



TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

Cllr M James
Cllr M Sharman
Cllr W Underwood
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 10 December 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 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
5 December 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 & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 October 2025 as a true record. **(Pages 3-6)**
- 5. Budget Monitoring to 30 November 2025**
To receive budget monitoring report to 30 November 2025 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 7-9 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Budget Estimates 2026/27 (Draft)**
To consider draft budget proposals for 2026/27 following recommendations from Council's Assets & Services, Civic & Community and Personnel Committees and make any recommendations to Council. **(Pages 10-14 & Appendices B & C)**
- 7. Co-option Policy and Procedures**
To review a draft Co-option Policy and make any recommendations to Council. **(Page 15 & Appendix D)**
- 8. LCAS Gold Award**
To recommend to Council that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place to re-apply for the Gold award and these are published on the Council's website, where applicable. **(Page 16)**
- 9. Closure**
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 28 January 2026 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES of the **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held at
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 15 October 2025 at 7.30pm

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

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*)
Cllr C Franklin

245. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There was none.

246. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr D Aitchison** and **Cllr W Underwood**.

247. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Other Registerable 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	Other registerable interests (as Members of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Bennett Cllr M Deacon	All	Other registerable interests (as Members of East Suffolk Council)

Members were advised that, should any 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 4 June 2025 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

249. BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 30 September 2025. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 50% or £500 was considered.

In response to a query on the outstanding lease payment for Broadway House, a Member agreed to follow this up directly.

The Clerk confirmed that the debtors list had significantly reduced since revised processes had been put in place.

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

250. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ANNUAL RETURN 2024/25

Committee noted that the External Audit for the Financial Year 2024/25 had been completed on 12 September 2025, with the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, having expressed the view that the information was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

Members recorded a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and Finance Administration Assistant for their work in achieving Council's ongoing unqualified audits.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. It be recommended to Council that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, including Audit Certificate, be approved and accepted as presented; and,**
- ii. it be noted that, in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and associated regulations, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard from 16 September 2025 and was available on the Council's website.**

251. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: INTERIM 2025/26

Members considered the interim Internal Audit Report for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 as presented and noted that the Auditor had made no formal recommendations.

The Committee extended its thanks to the staff for their efforts in achieving another positive audit report.

It was RESOLVED that the Interim Internal Audit Report for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 be noted as presented for onward referral to Council.

252. QUARTERLY BANK RECONCILIATION

It was confirmed that Cllr David Rowe, as the Council's nominated Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Signatory (*Minute #15 of 2025/26 refers*), had signed the reconciliations between the bank statement and Scribe accounts to confirm the amounts agreed each month for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2025/26.

It was RESOLVED that it be noted that the reconciliations between the bank statements and accounts for the period 1 April – 30 September 2025 had been reviewed and signed by the appointed bank reconciliation signatory.

253. COUNCIL INVESTMENTS

Committee noted the report on Council investments and discussed the investment of a further £250,000 in a one-year bond, acknowledging Fitch's recent downgrade of Close Brothers' credit rating.

The Deputy Town Clerk presented further options for investment following research into other banks and financial institutions.

It was noted that, as of 1 July 2025, Virgin Money UK PLC's long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) from Fitch Ratings was 'A' with a Stable Outlook, following completion of its acquisition by Nationwide Building Society. This represented an upgrade from 'A-'. With a one-year fixed rate of 4.10%, Virgin Money was a viable contender, and its Responsible Investment Policy aligned with the Council's ethical considerations.

Committee also noted that the Cambridge & Counties Bank 1-year Business Bond at 4.35% was competitive. Although unrated by the major agencies, the bank was jointly owned by a Cambridge University college and a Local Government Pension Fund, with a conservative lending profile, and demonstrated strong ethical and sustainability commitments.

Members agreed that investing with Virgin Money offered a balanced approach combining reasonable yield and security.

It was further agreed that £250,000 be transferred from the Barclays Business Tracker Account to the Nationwide 35-Day Saver Account to maximise interest returns.

RESOLVED that

- i. The Council invest £250,000 in a one-year bond with Virgin Money; and,**
- ii. £250,000 be transferred from the Council's Barclays Business Tracker Account to the Nationwide 35-Day Saver Account.**

254. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES POLICY

Committee reviewed the Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy, noting that Felixstowe Town Council has historically chosen not to provide any form of allowance.

Following a debate, Members agreed that allowances should not be introduced at this stage but that the matter should be reviewed again in advance of the 2027 Council elections and the setting of the 2027/28 budget.

