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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 Bird  
Cllr W Underwood

Cllr S Bennett  
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 15 January 2025** 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**  
**10 January 2025**

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 4 December 2025 as a true record. **(Pages 3-5)**
- 5. Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2024**  
To receive budget monitoring report to 31 December 2024 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 6-9 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Investment Policy and Strategy**  
To review the Investment Policy & Strategy and make any recommendations to Council. **(Pages 10-13 & Appendix B)**
- 7. Insurance Adequacy Review**  
To review the adequacy of the Council's insurance provision and make any recommendations to Council. **(Page 14)**
- 8. Local Council Award Scheme**  
To consider the Council's re-accreditation in the Local Council Award Scheme. **(Pages 15-16)**
- 9. Exclusion of Press and Public**  
In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1 (2), the press and public are recommended to be excluded during consideration of the following item due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
- 10. County Court Judgment and Debt Recovery**  
To consider the next steps in recovering an outstanding debt. **(Confidential Report)**
- 11. Closure**  
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 7.30pm.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at  
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllr D Rowe (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr D Aitchison  
Cllr S Bird  
Cllr S Bennett  
Cllr M Sharman  
Cllr S Wiles  
Cllr W Underwood

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One member of the public (*via Zoom*)

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr M Deacon, Vice-Chairman Cllr D Rowe was the chair.

### **245. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There was none.

### **246. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr M Deacon** and **Cllr M James**.

### **247. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Interests, to which no matters on the agenda were directly related, were noted:

<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr S Bennett Cllr S Bird Cllr S Wiles	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as Members of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Bennett	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as a Member of East Suffolk Council)

**Cllr D Rowe declared an Other Registerable Interest in the CIL application from Level Two (as a Director of Level Two). As the matter for consideration directly related to his Other Registerable Interest, Cllr Rowe advised that he would leave the meeting prior to any debate and decision on this item.**

Members were advised that, should any other matters arise in the meeting that directly relate to any of their interests, they should make appropriate declarations at that time.

**248. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2024 be signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.**

**249. BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024**

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024, , which highlighted variances exceeding 10% or £500 against budget estimates.

Attention was drawn toward the reduction in wedding hire income for the current year as well as several invoices issued which were yet to be settled, notably the lease for the Mobile Phone Mast and Magazine Sponsorship invoices. During the report, Committee was noted of a typographical error in Budget Codes 1120 & 1130, and has been corrected:

**1120 Purchase of Graves (64%)**

Three outstanding invoices totalling £2632 awaiting payment (70%).

***Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoices***

**1130 Memorials (31%)**

Outstanding invoices totalling £2697 awaiting payment (43%).

***Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoices***

**RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 30 November 2024 be noted.**

**250. BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025/26 (DRAFT)**

Committee considered the papers showing a first draft full budget, including suggested Earmarked Reserve transfers 2025/26. Members considered comparisons against the current year budget, actual expenditure, and projected outturn for the full year 2024/25.

Members noted that relevant sections of the budget had been considered and recommended by the Council's Civic & Community, Assets & Services and Personnel committees. Notably, the Civic & Community Committee had recommended an increase of £10,000 for Occasional Grants 2025/26.

The Town Clerk highlighted the pressure on the Council's General Reserves due to inflationary factors and increased service provision. The draft budget illustrated how a 0% change to Council Tax would require a contribution from the General Fund of £36,792 (excluding any projected Earmarked Reserve expenditure) to meet the estimated net expenditure requirements for the

forthcoming year. To negate this deficit in its entirety, an increase of 5.2% to the Town Council's element of the Council Tax charge would be required.

Noting CPI inflation (12 months to October 2024) Committee considered the potential impact of a 3.2% increase in Council Tax, which would generate a precept of £717,436. This would require reducing budgeted expenditure by £14,579 or utilising reserves to balance the budget.

Committee discussed potential options to address the revenue budget deficit, recommending the following adjustments:

- Twinning budget be set at £3,500, which was closer to pre-anniversary levels (saving £1,500).
- Using £10,000 from the Community Support Earmarked Reserve to fund the recommended increase in the Occasional Grants budget, subject to review in the following year (saving £10,000).

Noting that these adjustments would offset the majority of the deficit, leaving a net contribution required from the General Fund of £3,079 to balance the budget.

Additionally, the 'Planting' budget was deemed unnecessary as a separate item and should be merged with the Parks Repair & Maintenance budget for clarity and efficiency.

**It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that, subject to any further adjustments to the budget deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk, which would not cause the total requirement to change, the draft budget 2025/26 proposals with a 3.2% increase (£77.19 per annum for a Band D property) be approved.**

## **251. CIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

Committee received an update report from the CIL Working Group.

Committee was pleased to note that the pump track concept was progressing with support from Felixstowe School. Committee was informed the Cemetery Extension and Enhancement Project will be further discussed at the January CIL Working Group meeting and referred to the Assets & Services Committee, just as the Environmental Neighbourhood Plan has been referred to Planning & Environment Committee for their consideration.

**It was RESOLVED that the CIL Working Group Update has been noted**

## **252. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 7.30pm.

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## AGENDA ITEM 5: BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 31 December 2024 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 31 December 2024 (2024 - 2025)

### 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	700,727.00	701,578.34	851	100.12%	348,113.00	279,181.46	68,932	80.20%
201 Town Hall	21,400.00	11,107.02	-10,293	51.90%	87,417.00	56,256.38	31,161	64.35%
202 Walton	8,000.00	11,107.12	3,107	138.84%	14,007.00	10,763.69	3,243	76.85%
203 Broadway House	2,650.00	2,750.00	100	103.77%	10,302.00	7,733.55	2,568	75.07%
204 Cemetery	76,565.00	52,070.54	-24,494	68.01%	177,917.00	120,986.28	56,931	68.00%
205 Allotment	17,850.00	16,965.30	-885	95.04%	39,775.00	25,919.62	13,855	65.17%
206 Parks & Recreation	0.00	4,755.00	4,755	N/A	40,075.00	24,167.17	15,908	60.30%
301 Civic & Community	4,191.00	0.00	-4,191	0.00%	38,578.00	25,416.00	13,162	65.88%
302 Grants	0.00	195.00	195	N/A	44,950.00	38,202.45	6,748	84.99%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	6,000.00	3,654.22	-2,346	60.90%	9,250.00	7,399.11	1,851	79.99%
304 Communication	6,000.00	2,860.00	-3,140	47.67%	22,000.00	14,709.00	7,291	66.86%
305 Community Projects	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	11,000.00	11,000.00	1,000	100.00%
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>843,383.00</b>	<b>807,042.54</b>	<b>-36,340.46</b>	<b>95.69%</b>	<b>843,384.00</b>	<b>621,734.71</b>	<b>221,649.29</b>	<b>73.72%</b>

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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 nine months in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 75%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500 or 10% or over this level (i.e. 82.5%). Total expenditure for the first nine months stood at 73.72%. Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are as follows:

<b>Cost Centre 101 - Administration</b>
<b>4001 Employee National Insurance (100%)</b> National insurance rise <b>Recommendation: No action.</b>
<b>4400 Stationery (109%)</b> Paper price increase <b>Recommendation: No action.</b>
<b>4425 Postage (95%)</b> Franking machine lease and top-ups <b>Recommendation: No action.</b>
<b>4460 Subscriptions (96%)</b> All annual subscriptions paid <b>Recommendation: No action.</b>
<b>4461 External Audit (100%)</b> External audit paid <b>Recommendation: No action.</b>

<p><b>4462 Internal Audit (99%)</b> Internal audit paid <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4464 Insurance (100%)</b> Full year payment up front <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall</b></p>
<p><b>1001 Weddings (57%)</b> Fewer weddings than budgeted, possible drought after post-COVID spike, more in Clerk's office than Chamber, increase in weddings booked for next year. <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>1030 Leases, Rents &amp; Licenses (0%)</b> Awaiting correspondence from East Suffolk Council for lease invoices <b>Recommendation: Pursue payment on regular basis</b></p>
<p><b>4110 Rates (86%)</b> Rates are paid over 10 months only. <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4170 Repairs &amp; Maintenance (103%)</b> Expected to be over budget due to emergency lights failing reported to A&amp;S <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4180 Licences (100%)</b> Paid in full for the year <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>4260 Equipment Purchases (176%)</b> New card machine and microphone stand to replace broken ones, new shelving units for better organisation of on-site equipment <b>Recommendation : Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4466 Catering Sundries (110%)</b> Banqueting roll, events <b>Recommendation: No action.</b></p>
<p><b>Cost Centre 202 – Walton Community Hall</b></p>
<p><b>4110 Rates (98%)</b> Rates are paid over 10 months only. <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4110 Water &amp; Sewerage (98%)</b> Increase in hirers use more water <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4171 Repairs &amp; Maintenance (105%)</b> Roof repair costs, which will be offset by invoice still outstanding - not expected to remain overspent by year-end <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery</b></p>

