

**MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M Deacon (Chairman) Cllr M James
D Rowe (Vice-Chairman) Cllr M Sharman
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Wiles
Cllr S Bennett 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*)

300. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There was none.

301. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Aitchison.

302. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
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 Cllr M Deacon	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as a Member of East Suffolk Council)

Members were reminded that should any matters arise during the meeting which relate to these interests, appropriate declarations should be made at that time.

303. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 15 October 2025 be signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.

304. BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 NOVEMBER 2025

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 30 November 2025, which highlighted variances exceeding 10% or £500 against budget estimates.

Attention was directed at increased water prices, with members advised of recent unit charge rises. Committee was also advised that the invoice chasing process has been successful, with only the Magazine Sponsorship cost code appearing below the expected value due to outstanding invoices.

RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 30 November 2025 be noted.

305. BUDGET ESTIMATES 2026/27 (DRAFT)

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

Relevant sections of the budget had previously been considered and recommended by the Council's Civic & Community, Assets & Services, and Personnel committees.

A recommendation for a 5% precept increase, aimed at avoiding significant depletion of the general reserve, was met with resistance from members, who preferred a 3.6% increase in line with inflation figures.

Committee requested the Clerk write to East Suffolk Council to enquire further into the details of the taxbase and suggested establishing a "budget working party" comprising existing members of the Finance & Governance Committee to allow for more detailed groundwork prior to January's budget setting. To help mitigate the impact on the general reserve, it was agreed that the Cemetery Groundskeeper apprenticeship would be postponed until 2027/28.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that, subject to any further adjustments deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk (which would not alter the total requirement), the draft budget 2026/27 proposals with a 3.6% precept increase (£79.97 per annum for a Band D property) be approved.

306. CO-OPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Committee received an overview of the Co-Option policy and procedures. Members raised minor questions, which were addressed. It was noted that the policy complies with NALC guidance and would meet the formal requirement set out by NALC's Local Councils Award Scheme accreditation.

It was RESOLVED that the Finance & Governance committee recommended the adoption of the Co-Option Policy to Council

307. LCAS GOLD AWARD APPLICATION

Further to the previous item, Committee was advised of other requirements to meet Gold Award standards. Committee reflected on the work and effort undertaken to first achieve the LCAS Gold Award in 2015 and were advised that resolution from Council is the final step in the re-application process.

It was RESOLVED that the Finance & Governance Committee recommend to Council that all required documents, information, and conditions are in place to re-apply for the Gold Award.

308. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.01pm. The next meeting noted as scheduled for Wednesday 28 January 2026 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____