It was RESOLVED that the Members' Allowances & Expenses Policy be re-adopted without change at this time; and that the Policy be reviewed again in advance of the 2027 elections and the setting of the 2027/28 budget.

255. ICT POLICY

Committee reviewed the Council's ICT Policy,

It was RESOLVED that ICT Policy be updated as presented and recommended to Council for approval.

256. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 20.12pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 5: BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 NOVEMBER 2025

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 30 November 2025 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 30 November 2025 (2025 - 2026)

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	762,786.00	754,883.86	-7,902	98.96%	378,372.00	259,798.08	118,574	68.66%
201 Town Hall	21,351.00	23,238.20	1,887	108.84%	97,638.00	58,042.55	39,595	59.45%
202 Walton	15,000.00	10,453.25	-4,547	69.69%	16,438.00	11,080.07	5,358	67.41%
203 Broadway House	2,800.00	2,872.86	73	102.60%	13,578.00	8,816.27	4,762	64.93%
204 Cemetery	72,600.00	74,514.46	1,914	102.64%	198,145.00	131,302.16	66,843	66.27%
205 Allotment	19,500.00	19,110.49	-390	98.00%	44,184.00	33,018.79	11,165	74.73%
206 Parks & Recreation	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	43,184.00	26,822.26	16,362	62.11%
301 Civic & Community	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	34,480.00	21,260.56	13,219	61.66%
302 Grants	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	56,992.00	43,157.70	13,834	75.73%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	6,000.00	4,908.38	-1,092	81.81%	9,250.00	8,740.38	510	94.49%
304 Communication	7,500.00	3,342.50	-4,158	44.57%	20,356.00	9,973.00	10,383	48.99%
305 Community Projects	0.00	0.00	0	N/A	11,000.00	11,000.00	1,000	100.00%
NET TOTAL	907,537.00	893,324.00	-14,213.00	98.43%	923,617.00	623,011.82	300,605.18	67.45%

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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 eight months in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 66.67%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500 or 10% or over this level (i.e. 73.34%). Total expenditure for the first eight months stood at 67.45%. Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are as follows:

Cost Centre 101 - Administration
4425 Postage (75%) Increase in stamp/franking cost Recommendation: No action.
4460 Subscriptions (105%) All annual subscriptions for 2025/26 now paid. Recommendation: No action.
4461 External Audit (125%) External Audit now paid. Recommendation: No action.
4462 Internal Audit (100%) Internal Audit now paid. Recommendation: No action.

4464 Insurance (113%) Full year payment up front, increase due to new electric truck Recommendation: Review budget provision for 2026/27.
4464 IT Maintenance & Software (80%) Several frontloaded costs, not expecting to exceed budget Recommendation: No action.
4490 Professional Fees (157%) One-off additional expenditure on survey report cost. Recommendation: No action.
Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall
4110 Rates (81%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No action.
4155 Cleaning Materials (84%) More cleaning materials being used, not expected to exceed budget Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.
4180 Licences (100%) Paid in full for 2025-26 Recommendation: No action.
Cost Centre 202 – Walton Community Hall
4110 Rates (100%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No further action
Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery
4112 Rates (98%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No further action
4117 Water & Sewerage (156%) Unit cost per M ³ increased by 41.2% since 2023. Recommendation: Seek to mitigate consumption and investigate alternative supplier.
4173 Repairs & Maintenance (85%) Additional cleaning materials and maintenance work to gates/tools Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis
4300 Vehicle Running Costs (121%) Front loaded costs such as MOT, Truck Tax paid, repairs to tractor, new tyre. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis
Cost Centre 205 – Allotments
4118 Water & Sewerage (167%) Unit cost per M ³ increased by 41.2% since 2023 Recommendation: Seek to mitigate consumption and investigate alternative supplier.

