Chard Town Council
The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk
Mayor: Cllr Tricia O'Brien, Town Clerk & RFO: Stephen Hill

HR Committee

Minutes

Minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 3rd November 2026** at 19:00 in the Mayors Parlour, The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

Present: Cllr Bates (Chair), Cllr Kenton, Cllr Richter

Also present: Stephen Hill (Town Clerk), Tim Bickham (Events Officer), Beverley Newman (Democratic Services Officer)

Section 1 – Standing Items

2026/32/HR **Apologies for absence**
Committee received apologies from Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Shortland and Cllr J. Kenton.

2026/33/HR **Declarations of interest**
No declarations were received.

2026/34/HR **Public participation**
No members of public were present.

2026/35/HR **Committee meeting minutes**
Committee RESVOLED to approve the minutes of 7th September 2026.
Proposed: Cllr Richter Seconded: Cllr Kenton
For: 3 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Section 2 – Items to Note

2026/36/HR **Staffing Training Update**
The DSO explained that a comprehensive training matrix has been setup to record and track the training completed by staff. Some of the training recently completed or are currently being undertaken were referred to as:

- ILCA
- IT training
- Website training
- Operational training for members of the Amenities Team.

There is a balance of £4,000 remaining in the training budget for 2026/27.
Committee **NOTED** recent developments concerning staff training.

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2026/37/HR **Staff Appraisals Update**

Committee **NOTED** that all appraisals for 2026 are complete, to include, Officers, Guildhall staff, admin and amenities. Further, that they have all been signed off with the exception of two being outstanding.

2026/38/HR **Employee Assistant Programme**

The DSO gave an overview of the support Worknest will provide to both council staff and Councillors, which will primarily be a telephone counselling service. The programme had been launched at a staff meeting on 28.10.26. Worknest has provided various resources, including a Managers Guide and a 1-page summary that will be put up in staff areas. The DSO agreed to circulate the details to Councillors.

Committee **NOTED** the Employee Assistant Programme, following Full Council 21st September 2026, when Council commissioned Work Nest as the preferred supplier.

Section 3 – Items for Decision

2026/39/HR **Safeguarding Policy**

The DSO explained there are two key types of Safeguarding Training available to the council. Two providers had been found and with cost at approx. £70 per person. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will need to undergo more substantive training. The three Officers to whom safeguarding concerns must be reported are the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Stakeholder Liaison Officer (the Safeguarding Team).
The Clerk highlighted that committee had received (by email) a revised Safeguarding Policy (to that attached to the agenda – which should be superseded).

Committee RESOLVED to delegate to the Clerk to complete the revised draft Safeguarding Policy (in consultation with the HR Committee) to be presented to Full Council on 16th November 2026 to comment and resolve to adopt.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Richter
3: 0: 0

The Democratic Services Officer left the meeting at 19:22

2026/40/HR **Budget 27/28**

The Clerk explained that a Budget Workshop is planned to take place on 23rd November 2026. There is a range of £708K-£775K staffing budget, pending agreed scale points. The new structure sees potentially an additional £132K spend. At £132K that includes salary incremental

points, cost of living inflation increase. There may be other reorganisations costs. Job evaluation will take place planned after Christmas, this is quoted to cost £6K and is planned to be completed by Southwest Councils. The Clerk summarised the re-structures benefits to council as providing;

- Communications resource
- Technical support
- Greater flexibility for the Guildhall
- Mayoral support

Committee RESOLVED to approve its budgets increase of £132K staffing, £6K job evaluation planned for 2026/27 and potential other costs and Recommend budget 27/28 to the Finance & Policy Committee 15th December 2026.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Kenton

3: 0: 0

Section 4 – Confidential Items

There were no confidential items.

2026/41/HR Date of next meeting

It was agreed the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2nd March 2027 at 19:00.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending & the meeting concluded at 19:42

Chair: Date:

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