

Telephone: 01394 282086  
Fax: 01394 285920  
email: [enquiries@felixstowe.gov.uk](mailto: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 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 25 October 2023** 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](mailto: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**  
**20 October 2023**

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 & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 12 July 2023 as a true record. **(Pages 3-6)**
- 5. Budget Monitoring to 30 September 2023**  
To receive budget monitoring report to 30 September 2023 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 7-10 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Quarterly Bank Reconciliations**  
To note that Cllr D Rowe has confirmed the reconciliations between the bank statements and accounts statements for the period 1 April–30 September 2023.
- 7. Annual Governance & Accountability Return**  
To receive the External Auditor's Report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the Financial Year 2022/23. **(Page 11 & Appendix B)**
- 8. IT Equipment Update**  
To receive an update on the purchase of IT equipment for Members and staff **(Page 12)**
- 9. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Report**  
To receive an update on CIL and the CIL Annual Report for 2023/24. **(Pages 12 & Appendix C)**
- 10. Business Plan 2024-2028**  
To receive an update on the Business Plan process. **(Page 13 & Appendix D)**
- 11. Notice of Election for Felixstowe South Ward**  
To note the Notice of Election for one Town Councillor to the Felixstowe South Ward was published on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The Election will take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.
- 12. Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy**  
To consider a revised draft Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy and make any necessary recommendations to Council. **(Page 14 & Appendix E)**
- 13. Closure**  
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 7.30pm.



#### **108. BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2023**

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 30 June 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 30 June 2023 be noted.**

#### **109. COUNCIL INVESTMENTS**

Committee noted the report on Council investments and discussed the reinvestment of £500,000 in a 1-year bond with the Close Brothers Group at a return of 4.8% interest.

In response to a query on whether the interest received is returned into General or Earmarked Reserves, the Clerk confirmed that interest received would be accounted for as income on the revenue budget and, depending on the final year outturn, would affect the General Reserve.

Members were supportive of renewing a 1-year bond with the Close Brothers.

**It was RESOLVED that £500,000 be reinvested in a 1-year bond with the Close Brothers Group.**

#### **110. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES POLICY 2023–27**

Members noted the report and debated the possibility of introducing a Parish Basic Allowance for Members during the 2023-27 Council term.

It was noted that, should the Council propose to pay the Parish Basic Allowance, in setting the level of that allowance, it must have regard to the recommendations which have been made in respect of it by the district council's independent remuneration panel.

Members debated the merits and issues of introducing a Parish Basic Allowance for Town Councillors. Members were keen to ensure that people were not put off from joining the Council if they felt that it would leave them out of pocket.

It was agreed that the Expenses Policy should be reviewed to cover additional costs that may be incurred in relation to the role of Councillor.

In relation to the potential introduction of a Parish Basic Allowance, Members agreed that in the first instance the district council's independent review panel should be asked to provide a district-wide recommended figure for town and parish councils, based on its own basic allowance, when it next convenes to review its own arrangements.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the Clerk would draft a broader expenses policy, to defray a range of potential out-of-pocket costs that may be incurred as a result of being a Town Councillor, for Committee to review; and,**
- ii. East Suffolk Council's Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to consider a district-wide recommended figure for town and parish councils, based on its own basic allowance, when it next convenes to review its own arrangements.**

## **111. IT EQUIPMENT**

Committee considered the provision of IT equipment for Councillors.

It was noted that under its Terms of Reference, Committee had delegated authority to spend against the Council's IT Replacement Fund Earmarked Reserve, which currently stood at £25,402.62.

It was agreed that the Clerk should offer all Councillors the provision of a tablet, Chromebook or laptop for use during their career with the Council, to be used in accordance with the Council's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy 2021-25, and be delegated the authority to order the equipment.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. Members be offered the provision of the provision of a tablet, Chromebook or laptop for use during their career with the Council, to be used in accordance with the Council's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy 2021-25; and,**
- ii. authority be delegated to the Clerk to purchase the necessary equipment and software licences from the IT Replacement Fund Earmarked Reserve and report back to the next Committee meeting.**

## **112. COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES**

Members considered the possibility of bringing forward meeting start times by half an hour, from 7.30pm to 7pm for all Council and Committee meetings, aside from Planning & Environment and Personnel Committee meetings.

