

Telephone: 01394 282086
Fax: 01394 285920
email: enquiries@felixstowe.gov.uk

9 am to 4 pm Mondays to Fridays



TOWN HALL
FELIXSTOWE
SUFFOLK
IP11 2AG

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr M Deacon (Chairman)
Cllr D Rowe (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Aitchison
Cllr S Bennett
Cllr S Bird

Cllr M James
Cllr C MacGregor
Cllr M Sharman
Cllr S Wiles

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** to be held at **TOWN HALL, FELIXSTOWE** on **Wednesday 20 March 2024** at **7.30pm** for the transaction of the following business:

Public Attendance

Meetings of the Town Council and its Committees are open to the press and public who are welcome to attend. Members of the public are invited to make representations or put questions to the Committee during the public session.

There is a limit to the number of public attending in-person. If you wish to attend in person, please email townclerk@felixstowe.gov.uk to confirm capacity.

Members of the public are very welcome join via Zoom using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83090518311> Alternatively, you may join via the meeting ID 830 9051 8311 or over the telephone by calling 0131 460 1196.

Our online meeting guidance can be found here: <https://www.felixstowe.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Remote-Meeting-Guidelines.pdf>

Council has a duty to pay due regard to preventing crime and disorder and to conserve biodiversity in its decision-making and Members are reminded to consider the Council's commitment to climate action.



The Council kindly asks that anyone planning to attend the meeting in-person to consider car-sharing or low-carbon modes of transport to the Town Hall

Ash Tadjrishi
Town Clerk
14 March 2024

For information (via email):

All Town Councillors
Local Press



A G E N D A

- 1. Public Question Time**
Up to 15 minutes is set aside to allow members of the public (up to three minutes each) to make representations or put questions to the Committee on any relevant matters.
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations from Members on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable interest.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
To confirm the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee meeting held on 20 January 2024 as a true record. **(Pages 3-4)**
- 5. Budget Monitoring to 29 February 2024**
To receive budget monitoring report to 29 February 2024 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 5-7 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Draft Business Plan 2024-28**
To consider the draft Business Plan for the Municipal years 2024-28 and the process for formal adoption by Council. **(Page 8)**
- 7. Community Infrastructure Levy update – Play Equipment**
To receive a report from the Community Infrastructure Levy Working Group **(Pages 8-9)**
- 8. Terms of Reference 2024/25**
To review, and recommend to Council, Terms of Reference for 2024/25. **(Page 10 & Appendix B)**
- 9. Standing Orders 2024/25**
To review, and recommend to Council, Standing Orders for 2024/25. **(Page 10 & Appendix C)**
- 10. Financial Regulations 2024/25**
To review, and recommend to Council, Financial Regulations for 2024/25. **(Page 10 & Appendix D)**
- 11. Risk Management Policy & Financial Risk Register**
To review the Risk Management Policy & Financial Risk Register and make any recommendations to Council. **(Pages 11 & Appendix E)**
- 12. Complaints Procedure 2024/25**
To review the Council's Complaints Procedure for 2024/25 and make any recommendations to Council. **(Page 11 & Appendix F)**
- 13. Publication Scheme 2024/25**
To review the Council's Publication Scheme for 2024/25 and make any recommendations to Council. **(Page 11 & Appendix G)**
- 14. Closure**
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 7.30pm.

378. BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 31 December 2023. 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 31 December 2023 be noted.

379. EARMARKED RESERVES REPORT

Committee considered the report on Earmarked Reserves.

It was RESOLVED that the Earmarked Reserves report be noted.

380. INVESTMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2024-25

Committee noted the report on the Council's investments and reviewed the Investment Policy and Strategy 2024-5.

It was RESOLVED that the Investment Policy and Strategy for the period 2024-2025 be recommended to Council for adoption as presented.

381. INSURANCE ADEQUACY REVIEW

Committee received a report on Council's insurance cover and levels. Members requested that when the next Long-Term Agreement is reviewed later in the year that exclusions and excesses are considered in detail.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that Council's arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks be approved and confirmed as adequate for 2024/25.

