

**MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at
Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 3 June 2026 at 7.30pm**

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

27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There was none.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were noted. Where a specific item on the agenda was directly related to any Members' declared interest, their participation was restricted in accordance with the Code of Conduct:

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bennett	All	Other Registerable Interests (as Member 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.

30. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2026 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

31. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: FULL YEAR 2025/26

Members considered the final Internal Audit Report for the year 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 as presented, noting one typographical error on page 22 that states the internal control was reviewed on 4 June 2026, instead of 2025.

Committee noted that the Auditor recommended keeping and regularly publishing a Contracts Register to detail all contracts, tenders, and commercial arrangements exceeding £5,000 in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. Committee was pleased to note that work on compiling this register is already underway.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. committee reviewed and noted the final Internal Audit Report for 2025/26;**
- ii. the proposed action plan to publish the compliant Contracts Register directly to the Council's website to meet the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 be approved; and**
- iii. Committee recommends to Council that it formally receives and adopts the Internal Report for the year ending March 2026.**

32. REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT EFFECTIVENESS

Committee reviewed the arrangements for, and the effectiveness of, the Council's internal audit.

Members acknowledged the Deputy Town Clerk's new role as an auditor with the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), satisfied this represents no conflict of interest as she will not be carrying out audits of Felixstowe Town Council specifically. It was agreed that SALC provides a good service, noting the value of engaging an auditor with experience in the town council sector. It was proposed that the existing arrangement be continued for 2026/27.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that:

- i. following a review of the effectiveness of its internal audit, Council confirms the current arrangements to be effective; and**
- ii. in being satisfied with the independence and competence of the internal auditor, the Suffolk Association of Local Councils be appointed to continue as the Council's internal auditor for 2026/27 to carry out interim and year-end audits in accordance with the statutory Practitioner's Guide.**

33. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025-26

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement and Accountability Return for the financial year 2025/26 as presented.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the Town Council team for their work in preparing the accounts and supporting documentation.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that:

- i. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2026 (Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement) be approved and the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council;
- ii. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2026 (Section 2 – Accounting Statements) as signed by the Town Clerk, as the Council’s Responsible Finance Officer be approved, and the Mayor be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council; and,
- iii. it be noted that there were no recommendations arising from the final Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2025/26 and, as such, no action plan was required to be submitted with the Annual Return to the External Auditor.

34. ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Committee considered the draft Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Members expressed positive feedback on the format, readability, and content of the Report.

Members were encouraged to take their time and look over the report for any misprints or suggested amendments, with a single misspelling noted and corrected during the meeting.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments discussed, the Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2025/26 be recommended to Council for approval and adoption.

35. BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 MAY 2026

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 30 May 2026. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 16.7% or £500 was considered.

RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 30 May 2026 be noted.

36. QUARTERLY BANK RECONCILIATION

It was confirmed that Cllr David Rowe, as the Council’s nominated Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Signatory (Min #15 of 2025/26 refers), had signed the reconciliation between the bank statement and Scribe accounts to confirm the amounts agreed each month.

RESOLVED that it be noted that the reconciliations between the bank statement and accounts statements for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 had been reviewed and signed by the appointed bank reconciliation signatory.

37. COUNCIL INVESTMENTS

Committee considered a report on Council investments and discussed the upcoming maturity of a £500,000 fixed-term deposit.

Members noted the current 'Negative Watch' status of the BBB+ rated Close Brothers Group due to an ongoing sector investigation. However, following full consideration and due diligence, the Committee expressed confidence in maintaining the investment, noting that alternative options failed to offer a comparable balance of security and return on investment.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that it renews its investment of £500,000 with Close Brothers upon maturity.

38. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL 2026/27

Committee noted the statutory requirement under Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for local authorities to conduct an annual review of their system of internal control.

Following a review of the Council's current Internal Control Statement and associated policy documents, Members were satisfied that the existing arrangements remained robust, effective, and required no further amendment.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that the Internal Control Statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2027 be formally adopted as presented.

39. ACTION PLAN REVIEW

Committee reviewed progress on the Town Council's Action Plan in delivering the key priorities identified within the broader Business Plan. The Clerk advised that the Action Plan is maintained as a 'living document', regularly reviewed by the Committee to reflect the ongoing delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.

Members discussed the content of the current plan and agreed on the following amendments to provide better clarity and context:

- **Item BP 3.1 (Grants):** Expand the scope to explicitly include Annual Grants alongside Occasional Grants.
- **Grant Conditions:** Update the criteria to require, rather than request, that ongoing grant recipients formally acknowledge financial contributions from Felixstowe Town Council.
- **Partnerships:** Remove all references to the Business Improvement District (BID) following its formal dissolution.
- **Civic Achievements:** Make past support for the Blue Flag Beach Award and Seaside Award more prominent, alongside other historic project achievements.

It was RESOLVED that the Action Plan be updated in line with Members' comments and kept under regular review as part of the Committee's strategic oversight.

40. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.12pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 14 October 2026 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____