

Downham Market Town Council
Human Resources Committee Meeting
Thursday 11 June 2026 at 6pm

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

Present

Committee Chair – Cllr Pegg

Committee Members - Cllrs Daymond, Jordan, C Pyatt & Webb (5)

Town Clerk – Claire Dornan

There were no members of the public present.

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.

1. To note apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Cain (Holiday) & Cllr B Moyses (Personal)

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

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. To approve the minutes of the meetings, 20th March 2026, 6th May 2026, 27th May 2026.

RESOLVED:

‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2026, 06 May 2026 & 27 May 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.’

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Daymond

All in Favour

4. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

5. Update on GDPR policy

The Committee received an update regarding the Council's GDPR policy. Members discussed the current policy and noted that GDPR training for all Members is scheduled to take place on 16 June 2026 at 6:00pm. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to review the policy further following completion of the training session.

6. Update on Privacy Policy

The Committee received an update regarding the Council's privacy policy. Members discussed the current policy and considered the importance of ensuring that it remains up to date and compliant with current legislative and operational requirements.

Members were of the view that it would be prudent to obtain advice from the Council's HR consultant before undertaking any further review or amendment of the policy.

This item was noted and will be considered further following receipt of professional advice.

7. To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

RESOLVED:

'That members of the press and public be excluded whilst information pertaining to staff matters are discussed.'

Proposed – Cllr Daymond

Seconded – Cllr Jordan

All in Favour

The meeting went into confidentiality.

8. Confidential item – Staff Matters

Sickness absence

The Committee considered an individual's sickness absence. Members noted the circumstances and the need for appropriate support and assessment.

Occupational Health Report

The Committee considered an Occupational Health Report. Members noted the contents of the report and the recommendations made.

Trial working arrangement

The Committee considered the current trial working arrangement relating to a revised working pattern. Members noted that the trial period is due to conclude on 30 June 2026 and that the arrangement have been operating effectively to date in terms of operational delivery. The Committee agreed that the arrangement of 32 hours per week over 4 days has proven to be effective in meeting service needs.

Project support

The Committee considered proposals regarding the potential engagement of an officer on a short-term, flexible basis to support the Council with specific project work during a transitional period. Members noted the value of retaining experience to support key civic events, including the Remembrance Parade and Christmas Lights Switch On.

Cleaning services

The Committee considered arrangements for the provision of cleaning services. Members noted that, due to an extended period of staff absence, a cleaning contractor has been engaged to ensure continuity of service provision and to maintain appropriate standards of cleaning across Council premises. Members considered proposals to formalise the arrangement on a self-employed contract for services basis.

Christmas 2026

The Committee considered arrangements for the Christmas 2026 period. Members agreed that the Council office be closed during the period between Christmas and New Year.

Out-of-hours arrangements

The Committee considered proposals in relation to the Council's out-of-hours arrangements. Members noted that caretakers routinely undertake opening and closing duties and are often best placed to respond to issues arising outside normal office hours. It was further noted that a security firm had been approached regarding provision of an out-of-hours response service; however, the firm advised that a charge of £180 per call-out would apply. Considering the above, the Committee considered the introduction of a formal on-call rota.

Member conduct and media policy concerns

The Committee considered a report from the Town Clerk in relation to recent communications and potential breaches of Council policy. Members acknowledged concerns regarding compliance with the Council's Media Policy and the potential reputational risk and impact on staff wellbeing. It was further noted that the matter relates to information which is not yet in the public domain. Members noted that the Council does not have authority to impose sanctions on elected Members, and that such matters must be considered through the appropriate standards process by the Monitoring Officer.

Human Resource Committee budget

The Committee considered the current Human Resource Committee budget and associated expenditure pressures. Members noted that the HR advice budget is currently £3,126.55 and that increased demand for professional HR support has been identified. Members further noted that the salary budget of £305,709.03 does not fully reflect additional expenditure arising from extended staff sickness, absence and associated cover requirements.

