

Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday 9 December 2025

Time: 7:00 PM

Venue: Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market PE38 9DW

Present

Chair: The Mayor, Cllr Michael Lane

Councillors: Cain, Campell -Robb, Daymond, Hobbs, Jordan, Leach, Lewis, Leivers, B Moyses, S Moyses, Wiles, Pegg, Perkin, C Pyatt, J Pyatt & Sims. (17)

Tina Griffin (Deputy Clerk)

2 Members of the public at the start of the meeting

The Chair reminded all present of the emergency evacuation procedure and of the need to keep phones on silent.

1. To Note Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Brewer (ill health) and Cllr Dickson (work commitments)

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider requests for Dispensations.

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

No declarations were made.

3. Public Participation

A member of the public asked a series of questions:

- Why has this matter become so urgent?
- A meeting in September confirmed Croner until the end of the contract, why is this different now?
- When and who authorised the Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd contract and invoice?
- Accusations have previously been made about unlawful actions, and been proved wrong, but is this not unlawful?
- Shouldn't contracts be awarded on tender, not on the whim of a Cllr?

He also expressed a hope that the discussions would be open so that the public can see how Council has come to this point, otherwise it will appear that there is something to hide.

Following a request from Cllr Wiles, Council considered a resolution (under the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960) to exclude members of the public and press. The Mayor was of the opinion that the matters under discussion did not require the meeting to go into

confidence, however he reluctantly allowed a vote.

Resolved: That members of the press and public be excluded whilst commercially sensitive information is discussed.'

The meeting went into confidentiality and members of the public left the meeting.

Discussions took place that covered both item 4 and 5.

Cllr Pegg outlined the reasons for the motions under items 4 and 5 including:

There is an urgent need to conclude a long standing, ongoing investigation for the sake of everyone involved and that the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure 2.3 states that "The HR Committee will appoint an investigator who will be independent and may be an external consultant to ensure the investigation is fair and reasonable." Cllr Pegg, as chair of HR Committee, had taken responsibility for contracting with Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd on this basis.

Cllrs have not seen evidence that the contract with Croner Group has been amended to confirm that notice to terminate was effected in July 2022.

Members also discussed:

- The potential loss of Croner Group training modules and the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Whether Croner Group had been approached to assist with casework.
- The terms of a contract with Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd being on a monthly basis, or a longer term arrangement if required.
- Whether the four alternative HR consultancies presented to Full Council on 9.9.25 item 16 had been considered, as it had been decided to wait until the end of the Croner Group contract to discuss the alternatives.

The Mayor took the meeting out of confidentiality as all potentially commercially sensitive matters had been discussed. Members of the public were invited to rejoin the meeting and recording recommenced.

4. To terminate the contract with Croner HR forthwith and abide by the terms of the contract with regard to termination.

Resolved: To terminate the contract with Croner HR forthwith and abide by the terms of the contract with regard to termination.

5. To secure the services of Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd, Retained Services, on a monthly basis as per their Services to Town and Parish Councils.

Resolved: To secure the services of Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd, Retained Services, on a monthly basis as per their Services to Town and Parish Councils.

An amendment to the motion was proposed.

Resolved: To include a formal review of the contract at 6 months and cancellation arrangements as part of the agreement.

Proposed Cllr Lane Seconded Cllr Sims All in favour

6. To adopt the revised and updated Terms of Reference (TOR) for the HR Committee.
Cllr Pegg advised that these had been drawn up with the approval of the Town Clerk.

Resolved: To adopt the revised and updated Terms of Reference (TOR) for the HR Committee.

7. To authorise payment of the invoice from Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd for services to HR Committee.

Cllr Pegg confirmed he had signed the terms and conditions for the work and admitted there had been a delay in submitting the invoice for payment.

Resolved: To authorise payment of the invoice from Personnel Advice and Solutions Ltd for services to HR Committee.

Proposed Cllr Pegg Seconded Cllr Jordan 15 in favour, 1 against

The Mayor closed the meeting and confirmed the next Full Council meeting would be on 13 January 2026.

End