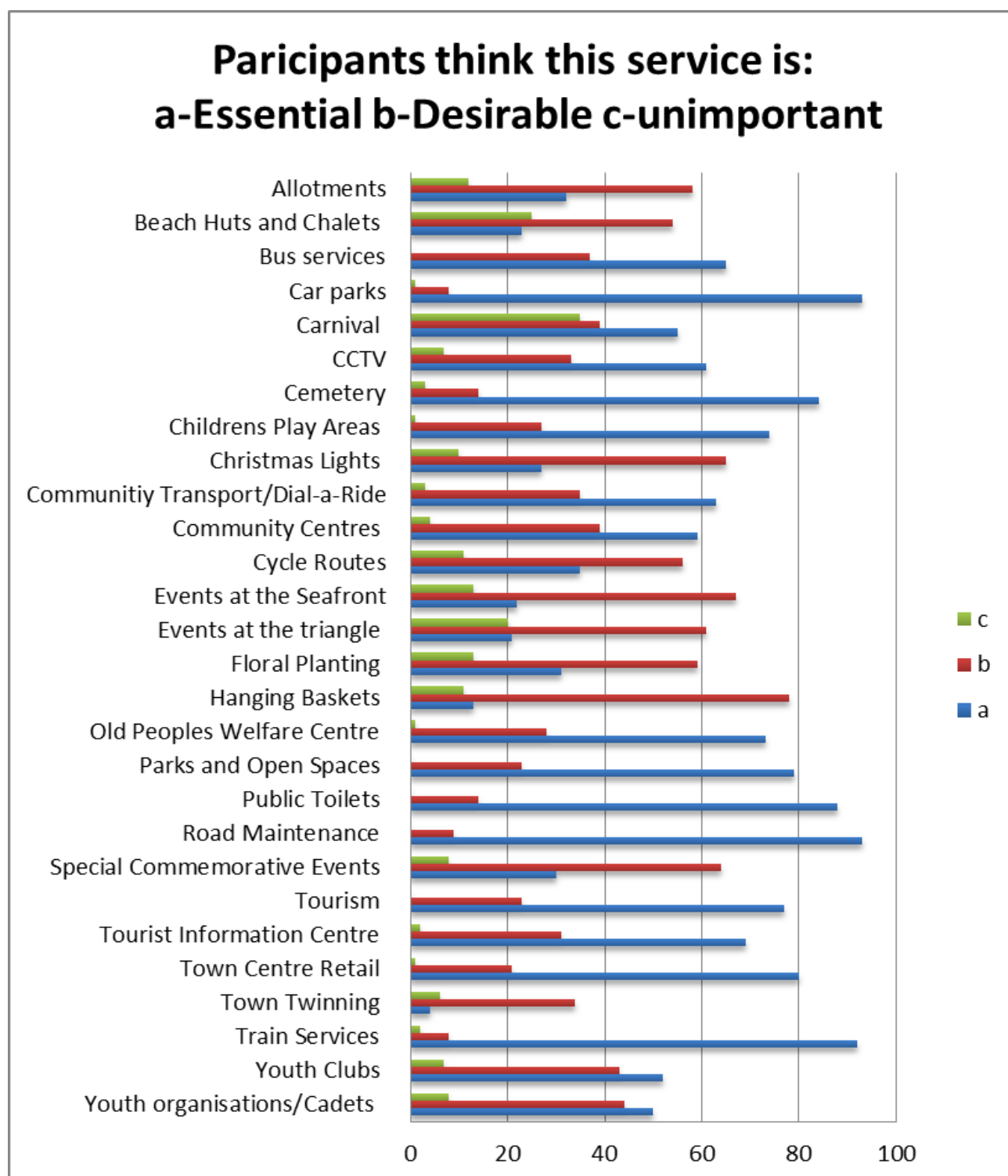
APPENDIX 1 – ACTION PLAN (This will be completed once the Plan is adopted)

Reference	Objective	LEAD/PARTNERS	ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE Short term up to March 2017 Medium term 2017-18 Long term 2019 onwards	BUDGET REQUIRED	COMMENTS
E.g. FTC1	E.g. Improved communication	E.g. Felixstowe Town Council (FTC)	E.g. Produce regular updates on the town website	Ongoing		

APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY ANALYSIS

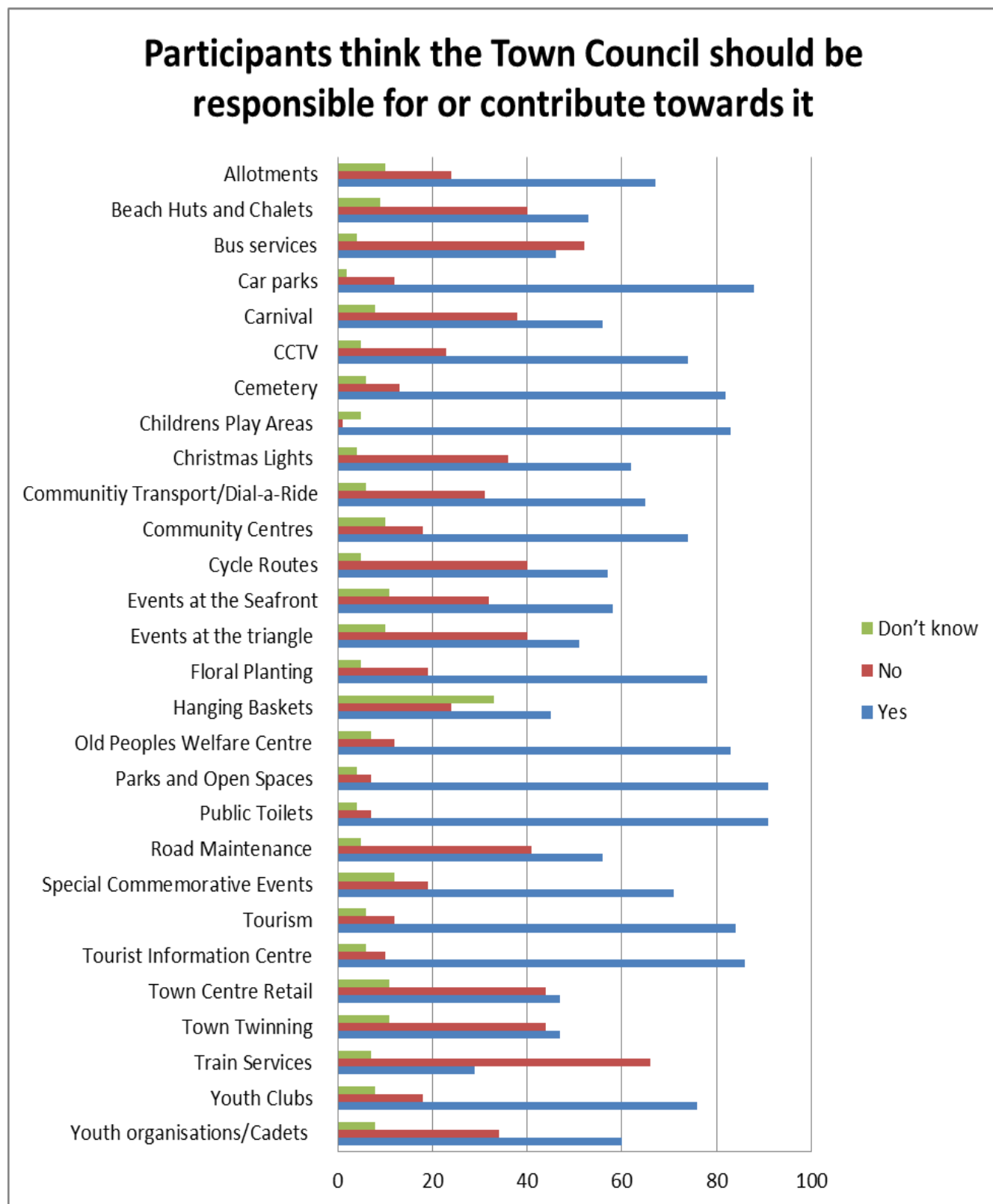
Results from survey carried out October 2014

The following chart displays how participants felt 'how essential' various services are, expressed as a percentage:



Results from survey carried out October 2014

The following chart displays whether participants thought the Town Council should be responsible for, or contribute towards, various services. Expressed as a percentage:



Felixstowe Town Councillors 2015 - 2019

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*Denotes: Suffolk Coastal District Council Member as well as Town Councillor

**Denotes: Suffolk County Council Member as well as Town Councillor

For more information and resources, please visit our website at www.felixstowe.gov.uk which provides details of all of our services and facilities, information about Town Councillors, Council committees, meetings, agendas, minutes, policies, contact information and Council news.