382. BUSINESS PLAN 2024-2028

Committee noted the report on the Business Plan. The Town Clerk advised that the Business Plan Steering Group would be meeting to progress the draft Business Plan following the Members' workshops and this would be brought to Committee in March.

It was RESOLVED that the Business Plan 2024-28 update report be noted.

383. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.08pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 5: BUDGET MONITORING TO 29 FEBRUARY 2024

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 29 February 2024 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 29 February 2024 (2023 - 2024)

Felixstowe Town Council Summary of Receipts and Payments Summary - All Cost Centres

Cost Centre	Receipts				Payments			
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	% Received	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	% Spent
101 Administration	637,129.00	803,905.31	166,776	126.18%	332,113.00	303,747.57	28,365	91.46%
201 Town Hall	23,500.00	16,541.32	-6,959	70.39%	87,632.00	63,971.32	23,661	73.00%
202 Walton	8,000.00	9,499.41	1,499	118.74%	12,875.00	12,405.21	470	96.35%
203 Broadway House	2,650.00	2,400.08	-250	90.57%	11,192.00	9,338.16	1,854	83.44%
204 Cemetery	82,792.00	75,027.15	-7,765	90.62%	209,982.00	185,638.63	24,343	88.41%
205 Allotment	17,000.00	17,649.30	649	103.82%	40,692.00	34,254.09	6,438	84.18%
206 Parks & Recreation	0.00	2,520.00	2,520	N/A	11,400.00	6,443.03	4,957	56.52%
301 Civic & Community	4,191.00	3,095.50	-1,096	73.86%	33,828.00	28,362.26	5,466	83.84%
302 Grants	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	38,700.00	37,490.00	1,210	96.87%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	6,000.00	5,145.92	-854	85.77%	8,900.00	7,086.65	1,813	79.63%
304 Communication	8,000.00	4,495.00	-3,505	56.19%	21,000.00	15,559.00	5,441	74.09%
305 Community Projects	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	11,000.00	11,000.00	0	100.00%
NET TOTAL	789,262.00	940,278.99	151,016.99	119.13%	819,314.00	715,295.92	104,018.08	87.30%

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In accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, Committee is to receive explanations of Material Variances for expenditure in excess of the estimated budget of 10% or £500, whichever is less. As the Council's budgets are not produced on a phased basis, the expectation is, being 11 months in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 91.7%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500 or 10% or over this level (i.e. 100.83%). At Ordinary Council this month, we provided forecasted outturns of where we would expect to be at year-end, Total expenditure for the first eleven months stood at 85.13%. Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are as follows:

Cost Centre 101 - Administration
4400 Stationery (146%) Attributed to sharp increase in paper cost Recommendation: Look at potential alternative office suppliers
4462 Internal Audit (102%) Cost slightly higher than previous years and what was anticipated Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25

4464 Insurance (104%)

Full year payment up front - overspend due to parks

Recommendation: No Action

4490 Professional Fees (106%)

Slight overspend due to Town Hall Ceiling Professional Repair Evaluation

Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25

Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall

1000 Hirings (70%)

Lack of interest, potentially derived from “hotspot”/meeting area competition on high street, also partially due to ceiling damage (£556 still expected, all of which issued in March 2024)

Recommendation: No action.

1001 Weddings (82%)

A large amount of weddings this year were held in the more cost-effective Clerk’s Office. Amount of weddings comparable to previous years.

Recommendation: No action.

1030 Leases, Rents & Licenses (51%)

Awaiting payment from East Suffolk Council Hot Desk, £3250.

Recommendation: No action.

4120 Gas (139%)

Consumption is comparable to previous years, with notably increased usage in Winter months

Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25

Cost Centre 202 – Walton Community Hall

4111 Rates (105%)

Rates increased more than predicted

Recommendation: No action.

4116 Water & Sewerage (130%)

Consumption increase due to increase in regular hirers

Recommendation: No action.

4123 Electricity (116%)

Energy prices lower than previous years, consumption increase due to increase in regular hirers

Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25

Cost Centre 203 – Broadway House

4172 Repairs & Maintenance (128%)

Repeated callouts due to failing door mechanism

Recommendation: No action.

Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery

<p>1120 Interment Fees (82%) Invoices awaiting payment total £ (%). Decreased demand in 2023/24 - likely coincidental Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>1130 Memorials (79%) Invoices awaiting payment / input total £ (%). Some invoices already paid - not banked at time of writing Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>4014 Employer Pension Contributions (112%) Staffing/pension scheme change Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>4032 Water & Sewerage (167%) Increased usage, ongoing parks maintenance and saplings Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25 and consider budget accordingly</p>
<p>4124 Electricity (128%) Increased charge, consumption comparable to previous year Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25 and consider budget accordingly</p>
<p>4320 Vehicles/Tool Hire (137%) More skip exchanges than expected, still getting the best possible rate. Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25 and consider budget accordingly.</p>
<p>Cost Centre 301 – Civic & Community</p>
<p>1800 Agency Income (50%) Still awaiting outstanding CCTV Contribution Invoice from East Suffolk Council Recommendation: Complete for 2022/23. No further action</p>
<p>Cost Centre 303 - Felixstowe in Flower</p>
<p>1811 Donations & Sponsorship (86%) Additional £265 received in March, not reflected in this figure - still awaiting outstanding invoice from one sponsor totalling £566. Recommendation: Monitor throughout 2024/25</p>
<p>Cost Centre 304 – Communication</p>
<p>1812 Donations & Sponsorship (57%) Additional £312 received in March, not reflected in this figure - still awaiting outstanding invoices totalling Recommendation: No action.</p>

Committee is requested to consider the budget monitoring report to 29 February 2024 and decide on any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2024-28

Following the Member and staff workshops, the Business Plan Steering Group met to review progress with the Council's Business Plan for 2024-28. A draft Business Plan was circulated to all Councillors for feedback prior to this meeting and Members are asked to consider any final changes before it is published.

Subject to approval by Committee, the draft Business Plan will be out for public consultation from 22nd March – 26th April with feedback invited via a Survey Monkey survey. The consultation has been launched in Council's Spring Magazine and will be promoted via the Council's social media channels. Local community groups will be emailed directly for their feedback.

After the consultation period the Business Plan Steering Group will meet again at the beginning of May to review the responses. Any changes (or none) to the Business Plan draft based on the consultation responses will be qualified with the results shared alongside an updated draft in advance of Annual Council.

The aim is to have the Business Plan published for approval at the Annual Council meeting on 15th May.

Committee is to consider the draft Business Plan for the Municipal years 2024-28 and the process for formal adoption by Council.

AGENDA ITEM 7: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The CIL Working Group has been collaborating with East Suffolk Council on upgrading Felixstowe's play areas. Following a successful community consultation, a timeline has been established for refurbishments.

The Felixstowe Play Area Community Consultation Survey, promoted by East Suffolk Council and Council is now closed but received 240 respondents, all comments received were positive.

There is now a timeline sketched out for improvements to the play areas in Felixstowe which currently is looking as follows:

- 2024/25: Walton Rec.
- 2024/25: Seaton Park
- 2025/26: Cavendish Park
- 2026/27: Martello Park
- 2027/28: Eastward Ho (subject to nearby development)

Funding for this project is anticipated to be met via ESC capital funding, S106 funds, and application to CIL funding from East Suffolk Council, and – subject to Council approval - Felixstowe Town Council CIL funding towards the Walton Rec and Seaton

Park play areas, which would enable those projects to commence in the new financial year. The contribution being sought would be £50,000 each to those two parks, a total of £100,000, from the CIL Earmarked Reserves.

The timeline for the first two park refurbishments are as follows:

Saturday 13 April 2024: a Community Day/Market Place is planned for the morning (10am – 1pm) at Felixstowe Leisure Centre. As there is such a wide range of play equipment available, outside companies will be invited to attend and show the different types available. This event will be publicised, and local children and parents will be invited to attend and provide some input into the type of play equipment they would like to see.

Monday 15 April to 13 May: This 4 week period will be for companies to quote and provide their designs. Monday 15 April request for Quotation issued, Monday 6 May Clarifications closure deadline, Monday 13 May closing date for invitation to bid.

The following week will be for internal valuation by East Suffolk. Pre-qualification checks will be made on the companies. Designs will go out to the public and schools to decide on their favourite designs and they will be asked the reasons why they chose that design.

22 May to 12 June: The chosen design will go out to tender and it is hoped that by 22 June East Suffolk Council will be in a position to award the contract.

A decision will need to be made as to whether they start building soon after this date or whether they wait until after the School Summer holidays. There is not much equipment at Walton Rec so that could be started earlier. Seaton Park has some access issues which will need to be assessed, and also how it may affect football.

The positioning of the play area at Walton is planned to be changed. It is suggested that the Toddler area is moved nearest to the houses, then the Junior area beside, then the basketball court then the youth area for older children. Seaton Road is also a large area and so it is also planned to do areas for all three age categories there also.

The aim is to commence construction after the tendering process, with a focus on ensuring accessibility and offering diverse equipment options at each site.

Council's contribution will be able to ensure that both play areas are built to a high standard. Similar to Gosford Way Park and Allenby Park Matta is preferred as a base to the play areas as this makes the play areas far more accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Committee is to consider the CIL Working Group's recommendation, in principle, to provide £100,000 CIL funding towards the refurbishment of Walton Recreation Ground and Seaton Park play areas, and make any recommendations to Council.

AGENDA ITEM 8: TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024/25

Terms of Reference for Council and its committees are reviewed at least once annually and are due for review by this Committee prior to adoption by Annual Council in May.

Terms of Reference for the Municipal Year 2024/25 is attached at **Appendix D** for review.

Committee is requested to review and recommend to Annual Council, Terms of Reference for 2024/25.

AGENDA ITEM 9: STANDING ORDERS 2024/25

Council's Standing Orders are reviewed at least once annually and approved for adoption by Annual Council each year.

Draft Standing Orders for 2024/25 are attached at **Appendix E** for review.

Committee is requested to review and recommend to Annual Council, Standing Orders for 2024/25.

AGENDA ITEM 10: FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024/25

Council's Financial Regulations are reviewed at least once annually and approved for adoption by Annual Council each year.

Draft Financial Regulations for 2024/25 are attached at **Appendix F** for onward referral to Annual Council.

In line with item 6.8 the approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years, this was agreed by resolution at Annual Council 2023 (*Minute #12 2023/24 refers*).

Committee is requested to review and recommend to Annual Council, Financial Regulations for 2024/25; and to recommend approval of the continued use of BACS to make payments.

AGENDA ITEM 11: RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

Council is required to review its Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register on an annual basis. The Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register is shown at **Appendix G** for review.

Councils are also required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. Council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the annual return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken. The Clerk will bring a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to Committee in May for a recommendation to Council in June.

Committee is requested to review the updated Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register and recommend to Council for adoption.

AGENDA ITEM 12: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Council is to review its Complaints Procedure annually. The current procedure provided at **Appendix H** is presented for review and onward recommendation to Council with a tracked minor amendment due to the Code of Conduct.

Committee is requested to review the Complaints Procedure and recommend to Council for adoption.

AGENDA ITEM 13: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SCHEME

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is the duty of every public authority to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. Local authorities must produce and publish the method by which specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified by members of the public.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provides a model publication scheme (version 1.2, 2015 is the current version), which the Council adopted in 2016 alongside an updated schedule of information available from Felixstowe Town Council within the scheme. Authorities adopting the ICO must do so without changes, unless amended by the ICO.

The model scheme and a schedule of information available is provided at **Appendix I**.

Committee is requested to review the model publication scheme and recommend to Council for approval without change for 2024/25.
