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**

Finance & Policy Committee

MINUTES

Finance & Policy Committee held on **Tuesday 20th October 2026** at 19.00 in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

Councillors Present: Cllr Hussey (Ex-officio), Cllr J Kenton, Cllr O'Brien (Ex-officio) and Cllr Tribble

Officers Present: Stephen Hill (Town Clerk & RFO), Teresa Turnbull (Finance Officer) and Tim Bickham (Events Officer)

Also Present:
Greg Venn and Jane St John Webster (Somerset Buildings Preservation Trust)

2026/29/FP In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee a Chair was elected.
Committee RESOLVED to elect Cllr Hussey to Chair the meeting.
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: J. Kenton
For: 4 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Section 1: Standing Items

2026/30/FP **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Baker, Bulmer, Eggins, A. Kenton and Williams.
Committee RESOLVED to accept the apologies.
Proposed: Cllr Tribble Seconded: Cllr O'Brien
4: 0 :0

2026/31/FP **Declarations of interest**
No declarations were given.

2026/32/FP **Public Participation**
There were no members of public present.

2026/33/FP **Committee Meeting Minutes**
Committee RESOLVED to approve for accuracy the minutes of the F&P Committee meeting held on 21st July 2026.
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr Hussey
2: 0: 2

Cllr J. Kenton declared an interest in the following item, as a Somerset Council Unitary Councillor.

Cllr J. Kenton left the meeting at 19:14.

2026/34/FP Somerset Building Preservation Trust

Committee received the following Report from Greg Venn.

Committee RESOLVED a grant variation of £5,196 towards additional asbestos removal costs incurred during the restoration project at 9 Fore Street.

Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr Tribble

3: 0: 0

Councillor J. Kenton rejoined the meeting at 19:30.

Section 2: Items to Note

2026/35/FP Q2 25/26 Financial Report

Committee **NOTED** the report as included with the agenda.

2026/36/FP AGAR 2025/26

Committee **NOTED** the report as included with the agenda.

2026/37/FP Policies

Committee **NOTED** the policies:

a) Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Management, Corporate Risk Assessments, Scheme of Delegation, Publication Scheme, Vexatious Complainant and Grants 26/27, agreed at Full Council September 2026; and
b) Code of Conduct, Social Media, Community Engagement, Retention & Disposal and Redundancy considered at Full Council 19th October 2026.

Committee further **NOTED** that Full Council 19th October 2026 had **DEFERRED** the policies: Communications and Member and Officer Relations.

2026/38/FP Grants

Committee **NOTED** the Grants advertising campaign including deadline for receipt of Applications 20 November 2026.

2026/39/FP IT Policy

Committee **NOTED** the IT Policy, as brought to Full Council 19th October 2026.

Section 3: Items for Decision

2026/40/FP Councillor IT equipment

A Councillor queried the short amount of time purchased equipment may be used for. The Clerk confirmed the policy takes this in to account. Another Councillor mentioned the incompatibility with latest version of Windows on their equipment makes it vulnerable to risk. It was also stated in the interest of security that equipment may be remotely locked in the event it is not returned, rendering it unusable.

Following the IT briefing of 28 September 2026 Committee RESOLVED to move £6,000 from General reserves to IT equipment for the Council's purchase of Town Councillor IT hardware.
Proposed: Cllr Tribble Seconded: Cllr J. Kenton
4: 0: 0

2026/41/FP Independence of Internal Auditor
Committee RESOLVED to approve the statement of independence of the Internal Auditor.
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr J. Kenton
4: 0: 0

2026/42/FP Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) & S106 Monies
Queries were raised on funds put aside for devolution and what assets were considered, beside Bath Street Toilets. The Clerk confirmed the council strategy 2026/27 shows the direction and its earmarked reserves. Further, that offers for a Depot Options Appraisal are currently being received.
Committee NOTED current CIL & S106 Position and RESOLVED to adjust CIL reserve balance to reflect reconciled position.
Proposed: Cllr Tribble Seconded: Cllr J. Kenton
4: 0: 0

2026/43/FP Corporate Risk Assessments
Following the Risk Management Working Group 30th September 2026 Committee RESOLVED to approve the Corporate Risk Assessments: a) Assets and Liabilities Internal Audit, b) Finance & Audit, c) Governance Audit and d) People Management.
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr O'Brien
4: 0: 0

2026/44/FP Asset Register
Following a Councillor query the Clerk confirmed that local councils are not required to devalue its assets. There will be little change from previous years.
Committee RESOLVED to approve the draft Asset Register 26/27.
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr Hussey
4: 0: 0

2026/45/FP Draft budget process and timetable for 27/28
It was suggested that workshops could be useful and these will happen in early December prior to next committee meeting.
A query raised as to if there was an increase in the precept and if a plan for the town exists. The Clerk referred to the council strategy as the closest match to this.
Committee RESOLVED to Recommend to Full Council approval of the process and timetable for budget setting 2027/28.
Proposed: Cllr Hussey Seconded: Cllr Tribble
4: 0: 0

2026/46/FP Allocation of Committees and Lead Officers to Budget Codes
Committee RESOLVED to approve the allocation of committees and Lead Officers to the Council's budget codes for 2027/28; that

the allocation will be used to support the preparation, monitoring and reporting of the annual Council budget.
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr J. Kenton
4: 0: 0

2026/47/FP F&P Committee Budgets
It was noted that the Town Crier should receive a reminder to claim expenses under the regalia budget line.
Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Finance & Policy Committee (December 26) on the 2027/28 budgets for which the Committee is responsible and agreed to increase community grants to £3,000 and core grants to £2,000.
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr O'Brien
4: 0: 0

2026/48/FP Date of Next Meeting
Committee noted the date of the next Finance & Policy Committee meeting will be **Tuesday 15th December 2026** at 19:00 at The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, TA20 1PP.

There being no other business the Chair thanked people for attending and closed the meeting at 20:32.

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