

Finance & General Purposes Committee 19th October 2026

Budget Briefing notes for 2027-2028 budget

Report from the Director of Finance & Resources

1. Purpose and Background of Report

A review of the budget setting process was taken to the Finance & General Purposes on 19th October 2026 whereby it was recommended that during September to November each year that Committees and Sub Committees are to provide recommendations/considerations to budget areas in line with set strategic aims of the council only (having regard for the councils Medium Term Financial Plan).

The following budget areas were reviewed as part of the first draft review for the 2027/2028 budget and identifies income and expenditure that needed consideration against the budgets that were set in 2026/2027.

2. Options for Council

To review the budget reports for considerations identified by the budget holders in appendices 1-10 attached to this report.

Options:

- would be to not consider or recommend any items identified in the attached reports noting that this could affect the ability to run or improve service provisions and current operating models.
- to consider items identified in the attached reports and advise of other items discussed by the committee to be taken into account in the budget setting process.

3. Reason for Recommendation

The items within the attached reports have been identified by the budget holders to aid their teams in the delivery of the Town Council's strategic plan and to move forward.

4. Expected Benefits

Continuation of service delivery

5. Implications

N/A

5.1. Legal

N/A

5.2. Risks

N/A

5.3. Financial Implications

If considerations are not discussed and reviewed costs and income could be overseen which will impact the delivery of services of the Town Council and an incorrect precept value being submitted to North Somerset Council.

5.4. Timescales

For inclusion in the 2027/2028 draft budget recommendation to Finance & General Purposes Committee in December 2026.

5.5. Stakeholders

N/A

5.6. Contractors

N/A

5.7. Crime & Disorder (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

N/A

5.8. Biodiversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

N/A

5.9. Privacy Impact (consider Privacy Impact assessment)

N/A

5.10. Equality & Diversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

N/A

6. Appendices

- 1.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for Capital Projects budget
- 2.Considerations from the Civic Officer the Civic budget
- 3.Considerations from the Democratic Services Manager for the Democratic Budget
- 4.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for the Other costs & income budget
- 5.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for Planned & Preventative Maintenance (PPM) budget
- 6.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for the Strategic Planning budget
- 7.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for the Youth Services budget
- 8.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for the Central Services budget
- 9.Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for Central Operational Services budget
10. Considerations from the Director of Finance & Resources for the HQ budget

7. Members are recommended to:

Consider all of the costs and income identified within the budget holders reports for inclusion in the draft budget for 2027/2028

Helen Morton

Director of Finance & Resources

Drafted 12th October 2026

Appendix 1 – Capital Projects

Capital Projects						
Committee	Finance & General Purposes					
Considered by Committee on: 12th October 2026						
Department	Central Services					
Cost Centre	199					
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028	
1	Capital Provision (MTFP) / Play Strategy	62,160		0	30,000	
2	Phase 2 Clara's Cottage				70,000	
3	Visit Weston website	33,750		0		
4	Old Town Quarry Barn	31,080	31,958	-878		
5	Castle Batch play area	46,620		0		
6	Weston Town Interactive map	26,936		0		
7	Old Town Quarry Phase 2			0	50,000	
Total Expenditure		200,546	31,958	-878	150,000	
1100 PWLB Received						
Total Income		0	0	0	0	
Total Net Costs		200,546	31,958	-878	150,000	
1	Capital Provision (MTFP) / Play Strategy					
2	Phase 2 Clara's Cottage					
3	Visit Weston website - complete 26/27					
7	Old Town Quarry Phase 2					

Comments

Within the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the section on Capital Programme budget forecast it is important to stress that the five-year Capital Programme Budget Forecast is an indicative budget and will be reviewed on a year to year and project by project basis, in line

with actual needs, requirements and priorities and the actual level and availability of Council Balances and Reserves.

