

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE FAKENHAM CONNECT BUILDING, OAK STREET, FAKENHAM**

TUESDAY 20th January 2026 AT 18:00

Attending Committee Councillors: A Glynn (Mayor), V Joslin (Deputy Mayor), M Dutton, L Harrison & J Rockett

Attending Non-Committee: None

Clerk: L Meanley

RFO & Deputy Clerk: K Lindsay

General Public: None

Press: None

Number	Agenda
121/26GF	To receive Apologies for Absence Apologies received from Councillors P Bucknell & D Hunter
122/26GF	To adjourn the Meeting for Electors' questions None received
123/26GF	Declarations of Interest: Members are asked at this stage to declare any Interests, which they may have, in any of the following items on the agenda None declared
124/26GF	To confirm the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 10th December 2025 On the proposition of Cllr Dutton, seconded by Cllr Glynn, the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 10 th December 2025 were AGREED by all and signed by the Chair
125/26GF	To discuss any matters arising from the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 10th December 2025 110/25 – It was noted that one of the Town Ambition Programme project sponsors has not yet responded to the formal agreement request sent by the Clerk. ACTION: Cllr Glynn to provide alternative contact details to enable the correspondence to be re-sent
126/26GF	To review and agree policies and risk assessments for update: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equality & Diversity Councillors reviewed the Equality & Diversity Policy and RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council with minor amendments.• Finance & Governance Risk Management Councillors reviewed the Finance & Governance Risk Management Policy and RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council with minor amendments.
127/26GF	To review finance reports for month ending December 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To receive and review December 2025 receipts and payments for Fakenham Town Council and Charter Market Cllrs RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To receive and review December 2025 consolidated bank reconciliation reports for Fakenham Town Council and Charter Market bank accounts and confirm bank statements balances for signing Cllrs RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council - all bank statements and reconciliations were confirmed and signed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To receive and review the third quarterly Income and Expenditure Budget vs Actuals report

	<p>Cllrs RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council Councillors noted that the RFO had highlighted key points within their report, which would be considered and noted under that item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive and approve the December 2025 schedule of payments over £500 for display on the website <p>Cllrs RESOLVED to approve for presentation and approval by Full Council</p>
128/26GF	<p>To note that in the absence of councillors available to approve payment run 18 at Barclays, the Clerk completed approvals including Salaries. Also approved payment run 20, as advised by Cllr Dutton due to time constraints.</p> <p>Noted</p>
129/26GF	<p>To receive the RFO's report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors reviewed the Insurance Renewal update and noted the additional cyber insurance requirements should the Council's projected turnover exceed £1 million. It was agreed that preparations should be made during 2026 in anticipation of this potentially impacting the 2027/28 budget. <p>ACTION: RFO to obtain an additional quotation for Cyber Essentials certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors considered the Rialtas termination fee and agreed to proceed with the termination of Rialtas and the transition to Scribe. • Councillors reviewed the third quarterly Income & Expenditure Budget vs Actuals report, considering notable variations and the explanations provided. <p>The rest of the report was noted</p>
130/26GF	<p>To receive notification of submission of the 2026/27 Precept demand</p> <p>The 2026/27 precept demand for £861,862.67 was submitted to North Norfolk District Council on 22nd December 2025 and receipt was acknowledged the same day.</p>
131/26GF	<p>To prepare the 2026/27 Precept increase demand explanation for NNDC to use on Council Tax Demand Notices</p> <p>To recommend to Full Council the 2026-27 precept increase demand explanation for NNDC to use on council tax demand notices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Council's gross expenditure for the year 2026/27. = £763,125.00 as per budget 2) The Council's gross expenditure for the year 2025/26. = £546,700.00 estimated 3) The Council's Precept for the year 2026/27. = £861,862.67 4) Confirm the Council's Precept for the year was 2025/26. = £567,675.00 5) The reasons for any difference between 1 & 2. = The Council's expenditure for 2026/27 is £216,425 higher than 2025/26. This reflects unavoidable cost pressures, including increases to overheads, direct costs and contracts, in line with prevailing inflation. The budget also includes the continued funding of the Depot (£42,500) resulting from the impact of NNDC's FLASH project and the continuance of the CCTV replacement programme (£15,000) approved in 2025/26. While these costs were not originally forecast to extend into 2026/27, they now represent ongoing commitments and do not constitute new budget growth. The increase in expenditure is primarily attributable to essential and time-critical service requirements, including urgent streetlight replacements and repairs (phase 1) (£93,000), revised grass-cutting arrangements to address service deficiencies (£21,185), replacement of ageing plant and machinery where continued repair is no longer cost-effective (£16,000), and the renewal or removal of play equipment that has reached the end of its safe operational life (£25,000). The remainder of

	<p>the increase relates to a number of smaller service-critical and statutory items, including wayfinding, match-funded grant commitments, parking enforcement, increased electricity costs, memorial safety works and election planning.</p> <p>6) The reasons for any difference between 3 & 4. = The Council's precept for 2026/27 is £294,187.67 higher than 2025/26. This increase reflects the additional expenditure requirements outlined in Section 5, including unavoidable inflationary pressures and essential service and infrastructure priorities. In addition, the increase ensures the Council maintains sufficient contingencies and reserves to meet its statutory obligations and to respond proactively to emerging responsibilities. For example, as Local Government Reform progresses and County and District Councils move toward unitary structures, discussions are ongoing regarding the potential transfer of assets such as open spaces, playgrounds, and public toilets. The Council is taking a prudent approach to ensure it is able to respond appropriately to any new responsibilities that may arise.</p> <p>7) An opinion of the change in precept issued for the upcoming year to share with the taxpayer (what has caused this change, additional services provided etc.) = The Council recognises that the 2026/27 precept represents a significant increase. This decision was not taken lightly. The increase is necessary to meet rising costs, maintain essential services, invest in critical infrastructure, and ensure the Council is prepared for future responsibilities, including potential changes arising from Local Government Reorganisation. It also reflects the need to correct and address funding shortfalls from prior budgets to maintain financial stability. We are committed to transparency and accountability. The budget proposals were openly discussed at a public forum on 16th December, where residents had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback before the precept was formally set by Council on 17th December. This careful process ensures that the Council can plan prudently, safeguard essential services, and respond responsibly to the community's needs while maintaining statutory reserves and contingency funds. We appreciate that any increase can be challenging for households, and the Council will continue to manage resources efficiently and seek alternative sources of income wherever possible.</p>
132/26GF	<p>To receive an update on 2026 insurance renewals Councillors noted that all insurance policies were renewed and in place as of 1 January 2026. Other key points were reviewed in the RFO's report.</p>
133/26GF	<p>To discuss and consider adding MJ Tree Services Ltd to the Preferred Contractors Register Councillors reviewed the application from MJ Tree Services Ltd and RESOLVED to add the company to the Preferred Contractors Register for the provision of tree cutting services.</p>
134/26GF	<p>To receive notification of Rialtas termination costs Councillors noted and reviewed the Rialtas invoice for termination costs of £867.49 and, while expressing concern, RESOLVED to approve payment in order to enable a clean break and facilitate the transition to Scribe, as previously outlined in the RFO's report.</p>
135/26GF	<p>To receive the Internal Controller review None</p>
136/26GF	<p>To discuss the FLASH Project It was noted that confirmation of exchange of the lease contracts had not yet been received, and that the Council's solicitor is pursuing this matter with NNDC</p>
137/26GF	<p>To confirm the date and time of next meeting Governance & Finance: Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 18:00</p>

There being no further business the meeting closed at 18.43

Confirmed this

day of

2026

CHAIR