



Needham Market Town Council

Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246

<https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/>
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

Governance and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 6th October 2026

Held at: The Green Room, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market.
Meeting started at 19:00

Councillors Present:

J Reardon (Chair), K Hunter, C Goodchild, T Cooke, G Blake, S Clennell and I Mason

Also in Attendance:

G de Cova (Town Clerk and RFO)

GF/26/048 Apologies for Absence

No Councillors were absent from this meeting.

GF/26/049 To receive declarations of interest from members relating to items on this agenda

No interests were declared

GF/26/050 To approve any Dispensations with respect to Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests

As no interests were declared, no dispensations were needed.

GF/26/051 To receive and confirm the Minutes of the Governance and Finance Meeting held on Tuesday 4th August 2026

Councillors received the previous minutes for review ahead of the meeting. Cllr Hunter proposed to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting. Seconded by Cllr Goodchild. All in favour

It was **Resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th August as a true and accurate record.

GF/26/052 To discuss matters arising from previous meetings minutes

Cllr Goodchild raised a query relating to one of the bank accounts that the Council holds funds in. The Clerk confirmed the current progress.



Needham Market Town Council

Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246

<https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/>
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

GF/26/053 To receive questions from any members of the public present

No members of the public were present

GF/26/054 To receive a report from the Town Clerk/RFO

Councillors received a report from the Town Clerk. It was confirmed that there is one vacancy for the position of Town Councillor, after the resignation of a member. It was also confirmed to Councillors that there will be an election held for the Bosmere Division Seat of Suffolk County Council after the resignation of the County Councillor.

GF/26/055 To consider a proposal from the Community Centre relating to Office Accommodation, and agree any recommendations to Full Town Council

Councillors discussed a request from the Community Centre relating to the space currently being rented by the Town Council for the use of Office Accommodation. It was noted that there is no formal lease agreement in place.

GF/26/056 To discuss findings from the External Audit and agree any recommendations to Full Town Council

Councillors

GF/26/057 Update on Governance and Finance Arrangements

GF/26/057/a To monitor the Council's approved Budget 2026/27 against actual expenditure

Councillors had received an updated budget monitoring spreadsheet prior to the meeting. At this time there were no questions arising regarding income or expenditure.

GF/26/057/b Review of the Council's Financial Management Procedures

There had been no changes, and therefore no review was needed at this time.

GF/26/057/c Review of Council's Community Infrastructure Levy priorities and expenditure

Members reviewed the current CIL position and discussed projects on the list. Cllr Hunter gave an update on the replacement shelter to be sited opposite Elton House News. Cllr Goodchild proposed that Cllr Hunter be given approval to continue with the project. Seconded by Cllr Cooke. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to give Cllr Hunter authorisation to continue with this project



Needham Market Town Council

Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246

<https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/>
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

GF/26/057/d Review of Council's policies

No policies were reviewed at this meeting

GF/26/057/e Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

Councillors reviewed the Risk Assessment document. It was noted that an item had now been included in the document.

GF/26/057/f Review of the Council's Reserves Position

There was no update on the reserves position at this time, the amount of monies held remains the same.

GF/26/057/g Review of the Council's Investment Strategy

There had been no changes, and therefore no review was needed at this time.

GF/26/058 To consider for recommendation to Town Council a Tree Management Policy

Councillors reviewed a draft Tree Management Policy that had been circulated ahead of the meeting. It was noted that the Council is responsible for a number of trees both on land which it owns and on land which is leased to it. Members discussed the importance of maintaining appropriate inspection records and ensuring that any tree works are undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor. It was considered that the Policy would support a consistent approach to tree management and agreed that an initial survey would assist in establishing a baseline assessment of tree stock. Cllr Hunter proposed that the policy be recommended to Full Town Council for adoption and that it also be recommended to engage with a suitably qualified contractor to commission an audit. Seconded by Cllr Goodchild. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to recommend adoption of the Tree Management Policy to Full Town Council and to recommend that a professional tree survey be commissioned to establish a baseline record of the Council's trees.

GF/26/059 To review a draft budget for the 2027/28 year

Councillors reviewed a draft budget for the 2027/28 financial year. Also included with the draft budget were comparison figures for previous years. Discussion took place regarding a number of significant increases across budget headings and the reasons for those changes, including the reassignment of costs to more appropriate budget lines and anticipated future expenditure requirements. It was agreed that any future increase



Needham Market Town Council

Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246

<https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/>
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

in the precept would need to be supported by clear justification and that residents should be able to understand the reasons for any increase in Council expenditure.

GF/26/060 To consider any items for inclusion in the 2027/28 budget

Members discussed potential future priorities for consideration within the 2027/28 budget. Discussion included the continued growth of the town and the potential impact this may have on demand for Council services, facilities and amenities. Members considered the importance of ensuring that future budgets reflect the needs of both existing and new residents. Consideration was given to the Town Council's role in supporting organisations that assist residents experiencing financial hardship and the importance of ensuring that such support continues to deliver benefit to the local community.

GF/26/061 To receive an update on the Register of Interests for Councillors

Members were reminded of their responsibility to ensure declarations remained accurate and up to date.

GF/26/062 To scrutinise any matters referred from, or to, The Council's Community and Assets Committee and/or Planning Committee

No matters were referred to this committee

GF/26/063 Matters to be raised by members

It was agreed that emergency planning arrangements and the role of the Town Council during significant incidents affecting the town should be included on a future agenda.

GF/26/064 To confirm the Date, Time and Location of the next Governance and Finance Committee Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, 1st December 2026 at 7PM in the Green Room of Needham Market Community Centre.

Meeting closed at 20:00

Chair.....

Date.....