Appendix 2 – Civic

Civic					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes				
Considered by Committee on: 12th October 2026					
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	107				
Code	Expenditure heading				
		Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4000	Staffing costs	17,708	13,769	17,708	18,431
4044	Insurance	16,576	5,224	5,224	5,900
4050	Printing	1,036	505	750	1,500
4150	Chauffer / Travel Costs	3,626	1,700	2,300	3,626
4151	Catering	3,108	793	2,750	3,000
4152	Civic Miscellaneous	1,554	2,161	2,600	2,000
4153	Mayors Allowance Inc	4,922	1,231	4,922	4,922
4154	Civic Regalia	5,491	1,143	2,500	4,000
4164	Civic events *	9,842	9,017	9,842	9,500
4165	Hildesheim	4,144	3,084	4,144	4,000
6000	Central Serv Sals Recharge	67,694			
6005	Central Serv Overhead Recharge	12,382			
6009	HQ Recharge	7,262			
6010	Grounds Sals Recharge	1,554			
6015	Grounds Overhead Recharge	377			
6030	Ops Serv Sals Recharge	3,790			
6035	Ops Serv Overhead Recharge	345			
Total Expenditure		161,411	38,627	52,740	56,879

Comments

Insurance increase – a revaluation of the regalia and silverware was undertaken by both Clevedon Sales Rooms and Rossitor's in September 2025 whereby the Regalia was revalued the valuation will be reflected in the 2027/2028.

Civic events - £1,000 Remembrance £500 Armed Forces Day
 £5,000 Mayor making £1,000 Christmas Carol Service
 £2,000 Mayors end of term event

Hildesheim – £3000 - entertaining colleagues form Hildesheim
 £1000 - mayor & consort (1 other) trip to Hildesheim 2026

Appendix 3 – Democratic Presentation

Democratic Representation					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes				
Considered by Committee on: 12th October 2026					
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	108				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4012	Travel & Subsistence expenses	103	98	103	100
4013	Training Costs	1,036	500	1,036	
4018	Election Costs	15,000	0	15	15,000
4083	Security staff**	2,072	0	500	2,000
4107	IT Support & Upgrade*	18,130	16,296	18,130	8,916
Total Expenditure		36,341	16,894	19,784	26,016
Total Income		0	0	0	0
Total Net Costs		36,341	16,894	19,784	26,016
* Flotek support £2500 Modern Gov new system year 2 cost					
** Security staff for meetings					

Comments

Election costs - £15,000 by election cost build & for general election

IT support & upgrade –£8,916 2nd year support package for the implementation of the Modern Gov system

Security - £2,000 provision for security to support council meetings

Appendix 4 – Other costs & Income

Other Costs and Income					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes	12th October 2026			
Considered by Committee on:					
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	110				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4051	Bank Charges	4,100	1,417	2,000	4,100
4060	PWLB Interest paid - Blakehay - 48877	2,067	1,113	2,067	1,845
4061	PWLB Capital paid - Blakehay - 48877	12,000	6,000	12,000	12,000
4068	PWLB interest paid - Waterpark - 4969	6,706	3,431	6,706	6,069
4069	PWLB capital repaid - Waterpark - 4969	13,653	6,748	13,653	14,293
4080	PWLB HQ Capital Paid	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
4081	PWLB HQ Interest Paid	7,454	3,783	7,454	7,009
4999	General Reserve	194,790	-	184,790	25,000
	Expenditure Total	250,770	27,492	238,670	80,316
1190	Bank Interest	30,000	27,053	35,000	40,000
1191	CIL Received	-	-	-	
1176	Precept				
1100	Misc Income *	-			-
New Code	General Reserve Movement				
	Income Total	30,000	27,053	35,000	40,000
Total Expenditure		250,770	27,492	238,670	80,316
Total Income		30,000	27,053	35,000	40,000
Total Net Costs		220,770	439	203,670	40,316

Comments

These are the Public Works loans that the council currently pays.

Blakehay end date – May 2029

Waterpark end date – June 2034

32 Waterloo Street – Dec 2033



Appendix 5 – Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM)

Planned Maintenance					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes				
Considered by	Committee on:				
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	475				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4231	Holding Budget	195,496	86,552	195,496	200,000
Total Expenditure		195,496	86,552	195,496	200,000
Total Income					-
Total Net Costs		195,496	86,552	195,496	200,000
PPM maintenance element (as per Currie Brown 30 year plan) also including £20k for tree management (Steve Clark)					

Comments

The PPM budget is based on the Currie Brown lifecycle report produced in March 2024 which covers a 30-year period of maintenance. The total report has a value of the report is £5,661,087 which identifies a provision for PPM of £195,496 per year for buildings but also a PPM annual provision for tree works for the council's tree stock.

