

**MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M Richardson (Chairman)
Cllr S Harkin
Cllr A Smith

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr S Congi (Financial Administration Assistant)

432. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

433. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr S Bennett, Cllr S Bird, Cllr M Deacon, Cllr T Green, Cllr S Wiles and Cllr K Williams.**

434. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr M Richardson	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of East Suffolk Council)

As no Pecuniary declarations were made, there were no requests for dispensation.

435. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 8 December 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

436. BUDGET MONITORING TO 18 March 2022

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 18 March 2022. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 10% or £500 was considered.

It was RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 18 March 2022 be approved, with no other action required at this time.

437. 2021/22 OUTTURN PROJECTION

Committee noted a report outlining the expected outturn to 31 March 2022.

Committee noted that grants for the Apprentices and CJRS (Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) had been received and it was agreed that these be transferred to the Staffing Earmarked Reserve before year end.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the report on the projected outturn for the year 2021/22 be noted; and,**
- ii. the grant for Apprenticeships and the CJRS, a total of £12,689.69 is transferred to the Staffing Earmarked Reserve before year end.**

438. INSURANCE REVIEW

Committee considered the quotes received to renew Council's Insurance.

RESOLVED that Council's insurance is renewed with Zurich at the premium of £5,918.73 for a 3 year Long Term Agreement, subject to adjustment after the Reinstatement Cost Assessment Valuations of all Council's buildings and the addition of insurance for Allenby and Gosford Road Parks when the transfers are completed.

439. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Committee considered the report on East Suffolk Council's Term of Reference to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) covering the East Suffolk district.

It was noted that page 4 of the Terms of Reference states: *"As new development takes place, it may be that existing parish boundaries are no longer the most appropriate division between parishes. The CGR provides an opportunity for existing boundaries to be reviewed."*

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, adopted 23 September 2020, includes proposals for a North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. This encompasses 143ha, a comprehensive development of which is expected to deliver a leisure led development, provide up to 2,000 dwellings incorporating dwellings for older and younger people, affordable housing and self-build plots. 12.62 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan shows how the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood could be developed and illustrates that a small portion of this land at the north-west would straddle the civil parish boundary between Felixstowe and Trimley St. Mary. Given that the majority of the residential settlement in Trimley St. Mary is to the south-west, across the dual-carriageway of the A14, it is anticipated that residents of the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood will consider themselves to be within the parish of Felixstowe rather than Trimley St. Mary.

Page 7 of the CGR Terms of Reference states that East Suffolk Council *"will consider the effect of new and forecast development activity on existing parish*

boundaries. Parish boundaries should be easily identifiable and reflect the separation of settlements recognised locally as having their own identity. These boundaries should generally reflect the areas between communities with low populations or physical barriers such as rivers or manmade features such as railways or motorways."

On that basis, members recommended that the Town Council requests that the CGR gives consideration to amending the parish boundary so that the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood would reside wholly within the civil parish of Felixstowe.

Committee carefully considered this matter with a view to ensuring that local governance arrangements within East Suffolk continue to be reflective of the identity and interest of local communities and that they are as efficient and effective as they can be. Members understand that consent would be required from the LGBCE to implement any proposed changes recommended by this CGR. Whilst this proposed adjustment to the civil parish boundary may also necessitate a corresponding adjustment to the County Division and District Wards at this location, it is not believed that this would undermine the changes resulting from the recent District and County Council electoral reviews which were carried out within the past five years.

Members considered all other relevant existing and forthcoming arrangements to be satisfactory at this time.

The above response should be sent to East Suffolk Council by the deadline of 1 April 2022 and a copy be sent to the Clerk of Trimley St. Mary for information as a matter of courtesy.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. A response as detailed above be sent to East Suffolk Council by the deadline of 1 April 2022 as a formal response from Felixstowe Town Council as agreed at Ordinary Council (*Minute #355 & #414 2021/22 refers*); and,**
- ii. A copy of the response be sent to the Clerk of Trimley St Mary.**

440. TERMS OF REFERENCE 2022/23

Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for Council and its Committees for 2022/23.

Members discussed the clarification of individual committee's currently being able to approve expenditure from their Earmarked Reserves, up to a limit of £20,000 in total per financial year, in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations without requiring further approval from Council. Where a committee such as the Assets & Services Committee have a number of Earmarked Reserves for each property (5 in total) £20,000 could be limiting if there were many requirements in one year.

Committee agreed that it would be more practical if the wording should be amended to ' up to £20,000 per Earmarked Reserve.'

A small typo under General Provisions 4. Should be changed from 'the' to 'a'.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to the change in delegation to Committees giving authority to spend against specified Earmarked Reserves, up to £20,000 per Earmarked Reserve and the typo, the Terms of Reference for 2022/23 be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented.

441. STANDING ORDERS 2022/23

Committee considered Standing Orders for 2021/22, and agreed the amendment to correct the year of the NALC model on page 1 and to update the contract thresholds under 18. Financial Controls and Procurement.

It was RESOLVED that Standing Orders for 2022/23 be recommended to Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented, updated with the correct year, based on the NALC 2020 model and updated thresholds for Contract Procurement.

442. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2022/23

Committee reviewed its Financial Regulations for 2022/23. The Town Clerk reported that enquiries had been made to Council's Internal Auditor regarding the feasibility of no longer keeping paper invoices and keeping all records digitally, and that amendments as required would be made before the Financial Regulations are considered by Council.

The thresholds on page 15 will also be updated. In accordance with Regulation 6.8, Committee reviewed the continued use of BACS.

It was RESOLVED that

- i. the Financial Regulations for 2022/23 be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented with updated thresholds and amendments as would be necessary to enable digital signing; and,**
- ii. the continued use of BACS also be recommended to Council.**

443. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

Committee considered Council's Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register for 2022/23.

It was RESOLVED that the Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption.

444. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Committee reviewed the Council's Complaints Procedure for 2022/23.

It was RESOLVED that Council's Complaints Procedure be recommended to Annual Council for re-adoption in 2022/23 with no changes.

445. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SCHEME

Committee reviewed the Publication Scheme based on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) model publication scheme, and the schedule of information available from Felixstowe Town Council.

RESOLVED that the ICO model publication scheme be recommended to Annual Council for re-adoption without change for 2022/23.

446. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.20pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____