

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Meeting

Date: Wednesday 03 December 2025

Time: 6:00 PM

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

Present

Chair – Cllr Hobbs

Councillors Brewer, Dickson, Lane, Perkin

Claire Dornan (Town Clerk)

There was 1 member of the public present.

The Chair reminded members to place mobile phones on silent and outlined the fire evacuation procedures.

1. To note apologies for absence

All members were present.

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

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025

The Town Clerk was asked to amend the spelling of “duel” to “dual” under agenda items 7.2 and 7.4. This was completed electronically at the meeting prior to the resolution being made.

It was noted that under agenda item 10 the word “adverse” should be amended to “averse”.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025 be approved, as amended, as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Hobbs Seconded: Cllr Dickson

Vote: All in favour

4. To review Standing Orders and make recommendations to Full Council

The review of Standing Orders was still in progress by the Town Clerk and therefore the Committee did not review Standing Orders at this meeting.

5. To review Financial Regulations and make recommendations to Full Council

Members reviewed the Financial Regulations approved on 14 January 2025 and amended on 01 April 2025.

Members discussed the Property Committee request to approve expenditure up to £10,000 without Full Council approval. Concerns were raised that some items had recently been approved outside existing regulations, including the Skate Park removal where no budget had been set. Members felt that increasing the approval level would increase financial risk to the Council.

Members agreed they could not recommend approval of this amendment to Full Council. Members proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations which the Town Clerk will draft.

The following amendments were suggested:

The word council to be changed to Council throughout the document.

1.5 – Clarify that the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control before the end of June each year.

1.13 – Add reference to the RFO's authority to write off debts up to £100.

1.14 – Amend relevant committee to Human Resources Committee.

2.2 – Amend cheque signatory to Bank Signatory and Finance Committee to Full Council.

2.10 – Amend all councillors to Full Council.

3.2 – Amend Finance Committee to Full Council.

4.2 – Amend council to Full Council and refer to Governance Committee (Overspend Referral Procedure).

4.3 – Add that earmarked reserves can be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.4 – Remove reference to 'a hard copy schedule' and replace with 'minuted.'

4.8 – Review management of Car Park reserves.

5.1 – Add "and/or Enhanced DBS".

5.2 – Amend Chairman to Chair.

5.5 a), b), c) – Remove the words "appropriate" and "or duly authorised committee".

5.6 – Remove "signed by the Mayor" and add "two Bank Signatories".

5.10 – Remove "in writing".

6.2 and 6.3 – Remove reference to a duly delegated committee.

6.4 – Remove "or committee" and change "an officer" to "RFO or Deputy Clerk".

6.7 – Remove paragraph regarding banker's standing order.

6.8 – Remove paragraph regarding BACS or CHAPS.

6.9 – Amend to reflect that Norfolk Computer Services hold device passwords.

6.10 – Remove reference to authorisation in writing.

6.11 – Add reference to cloud back-ups held by Norfolk Computer Services.

6.13 – Remove "or finance committee in writing".

6.14 – Remove "corporate credit card or".

7.1 – Change "duly delegated" to "Human Resources".

7.3 – Change "the Green Book" to "Unison".

- 7.7 – Change HR Committee to Full Council.
 - 8.3 – Amend Chairman to Chair.
 - 9.8 – Change “at least annually” to “quarterly”.
 - 9.9 – Remove this paragraph.
 - 10.1 – Amend to “purchase order”, remove reference to inappropriate orders, and add “on the Council’s accounting system”.
 - 10.2 – Remove this paragraph.
 - 10.3 – Cross reference with the Procurement Policy.
 - 11.1 v – Amend Chairman to Chair.
 - 11.1 d – Remove this paragraph.
 - 11.1 f and h – Cross reference with the Procurement Policy.
 - 14.4 – Ensure capital letters for Full Council.
 - 14.5 – Remove reference to health and safety inspection.
 - 18.2 – Remove this paragraph.
- Add the Pecuniary Interest Template to the Financial Regulations.

Add a paragraph requiring Full Council approval and receipt of all relevant paperwork where a subcontractor is proposed, prior to work commencing.

Add a paragraph requiring contractor to be responsible for the lawful management, removal, and disposal of all waste arising from the works, including the provision and retention of all required Waste Transfer Notes in accordance with current legislation.

Meeting closed: 7:20 pm