

FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE
SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the **FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE** MEETING held in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden on **Monday 19 May 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present Councillors: Coote, Eke, McBirnie, Meloy, Hawke-Smith, Parker, McLellan and Curtis (as a substitute for Cllr Ahmed).

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Public: None

F&E 060-25	In the absence of the former Committee Chair, Committee agreed that Cllr Coote should open the meeting
F&E 061-25	Election of Committee Chair Cllr Hawke-Smith nominated Cllr de Vries as Committee Chair, seconded by Cllr Parker. It was unanimously resolved to appoint Cllr de Vries as Committee Chair for 2025/26.
F&E 062-25	Election of Deputy Committee Chair Cllr Coote nominated Cllr McLellan as Deputy Committee Chair, seconded by Cllr Hawke-Smith. It was unanimously resolved to appoint Cllr McLellan as Deputy Committee Chair for 2025/26. In the absence for Cllr de Vries, Cllr McLellan Chaired the remainder of the meeting as the newly appointed Deputy Committee Chair.
F&E 063-25	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ahmed, de Vries and Freeman.
F&E 064-25	To receive any Declarations of Interest Cllrs Coote and McBirnie declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council.
F&E 065-25	Public Speaking Time There were no questions arising.
F&E 066-25	Minutes of the Finance & Establishment Committee (a) 17.03.2025 (committee meeting): Approved and signed by the Chair (b) 17.02.2025 (committee meeting) Approved and signed by the Chair with the following two additions agreed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F&E 021-25 b.i: "Cllr Meloy made comments about the RFO's narrative highlight report." 2. F&E 021-25 e.i: "Cllr Gadd queried the reason for there being no positive net balance on the EMR which the RFO would address outside the meeting."

	(c) 22.04.2025 (meeting notes) inquorate discussion: Approved and signed by the Chair
F&E 067-25	<p>Sub-Committees / Working Groups (WG) Committee considered the retention/establishment of any sub-Committee and/or Working Group under the remit/responsibility of this Committee, further considering membership and Terms of Reference for any WGs or sub-committees.</p> <p>(a) F&E Sub-Committee – considered under agenda item 19 due to the confidentiality of this committee</p> <p>(b) Budget Working Group – it was further acknowledged its membership includes cross-representation from all existing committees as stipulated within Financial Regulations.</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>(i) To note challenges and difficulties with the 2025/26 process, further noting there is current post budget setting review consultation, and the results are not yet available and will be presented to a future Full Council meeting.</p> <p>(ii) To recommend to June Full Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of a F&E Sub-Committee for the 2025/26 Budget setting. 2. To review the ToR alongside the consultation results, notwithstanding this, as a sub-committee the ToR should: Should consider the membership numbers, to ensure quorum. Include reference to: Sub-committee meetings being held in person.
Financial Matters	
F & E 068-25	<p>Expenditure – to be authorised</p> <p>(a) Committee noted the invoices paid in March 2025 (8a.1 and 8a.2)</p> <p>(b) Committee approved the payment of the invoices received since 22.04.2025.</p> <p>(c) Committee approved payments, DDs, STOs, debit card payments and cheques already issued since 17.03.2025 (8c.1 and 8c.2)</p>
F & E 069-25	<p>Tourist Information Centre The Committee received and noted the profit and loss account for March and April 2025.</p>
F & E 070-25	<p>Monthly Reports Committee received and noted the following monthly reports:</p> <p>(a) Bank reconciliation statement with supporting statements</p> <p>(b) Cash Book – showing all income and expenditure for March and April 2025</p> <p>(c) Income report broken down by budget code – year to date including comparison of income year to date against previous years.</p>
F & E 071-25	<p>Committee Hi-Light Reports The Committee received and noted the April 2025 Hi-Lighted reports from the RFO. There were no specific items to note or action to be taken in relation to the documents.</p>
	<i>Between 20.30-20.34: Cllr Eke briefly left the meeting</i>

F & E 072-25	<p>Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024-25 (Annual Return)</p> <p>Committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The internal auditor has completed her internal audit, a copy was presented to committee. (b) Annual Governance Statement 2024-25. (c) The following documents were received for the year ended 31st March 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variances explanation 2. Reconciliation document 3. Working details for annual return 4. Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts 5. Balance sheet 6. Bank reconciliation pro-forma (d) Asset Register as at 31st March 2025 (e) Dates for the period of exercise of public rights, commencing on: Monday 23rd June ending Friday 1st August 2024. (f) Committee considered and noted Section1 being the Annual Governance Statement. <p>It was Resolved: To recommend adoption of the AGAR and the above documents to the June Full Council meeting.</p>
F&E 073-25	<p>Precept Tranche Received</p> <p>It was Resolved: To note the first tranche of precept for 2025-26 of £721,158.00 was received on 25th April 2025</p>
F&E 074-25	<p>HR & H&S Provision</p> <p>It was Resolved: To note that following a comprehensive review of the Town Council's HR & H&S requirements and in compliance with the Town Council's governing documents, a new contract has been awarded to Worknest for the provision of HR and H&S support. In accordance with the Council's overarching policies on HR & H&S matters, approved users of this system (Officers/Cllrs) has been notified to the provider.</p>
F&E 075-25	<p>SWTC third party grant applications</p> <p>Committee noted the written update, detailing progress made on third party grant applications submitted by SWTC.</p>
F & E 076-25	<p>Urgent Information Items</p> <p>There were no matters raised.</p>
F & E 077-25	<p>Date and time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next meeting to be held on Monday 16th June at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden – Cllr Hawke-Smith gave his apologies.</p>

F&E 078-25	<p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</p> <p>It was resolved under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
F&E 079-25	<p>Sub-Committees / Working Groups (WG)</p> <p>Following agenda item 7, the current F&E Sub-Committee Terms of Reference were noted and considered.</p> <p>It was resolved: To recommend the ToR to Full Council as presented, with no proposed changes, acknowledging the ToR and Committee membership were established by Council in April 2025.</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm