



Minutes of the meeting of Finance and Governance Committee on Monday 24th August 2026 at 5.45pm in Committee Room at Town Hall

Present: Joseph Athorn, Peter Shannon, Richard Stubbings (Chair), Christine Wheeler

In Attendance: Paul Cunningham, Town Clerk

Apologies: Gillian Birrell, Barry Darch, Alan Hopley, Samuel Hunt

Absent: None

Members of public: No members of the public.

1 - To receive apologies for absence

Received from Barry Darch, Alan Hopley, Gillian Birrell and Sam Hunt.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

2 - To receive Declarations of Interest or any requests for the granting of dispensations in relation to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda

There were none.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

3 - To elect a Deputy Chair of the committee

Cllr Wheeler proposed that Cllr Shannon be elected as Deputy Chair of the committee.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To elect Cllr Shannon as Deputy Chair of Finance and Governance
Committee for 2026-27.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

4 - To approve the minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 27th July 2026

Motion to approve minutes: Cllr Wheeler.

Seconded by: Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 27th July 2026.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

5 - To receive an update on current Strategic Plan

Cllr Wheeler noted that the parts of the plan that fall under the remit of the Assets & Estates Committee had been reviewed by that committee at their meeting on 19th August.

Cllr Shannon asked about the Common Lane parking project and specifically the continuing delay in installing double yellow lines along Common Lane. Cllr Stubbings noted that this work had been held up as part of the delay to the implementation of the on-street parking review. He noted that the review was now moving forward but that as yet there was still no definite timetable for implementation.

Cllr Shannon asked about the former orchard site and when this would be ready for the Scouts and Guides to take the site on. Town Clerk replied that Rangers are planning to sow grass seed in the Autumn. Cllr Shannon also noted that the container had not yet been assembled and Town Clerk replied that this was because the weight means that at least four people will be needed to erect it and that getting that many staff on site together will be easier once the Town Maintenance Technicians are less busy with watering.

Cllr Wheeler raised the potential Visitor Centre at Quay. Councillors noted that this was unlikely to be able to proceed soon and that the priority at the Quay should be revamping the toilet and shower block, which is being pursued by Assets & Estates Committee. Cllr Wheeler noted that a 'Changing Places' toilet facility at the Quay is not possible under the current refurbishment scheme and that this would need to be considered as part of a future Visitor Centre project.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

6 - To consider a process and timeframe for creating council's next Strategic Plan

Councillors noted that elections will be held in May 2027. Chair suggested that current councillors draw up a 'framework' document for the new plan for 2027-2031 and allow the new council to decide on a list of specific projects. He noted that such a framework document will need to include the council's position on potential asset transfers as a consequence of Local Government Reorganisation.

Chair proposed that he and Town Clerk be asked to draft such a 'framework' document for review by the committee at a future meeting.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To ask Chair and Town Clerk draft a 'framework' document for the council's Strategic Plan for 2027-2031, for review by the committee at a future meeting.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

7 - To consider current list of outstanding payments and to agree 'write-offs' as appropriate

Councillors considered the report from Finance Officer.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that all outstanding allotment payments recommended for write-off be agreed and that the committee review allotment renewal process at a future meeting.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To approve the write-off of those outstanding allotment payments recommended by Finance Officer and to review allotment renewal process at a future meeting.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that all outstanding Blyburgate Hall payments recommended for write-off be agreed, that Purchase orders be required for corporate bookings and that Assets & Estates Committee be asked to review booking and invoicing procedure for the Hall.

Seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To approve the write-off of those outstanding Blyburgate Hall payments recommended by Finance Officer, to require that Purchase orders be obtained for corporate bookings of the Hall and that Assets & Estates Committee be asked to review booking and invoicing procedure for the Hall.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that all other outstanding payments recommended for write-off be agreed.

Seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To approve the write-off of all other outstanding payments recommended by Finance Officer.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that Assets & Estates Committee receive a list of outstanding Hall payments on a monthly basis.

Seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To ask Finance Officer and Administration Officer to provide a monthly update to Assets & Estates Committee of outstanding hall payments.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
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8 - To review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Councillors considered the Standing Orders. They noted that:

Section 4e v should be amended to cover where a councillor has been removed from a committee under Section 4e ix. Proposed new text of Order 4e v: "Every councillor should serve on at least one of Assets and Estates Committee and Development and Commerce Committee, unless a councillor has been removed from one or both of these committees by Order 4e ix. Councillors may serve on both committees. The mayor and deputy mayor will serve on both committees as ex-officio members."

Section 4e viii should be amended for clarity to avoid the implication that the Chair of a committee has the power to allow a councillor who is not a member of the committee to vote at a meeting of the committee. Proposed new text of Order 4e viii: "Any Council member shall, unless the Council otherwise orders, be entitled to be present at the meetings of any committee of which he or she is not a member but shall not be able to vote at such a meeting. At the invitation of the Chair, councillors who are not members of the committee may be allowed to speak at any point during such a meeting."

Cllr Athorn asked that personal pronouns be reviewed in the text in italics (sections that council has added to the model Standing Orders) to replace 'he' with 'he or she' and 'him' with 'him or her'.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the changes to Orders 4e v and 4e viii above be agreed and that changes to personal pronouns in italics (sections that council has added to the model Standing Orders) throughout the document be agreed.

Seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore
RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To amend Standing Orders 4e v and 4e viii and to change personal pronouns in italics (sections that council has added to the model Standing Orders) throughout the document.

Councillors reviewed Financial Regulations.

Cllr Wheeler proposed that no changes were needed to the Financial Regulations.

Seconded by Cllr Shannon.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore
RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL That no changes are needed to the council's Financial Regulations.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

9 - Consider timescale and process for seeking new electricity supplier

Councillors noted the list of current electricity supplies provided by Finance Officer. They noted that the spend levels are below the threshold for tendering.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that Finance Officer be asked to approach electricity suppliers directly to request quotes and to consider well established secure suppliers like for instance Octopus rather than smaller, less stable suppliers, and to report back to a future meeting with at least three quotes, including options for the duration of the contract, whether the contract would be fixed-term or not and whether the Fenland Trust's electricity accounts can be included in the same contract.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To ask Finance Officer to approach electricity suppliers directly to request quotes and to consider well established secure suppliers like for instance Octopus rather than smaller, less stable suppliers, and to report back to a future meeting with at least three quotes, including options for the duration of the contract, whether the contract would be fixed-term or not and whether the Fenland Trust's electricity accounts can be included in the same contract.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

10 - To consider policy regarding street traders in Sheepgate and Exchange Square

Chair noted the difference between street trading (i.e., setting up a stall to trade on public land), which no longer requires a licence, and pavement licences, which allow businesses such as cafes, restaurants and bars to place removable furniture on the highway, which are still in force and on which East Suffolk Council consult with Town Council. He noted that pavement licences continue to fall under the remit of the Planning & Highways Committee but that requests from street traders, who are referred to us by East Suffolk Council, may be better managed by Development and Commerce Committee, alongside their responsibility for markets. Chair also suggested that any street traders in Sheepgate or Exchange Square on a Friday should be treated as being part of the Friday market and that they should be charged rent.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that street trading requests be agreed by Development & Commerce Committee rather than Planning and Highways Committee.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To amend Committee Terms of Reference so that Development & Commerce Committee review Street Trading requests and that Planning and Highways Committee retain delegated responsibility for responding to Pavement Licensing applications.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that street traders in Sheepgate and Exchange Square on a Friday be treated as part of the market and charged rents accordingly.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED That street traders in Sheepgate and Exchange Square on a Friday be treated as part of the market and charged rents accordingly.

11 - To consider feedback from Local Council Award Scheme panel that our standard 5-year review period for policies is too long

Councillors considered the feedback from the Local Council Award Scheme panel that council's standard 5-year review period for policies is too long.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that, for all policies where the review period is set at five years, this be reduced to three years.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED That, for all policies where the review period is set at five years, this be reduced to three years.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

12 - Date of next meeting

This was agreed as Monday 28th September 2026 at 5.45pm.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

13 - To consider confidential items

RESOLVED THAT, PURSUANT TO SECTION 1(2) OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960, BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED, THE PUBLIC AND PRESS LEAVE THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE REMAINING MATTERS.

What?	By Whom?	By When?

15 - To approve the confidential minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 27th July 2026

Motion to approve confidential minutes: Cllr Wheeler.

Seconded by: Cllr Stubbings.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the confidential minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 27th July 2026.

What?	By Whom?	By When?