As there was no consensus amongst the Members at the meeting, Members felt that it would not be appropriate to make a clear recommendation to Council at this stage.

It was agreed instead that the Clerk should survey all Councillors for their views on the matter and, if there was a clear preference to change the meeting times, this should be reported to Council.

**It was RESOLVED that the Clerk survey all Councillors for their views on the matter and, if there was a clear preference to change the meeting times, this should be reported to Council.**

### **113. BUSINESS PLAN 2024-2028**

Committee considered the process by which the Council's next Business Plan for the period 2024-28 could be delivered.

The timescale as indicated on the agenda was reviewed and it was considered that it would be too ambitious to put a draft Business Plan to Council in March if there were to be six-week public consultation commencing in January. The Clerk advised that it would potentially be able to go to this Committee at the end of March, for onward referral to Annual Council in May.

Members debated the prospect of using a professional facilitator to support the Council in developing the Business Plan. The Clerk had been in contact with a local facilitator who would be able to support the Council in this process. The indicative cost for preparing and supporting two workshops and the production of a follow-up report would be under £900 which could be met from the Professional Fees budget.

Following a vote it was agreed that an external facilitator be engaged to support Member and staff workshops as part of the Business Plan development and that a Steering Group be set up to make any necessary arrangements to engage a professional facilitator, and oversee the process of developing the Business Plan 2024-28.

**It was RESOLVED that;**

- i. that an external facilitator be engaged to support Member and staff workshops as part of the Business Plan development; and,**
- ii. a Business Plan Steering Group, comprising Cllrs S Bennett, M Deacon, M James and D Rowe be set up to make any necessary arrangements to engage a professional facilitator and oversee the process of developing the Business Plan 2024-28.**

### **114. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 9.04pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 25 October 2023 at 7.30pm.

## AGENDA ITEM 5: BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 30 September 2023 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 30 September 2022 (2022 - 2023)

### **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	616,030.00	622,849.00	6,819	101.11%	312,678.00	153,435.04	159,243	49.07%
201 Town Hall	22,740.00	17,584.89	-5,155	77.33%	78,997.00	41,545.54	37,451	52.59%
202 Walton	7,500.00	4,462.91	-3,037	59.51%	10,567.00	6,695.12	3,872	63.36%
203 Broadway House	2,270.00	2,392.56	123	105.40%	8,869.00	4,938.21	3,931	55.68%
204 Cemetery	86,481.65	38,061.59	-48,420	44.01%	195,897.00	90,692.87	105,204	46.30%
205 Allotment	16,750.00	808.41	-15,942	4.83%	37,754.00	18,413.72	19,340	48.77%
206 Parks & Recreation	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	14,780.00	261.37	14,519	1.77%
301 Civic & Community	3,992.00	0.00	-3,992	0.00%	32,430.00	22,394.08	10,036	69.05%
302 Grants	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	86,200.00	20,270.00	65,930	23.52%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	8,250.00	3,437.57	-4,812	41.67%	5,900.00	4,064.36	1,836	68.89%
304 Communication	10,000.00	3,986.44	-6,014	39.86%	13,200.00	9,806.00	3,394	74.29%
305 Community Projects	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	16,000.00	13,699.25	2,301	85.62%
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>774,013.65</b>	<b>693,583.37</b>	<b>-80,430.28</b>	<b>89.61%</b>	<b>813,272.00</b>	<b>386,215.56</b>	<b>427,056.44</b>	<b>47.49%</b>

Created by  Scribe

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 six months in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 50%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500 or 10% or over this level (i.e. 55%). Total expenditure for the first six months stood at 47.5%. Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are as follows:

<b>Cost Centre 101 - Administration</b>
<p><b>4400 Stationery (70%)</b> Boswell orders, printer paper increase in price <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4460 Subscriptions (100%)</b> All annual subscriptions for 2023/24 now paid. <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4461 External Audit (100%)</b> External Audit now paid. <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>

**4464 Insurance (99%)**

Full year payment up front.

