

**MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at  
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllr M Deacon (Chair)  
Cllr D Rowe (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr S Bird  
Cllr S Bennett  
Cllr M James  
Cllr M Sharman  
Cllr W Underwood

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

**446. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There was none.

**447. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr D Aitchinson** and **Cllr S Wiles**.

**448. 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 M Deacon	All	Other registerable interests (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Bennett	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of Suffolk County 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.

**449. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 28 January 2026 be signed as a true record.**

**450. BUDGET MONITORING TO 28 FEBRUARY 2026**

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2026. Attention was directed at increased water prices, with Members advised of recent unit charge rises and the high consumption at the allotment sites.

Committee noted that the revised invoice chasing process was working well.

**RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2026 be noted.**

**451. TERMS OF REFERENCE 2026/27**

Committee considered the Terms of Reference for Council and Committee for 2026-27.

**It was RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the period 2026/27 be updated and recommended to Council for adoption as presented.**

**452. STANDING ORDERS 2026/27**

Committee considered the Standing Orders for 2026-27, noting the amendment concerning the wording on convening extraordinary councils meetings, as discussed in the previous Council meeting.

**It was RESOLVED that the Standing Orders for 2026/27 be recommended to the Annual Council Meeting for adoption as presented.**

**453. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2026/27**

Committee reviewed the Council's Financial Regulations for 2026/27 based on NALC's most recent model. In accordance with Regulation 6.8, Committee reviewed the continued use of BACS.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the Financial Regulations for 2026/27 be recommended to the Annual Council Meeting for adoption as presented; and,**
- ii. it be noted that the regulations remain compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024; and, that all electronic payment mandates remain valid under the 2025 resolution.**

**454. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER**

Committee considered Council's Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register for 2026/27.

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

**455. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2026/27**

Committee reviewed the Council's Complaints Procedure for 2026/27.

Committee called for consistency with terms of Chair and Chairman, and noted that the procedure had been updated for the 2026/27 municipal year with the addition of a specific exclusion to Section 2.3 to clarify that complaints relating to the handling of personal data would be processed in compliance with the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

**It was RESOLVED that Council's Complaints Procedure be recommended to Annual Council for adoption in 2026/27.**

**456. PUBLICATION SCHEME 2026/27**

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 2026/27.**

**457. RESERVES POLICY 2026-28**

Committee considered the Reserves Policy for 2026/28, including an amendment advising that three months of operating expenditure general reserve is held, as opposed to nine. Committee was advised that since income is precept based, the risk is lower to a council than organisations dependent on monthly income.

**It was RESOLVED that the Reserve's Policy be recommended to Annual Council for adoption as presented, with the inclusion of the 3–6 month operating expenditure target range for General Reserves, for the period 2026-28.**

**458. IT REPLACEMENT POLICY**

Committee considered the IT Replacement Policy.

Committee was informed that due to the pandemic, desktops were replaced with more portable and efficient laptops. Six years later some of the devices have reached the end of their serviceable life, and as replacing all at once would be unfeasible, it was recommended that the IT Replacement Policy is put in place to record when devices are replaced.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the phased laptop replacement programme be approved and the draw-down from the IT Replacement Earmarked Reserve for the purchase of two laptops in the 2026/27 financial year be approved;**
- ii. the recent purchase of replacement batteries as a proactive measure to extend asset life be noted; and,**

- iii. the 4-year rolling refresh cycle as the Council's standard IT Replacement Policy be endorsed.**

**459. DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Committee considered the Debt Management Policy.

Committee was advised that new credit control methods will be introduced for late payers, with emphasis placed on fairness and legality.

**It was RESOLVED that :**

- i. the Debt Management Policy be recommended to Annual Council for adoption for the year 2026/27;**
- ii. the introduction of late payment charges for invoices remaining unpaid after 90 days, backdated to the 29th day of the invoice period be approved; and,**
- iii. Officers update all service Terms and Conditions, booking forms, and invoices to include a formal reference to the Debt Management Policy and the potential for late payment interest.**

**460. ADOPTION OF DIGITAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK (ASSERTION 10 COMPLIANCE)**

Committee noted the authority delegated by Council to adopt policies to ensure that Felixstowe Town Council meets the mandatory Assertion 10 requirement of the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement before the 31 March audit deadline.

It was noted that the Council's Assertion 10 compliance is based on the NALC roadmap, providing assurance that the Council's domains utilise an official .gov.uk address and that the website meets mandatory accessibility standards.

The Committee acknowledged the requirement for all held data to be adequately accounted for; to that end, the ICT policy had been updated to reflect requirements for multi-factor authentication and personal device usage, further reinforcing the use of the official domain for website and email communications.

Committee was advised of the ongoing work required for website content, specifically the inclusion of image descriptions to ensure accessibility for users with visual impairments. This standard will also be applied to PDFs and scanned documents. It was noted that third-party PDFs may present an accessibility risk and require ongoing mitigation. The Information Asset Register now identifies various points of Council data. Members were asked to sign a Statement of Understanding regarding the secure handling of credentials and the mandatory use of multi-factor authentication.

**It was RESOLVED that :**

- i. the revised ICT Policy 2026–2030 be adopted;**
- ii. the updates to the Data Protection and Data Retention Policies be approved;**
- iii. the updated Website Accessibility Statement be adopted and the Internal Audit Review record be noted;**
- iv. the Information Asset Register and DPIA Screening Tool be approved; and,**
- v. the finalised documents to be maintained and presented to the Internal Auditor as primary evidence of Assertion 10 compliance for the 2025/26 financial year.**

**461. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 8:55pm. The next meeting noted as scheduled for Wednesday 3 June 2026.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_