HM Revenue and Customs mileage allowance

The Committee considered a report on HMRC mileage allowance rates, including the potential increase in the approved mileage allowance payment from 45p to 55p per mile.

Resolutions – Outside of Confidentiality

Sickness absence

RESOLVED:

That an occupational health referral be arranged by the Town Clerk in respect of the individual concerned.

Proposed – Cllr Jordan Seconded –Cllr Webb All in Favour

Occupational Health Report

RESOLVED:

That a meeting be arranged between the individual and the Town Clerk, with support from Cllr Cain, to discuss the findings of the occupational health report and any appropriate next steps.

Proposed – Cllr Jordan Seconded –Cllr Webb All in Favour

Trial working arrangement

RESOLVED:

- 1. That subject to the successful completion of the trial period ending 30 June 2026, the revised working pattern of 32 hours per week over 4 days be confirmed as a permanent contractual arrangement with effect from 1 July 2026; and**
- 2. That a formal variation to the employee’s contract be prepared and issued accordingly.**

Proposed – Cllr Jordan Seconded –Cllr Webb All in Favour

Project support

RESOLVED:

- 1. That a fixed-term zero hours contract be offered for the period 1 July 2026 to 31 March 2027, subject to formal contract documentation;**
- 2. That the rate of pay be SCP 30 in accordance with the Council’s pay structure;**
- 3. That the arrangement be for project support work as required by the Council, with no guarantee of hours; and**
- 4. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to issue the formal contract in accordance with Council approval.**

Proposed – Cllr Jordan Seconded –Cllr Webb All in Favour

Cleaning services**RESOLVED:**

1. That a continued arrangement be entered into with the contractor on a self-employed basis at a rate of £20.00 per hour, with effect from 1 July 2026;
2. That the arrangement comprises a regular weekly provision of 8 hours, preferably on a Monday, split as follows:
 - 4 hours at the Town Hall; and
 - 4 hours at the JCC;
3. That the weekly arrangement sits alongside the existing hours previously agreed in June, which will continue as currently arranged; and
4. That the key terms of the arrangement be approved.

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Webb

All in Favour

Christmas 2026**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council office close at 12:00 noon on Thursday 24 December 2026 and re-open at 9:00am on Monday 4 January 2027;
2. That additional time off be granted as detailed within the report;
3. That officers required to work scheduled markets be granted appropriate time off in lieu; and
4. That the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk remain on call throughout the closure period.

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Webb

All in Favour

Out-of-hours arrangements**RESOLVED:**

1. That a formal on-call rota be introduced for the caretaker team on a one week on / one week off basis;
2. That during on-call weeks, officers be available to respond to out-of-hours issues alongside either the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk;
3. That an on-call allowance be introduced of £10 per day (Monday to Friday) and £25 per day (Saturday and Sunday), payable irrespective of whether a call-out is made;
4. That where an officer is on annual leave, on-call duties be covered by another member of staff;

5. That the on-call allowance be calculated manually monthly according to periods on call; and
6. That call-out payments continue to be paid in accordance with the arrangements approved by the Human Resources Committee on 11 November 2025.

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Webb

All in Favour

Member conduct and media policy concerns

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair of the Human Resources Committee be authorised to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for consideration under the Member Code of Conduct; and
2. That the importance of safeguarding staff wellbeing during the ongoing process be reaffirmed.

Proposed – Cllr Pegg

Seconded –Cllr Daymond

All in Favour

Human Resource Committee budget

RESOLVED:

That the following be recommended to Full Council for approval:

1. The HR advice budget be increased from £3,126.55 to £10,000; and
2. The salary budget be increased from £305,709.03 to £320,000.

Proposed – Cllr Pegg

Seconded –Cllr Daymond

All in Favour

HM Revenue and Customs mileage allowance

RESOLVED:

That the Council's mileage allowance rates remain unchanged at:

- 45p per mile for business mileage; and
- an additional 5p per mile for each authorised passenger travelling on Council business.

Proposed – Cllr Pegg

Seconded –Cllr Daymond

All in Favour

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30 June 2026 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 19:59.