**Recommendation: No action.****4464 IT Maintenance & Software (65%)****Recommendation: No action.****Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall****4110 Rates (62%)**

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

**Recommendation: No action.****4180 Licences (100%)**

Paid in full for 2022-23

**Recommendation: No action.****4120 Gas (66%)**

Paid in full for 2022-23

**Recommendation: No action.****4490 Professional Fees (70%)**

East Suffolk Council planning application

**Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.****4260 Equipment Purchases (64%)**

Safety equipment &amp; additional clothing for new member of staff

**Recommendation : Continue to monitor on a monthly basis****4490 Repairs & Maintenance (67%)**

Boiler repair and Stair-Riser/ Lift Service paid upfront

**Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.****Cost Centre 202 – Walton Community Hall****4110 Rates (60%)**

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

**Recommendation: No further action****4110 Water & Sewerage (68%)**

Increase in hirers use more water

**Recommendation: No further action****4123 Electricity (61%)**

Increase in hirers use more energy

**Recommendation: Look into increasing budget appropriately 2023/24****Cost Centre 203 – Broadway House**



**1031 Leases, Rents & Licenses (0%)**

Annual invoice is outstanding, awaiting payment

**Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoice**

**Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery****1032 Mobile Phone Mast (0%)**

Annual invoice is outstanding, awaiting payment

**Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoice**

**1120 Purchase of Graves (37%)**

Three outstanding invoices totalling £6242 awaiting payment (54%).

**Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoices**

**4032 Water & Sewerage (126%)**

Overspend caused by increased water usage due to FIF basket watering

**Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis**

**4112 Rates (64%)**

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

**Recommendation: No further action**

**4330 Equipment Purchases (99%)**

Safety equipment purchased for new member of staff

**Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis**

**4300 Vehicle Running Costs (66%)**

Front loaded costs such as MOT, Truck Tax paid, also work to trailer and tractor.

**Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis**

**Cost Centre 205 – Allotments****1080 Allotment Rents (5%)**

Majority of Allotment rents are billed annually end of September

**Recommendation: No further action.**

**Cost Centre 206 – Parks & Recreation****4175 Repairs & Maintenance (91%)**

East Suffolk Services/Norse maintenance work

**Recommendation: No further action.**

**4615 Street Furniture (72%)**

Defib Cabinets

**Recommendation: No further action.**

<b>Cost Centre 301 – Civic &amp; Community</b>
<p><b>4471 Advertising &amp; Promotion (88%)</b>  Keep Britain Tidy  <b>Recommendation: Complete for 2023/24. No further action</b></p>
<p><b>1800 Agency Income (0%)</b>  CCTV invoice (6 months) settled, recorded on Scribe in October so not reflected  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4511 Town Twinning (84%)</b>  Travel and expenses for Wesel visit  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4645 Christmas Lights (100%)</b>  Paid in full June 2022.  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4512 Engraving/Sign Writing (85%)</b>  Paid in full for 2023-24  <b>Recommendation: No further action.</b></p>
<b>Cost Centre 302 – Grants</b>
<p><b>4620 Annual Grants (97.0%)</b>  All annual grants processed &amp; paid.  <b>Recommendation: No further action.</b></p>
<b>Cost Centre 303 – Felixstowe in Flower</b>
<p><b>1811 Donations &amp; Sponsorship (43%)</b>  £1,785 + £2,000 main sponsorship awaiting payment (126%)  <b>Recommendation: Chase up outstanding invoices</b></p>
<p><b>4290 Flowers &amp; Containers (85%)</b>  Flowers &amp; containers purchased for 2023/24  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<b>Cost Centre 304 – Communication</b>
<p><b>1812 Donations &amp; Sponsorship (38%)</b>  Many magazine invoices are outstanding and awaiting payment. £4,160 (90%)  <b>Recommendation: Revise budget expectations for 2022/23</b></p>

**Committee is requested to consider the budget monitoring report to 30 September 2023 and decide on any action it deems necessary.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23**

Council is advised that Notice has been given that the external audit of the accounts of Felixstowe Town Council for the Financial Year 2022/23 was completed on 1 September 2023. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), including the Audit Certificate is presented at **Appendix B**.

The Council's External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, 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 Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234) and the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/404) the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard from 13 September 2023 and is also available to view on the Town Council website to advise local electors that the accounts and requisite information as defined by Section 13(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 are available for inspection.

Additionally, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Financial Year 2022/23 will remain available online on the Council's website, as have the documents for the previous six years.

