

Downham Market Town Council

Human Resources Committee Meeting

Held On Tuesday 22 September 2026 at 5:30pm

This meeting was held at Downham Market Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9DW

Present

Committee Members - Cllrs Cain, Daymond, B Moyses (Arrived 5:40pm), C Pyatt (Arrived 5:39pm) & Webb (5)

Town Clerk – Claire Dornan

There were no members of the public present.

In the absence of Cllr Pegg, the Vice Chair, Cllr Cain led the meeting. Cllr Cain reminded members of the evacuation procedures from the Clock Room.

Cllr Cain asked that all mobile phones be switched off or on silent.

1. To note apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Jordan (Work) & Cllr Pegg (Ill Health). These apologies were noted by members.

Cllr B Moyses and Cllr C Pyatt advised members that they were on route to the meeting and apologised in advance for being late.

2. To receive declarations of interest and consider requests for dispensations.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation made.

3. To approve the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 17 August 2026.

It was noted that there was a spelling mistake for one of the members names.

RESOLVED:

‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2026 be approved as a correct record subject to a spelling correction.’

Proposed – Cllr Daymond

Seconded –Cllr Cain

All in Favour

4. Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present and there was no correspondence to consider.

5. To consider a request from Cllr Campbell-Robb for the Town Council to adopt the Civility & Respect Pledge and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to Full Council.

The Chair reported that research had been undertaken into the Civility & Respect Pledge and that, at the time of the research, only six councils in Norfolk had adopted the pledge.

Members discussed the potential implications of adopting the pledge, including the additional time, resources and costs that may be involved, particularly in relation to working towards the Local Council Award Scheme. Members also noted that training would be required, but that the Town Council could not mandate councillors to attend training.

Members felt that treating others with civility and respect should already be an expectation of all Councillors and members of staff. It was considered that adopting a separate policy was not necessary where these principles are already shared values and are reflected within the existing Code of Conduct and employment requirements.

Following discussion, members did not consider that adopting the Civility & Respect Pledge would provide sufficient additional benefit to justify the potential additional work, time and resources involved.

Cllr C Pyatt arrived at 5:39pm.

Cllr B Moyses arrived at 5:40pm.

RESOLVED:

‘That the Human Resources Committee does not recommend adoption of the Civility & Respect Pledge, as the principles are already covered by the Code of Conduct and are considered to be shared values.’

Proposed – Cllr Webb

Seconded –Cllr Cain

All in Favour

6. To consider and, if appropriate, recommend the adoption of a Menopause Policy for Council employees.

Members considered the matter and reviewed the relevant GOV.UK guidance dated 4 March 2026. Members noted that the Council already provides a number of workplace adjustments, including flexible working hours, ergonomic office furniture, air conditioning and windows which can be opened to provide ventilation.

Members also noted that there is no separate staff rest room at the Town Hall. However, where the Town Hall is hired out, the Town Clerk’s office could be made available as a private rest area for short periods, where appropriate.

Following discussion, members did not consider that a separate Menopause Policy was necessary at this time, given the existing arrangements and ability to consider individual workplace adjustments.

7. To receive an update on the out-of-hours staff call-out trial.

The Committee received an update on the out-of-hours staff call-out trial.

On Sunday 9 August 2026 at 9:02am, a call-out was received in relation to a FOB failure. The Town Clerk attended and the contractor was on site. No financial claim was made.

On Friday 11 September 2026 at 11:37pm, a call-out was received following a fire alarm caused by an electrical failure. The Deputy Clerk and Caretaker attended and were paid for their time.

On Saturday 12 September 2026 at 8:57am, a further call-out was received following a fire alarm caused by an electrical failure. The Town Clerk was contacted by telephone and the Caretaker attended. No financial claim was made.

On Thursday 17 September 2026 at 2:57am, a call-out was received in relation to a battery fault. The Town Clerk received the call-out but did not attend. No financial claim was made.

8. To consider a request for work experience and the associated requirements.

Members considered the request and reviewed the relevant Government guidance dated 15 May 2023 regarding work experience, internships and the National Minimum Wage.

Members noted that work experience can provide an opportunity for an individual to gain an insight into working life and the working environment. It was also noted that work shadowing, where an individual is observing rather than carrying out work, does not fall within National Minimum Wage legislation.

Members noted the provisions relating to volunteers and that the Town Council, as a statutory body, may offer voluntary work experience where the appropriate requirements are met.

Members were supportive of providing work experience opportunities and agreed that any placement should be appropriately structured, supervised and in accordance with the relevant guidance and safeguarding requirements.

RESOLVED:

‘That the Human Resources Committee supports offering work experience opportunities, subject to appropriate arrangements being put in place by the Town Clerk.’

Proposed – Cllr Daymond

Seconded – Cllr Cain

All in Favour

9. To note the 2026/27 Local Government Pay Settlement and consider any implications for Council employees and the Council's staffing budget.

Members noted the SLCC notification dated 24 August 2026 confirming a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances, backdated to 1 April 2026.

Members noted that all current employees received their back pay in the September 2026 salary. The retired Deputy Clerk has subsequently applied for back pay, which will be processed in the October 2026 salary run.

The staffing budget was reviewed and members noted that expenditure is currently within the approved budget allocation.

10. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of confidential personnel matters.

RESOLVED:

"That the press and public be excluded from the meeting whilst confidential staffing matters are discussed."

Proposed – Cllr Cain

Seconded – Cllr Webb

All in Favour

The meeting went into confidentiality.

Confidential Items

10.1 To discuss staff welfare

Staff welfare was discussed.

10.2 To receive a report on staff sickness / absence

Members received the staff sickness report and discussed potential Occupational Health referrals, where appropriate.

10.3 To receive and consider staff appraisals, including any requests or recommendations arising from the appraisals which fall outside the Town Clerk's delegated authority.

Members discussed the staff appraisals.

10.4 To discuss staff training

Members were advised that the staff had completed Data Protection Training and had been issued Action Counters Terrorism training in preparation for Martyn's Law.

10.5 To consider current and future staffing requirements and workforce planning taking into account the confidential information received under items 11.1 to 11.4.

It was noted that the description of the agenda point should say 10.1 to 10.4.

Members noted that the Council continues to use contractors to cover staff absence.

The meeting came out of confidentiality.

11. To consider and determine matters arising from the confidential reports and staff appraisals, including current and future staffing requirements and personnel planning, within the Committee's delegated authority.

RESOLVED:

‘That the staff member who has taken on additional responsibilities be awarded an increase of two spinal column points, that the Caretaker’s hours remain unchanged and thanked for their offer, appropriate Occupational Health referrals be arranged by the Town Clerk, and an additional Human Resources Committee meeting be held on 29 September 2026 at 6:15pm to review the recent investigation and consider key learning points, feedback and actions arising.’

Proposed – Cllr C Pyatt

Seconded –Cllr Cain

All in Favour

The meeting closed at 7:02pm