<p><b>1100 Interment Fees (60%)</b>  £2228 outstanding (68%) awaiting payment  <b>Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoices</b></p>
<p><b>1120 Purchase of Graves (68%)</b>  £2188 outstanding (80%) awaiting payment  <b>Recommendation: Chase outstanding invoices</b></p>
<p><b>1130 Memorials (41%)</b>  £1621 outstanding (50%) awaiting payment  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4112 Rates (98%)</b>  Rates are paid over 10 Months only  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4117 Water &amp; Sewerage (204%)</b>  Increased water usage due to FIF watering &amp; maintenance  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4124 Electricity (105%)</b>  Increased usage due to electric van  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4173 Repairs &amp; Maintenance (105%)</b>  Unforeseen toilet repair, other misc expenditure, barriers, etc.  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4262 Equipment Purchases (106%)</b>  New safety and PPE equipment for new member of staff  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p><b>4300 Vehicle Running Costs (123%)</b>  Unforeseen expenditure, puncture repair, alternator, replacements, etc.  <b>Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cost Centre 206 – Parks &amp; Recreation</b></p>
<p><b>4615 Street Furniture (137%)</b>  Awaiting refund from East Suffolk Council – not expecting to be overbudget by year-end  <b>Recommendation: No further action.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cost Centre 301 – Civic &amp; Community</b></p>
<p><b>4471 Advertising &amp; Promotion (88%)</b>  Keep Britain Tidy  <b>Recommendation: Complete for 2023/24. No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4511 Town Twinning (98%)</b>  No further expenditure expected for the year  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>
<p><b>4645 Christmas Lights (100%)</b>  Paid in full June 2024.  <b>Recommendation: No further action</b></p>



**4650 Seasonal Events (100%)**

Paid ice rink in full

**Recommendation: No further action****Cost Centre 302 – Grants****4620 Annual Grants (100%)**

All annual grants processed &amp; paid.

**Recommendation: No further action.****Cost Centre 303 – Felixstowe in Flower****1811 Donations & Sponsorship (51%)**

Fewer sponsorships than expected, ongoing payment dispute with major sponsor

**Recommendation: Chase up outstanding invoices****4290 Flowers & Containers (87%)**

Flowers &amp; containers purchased for 2024/25

**Recommendation: No further action****Cost Centre 304 – Communication****1812 Donations & Sponsorship (50%)**

£1155 invoices outstanding (66%) awaiting payment

**Recommendation: Chase up outstanding invoices****Cost Centre 305 – Community Projects & Partnerships****4625 Harwich Harbour Ferry Services (100%)**

Paid in full at the beginning of the year

**Recommendation: No action****4630 Level 2 (100%)**

Paid in full at the beginning of the year

**Recommendation: No action**

**Committee is requested to consider the budget monitoring report to 31 December 2023 and decide on any action it deems necessary.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: INVESTMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2024-25**

Council is required to review its Investment Policy & Strategy annually. The existing policy reflects the statutory guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition) issued under Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Current Investments:

- Close Brothers Treasury: £500,000 one-year fixed investment at 5.1%, maturing on 22 July 2025.
- Nationwide Building Society: £410,901.01 transferred from the Barclays savings account into a 35-day notice account on 6 September 2022. This account has a variable rate currently returning 3.05%.
- Barclays Business Banking: Operational funds are managed via a Tracker account (receiving the Precept twice annually) and a Current account (receiving income from sales), with an automatic sweep facility maintaining a £50,000 balance in the Current account overnight.

The table below provides the current credit ratings of the institutions currently holding Council funds (a credit ratings guide is on the next page):

Institution	Agency	Long term	Short term
Close Brothers Ltd.	Fitch (at 1 November 2024)	BBB+	F2
	Moody's (at 1 November 2024)	A1	P1
Nationwide	Fitch (at November 2024)	A	F1
	Moody's (at 6 September 2024)	A1	P1
Barclays Bank UK PLC	Fitch (at 4 July 2023)	A+	F1
	Moody's (at 12 December 2024)	A1	P1

Members will note that the Fitch rating for Close Brothers has been downgraded and further details on this can be found at

<https://www.fitchratings.com/research/banks/fitch-places-close-brothers-group-on-rating-watch-negative-01-11-2024>

When the one year investment is due for maturity, a report will be brought to Committee to reconsider this investment.

