



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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To all members of the Committee:

You are hereby summoned to attend a **MEETING OF REVIEW COMMITTEE** on Wednesday

4th November 2026 at 6.30pm

at The Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam for the transaction of the business listed on the agenda overleaf. Membership: Cllr Bach, Cllr Hodson, Cllr Horrocks, Cllr Lo-Vel, Cllr Whittaker and Cllr Newman-McKie (ex-officio). Two vacancies.

Questions by the public: There will be a period for questions by the public. In accordance with Standing Order 3, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of any Council business at Full Council, and at Committee meetings in respect of business on the agenda.

Members of the public are asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interruptions during council business are not permitted. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, the business of the meeting is disrupted in any way, the Chairman may ask the person/s causing the disruption to be quiet and if they refuse then ask them to leave. **Mobile phones must be switched off or silenced during the meeting.**

Anyone wishing to ask questions is requested to notify the Town Clerk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

Recording, photographs and filming: In accordance with the Council's policy on filming and recording of Local Council and Committee meetings (available to read in the Chamber) and arising from the *Local Government and Accountability Act 2014* the press or public may audio-record, photograph or film meetings, or report from the meeting using social media. As such, members of the public may be recorded or photographed during the meeting. Anyone wishing to record or photograph the meeting must notify the Town Clerk before the commencement of the meeting.

Public attendance at Council and committee meetings

As a public body, Northam Town Council understands the need for transparency and accountability. The Council will therefore seek to conduct meetings using practices and procedures set out within the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, which states:

Subject to subsection (2) below, any meeting of a body exercising public functions, being a body to which this Act applies, shall be open to the public.*

Subsection (2) states:

Where a meeting is open to the public, a body may, by resolution exclude the public from the meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.

Therefore, the Council's policy is to allow public access to meetings unless the business being transacted is confidential or there are 'other special reasons' to exclude the public.

Guy Langton

Guy Langton, Town Clerk & RFO

Date of issue: 29th October 2026

Members are requested to turn off or silence their mobile phones for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

- 1 **To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)** *All apologies must be notified to the Town Council offices by one hour prior to the start of the meeting.*
- 2 **Chair's announcements**
- 3 **To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests** *Members are reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.*
- 4 **To agree the agenda as published.**
- 5 **To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Review Committee meeting held on the 23rd September 2026 (p3-5)**
- 6 **Public Participation**
We welcome Parishioners speaking or making representations, asking questions or giving evidence at the meeting of the Full Council in respect of any issue affecting the Northam Town Council area. A period of twenty minutes is allocated for this unless directed by the Chair of the meeting and a member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes.
A question shall not receive a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- 7 **To consider the action point update (p6)**
- 8 **To consider the enclosed revised policies (p6 and attached under separate cover):**
Note, text highlighted yellow is new or has been added. Text crossed through is to be removed.
 - a) **Dedicated Benches Policy v.01** (2026.11.04 Item 8(a) and enclosed)
 - b) **Financial Risk Assessment 2026-27 v0.3** (2026.11.04 Item (8b) and enclosed)
 - c) **Vision Action Table** (2026.11.04 Item 8(c) and enclosed)

**Minutes of the Review committee held on the 23rd September 2026 at 6.30pm
in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bach, Hodson, Horrocks, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO).

2609/306 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

All members were present. There were two vacancies.

2609/307 Chair's announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

2609/308 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests

Members were reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.

2609/309 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.

Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Bach (all in favour)

2609/310 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Review Committee meeting held on the 22nd July 2026

It was **resolved** that to approve the minutes of that meeting of the Review Committee as a correct record, with a typographical correction, they were signed by the Chair.

Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Lo-Vel (all in favour)

2609/311 Public Participation

There were no members of the public represent.

2609/312 To consider the action point update

The action points were noted as below.

Item	September 2026
1. Emergency planning	<p>The Town Clerk has contacted the Emergency Planning project manager from Devon Communities who emphasised the nature of the role of the Town Council in preparing for emergencies.</p> <p>The contact details and locations included in the Emergency Plan had been reviewed and published on the Council's website at Emergency Plan - Northam Town Council</p> <p>The Town Clerk and Parks & Buildings Manager were to attend a seminar in October presented by the Devon Community Resilience Forum. After this, the Officers would review the previous drafts of the Emergency Plan and Risk Assessment for consideration and amendment (at a future meeting).</p> <p>Emergency Services have been advised of the Council's identified refuge buildings. ONGOING</p>
2. Vision Statement and action Plan	<p>To prepare a separate report for the completed actions; Remove/hide the columns for 2023/24;</p> <p>To prepare a separate report for the completed actions. ONGOING</p>
3. Allotment Terms & Conditions	<p>The Ts & Cs revised by this committee were sent to allotment holders and members for comment. On the Agenda. COMPLETE</p>

To consider the enclosed revised policies / controlled documents:

a) Allotment Terms and Conditions V1.0

The committee considered the feedback from allotment plot holders and Cllr Hames. Regarding how netting may be used, members heard advice was available from the RSPB regarding net dimensions and the National Allotment Society regarding fruit cages and netting on allotments more generally.

