DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday, 16 July 2026 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

Committee Members Present:	Cllr P Heinrich (Chairman)	Cllr R Macdonald (Vice-Chairman)
	Cllr M Batey	Cllr A Brown
	Cllr P Fisher	Cllr P Neatherway
	Cllr L Paterson	Cllr K Toye
	Cllr L Vickers	

Members attending:	Cllr C Cushing
Officers in Attendance:	Assistant Director – Planning Development Manager Solicitor Planning Officer (PO-NW) Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Regulatory Committees

12 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Fitch-Tillett, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr V Holliday and Cllr C Rouse.

13 SUBSTITUTES

None.

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 April, 14 May and 18 June 2026 were approved as a correct record, subject to minor grammatical amendments.

15 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr L Vickers declared a non-pecuniary interest for agenda items 8, 9, and 10 relating to 14 Market Place, Fakenham. She advised she would speak as Local Member only, and, per the Constitution, would not participate in the Committee debate or vote on the items.

17 FAKENHAM - PF/26/0688 - INSTALLATION OF NEW ATM IN PART OF EXISTING GROUND FLOOR WINDOW OPENING, AND ACCESSIBLE RAMP WITH RAILINGS AT 14 MARKET PLACE, FAKENHAM.

The Case Officer, PO-NW, introduced applications PF/26/0688, LA/26/0696 and ADV/26/0689 as a single presentation as all three applications collectively applied *for the installation of an internally illuminated ATM and accessible ramp with railings at 14 Market Place, Fakenham. The applications were voted upon separately.*

<u>Officers Report</u>

The Case Officer introduced the Officers' report and recommendation for refusal.

It was noted that the Local Ward Member called applications PF/26/0688 and LA/26/0696 to Committee but that application ADV/26/0689 was referred by the Development Manager, ensuring all three applications could be heard together.

Since the publication of the agenda, three further representations had been received in support. These argued the applications brought overwhelming public benefits through free access to cash, improved accessibility, the noted closure of other banking facilities in Fakenham, and the need for a cashpoint in the town centre which would in turn support both residents and businesses. These representations considered the applications would not cause significant harm to the character of the building and presented a practical solution.

The Case Officer identified the site's location, existing and proposed elevations and floor plans, and introduced images in and around the site. Details of the proposed machine and ramp were provided.

It was noted that an external wall mounted defibrillator had been previously permitted. It was considered that the lifesaving benefits of the defibrillator outweighed the heritage harm. This was therefore treated differently to an application for an ATM.

Officers recognised the scheme would bring public benefits in supporting the vitality and viability of Fakenham town centre, however cautioned that this must be balanced against the heritage harm arising as a result of the proposal on the Grade II listed Georgian building in the Fakenham Conservation Area. Whilst the Applicant, Nationwide, had publicly committed to keeping all of its branches open until 2030, it was not clear what would happen beyond the 2030 deadline. Officers considered, within this context, that any permission for an ATM could be regarded as more temporary in nature, as such, Officers tempered the weight afforded to the public benefits. Conversely, the works to the building could result in permanent and lasting damage to the Grade II listed building.

Alternate options had been discussed with the Applicant, which would go some way to reduce the level of harm, however these discussions were not fruitful. The Applicant considered concerns of damp could be mitigated by not having the ramp flush with the wall and had suggested they would be agreeable to safely storing the glass pane for installation at a later time when the ATM was no longer in use.

The Case Officer provided a map of Fakenham and identified all nearby ATMs and when they could be accessed. It was noted that there were alternate facilities within walking distance.

Highways Officers confirmed that they had no objection with the ATM, however, the presence of the ramp would be considered obstructive under The Highways Act 1980 and the only way that the proposal could go ahead would be for the developer to apply to the Department for Transport (DfT) for a Stopping Up Order under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act. This may make the proposal unachievable. Absent a Stopping Up Order, the highway matters would weigh against the grant of planning permission.

Officers concluded that the level of harm to the heritage assets carried greater weight and was not otherwise outweighed by the wider community benefits that the proposals may otherwise deliver.

Public Speakers

Jim Rockett – Supporting

Local Member

The Local Member, Cllr L Vickers, advised she called the applications to Committee on behalf of her residents and with the support of the Town Council, local businesses and Shop Fakenham.

The Local Member recognised this was a finely balanced application between perceived heritage harm and the economic benefits arising from the proposal.

Fakenham was identified as a large growth town within the adopted Local Plan, with an anticipated 900 new homes expected in coming years. Further, Fakenham served as the economic hub for many of the surrounding towns and villages. She affirmed that if services were taken away from town centres, people would be taken away from town centres, and with the loss of those people goes the economic well-being and vitality of the town.

Cllr L Vickers reflected that in recent years Fakenham had welcomed many independent, enterprising businesses, sold their wares and taught their craft, such businesses dealt predominantly with cash and had expressed their support for the ATM.

An application at this site had failed before, however the circumstances had materially changed since that refusal. Since the last application, four bank branches had closed.

Whilst there were other ATMs in Fakenham, these were not without issues. There was a cashpoint in the Community Centre, but this could only be accessed when the facility was open and involved an uphill walk from the town centre which was not practical for the elderly or disabled. The ATM at Tesco regularly ran out of money at weekends due to the level of demand.

Cllr L Vickers noted that should the application be approved, it may yet run into difficulties with the DfT due to the existing rights of way. Irrespective of the applications, the Local Member stated that the County Council needed to address the right of way issue.

Cllr L Vickers understood the position of the Conservation and Design team, and thanked them for their care, and genuine concerns. However, she felt, in this instance that the public benefit outweighed the heritage harm. She was satisfied that the level of harm would be tempered through safe storage and replacement of the glass, and restoration of the façade including the removal of the ramp.