### **Committee is requested to:**

- i. Approve and Accept the Annual Governance and Accountability Return including Audit Certificate as presented; and,**
- ii. Note that, in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 as defined by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 & the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard from 13 September 2023 and is available to view on the finance page of the Town Council Website.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 8: IT EQUIPMENT UPDATE**

Further to the agreement by Committee at the last meeting to purchase IT equipment for Councillors, the following have been purchased via delegated authority to the Clerk (*Minute #111 of 2023/24 refers*):

3 x Dell Latitude 5340 XCTO Laptops for Councillors to use during their career with the Council in accordance with the Council's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy 2021-25.

1 x Dell Latitude 5340 XCTO Laptop and docking station for a staff member.

The cost of these items is £ £3,488.38+VAT.

3 x Microsoft Surface Go tablets are also being purchased for Councillors to use as above @ £499+VAT each.

**Committee is requested note the purchase of IT equipment at a total cost of £4,985+VAT to be taken from the IT Replacement Fund Earmarked Reserve.**

---

## **AGENDA ITEM 9: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

An annual CIL report must be published by the Town Council by 31 December of the following reported year giving details on the total CIL received, how it was spent and unspent funds.

Felixstowe Town Council received two CIL payments in the year 2022/23 (£3,676.09 in April 2022 and £112,835.27 in October 2022) which are reflected in the Town Council's CIL annual report for the year 2022/23 at **Appendix C**.

This report will be published on the Town Council website, a summary reported in the magazine and put on the noticeboard. The CIL annual report will also be sent to East Suffolk Council by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 deadline.

**Committee is requested to consider the report on the Community Infrastructure Levy and approve the CIL Annual Report for 2022/23.**

---

## **AGENDA ITEM 10: BUSINESS PLAN 2024–28**

As directed at the previous Finance & Governance Committee meeting, the Business Plan Steering Group met with an external professional facilitator to scope the process of developing the Business Plan 2024-28.

As circulated to all Councillors and Staff there will be two workshops taking place to help develop the Council's next 4-year Business Plan, these will be held at Broadway House as follows:

- Tuesday 7th November 7-9pm
- Wednesday 15th November 7-9pm

Questions for consideration at these sessions can be found at **Appendix D**.

### **Session 1 Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 7-9pm**

#### **Planned outcomes:**

By the end of this 1<sup>st</sup> session, Members and staff will have:

- Agreed how they are going to work together during the two sessions.
- Explored the Town Council's vision for the next four years.
- Shared ideas for consideration.
- Involved all Members and staff in determining future strategic direction .

#### **Programme**

Welcome and introductions.

Agreeing ground rules for session.

Scene setting.

Discussed the Town Council's vision for the next four years.

Sharing of ideas linked to consultation questions.

Sort into key areas such as:

- Environment
- Community
- Public spaces and services
- Promoting Felixstowe
- Tourism and business
- Other

Agreed next steps and focus for session 2

### **Session 2 Wednesday 15th November 7-9pm**

#### **Planned outcomes**

By the end of this 2<sup>nd</sup> session Members and staff will have:

- Assessed all ideas against their value to/impact on Felixstowe and their feasibility within available resources.
- Decided on quick wins, high impact initiatives, and those suggestions not to be taken forward.

- Arrived at decisions about what will go into a business plan (2024-2028) and any other related actions.

### **Programme**

Reminded about ground rules for working together.

Where we got to in Session 1 – a brief summary.

Assess all ideas on specific themes against an Impact (value to the Felixstowe community) and Feasibility grid.

Arrived at consensus on quick wins, high impact initiatives, and those suggestions not to be taken forward.

Agreeing next steps – consultation, formulating a business plan, communication with all stakeholders.

**Committee is requested to note the update and any other report from the Business Plan Steering Group on the planned workshops and process of developing the Town Council’s Business Plan for 2024-28.**

---

## **AGENDA ITEM 12: MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES** **POLICY**

At the previous meeting it was agreed that the Expenses Policy should be reviewed to cover additional costs that may be incurred in relation to the role of Councillor (*Minute #110 of 2023/24 refers*).

Following research into other local government authorities’ arrangements, the Town Clerk has drafted a revised Members’ Allowances & Expenses Policy for Committee’s consideration and potential onward referral to Council at **Appendix E**.

**Committee is requested to consider the draft revised Members’ Allowances & Expenses Policy at Appendix E and make any recommendations to Council it deems necessary.**

---