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

- Inclusion of a clause encouraging plot holders to mulch their allotments to retain water and restrict weed growth.
- Inclusion of a clause detailing the use of fruit cages to restrict avian access to soft fruit crops.

Proposed: Cllr Newman-McKie, seconded: Cllr Horrocks (all in favour)

Action point: report the concerns regarding the health and longevity of the trees bordering the site to the north to the attention of the power grid provider and the landowner.

b) IT Policy v1.0

It was **agreed** to reconsider the document at a future meeting of this committee, though the following changes would be made in the meantime:

- Amend the Header to read Northam Town Council – IT Policy.
- Throughout clarify that references to ‘council’ means ‘Northam Town Council’.
- 1.3 replace ‘viola’ with ‘violated’.
- 4.2.1 remove ‘Councillors’ and correct typographical errors.
- 4.2.7 add the word ‘users’ after ‘authorised’.
- 5.16 (iv) delete ‘where possible’
- 7.4 replace ‘offboarding’ with ‘leaving the organisation’.
- 7.4 add the word ‘an’ before ‘employee’
- 12.7 (xiv) consider adding the inappropriate use clause to staff contracts at the next review (for example alongside the January 2027 Employment Law amendments following the passing of the Employment Rights act (2025)).
- 13.1 add ‘by staff and authorised users’ after ‘equipment’.

Action point: place on a future agenda after the changes had been made.

c) Publication Scheme v1.2

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

- Class 6 (d), add ‘received by councillors and staff, over the value of £50’

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Horrocks (all in favour).

d) New Councillors advert, councillor role descriptor and induction plan v0.1

It was **agreed** to reconsider the document at a future meeting of this committee, though the following changes would be made in the meantime:

- Page 1:
 - Add ‘Orchard Hill’ as an area.
 - Change ‘a couple’ to ‘at least a couple’.
 - Include member’s allowances and expenses.
- Page 2: Reword the subtitles
- Page 3:
 - Clarify eligibility criteria to include sentencing to an imprisonable term.
 - Change ‘if’ to ‘or’ in footnote

- Page 11:
 - Change title to 'Useful skills and qualities'
 - Change 'Working collaboratively' to 'teamwork'.
 - Add 'Basic' in front of 'IT skills'.
 - Add that there are opportunities for personal and council-specific development for members.
- Page 16:
 - Months 2-3 – add a phrase regarding training available to members, which could be undertaken online, in person or at the council's premises, for example:
'You may get more out of being a councillor if you attend training offered, please speak to the Town Clerk who will be pleased to discuss what is available'.
- General:
 - Include reference to disqualification (the '6-month' rule).

Action point: place on a future agenda after the changes had been made.

2609/314 To consider recommending the enclosed Civility & Respect protocol to the Council for adoption

It was **agreed** to include a copy in future "New Councillor's Packs".

Action point: include in all new packs.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:30pm.

Item 7 To consider the action point update

Item	September 2026
1. Emergency planning	<p>The Town Clerk has contacted the Emergency Planning project manager from Devon Communities who emphasised the nature of the role of the Town Council in preparing for emergencies.</p> <p>The contact details and locations included in the Emergency Plan had been reviewed and published on the Council's website at Emergency Plan - Northam Town Council</p> <p>The Town Clerk has attending a seminar in October presented by the Devon Community Resilience Forum and has drafted the Emergency Plan and Risk Assessment for consideration and amendment (at a future meeting).</p> <p>Emergency Services have been advised of the Council's identified refuge buildings.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ONGOING</p>
2. Vision Statement and action Plan	<p>Action Plan on the agenda.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ONGOING</p>
3. IT policy	<p>Revisions yet to be made. Consideration given to: including use of AI within this or as a separate policy, and the establishment of standard email signatures.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ONGOING</p>
4. New Councillors advert, councillor role descriptor and induction plan	<p>Revisions ongoing. Town Clerk is working with colleagues across Devon to align the documents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ONGOING</p>

Item 8 To consider the enclosed revised policies / controlled documents:

Note, text highlighted yellow is new or has been added. Text crossed through is to be removed.

a) Dedicated Benches Policy v.01 (2026.11.04 Item 8(a) and enclosed)

A new policy to formalise the Council's bench dedication scheme.

Consideration is to be given to the options presented in **red** in the document, which include:

- Expanding the locations for dedicated benches,
- Expanding the type of dedications permissible, and
- Removal of historic plaques after public call for information, or addition plaques being allowed on those benches.

b) Financial Risk Assessment 2026-27 v0.3 (2026.11.04 Item 8(b))

Reviewed and revised by the Town Clerk.

c) Vision Action Table (2026.11.04 Item 8(c) and enclosed)

As revised with at two informal working group sessions. The committee is asked to consider the accuracy of the updated Plan, its alignment to the Vision Statement 2023-27 (enclosed) and to make other amendments as required before recommendation to Full Council for noting and adoption.