Attending Member

Cllr C Cushing expressed his support for the application. He agreed with the Local Member that the public benefits outweighed the heritage harm.
He argued that there was a desperate need for a cashpoint in the Town Centre following the closure of four other banking facilities in recent years. Many residents and businesses had transferred banking to Nationwide as a result; it was prudent of the Council to support the application to ensure a banking presence in the Town.

Cllr C Cushing considered that cash remained the preferred method of payment for many households who were managing tight budgets. Further, the presence of a cashpoint in town would support local businesses and markets operating in the town.

He supported the Local Members' comments that the benefits would be felt beyond the Town of Fakenham and would be of benefit to the wider local community.

<u>Committee Debate</u>

a. The Committee noted the presence of alternate facilities in Fakenham. The Chairman asked if there was an existing cashpoint within the building. Cllr L Paterson asked if all the ATMs in the town offered free cash withdrawal. The PO-NW advised there was an ATM for Nationwide customers. The alternate ATMs in the town did not charge a withdrawal fee.

b. Cllr A Brown agreed with Cllr L Vickers and Cllr C Cushing that the public expectation was for a cashpoint in the town centre, especially given Fakenham's history as a market town and for the Fakenham Racecourse. There was undoubtably a legitimate public benefit in having an external ATM in the Market square. However, he recognised the Council has a duty to preserve and protect heritage assets within the district. This was therefore a case of balancing consumer convenience against conservation protection. Cllr A Brown felt, if the application were approved, that the restoration of the building should Nationwide vacate be tightly controlled, and welcomed the Applicant's offer to carefully remove and store the windows. Whilst he was minded to refuse the first two Officers' recommendations, as he felt the wider economic and public benefits outweighed the heritage harm, he agreed that advertisement application should be refused as it was not appropriate. Regardless, he recognised that were permission granted, the Stopping Up Order would be outstanding.

c. Cllr R Macdonald recognised the Stopping Up Order would potentially be an impediment to permission being built out.

d. The Council's solicitor clarified the ramp was not contained within the boundary map identified and therefore could not apply for an administrative order. The application would require a Stopping Up Order under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

e. The Development Manager explained that without the Stopping Up Order, any planning permission granted would be incapable of being implemented.

f. Cllr K Toye stated she was content with the offer that the window be removed and safely stored. She questioned what alternate locations had been considered, whether the owner of the building was content with the application, whether the ramp was sufficiently large to allow a turning circle, and whether the ramp was actually needed? She considered, on balance, the public benefits outweighed the heritage harm.

g. The Development Manager recognised this application was finely balanced and commended the Case Officer for her efforts to find a solution with the Applicant. The Development Manager expressed caution to the Committee and stated that whilst the ambition may be to store the window carefully, this could not be guaranteed. The risk, if permission were granted, was that long-lasting harm could be inflicted on the asset, and yet the public benefit of the ATM may only be in place until 2030.

h. Cllr L Paterson noted the Development Manager's concerns but felt that issues regarding the window could be dealt with by an appropriate condition. If, for whatever reason, the window was damaged in storage, it would be incumbent on the Applicant to provide a suitable replacement.

i. Cllr P Fisher proposed, seconded by Cllr K Toye, that the Officers' recommendation for refusal be approved.

RESOLVED

That Planning Application PF/26/0688 be REFUSED in accordance with the Officers' recommendation.

18 FAKENHAM - LA/26/0696- INSTALLATION OF ATM, ACCESSIBLE RAMP WITH A RAILING, INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED ATM SIGNAGE, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT 14 MARKET PLACE, FAKENHAM.

The Case Officer, PO-NW, introduced applications PF/26/0688, LA/26/0696 and ADV/26/0689 as a single presentation as all three applications collectively applied for the installation of an internally illuminated ATM and accessible ramp with railings at 14 Market Place, Fakenham. The applications were voted upon separately.

See Minute 17 (PF/26/0688) for details of the Committee debate relating to this application.

Cllr P Fisher proposed, seconded by Cllr K Toye, acceptance of the Officers' recommendation for refusal.

RESOLVED

That Planning Application LA/26/0696 be REFUSED in accordance with the Officers' recommendation.

19 FAKENHAM - ADV/26/0689 - INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED ATM COLLAR AT 14 MARKET PLACE, FAKENHAM.

The Case Officer, PO-NW, introduced applications PF/26/0688, LA/26/0696 and ADV/26/0689 as a single presentation as all three applications collectively applied for the installation of an internally illuminated ATM and accessible ramp with railings at 14 Market Place, Fakenham. The applications were voted upon separately.

See Minute 17 (PF/26/0688) for details of the Committee debate relating to this application.

Cllr P Fisher proposed, seconded by Cllr K Toye, acceptance of the Officers' recommendation for refusal.

RESOLVED

That Application ADV/26/0689 be REFUSED in accordance with the Officers' recommendation.

20 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Development Manager introduced the Performance Update Report. He affirmed that the quality of decisions remained very strong, and that the Planning Service were looking to improve the speed of decision-making.

21 APPEALS SECTION

The Development Manager introduced the appeals reports. He noted that determinations for enforcement appeals tended to be much slower.

Cllr L Paterson asked how long it may take for the Planning Inspectorate to come to a determination on PF/25/03. The Development Manager advised that the latest this should take was six months.

Cllr M Batey reflected that the appeal at Thornage Road had been ongoing 18 months without a determination. The Development Manager advised the Enforcement Team Leader was aware of this issue and had attempted to contact the Planning Inspectorate on a number of occasions to resolve the matter. Unfortunately, the Planning Inspectorate had not been receptive.

22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

The meeting ended at 10.25 am.

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Chairman