Cost Centre 301 – Civic & Community
4512 Engraving/Sign Writing Mayoral Board paid for 2025/26 Recommendation: No further action
4511 Town Twinning (100%) Travel and expenses for Wesel visit Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis
4645 Christmas Lights (100%) Paid in full June 2025. Recommendation: No further action
4512 Engraving/Sign Writing (100%) Paid in full for 2025-26 Recommendation: No further action.
Cost Centre 302 – Grants
4620 Annual Grants All Annual Grants Paid 2025/26 Recommendation: No further action
Cost Centre 303 – Felixstowe in Flower
4290 Flowers & Containers (99%) Complete for 2025/26 Recommendation: No further action.
4614 Engraving/Sign Writing (103%) All trophy-related invoices now paid Recommendation: No further action.
Cost Centre 304 – Communication
1812 Donations & Sponsorship (45%) Further £1,094 anticipated before next edition (60% once received) 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 30 November 2025 and decide on any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: BUDGET ESTIMATES 2026/27 (DRAFT)

Committee is asked to consider the draft budget estimates for the financial year 2026/27 and make any recommendations to Council. Relevant sections of the budget have been reviewed by the Assets & Services, Civic & Community and Personnel Committees, and have been incorporated into the consolidated full draft budget, together with the administration estimates and any other adjustments (shown in red in the supporting papers). A summary comparison against the current year's projected outturn and the previous year's position is provided at **Appendix B**, with the detailed draft budget and estimate notes set out at **Appendix C**, including proposed movements and transfers to Earmarked Reserves (ERs).

Tax Base

East Suffolk Council is required to set the tax base for 2026/27 by 31 January. Current forecasts indicate a tax base of 9,377.06 Band D equivalent properties for Felixstowe Town Council - an increase of 82.64 on 2025/26. At the existing Band D charge, this change would generate an additional £6,379.26 in precept income.

Financial Governance Considerations

Estimated Total Expenditure rises from £923,617 (budget 2025/26) to £970,640 (2026/27), reflecting inflationary pressures and service commitments. Based on the estimates presented, a 0% increase in the Band D charge for both 2026/27 and 2027/28 would place General Reserves below typical sector benchmarks (commonly cited as 3–12 months of net revenue expenditure for councils of this size £231,689 - £926,759). Under a frozen precept, the revenue budget shortfall for 2026/27 would be around £75,429, reducing General Reserves from a projected £303,029 (Mar 2026) to £227,600 (Mar 2027), and further to £110,858 (Mar 2028).

Such a reduction would significantly limit the Council's ability to absorb cost pressures, respond to unforeseen events, or take advantage of unplanned opportunities. In this context, the draft budget has been modelled on an indicative 5% increase to the Band D tax charge for 2026/27.

A 5% increase represents an annual rise of £3.86 on a Band D property (approximately 32p per month) and would reduce the 2026/27 in-year shortfall from £75,429 to £39,238. Even with this increase, further cost control or additional income generation will be required to stabilise General Reserves over the medium term.

Occasional Grants

Committee will recall that the Occasional Grants budget was increased from £25,000 to £35,000 in 2025/26, funded through the Community Fund ER. The budget proposes a similar transfer for 2026/27. However, using this ER in 2027/28 would leave only £2,031 remaining, making that the final year that this approach could be sustained. If the Council wishes to maintain this higher grant level thereafter, the additional funding will need to be met from the revenue budget or an alternative source.

Earmarked and Restricted Reserves

- Earmarked Reserves are forecast to reduce from £638,455 (Mar 2023) to £469,560 (Mar 2028).
This reduction is deliberate and aligned to planned project drawdowns.
- ERs cannot be applied to general operational pressures.
- CIL reserves are strictly restricted. Whilst total CIL is projected to peak at £487,008 (Mar 2026) receipts remain difficult to predict beyond the short term, and unspent CIL must be used within the statutory timeframe.

Although total reserves remain high in headline terms - declining from £1.33m (Mar 2025) to a projected £1.04m (Mar 2028) - this masks the fact that General Reserves are the only flexible reserves, and these are forecast to decline most sharply.

The summary table below shows the current year outturn projection, draft budget estimates for 2026-27 and a basic forecast for 2027-28:

TOTALS	Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Projected Outturn 2025-26	Draft Budget 2026-27	Forecast Budget 2027-28
General Reserves (c/f)	390,828	337,263	344,596	344,596	303,029	263,790
Earmarked Reserves (c/f)	638,455	592,697	573,315	573,315	534,600	510,100
CIL Reserves (c/f)	235,394	359,753	410,754	410,754	487,008	383,535
TOTAL RESERVES (c/f balance)	1,264,677	1,289,713	1,328,665	1,328,665	1,324,637	1,157,426
Income (excluding Precept or CIL)	179,536	198,085	191,601	227,414	202,896	203,911
Precept	621,629	664,727	717,436	717,436	760,006	760,006
Revenue Expenditure	792,177	813,979	923,617	926,759	970,640	1,012,968
Transfers from GF to ERs	62,553	41,500	31,500	59,657	31,500	31,500
Earmarked Reserves Expenditure	108,310	60,883	52,000	98,372	56,000	72,000
CIL Income	158,024	158,651	0	163,604	66,527	0
CIL Expenditure	33,665	107,650	0	87,350	170,000	0
General Reserves (balance 31 March)	337,263	344,596	298,516	303,029	263,790	183,239
Earmarked Reserves (bal. 31 March)	592,697	573,315	552,815	534,600	510,100	469,600
CIL Reserves (balance 31 March)	359,753	410,754	410,754	487,008	383,535	383,535
TOTAL RESERVES (closing balance)	1,289,713	1,328,665	1,262,085	1,324,637	1,157,426	1,036,375
<i>Surplus (+) Shortfall (-)</i>	<i>25,036</i>	<i>38,952</i>	<i>-66,580</i>	<i>-4,028</i>	<i>-167,211</i>	<i>-121,051</i>
<i>Surplus (+) Shortfall (-) excl. ER</i>	<i>-53,565</i>	<i>7,334</i>	<i>-46,080</i>	<i>-41,567</i>	<i>-39,238</i>	<i>-80,551</i>
<i>% Expenditure change (excluding ER/CIL)</i>	<i>2.89%</i>	<i>2.75%</i>	<i>13.47%</i>	<i>13.86%</i>	<i>4.73%</i>	<i>4.36%</i>
Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)	8,771.40	8,887.28	9,294.42	9,294.42	9,377.06	9,377.06
Precept charge per Band D	70.87	74.80	77.19	77.19	81.05	81.05
Tax charge increase per Band D	0.00%	5.54%	3.20%	3.20%	5.00%	0.00%

if static
taxbase

CPI inflation (ONS, October 2025) stands at 3.6%, for context:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2025>

If recommended to Council and approved as-is, the budget estimates presented provide for the following:

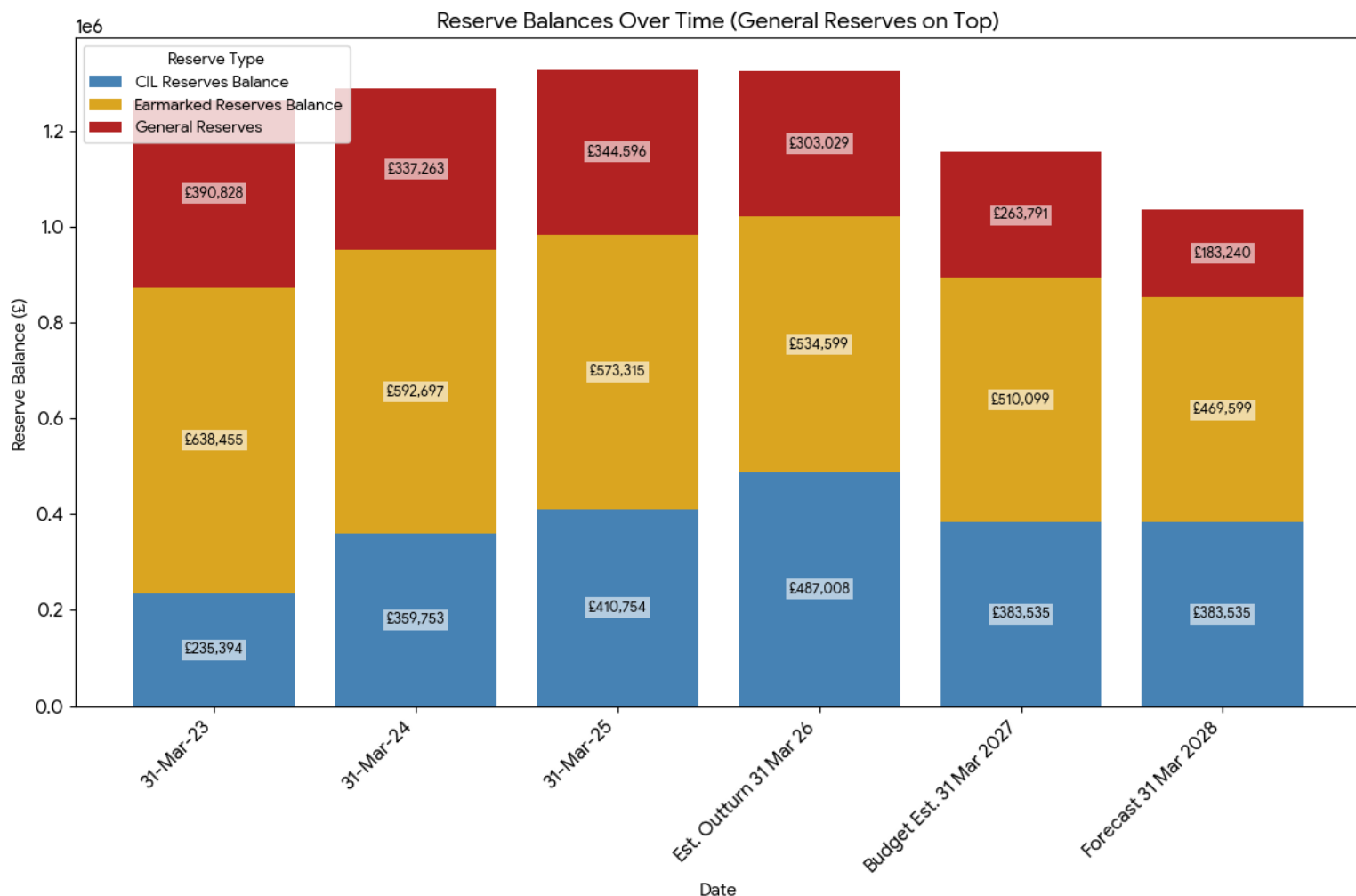
	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27
Estimated Total Expenditure Requirement	£923,617	£970,640
Less Estimated Income	£191,601	£202,896
Add Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	£31,500	£31,500
Less Contribution from General Fund	£46,080	£39,238
Gross Precept Requirement	£717,436	£760,006
Band D Equivalent Properties	9,294.42	9,377.06
Annual Council Tax charge per Band D	£77.19	£81.05
% change year on year	3.20%	5.00%