MOODY'S		STANDARD & POOR'S		Fitch Ratings		Rating description
Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	
Aaa	P-1	AAA	A-1+	AAA	F1+	Prime
Aa1		AA+		AA+		High grade
Aa2		AA		AA		High grade
Aa3		AA-		AA-		
A1	P-2	A+	A-1	A+	F1	Upper medium grade
A2		A		A		
A3		A-	A-2	A-	F2	Lower medium grade
Baa1	BBB+	BBB+				
Baa2	BBB	BBB		BBB		
Baa3	BBB-		A-3		BBB-	
Ba1	Not Prime	BB+	B	BB+	B	Non-investment grade speculative
Ba2		BB		BB		
Ba3		BB-		BB-		
B1		B+		B+		Highly speculative
B2		B		B		
B3		B-		B-		
Caa1		CCC+		C		CCC+
Caa2	CCC	CCC				
Caa3	CCC-	CCC-				
Ca	CC	CC	Extremely speculative			
	C	C	Default imminent			
C	RD	D	DDD	D	In default	
/	SD		DD			
/	D		D			

*In general, a time horizon of one year or under is considered short term, and anything above that is considered long term. In the past institutional investors preferred to consider long-term ratings.*

In accordance with Councils' Climate Emergency Declaration, Members have been regularly reviewing their accounts in line with their environmental and ethical impact. For this reason Nationwide Building Society was chosen, it is currently rated as the second most ethical bank

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/banking/ethical-banking/> and <https://www.statista.com/chart/27580/uks-most-ethical-banks/>.

Though the market is growing in this area, ethical banks tend to be either unrated, or below the acceptable risk level. For example, Charity Bank and the Ecology Building Society are all unrated, and Triodos Bank only holds a Fitch rating of BBB-. The Co-operative Bank is the only high street bank in the UK with an explicit ethical policy, however they also do not satisfy the credit-rating test (rated B by both Fitch and Moody's). Investment in such banks would contravene statutory guidance as security is Council's primary consideration.

Nationwide mainly funds residential mortgages so it doesn't invest in, or lend to, the fossil fuel industry. It discloses the carbon emissions associated with its mortgage, commercial real estate and registered social landlord lending, and has set science-based targets to reduce all three. However, Nationwide do not offer a current account to Businesses.

The consumer group 'Which' ranks the three top "eco providers" for current accounts based on a £10,000 investment considering how much it contributes in carbon emissions and the top bank is Triodos Bank followed by Co-operative Bank, then Nationwide Building Society. Triodos are currently not offering current accounts. The Cooperative Bank has a Moody rating of Baa3 and Fitch BB. Other banks such as Unity Bank has also been considered. Unity has a Fitch rating of B and is also thought of as an ethical bank as it supports social impact and has demonstrated a commitment to ethical practices.

In order to move Council's current account to a more ethical bank, the Investment Strategy would need to be amended to allow for a lower credit rating.

Comparison of charges can be seen below:

Barclays:

Item	Cost (Annual)
Account Fee	£8.50 per month (£102.00/year)
Cheques	68 @ £1.20 each (£81.60)
Cash Handling	7 transactions totalling £1,735.10 (£12.00)
Sweep Facility	Currently free (£0)
Payroll / Bulk Faster Payments	£10 per month (£120.00/year)
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>£315.60</b>

Unity Bank:

Item	Cost (Annual)
Account Fee	£6 per month (£72.00/year)
Transaction Fees	1,457 @ 15p each (£218.55)
Cheques*	68 @ 30p each (£20.40)
Cash Handling	7 transactions totalling £1,735.10 (£12.00)

Sweep Facility	£6 per month (£72.00/year)
Payroll / Bulk Faster Payments	45p per transaction (£86.40)
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>£481.35</b>

\*Note: Cheques with Unity Bank must be deposited at NatWest (Ipswich) or posted, adding 4-5 days to clearing times. Alternatively, the Council could choose to no longer accept cheques; only BACS, card or cash payments.

Co-operative Bank:

Item	Cost (Annual)
Account Fee	£10 per month (£120.00/year)
Transaction Fees	810 income transactions @ 20p each (£162.00) 647 payment transactions @ 15p each (£258.80)
Payment Transactions	68 @ 75p each (£51.00)
Cheques	7 transactions totalling £1,735.10 (£12.00)
Cash Handling	80p per £100 (£15.20)
Sweep Facility	£30 per quarter (£120.00/year)
Payroll / Bulk Faster Payments	£3 per batch, 14p per transaction (£62.88)
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>£789.88</b>

An updated draft Investment Policy & Strategy is presented at **Appendix B** for consideration.

Committee may wish to review retaining Barclays for the Council's business current account services or transition to an alternative provider, weighing ethical considerations against cost and operational impacts.

**Committee is requested note the downgrade in Fitch's credit rating for Close Brothers Ltd. and await further updates prior to the investment's maturity; and, consider the Investment Policy & Strategy, making recommendations to Council for any action it deems necessary.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 7: INSURANCE ADEQUACY REVIEW**

Council reviews the adequacy of its insurance arrangements on an annual basis.

On 1 April 2022 a new three-year Long-Term Agreement was taken out with Zurich, this comes to an end on 31 March 2025.

The premium for this year 2025/26 has been quoted as being £9,953.65 as part of a new three year LTA, 31.5% / £2,388.04 more than the 2024/25 cost. Quotes will be obtained by two other insurance companies that specialise in local authority insurance and details will be provided in the March Finance and Governance meeting.

The sums insured for contents, all risks and buildings are index linked, and our existing insurers have confirmed that they will be applying 5% index linking to the buildings, contents and all risks sums insured. This is to help protect against 'under insurance' as costs are always rising and it is not possible to always check the sums insured each year to ensure they are correct. In 2023 valuations of all buildings were carried out and submitted to the Insurance Company. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) recommends that valuations are carried out every three years.

All physical assets and equipment are insured, and cover is provided in accordance with Council's Risk Management Policy, to the following levels:

Public Liability (inc. personal accident liability cover for employees, Members and volunteers under the above policy)	<b>£15 Million</b>
Employers Liability	<b>£10 Million</b>
Fidelity Guarantee	<b>£2 Million</b>
Personal Accident (up to age 90)	<b>£50,000/£200 pw</b>
Hirers Liability	<b>£2 Million</b>
Libel and Slander	<b>£500,000</b>
Legal Expenses – enhanced EPL cover	<b>£200,000</b>
Money	<b>£250,000</b>
Officials Indemnity	<b>£15 Million</b>
Key Personnel Cover	<b>£100,000/£500 -£100pw</b>
Business Travel	<b>Included</b>
Motor	<b>Included</b>
Engineering - Inspection & Insurance	<b>Included</b>
Business Interruption	<b>Included</b>

**Committee is requested to confirm the adequacy of its arrangements in respect of all insured risks and make any recommendations to Council.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 8: LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

In 2015, Felixstowe Town Council became the first of 424 parish and town councils in Suffolk to achieve the 'Quality Gold' accreditation, the highest award level in the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS).

This prestigious award recognised the Council for demonstrating best practice in governance, community engagement, and business planning. Felixstowe Town Council was commended for going beyond its statutory obligations, actively seeking opportunities for improvement, and being at the forefront of innovation in the local council sector.

At the time, fewer than 40 of England's 9,000 town and parish councils had achieved this level, placing Felixstowe Town Council in an elite group.

The Local Council Award Scheme celebrates the successes of exemplary local councils and provides a framework for improvement and development. By achieving accreditation, councils demonstrate that they meet high standards in governance, financial management, and community engagement.

The scheme also supports councils at the start of their improvement journeys, offering tools, encouragement, and recognition for their efforts. It fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the sector, driving up standards and enabling councils to better serve their communities.

Further information about the scheme can be found on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) website:

[Local Council Award Scheme Guide to the Scheme](#)

Communication on scheme reaccreditation was delayed during the pandemic and, since this time, NALC has undertaken a comprehensive review of the award scheme, incorporating feedback from focus groups, public consultations, and stakeholder engagement. Key changes include:

- **New Award Levels:** The scheme levels have been renamed to Bronze, Silver, and Gold (formerly Foundation, Quality, and Quality Gold).
- **Civility and Respect Criteria:** From Bronze level onwards, councils must demonstrate a commitment to civility and respect, including:
  - Signing the Civility and Respect Pledge.
  - Adopting a Dignity at Work Policy.
  - Evidencing a culture of civility and respect at Gold level.
- **Strengthened Democratic Mandate:** Councils must actively promote elections and democratic engagement:
  - Bronze level requires promotion of elections and vacancies.
  - Silver level requires a co-option policy.
  - Gold level requires at least two-thirds of councillors to have stood for election.

Additionally, updated criteria and new policy requirements have been introduced to reflect evolving best practices.

Recently, SALC has re-engaged with the Council regarding the revamped award scheme and re-accreditation process. They have recommended that, should Felixstowe Town Council seek to reaccredit, it should aim to submit its application by May 2025, for potential accreditation by August 2025.

**Committee is requested to consider this report on the Local Council Award Scheme; make any recommendations to Council regarding re-accreditation at the Gold level; and, the necessary steps are in place to meet the updated criteria prior to submission.**

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