

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting

Date: Monday 23 March 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

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

Present

Councillors Brewer, Campbell-Robb (Arrived 6:11 PM), Dickson, Grover, Jordan, Lane, Leivers, Pegg (Left 6:45 PM) & Perkin

Non-Committee Members – Councillor Wiles

Claire Dornan (Town Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

1. Election of Chair

Elect the Chair of the Committee.

Cllr Perkin proposed Cllr Brewer and Cllr Grover seconded the proposal.

Cllr Leivers proposed Cllr Pegg and Cllr Jordan seconded the proposal.

The majority of members agreed that a paper vote would take place.

Cllr Brewer received 5 votes. Cllr Pegg received 3 votes.

Cllr Brewer was elected Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

2. Welcome, Apologies, and Health & Safety Notices

Receive apologies for absence.

Note the location of fire exits.

Reminder Mobile phones should be switched to silent.

Apologies were received from Cllr Campbell-Robb who was running late due to public transport delays.

Cllr Pegg stated that he would have to leave at 6:45 PM as he had a Downham West Parish Meeting at 7pm.

Cllr Brewer gave the location of the fire exits and explained the meeting point.

Cllr Brewer asked that mobiles and smart watches be switched to silent.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal or pecuniary interests relating to items on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Election of Vice Chair

Elect the Vice Chair of the Committee.

Resolved: That Cllr Pegg is elected Vice Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Leivers Seconded: Cllr Jordan All In Favour

5. Public Participation

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

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Cllr Wiles did not wish to speak but was invited to the table by Cllr Brewer.

6. Terms of Reference

Review the draft Terms of Reference for the Committee.

Discuss and agree any amendments.

Recommend the Terms of Reference to Full Council for formal adoption.

It was suggested by Cllr Leivers that:

The purpose of the Committee should be to oversee the day-to-day corporate governance and financial administration of the Town Council.

That meetings should be held as required. The Town Clerk noted that Bank Reconciliations must be received monthly to meet insurance requirements.

That compliance checks should be completed as required, and at least quarterly.

That policies should be reviewed by the Committees to which they relate and that this Committee only pick up the Policies which do not fit with a Committee.

That insurance be reviewed by Full Council.

That Internal Auditor meetings should be in the presence of the Chair / Mayor or Vice Chair / Deputy Mayor and 1 member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

That all property related tenders, leases, licences and annual contracts be reviewed by Property Committee and not form part of the Finance & General Purposes Committee remit.

That all property related hire costs, services, fees for use of Council assets should be reviewed by Property Committee and not form part of the Finance & General Purposes Committee remit.

Members agreed that the Terms of Reference should be drafted by the Town Clerk on this basis and presented to Full Council on 14 April 2026.

Cllr Campbell–Robb joined the meeting during the discussion.

7. Schedule of Meetings

Agree dates for future meetings.

Members agreed that meetings should be arranged, where possible, on a Thursday starting at 6:30 PM to allow those that work or attend college to attend.

Cllr Pegg left the meeting.

8. Priority Areas

Discuss and agree the Committee's key priority areas for 2026.

Cllr Leivers asked that the following policies be reviewed by Council as a matter of urgency:

Standing Orders – Draft from Governance & Finance Committee to be circulated.
 Financial Regulations - Draft from Governance & Finance Committee to be circulated.
 Cllr Expectations Policy – To be reviewed by Human Resources Committee.
 Compassionate Leave Policy – To be reviewed by Human Resources Committee.
 Document Retention Policy - To be reviewed by Finance & General Purposes Committee.
 Social Media Policy - To be reviewed by Finance & General Purposes Committee.
 Worker Protection Policy – To be reviewed by Human Resources Committee.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would circulate the Policy spreadsheet to Full Council with suggestions for which Committee take responsibility for each Policy and obtain approval at the meeting on 14 April 2026.

Members agreed that finance training should be a priority and asked that it be arranged face-to-face in an evening to allow all members to attend. It was agreed that Norfolk Parish Training and Support be asked to supply the training.

It was noted that the Insurance tender requires progression as the policy renewal is due in July 2026. Cllrs considered the Committee managing a tender, a working party managing the tender or the Town Clerk writing the tender, issuing the tender and assessing the tender

along with the Chair / Mayor of the Council, Vice Chair / Deputy Mayor of the Council and the Deputy Clerk. The latter was agreed.

Cllr Grover asked that members consider updating the standing orders to clarify:

1. Minutes of Committee meetings shall be approved for accuracy by the Committee itself, in accordance with Schedule 12, paragraph 41 of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. At Full Council, Committee minutes shall be formally received or noted.
3. Any recommendations or decisions arising from Committee meetings requiring Full Council approval shall be placed on the Full Council agenda as separate items. Discussion and voting on these matters shall occur only under those agenda items.
4. The purpose of receiving minutes at Full Council is purely to acknowledge the record; no debate or voting on the content of the minutes themselves shall take place.

Cllr Dickson suggested that the Council employ a Financial Advisor to look at options to increase interest receipt on bank balances given the difficulty in obtaining best value from high street banks.

9. Financial Matters

Receive Bank Reconciliation for February 2026.

Make recommendation to Full Council on adoption of the Bank Reconciliation.

Resolved: That Cllr Brewer be authorised to sign the February 2026 Bank Reconciliation on behalf of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Dickson Seconded: Cllr Perkin All In Favour

Meeting closed: 7:10 PM