

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2025 FROM 7 PM

Present: Councillors Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Johnson Tamara (Vice-Chair), Sally Kimondo (Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Mayor), Greg Alderman, Philip Crawley, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones and Matthew Neall

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer), Kelley Hallam (HR & Payroll Manager), Katie Williams (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer)

Public: Nil

204/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Matthew Brennan, Michelle Henderson and Louise O'Riordan

205/25 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest

206/25 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

207/25 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 June 2025

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

208/25 - Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions

Members received and noted the Action Tracker summarised by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

Members and officers all stated that the Heritage Open Day had been a huge success and that 175 people had attended Grove House to view displays and speak with those present. Feedback received had been extremely positive and members thanked all those that took part and helped organise the event.

209/25 – Corporate Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager presented a detailed report which included facility management, policy updates, health and safety and procurement.

Members were requested to clarify any issues relating to CCTV to enable the Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager to produce a detailed scope for a review of CCTV across the Council's estate. Members felt that all areas that the Council maintained should be included in the review

Action: *Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager*

The Committee reviewed the updated policies provided.

RESOLVED: i) to recommend the Health and Safety Policy be approved by the Council
ii) that the updated Information Security Policy be approved
iii) that the updated Data Protection Policy be approved

Members discussed the Carbon Action Plan and though they acknowledged that the aim for the Council to be carbon neutral was not achievable, they thought it was still important to set goals and timescales. It was therefore;

RESOLVED: i) to defer considering whether the Environmental Working Group should be disbanded to the following meeting
ii) Not to adopt the Carbon and Energy Action Plan as presented
iii) that the Carbon and Energy Action Plan be updated with goals and set timescales and brought back to the next meeting of the Committee
iv) that the revision of the Corporate Plan action be deferred until the Carbon and Energy Action Plan had been updated and adopted

Action: *Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager*

210/25 - Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report provided to members.

RESOLVED: i) to note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year to 31 August 2025
ii) to note the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 August 2025
iii) to note the current investments

iv) to note the current direct debits as at August 2025

v) to note that the annual pay award for 2025/2026 had been included in staff pay

Members were informed that the decoration of the Ceremony Room was now complete and that to enable the room to be utilised, 42 matching chairs were required. Mainly due to the pay award being lower than budgeted, the revenue budget for Corporate Services was forecast to be underspent. Members were therefore requested to approve the expenditure of approximately £3,000 for furnishing the Ceremony Room from this underspend.

RESOLVED: that the release of approximately £3,000 from forecasted revenue underspend within Corporate Services, for the purchase of furniture for the Ceremony Room and registrar rooms at Grove House, be approved

211/25 – Corporate Plan Update

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager presented a detailed report that updated Members on the progress of the Corporate Plan objectives, actions and key performance indicators associated with the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members noted the details within the report.

212/25 - Marketing and Communications

The Marketing and Communications officer summarised the report.

Members stated how much they liked the new website, and that it was much easier to navigate and noted the increase of the Council's social media followers.

Members were requested to approve a proposed calendar of surgery meetings. Members discussed the benefits of holding surgery meetings, but Members noted that attendance was poor, except when held on the market.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that Councillor surgeries would be held quarterly and only at the market or on event days

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive also suggested trialling an open, public session before Council meetings, which Members agreed to trial.

Action: *Democratic Services Manager and Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer*

213/25 - Referral Report from Personnel Sub-Committee

Members received and discussed a reference up from Personnel Sub-Committee which was summarised by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: i) that the Vivup, Home & Electronics staff benefit scheme be amended to a salary sacrifice scheme from April 2026 be approved

ii) that the adoption of the Vexatious Complaints policy be for approved

iii) that the adoption of the Portable Electrical Appliance Safety policy be approved

214/25 - Motion to exclude press and public

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item would be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

215/25 – Members Update

RESOLVED: i) to agree to encourage all councillors to attend the mediation event on Tuesday 7 October 2025

ii) to recommend to Council to confirm adoption and endorsement of the NALC: Civility and Respect Pledge

iii) to recommend to Council to encourage all Members to sign the Councillor's Statement of Assurance under the Civility and Respect Pledge

iv) to agree for the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to enact any further advice or direction given by the Monitoring Officer arising from these matters

216/25 - Date of the next meeting

Monday 17 November 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm