

Durrington Town Council

Proposed HR Committee, Amended Terms of Reference and Standing Orders Amendment

Report to Full Council – for consideration and adoption

Prepared by the Clerk – 16th September 2026

1. Background

Following the recent councillor training and the advice of CHRG, the FHR Committee has agreed to establish a separate HR Committee, so that HR and personnel matters are dealt with by a dedicated committee rather than as part of the Finance and HR Committee (FHR).

The proposed membership of the new HR Committee is Cllr Smith, Cllr Wright and Cllr Rennie, all three having HR experience and having agreed to take on this role. They will also complete up to date HR training withing two months.

It has also been agreed that the Staffing Appeals Committee (SAC), which hears appeals arising from HR and disciplinary decisions, should in future comprise all other Councillors – that is, every Councillor who is not a member of the HR Committee – so that those Members are kept free of any prior involvement in HR or disciplinary matters that may later come before them on appeal.

It has further been agreed that Councillors should only sit on the Finance Committee if they have completed **council-specific finance training** and should only sit on the HR Committee if they have completed HR training. No decision has yet been made on equivalent training for membership of the Facilities and Amenities Committee (FAC); that is left open for the Council to decide separately in due course.

This report proposes the consequential changes to the Council's Terms of Reference for Committees and to the Standing Orders needed to give effect to the above. It is based on the versions of the Standing Orders, Terms of Reference for Committees and Financial Regulations currently published on the Council's website (Standing Orders, amended January 2026; Terms of Reference for Committees, 2025; Financial Regulations, 2026).

2. Proposed Committee Structure

- Finance Committee (formerly the Finance and HR Committee) – retains all of the FHR's financial functions.
- HR Committee (new) – Cllr Smith, Cllr Wright and Cllr Rennie – takes on the FHR's personnel and HR functions.
- Staffing Appeals Committee – to comprise all Councillors other than the members of the HR Committee.
- Facilities and Amenities Committee (FAC) – unchanged; no training requirement proposed at this stage.

3. Proposed Terms of Reference – Finance Committee

Membership

The Committee will consist of between 3 and 6 Members.

Proposed new requirement: no Councillor may be appointed to, or continue to serve on, the Finance Committee unless they have completed council-specific finance training.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Committee's Members, at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Quorum will consist of three Members.

The Committee will meet at least quarterly, or at any other time as necessary.

Delegated business

- Comply with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Quarterly budget review and monitoring, with recommendations to Council.
- Consider annual budget requests from other Committees.
- Approval and award of grants.
- Consider and agree action on Internal Audit reports.
- Write off debts up to £3,000.
- Consider and resolve Freedom of Information Act appeals.
- Report on the Committee's grant allocations against agreed criteria.
- Provide Council with a budget and precept recommendation annually in January, prepared no later than December.
- Review the Financial Regulations as necessary.
- Review the risk register and asset register annually, and ensure adequate insurance is in place.
- Consider other financial matters, including CIL monitoring.
- Approve payment card usage and trade accounts, with authorisation levels.
- Monitor utility costs quarterly, and review contracts when required.
- Authorise bank payment of invoices.
- Approve the Clerk transferring funds between accounts, maintaining a minimum balance of £20,000.
- Control the expenditure and income of the approved Admin/Office Costs and Staff Costs budgets.

4. Proposed Terms of Reference – HR Committee (new)

Membership

The Committee will consist of Cllr Smith, Cllr Wright and Cllr Rennie.

Quorum will consist of three Members.

Proposed new requirement: no Councillor may be appointed to, or continue to serve on, the HR Committee unless they have completed HR training .

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Committee's Members, at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Committee will meet at least twice a year, or at any other time as necessary.

Delegated business

- Deal with personnel, employment and recruitment issues not delegated to the Clerk.
- Amend the staff structure within the approved budget; any additional budget requires Council approval.
- Consider and resolve staff grievances, in accordance with the Grievance Policy.
- Handle staff disciplinary matters, in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.
- Review health and safety at work for all employees.
- Prepare and review HR policies and recommend them to Council.
- Ensure appointments follow the Recruitment Procedure and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Ensure compliance with employment legislation.
- Ensure an effective appraisal system is in place for the Clerk.
- Control expenditure of the Staff Costs and expenses Budget.

5. Proposed Terms of Reference – Staffing Appeals Committee

Membership

The Committee will consist of all Councillors other than those serving on the HR Committee at the time, so that its Members have had no prior involvement in the HR or disciplinary matter under appeal.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Committee's Members, at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Committee will meet as necessary.

Quorum will consist of three Members.

Terms

- To receive evidence at appeal hearings and to decide, based on that evidence, whether an appeal should be upheld or rejected.
- Only Full Council may uphold the Committee's decision to dismiss the Town Clerk.

6. Consequential References to Update

The following existing references to the Finance and HR Committee will need to be updated once the split takes effect.

- Facilities and Amenities Committee Terms of Reference, item 2.7 ("report budget variations to Finance and HR Committee") – should refer to the Finance Committee.
- Standing Order 19 (Handling Staff Matters), which currently gives the Finance and HR Committee oversight of matters such as senior staff absence, grievances and the Clerk's performance review – should refer to the HR Committee throughout.

- Any other policy documents (e.g. Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Recruitment Procedure) that name the Finance and HR Committee as the responsible committee.

7. Proposed Standing Orders Amendment

It is proposed that the following new sub-clause be added to Standing Order 4 (Committees and Sub-Committees):

“No Councillor shall be appointed to, or continue to serve on, the Finance Committee unless they have completed training in the Council’s financial procedures. No Councillor shall be appointed to, or continue to serve on, the HR Committee unless they have completed training in HR procedures. This requirement does not, at present, apply to membership of the Facilities and Amenities Committee; the Council will decide separately whether an equivalent training requirement should apply to that Committee.”

8. Recommendations to Council

That Council adopts the amendment to Standing Order 4 (at section 7 above).

That Council agrees to establish the HR Committee, with membership of Cllr Smith, Cllr Wright and Cllr Rennie.

That Council agrees to rename the Finance and HR Committee as the Finance Committee and adopts the amended Terms of Reference (at section 3).

That Council adopts the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee (at section 4).

That Council agrees to adopt the amended Terms of Reference for the Staffing Appeals Committee (at section 5).

That Council agrees the consequential amendments (at section 6).

That Council notes no training requirement is proposed for the Facilities and Amenities Committee at this stage, pending a future decision.