

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 30 April 2026

Time: 6:30 PM

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

Present

Councillors Brewer, Campbell-Robb, Dickson, Grover, Jordan, Lane, Leivers & Pegg (8)

Non-Committee Members – Councillor Wiles

Claire Dornan (Town Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

1. Welcome, Apologies, and Health & Safety Notices

To receive apologies for absence.

To note the location of fire exits.

To remind attendees that mobile phones should be switched to silent.

Apologies were noted for Councillor Perkin due to a family commitment.

The Chair reminded members of the Health & Safety requirements.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of personal or pecuniary interests relating to items on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Public Participation

Members of the public may speak on matters on the agenda (maximum of 3 minutes per person, at the Chair's discretion).

There were no members of the public present.

4. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2026.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2026 are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer Seconded: Cllr Dickson All In Favour

5. Terms of Reference

To review the draft Terms of Reference for the Committee.

To discuss and agree any amendments.

To recommend the Terms of Reference to Full Council for formal adoption.

Cllr Leivers asked that the word oversea be changed to oversee.

It was agreed to change the Health & Safety, Risk and Governance checks from 6 monthly to quarterly.

It was agreed to change the salary, pensions, PAYE and 10% payments check from quarterly to monthly.

Members discussed whether procurement checks should be within the remit of the Committee however it was agreed that checks and balances should be completed. The wording was changed from 'To ensure all contracts, leases and licences **are issued** in accordance with procurement legislation and Council Policy' to 'To ensure all contracts, leases and licences **issued are** in accordance with procurement legislation and Council Policy.'

Resolved: That the amended draft Terms of Reference for the Committee be recommended to Full Council for approval.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer Seconded: Cllr Campbell-Robb All In Favour

The Chair changed the order of the agenda and item 12 was brought forward.

12.Audit

12.1 To note the scheduled Internal Audit – Thursday 21 May 2026.

The Chair reported that correspondence had been received from a Councillor raising concerns regarding a contract signed by members of the HR Committee rather than the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk. The correspondence queried whether appropriate due diligence had been undertaken and whether this constituted a breach of the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Town Clerk sought clarification as to whether Officers should sign the contract for the Employee Assistance Programme, noting that it was a rolling 30-day agreement, or whether the HR Committee was managing the matter.

Cllr Pegg confirmed that the Town Clerk should arrange a demonstration with the provider and, subject to satisfaction with the service, would be authorised to enter into a rolling 30-day contract at a cost of £145 per month.

Cllr Leivers queried whether the Council required a more in-depth internal audit for 2026/2027. Members discussed this and indicated that the scope of the internal audit would be reviewed at the Committee meeting in July 2026.

Following extended discussion, the meeting was suspended for 10 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 7:29 pm.

12.2 To receive an update on the AGAR for 2025/2026.

The Town Clerk advised that the Administrator was completing the final checks on the Asset Register.

The Chair brought forward Agenda Item 10.

10. Financial Matters

10.1 Receive the Bills for Payment schedule.

It was noted that Cllr Wiles had approved an item from the Mayor's Budget. This was identified as a potential conflict of interest and it was agreed that such situations should be avoided in future.

Resolved: That payments 729–871 from the 2025/2026 financial year and payments 1–37 from the 2026/2027 financial year be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer Seconded: Cllr Dickson All In Favour

10.2 Receive the Receipts schedule.

Resolved: That receipts 1129–1324 from the 2025/2026 financial year and receipts 1–71 from the 2026/2027 financial year be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Lane Seconded: Cllr Campbell-Robb All In Favour

10.3 Receive the Q4 VAT report.

Resolved: That the Q4 VAT report be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Lane Seconded: Cllr Campbell-Robb All In Favour

6. Financial Regulations

To review the draft Financial Regulations

To discuss and agree any amendments.

To recommend the Financial Regulations for formal adoption.

Members reviewed the NALC Model Financial Regulations for Local Councils line by line, up to and including Section 6.

7. Standing Orders

To review the draft Standing Orders

To discuss and agree any amendments.

To recommend the Standing Orders for formal adoption.

This item was not considered due to insufficient time.

8. Policy Schedule

To review the Policy Schedule referred by Full Council on 14 April 2026.

To agree review priority and process for review.

This item was not considered due to insufficient time.

9. Risk Register

To discuss the draft Risk Register submitted by Cllr Sims.

To discuss and agree any amendments.

To recommend the Risk Register for formal adoption.

This item was not considered due to insufficient time.

11. Training

To note the scheduled Finance Training – Thursday 14 May 2026.

This item was not considered due to insufficient time.

13. Next Meeting

To agree the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 6.00 pm.

Meeting closed: 8:30 PM