

**Downham Market Town Council
Human Resources Committee Meeting
Tuesday 11 November 2025 at 6pm**

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

	<p>Present</p> <p>Committee Chair – Cllr Pegg</p> <p>Committee Members - Cllrs Daymond, Jordan, Sims (4)</p> <p>Town Clerk – Claire Dornan</p> <p>There were no members of the public present.</p>
Notes	<p>The meeting started at 6:28pm.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members of the evacuation procedures from the Clock Room. The Chair asked that all mobile phones be switched off or on silent.</p>
001	<p><u>To receive Members’ Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllrs Dickson and Pyatt (Ill Health)</p>
002	<p><u>To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>
003	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2025</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Jordan Seconded –Cllr Pegg</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.’</p> <p>3 In Favour</p> <p>1 Abstention – Cllr Sims (Not present at previous meeting)</p>
004	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 06 August 2025</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pegg Seconded –Cllr Daymond</p>

	<p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 August 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.’</p> <p>3 In Favour</p> <p>1 Abstention – Cllr Sims (Not present at previous meeting)</p>
005	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2025</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Sims Seconded –Cllr Daymond</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
006	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 06 November 2025</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Sims Seconded –Cllr Jordan</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 November 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
007	<p><u>To discuss and agree Terms of Reference for the HR Committee for approval by Full Council</u></p> <p>The Chair had circulated a draft of the Terms of Reference (ToR) to the Committee ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk presented a paper outlining the implications of adopting the ToR as drafted, particularly regarding delegated responsibilities.</p> <p>The Town Clerk requested the following clarifications and amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm in both documents that the Town Clerk manages staff on a day-to-day basis, while the HR Committee focuses on oversight, policy, and recommendations to Full Council.

- Add to the HR Committee ToR:
“The Committee shall not be involved in the day-to-day management of staff, which is the responsibility of the Town Clerk.”
- Include a cross-reference in both documents stating:
“These Terms of Reference shall be read in conjunction with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation.”

It was agreed that:

- The Town Clerk will manage the day-to-day operations of staff and the site, except in matters of grievances and disciplinary action.
- The Town Clerk is authorised to issue verbal warnings without prior reference to the HR Committee; a copy of the File Note will be provided to the Chair.
- The Town Clerk is authorised to suspend staff without prior reference to the HR Committee; a copy of the File Note will be provided to the Chair, and a HR Committee meeting will be convened to commence the investigation process as per disciplinary procedures. The Town Clerk will be involved in these processes unless the matter relates specifically to the Town Clerk.

Grievances

- The Human Resources Committee shall oversee the formal grievance process in accordance with the Council’s policies and relevant employment law, in conjunction with the Town Clerk, unless the grievance relates to the Town Clerk.
- Any formal grievance raised by staff must be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk or, if the grievance concerns the Town Clerk, directly to the Chair of the HR Committee.
- The HR Committee will review and monitor the grievance process to ensure it is conducted fairly, consistently, and in line with ACAS guidelines.
- The Town Clerk will manage the procedural aspects of grievances in all cases except where the grievance involves the Town Clerk.
- The HR Committee shall report the outcome of all formal grievances to Full Council, as appropriate.
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Amendments to the Terms of Reference were agreed as follows:

- Section C ‘Functions’:
Changed from:
“The Human Resources Committee will be responsible, in conjunction with the Clerk to the Council or other professional advisers, for:-”
To:
“The Human Resources Committee will be responsible for monitoring, in cooperation with the Clerk to the Council or other professional advisers, for:-”
- Additional functions:
 - Ensure staff attend mandatory training and review all training requests.
 - In the event of long-term absence of the Clerk, review day-to-day management while cover is agreed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair to review references. ● Section F 'Responsibility of Members': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e) Attend all mandatory training given to them → Attend all training given to them ○ f) Where necessary, adhere to ACAS codes of practice → Adhere to ACAS codes of practice <p>Proposed: Cllr Sims Seconded: Cllr Pegg</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>That the amended Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee be recommended to Full Council for adoption.</p> <p>All in favour</p>																																				
008	<p><u>To discuss and agree the HR Committee budget requirements for 2026/2027 for approval by Full Council</u></p> <p>Members discussed the following budget lines:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="323 974 1214 1610"> <thead> <tr> <th>Budget Line</th> <th>Budget</th> <th>Projected at 31 March 2026</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Salaries</td> <td>£305,709.03</td> <td>circa £291,000*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pension</td> <td>£61,341.70</td> <td>circa £59,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Training</td> <td>£5,500</td> <td>circa £5,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Occupational Health</td> <td>£2,200</td> <td>Unknown at present</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HR Advice</td> <td>£3,126.55</td> <td>used in full</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Payroll Platform</td> <td>£200</td> <td>circa £155</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Uniform</td> <td>£1,100</td> <td>circa £500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel & Expenses**</td> <td>£550</td> <td>circa £300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Refreshments</td> <td>£550</td> <td>circa £250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recruitment</td> <td>£1,100</td> <td>circa £0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Vacancy Expenses</td> <td>£1,100</td> <td>circa £0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Salaries are based on information available up to 31 October 2025 and include an average of circa 12 hours per month overtime for the Deputy Clerk to cover events.</p> <p>**In conjunction with request from Planning Committee.</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that the Summary of Receipts and Payments contained an error within the line for Cllr Vacancy Expenses, reporting a receipt totalling £694.01. This is an administrative error relating to receipts 294, 387, 472 & 808, which should all be recorded against Town Hall Income.</p> <p>Members discussed the suggestion of establishing a separate email account for Human Resources matters, which had been raised at a previous meeting. The Town Clerk</p>	Budget Line	Budget	Projected at 31 March 2026	Salaries	£305,709.03	circa £291,000*	Pension	£61,341.70	circa £59,000	Training	£5,500	circa £5,300	Occupational Health	£2,200	Unknown at present	HR Advice	£3,126.55	used in full	Payroll Platform	£200	circa £155	Uniform	£1,100	circa £500	Travel & Expenses**	£550	circa £300	Refreshments	£550	circa £250	Recruitment	£1,100	circa £0	Cllr Vacancy Expenses	£1,100	circa £0
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advised that no information can be considered fully confidential, as all information is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other relevant legislation. All communications should be sent with this in mind.

It was noted that if the Town Clerk were not to have access, a member of the HR Committee would need to be responsible for managing access to all data. The Town Clerk cannot be denied access while also being responsible for fulfilling legal obligations, including requests under the Freedom of Information Act, by the police, or other statutory authorities.

The Town Clerk clarified that she does not currently have routine access to Councillor emails. Councillors are normally requested to provide information, as occurred when Cllr Pegg made a Freedom of Information request. However, if such a request were ignored or refused, the Town Clerk would then obtain access to fulfil legal obligations. Any access requests made to Norfolk Computer Services would generate an audit record.

It was decided not to pursue this further, and no budget has been allocated for a separate email account.

Members discussed a previous suggestion regarding a lockable cabinet for Human Resources documents. It was noted that, currently, HR data is being stored in a lockable cabinet at Cllr Pegg's home address.

The Town Clerk advised that she could purchase a lockable cabinet for secure storage in her office, with keys held by the Chair of the HR Committee and another nominated Committee member.

It was acknowledged that data retention periods must be maintained. Accordingly, every April, the two key holders would be invited into the office to review the contents of the cabinet and shred any documents as necessary. The members would sign for the key and confirm that all information contained within the cabinet is strictly for business purposes.

It was agreed that there should be no increase in the budget request for 2026/2027, as there is sufficient movement within existing allocations to cover additional staff, overtime, and business needs. It was also noted that unions are still negotiating salary uplifts for 2026/2027.

Proposed: Cllr Pegg Seconded: Cllr Sims

It was resolved:

'That the Human Resources Committee budget for 2026/2027 should remain the same as the 2025/2026 budget and be recommended to Full Council for adoption.'

All in favour

009	<p><u>Confidential Items</u></p> <p>To consider a resolution (under the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960) to exclude members of the public and press</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pegg Seconded –Cllr Sims</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That members of the press and public be excluded whilst information pertaining to staff matters are discussed.’</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>The meeting went into confidentiality.</p>
009.1	<p><u>To discuss staff matters</u></p> <p>Members discussed a Spinal Column Point review for staff working regularly past 9pm.</p> <p>Members discussed the current call-out arrangements, including the rate of pay, with the Town Clerk. Members expressed concern about the Town Clerk attending call-outs alone and noted that there is currently no agreed procedure. It was agreed that this arrangement would be reviewed further following consultation with other staff regarding their availability and willingness to participate. In the meantime, Cllr Sims offered to attend call-outs with the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The meeting came out of confidentiality.</p>
010	<p><u>To agree actions required following discussions within confidentiality</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pegg Seconded –Cllr Sims</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the spinal column point for a member of staff be increased by two points with immediate effect, within the existing pay banding for the role.’</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pegg Seconded –Cllr Sims</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>“The call-out rates shall be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 times the standard salary rate for call-outs between 8:00 pm and midnight • 2 times the standard salary rate for call-outs between midnight and 8:00 am

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minimum of 2 hours' pay for any call-out <p>These rates apply to any officer required to respond to a call-out.”</p> <p>All in favour</p>
	Meeting closed: 7:40pm
	SIGNED
	DATE