The table below shows the Annual Band D tax charge for all precepting town councils in East Suffolk over the past four years, illustrating that Felixstowe continues to remain amongst the lowest charging comparable towns, despite wider inflationary pressures and local service demands.

	Annual Band D Tax Charge				
Town Council	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Leiston	£171.63	£171.63	£173.42	£179.64	£184.34
Lowestoft	£142.68	£146.63	£152.85	£160.38	£181.23
Saxmundham	£143.28	£143.28	£150.30	£158.03	£165.14
Woodbridge	£110.67	£119.50	£125.40	£146.36	£156.95
Halesworth	£81.34	£81.34	£88.25	£90.46	£155.48
Bungay	£88.34	£95.18	£98.28	£112.14	£134.67
Aldeburgh	£114.95	£114.31	£113.21	£118.24	£118.22
Framlingham	£105.31	£105.31	£110.05	£113.27	£115.80
Southwold	£109.59	£109.59	£109.59	£109.59	£109.59
Kesgrave	£63.07	£67.93	£74.03	£87.47	£92.24
Beccles	£38.82	£39.74	£42.98	£69.44	£79.06
Felixstowe	£70.87	£70.87	£70.87	£74.80	£77.19
Carlton Colville	£21.68	£21.68	£21.68	£21.68	£22.87

The table below, and chart on the following page, shows how the Council's Reserve Balances change over time with the projections for the next two years:

Code	Description	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24	31-Mar-25	Est. Outturn 31 Mar 26	Budget Est. 31 Mar 2027	Forecast 31 Mar 2028
	Total Reserves Balance	£1,264,677	£1,289,713	£1,328,665	£1,324,637	£1,157,425	£1,036,374
	General Reserves	390,828	337,263	344,596	303,029	263,791	183,240
	Earmarked Reserves	638,455	592,697	573,315	534,599	510,099	469,599
	CIL Reserves	235,394	359,753	410,754	487,008	383,535	383,535
	Individual Earmarked Reserves Balances:						
330	Election Expenses	23,862	8,502	7,839	13,839	19,839	9,839
335	Enhancement Promotional	692	-	-	-	-	-
345	Asset Repairs & Renewals	23,065	26,065	29,065	19,940	22,940	25,940
350	IT Replacement Fund	25,403	20,428	19,318	19,318	13,318	7,318
360	Cemetery Projects	204,542	210,638	222,201	233,844	203,844	173,844
365	Broadway House	59,727	59,646	56,558	31,558	31,558	31,558
370	Walton Community Hall	74,527	73,509	73,509	38,509	38,509	38,509
380	Town Hall	52,512	24,872	7,165	68,083	73,083	78,083
390	Community Fund	9,297	36,037	33,785	22,031	12,031	2,031
400	CCTV	42,000	42,000	42,000	-	-	-
405	Staffing Reserve	58,564	58,564	44,036	44,036	44,036	44,036
415	AFW Legacy/Jubilee/VE	8,010	-	-	-	-	-
392	Community Support Fund	41,254	-	-	-	-	-
420	Public Spaces	-	17,437	15,337	13,440	13,440	13,440
425	Play Equipment	15,000	15,000	22,500	30,000	37,500	45,000
500	Grant Funded Projects	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Individual CIL Reserves Balances:						
411	CIL 2019/20	24,302	-	-	-	-	-
450	CIL 2020/21 (April)	16,567	7,204	-	-	-	-
451	CIL 2020/21 (October)	724	724	-	-	-	-
452	CIL 2021/22 (April)	6,819	6,819	-	-	-	-
453	CIL 2021/22 (October)	70,471	70,471	-	-	-	-
454	CIL 2022/23 (April)	3,676	3,676	-	-	-	-
455	CIL 2022/23 (October)	112,835	112,835	94,079	6,729	-	-
456	CIL 2023/24 (April)	-	46,844	46,844	46,844	-	-
457	CIL 2023/24 (October)	-	111,180	111,180	111,180	-	-
458	CIL 2024/25 (April)	-	-	17,750	17,750	12,503	12,503
459	CIL 2024/25 (October)	-	-	140,901	140,901	140,901	140,901
460	CIL 2025/26 (April)	-	-	-	93,319	93,319	93,319
465	CIL 2025/26 (October)	-	-	-	70,285	70,285	70,285
466	CIL 2026/27	-	-	-	-	66,527	66,527



Pending any further adjustments arising from new information or the recommendations of the Finance & Governance Committee, Committee is requested to consider the draft budget estimates for 2026/27 and make any recommendations to Council.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CO-OPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

“Co-option” is the process by which a local (parish or town) council fills a seat without holding a public by-election. This is typically when a “casual vacancy” occurs (for example, if a councillor resigns, dies, or becomes disqualified) and no by-election is called. It may also apply where, at a regular election, there are insufficient candidates to fill all available seats. In such cases, the council may co-opt to ensure full membership and effective governance.

Because councils have flexibility when co-opting, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends adopting a formal co-option policy. A policy ensures that any co-option is conducted fairly, transparently, and consistently, providing confidence to both councillors and residents.

A robust co-option policy typically includes:

- Eligibility criteria: Who may stand and any disqualifications.
- Advertising of vacancies: Ensuring vacancies are publicised widely via noticeboards, the Council website, and other appropriate channels.
- Person specification/role description: Outlining skills, experience, or representation the Council wishes to encourage, helping address any skill gaps or representational imbalances (e.g., age, gender, geographic distribution within the town).
- Transparent selection process: Applications, candidate statements or presentations, and a formal vote by Full Council (or delegated committee), requiring an absolute majority.
- Formal induction procedures: Acceptance of office, declaration of interests, and notifying Electoral Services/Monitoring Officer of the co-option.

Although Felixstowe Town Council has never previously needed to co-opt a councillor because all seats have been filled via election, adopting a co-option policy is required for councils seeking the Local Councils Award Scheme Gold level.

Bringing this policy to Committee ensures that Council:

1. Complies with NALC guidance and best practice.
2. Demonstrates governance readiness and transparency.
3. Meets a formal requirement for Gold Award accreditation.

Committee is requested to review the draft Co-option Policy and Procedures at Appendix D; and, recommend its adoption to Council.

AGENDA ITEM 8: LCAS GOLD AWARD APPLICATION

Felixstowe Town Council was the first of 424 parish/town councils in Suffolk to be rated 'Quality Gold'; the highest award level in the Local Councils Award Scheme (LCAS) in 2015.

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.

At the end of last year, this Committee resolved that the reaccreditation of the Gold Quality Award from the Local Council Award Scheme be pursued, (*Min # 363 2024/25 refers*).

All requirements are now in place and committee should consider the recommendation to Council that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place to re-apply for the Gold award and these are published on the Council's website, where applicable. This resolution from Council is required in order to make the final application.

Committee is requested to consider the requirements as set out in the Guide to the Local Council Award Scheme (see link above) and make a recommendation to Council that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place to re-apply for the Gold award and these are published on the Council's website, where applicable and make any further recommendations to Council as it considers necessary.