

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday 03 February 2026

Time: 6:30 PM

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

Present

Councillors Brewer, Lane & Perkin

Non-Committee Members – Councillors Grover & Sims

Claire Dornan (Town Clerk)

There was no member of the public present.

1. To note apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Dickson due to Downham Town Football Club commitments, where he is Secretary.

2. To receive declarations of interest and consider any requests for dispensations

There were no declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

3. To approve the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 21 January 2026

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer

Seconded: Cllr Perkin

Vote: All in favour

4. To undertake a further review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and agree whether to amend the recommendation previously made to Full Council (meeting on 10 February 2026)

Members undertook a further review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and considered whether to amend the recommendation previously made to Full Council (meeting on 10 February 2026).

It was noted that the Terms of Reference did not include the ability to co-opt members into Committee vacancies, which is available to other Committees.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference recommended to Full Council on 10 February 2026 include the ability to co-opt members onto the Committee when vacancies arise.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer

Seconded: Cllr Perkin

Vote: All in favour

5. To review relevant policies affected by the resignation of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and make recommendations to Full Council where appropriate

Members reviewed the following policies:

- Scheme of Delegation
- Business Continuity Plan
- Performance Appraisal Policy
- Filming, Audio-Recording, Photography and Reporting of Committee and Council Meetings
- Policy on Dealing with Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints
- Granting the Honorary Freedom of the Town
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Recruitment
- Sickness and Absence

It was noted that where a casual vacancy arises under Section 88 of the Local Government Act 1972, and where the Council chooses not to elect a new Mayor or where the Deputy Mayor steps down, the above policies are affected.

RESOLVED: That where the terms Mayor or Deputy Mayor appear within policies, the terms Chair and Vice Chair be added so that the wording is interchangeable and avoids confusion.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer

Seconded: Cllr Lane

Vote: All in favour

It was further noted that under section 9.1 of the Business Continuity Plan, reference to 15 Paradise Road should be removed following the sale of the property in 2025.

Members requested that the Town Clerk seek information from Bedford Council regarding their HR support to BCKLWN and the availability of independent arbitration.

6. To consider and agree a recommendation regarding requests from the media for statements

Members considered four recent requests for media statements where the Town Clerk had chosen not to issue a statement on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that this approach was appropriate.

It was noted that at least one Councillor had endorsed a news article by “liking” a post on social media. Members agreed that the Media Policy should be reviewed.

It was further noted that the Media Policy currently refers only to Facebook, whereas the Council uses additional social media platforms.

RESOLVED: That the following amendments be recommended to Full Council for inclusion in the Media Policy:

- Councillors should be mindful of endorsing any social media posts unless it is clear that the endorsement is of a personal nature and not made in their capacity as a Councillor.
- Replace references to Facebook with Social Media.

Proposed: Cllr Brewer

Seconded: Cllr Perkin

Vote: All in favour

Date of next meeting: 26 February 2026 at 7:00 pm

Meeting closed: 7:29pm