Appendix 6 – Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes- 12th October 2026				
Considered by Committee on:					
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	111				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4049	Professional Fees	31,080	5,781	31,080	31,500
4213	Development Budget	1,036	1,036	1,036	
Total Expenditure		86,769	6,817	32,116	31,500
Total Income		0	0	0	0
Total Net Costs		86,769	6,817	32,116	31,500

Comments

The professional fees budget for 2027/2028 will include any fees to support devolution

Appendix 7 – Youth Services

Youth Services						
Committee	Finance & General Purposes - 12th October 2026					
Considered by Committee on:						
Department	Central Services					
Cost Centre	451					
Code	Expenditure heading					
		Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction		Budget 2027 2028
4057	Youth Council Budget	500	-	500		500
4142	YMCA SLA	76,926	39,732	76,926		82,564
4219	Youth Grants	3,000	750	1,500		3,000
Total Expenditure		80,426	40,482	78,926		86,064
Total Income		-	-	-		-
Total Net Costs		80,426	40,482	78,926		86,064

Comments

No changes from the 2027/2028

YMCA SLA has inflation already added as part of the agreement

Appendix 8 – Central Services

Central Services					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes - 12th October 2026				
Considered by Committee on:	1				
Department	Central Services				
Cost Centre	102				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
4000	Staffing	581,064	268,050	581,064	579,072
4001	Staffing Agency	10,878	3,000	3,000	3,000
4006	HR Payroll Services MHR	7,252	7,252	7,252	5,625
4007	HR Support Worknest	3,937	6,468	6,468	7,000
4008	DBS Checks	1,243	523	750	1,000
4009	Health & Safety Support Worknest	3,108	-	-	1,500
4012	Travel & Subsistence / Expenses	311	257	311	320
4013	Training	6,216	7,504	8,000	6,250
4019	Website Costs	622	345	622	625
4035	Telephone	-	-	-	-
4036	Stationery	2,072	1,293	2,000	2,500
4038	Recruitment Advertising	-	-	-	3,000
4040	Audit & Accountancy	8,288	11,052	12,000	16,105
4041	Fees, Subs & Conferences	9,717	8,892	9,717	9,717
4042	Postages	2,072	1,228	1,750	2,000
4043	Ink Cartridges / printing	2,072	2,827	3,000	2,500
4044	Insurance	15,540	5,642	5,642	5,760
4049	Legal Fees	10,360	-	5,000	-
4083	Security patrols	-	6,359	6,750	8,900
4107	IT support & Upgrade	22,598	23,202	23,202	23,000
4136	Credit Card Charges	-	-	-	-
4151	Catering	3,107	1,319	3,000	3,000
Total Expenditure		690,457	355,213	679,528	680,874
1100	Misc income - staff support to BID	3,108	263	263	-
Total Income		3,108	263	263	0
Total Net Costs		687,349	354,950	679,265	680,874
The above costs are apportioned across all services					

Comments

Staffing – the staffing figure quoted above is an indicative figure for the purpose of this report
 Staffing agency - £3,000 this is the value of the security cover put in place to support any call outs if any building alarms are activated.

Payroll & HR service – increase is for the MHR payroll system that was implemented in 2026/2027

HR support Worknest – this will be reviewed within contract details

Training – Management training for Tier 2 Managers will continue into 2027/2028 alongside any compliance training needed

Audit & Accountancy – This budget has been increased due to the Council agreeing to appoint a new Data Protection Officer company in July 2026

£950 = PATAS internal auditor

£2,100 = DCK year end accounts production

£300 = DCK VAT exemption calculation

£1045 = Microshade Data Protection Officer support

£3500 = BDO external auditor year end audit reviews

£7485 = Naomi Korn Associates -DPO

Additional audit requirement compliance changes

Fees, subs & conferences - £3700 ALCA subscription

£200 ALCA silver award

£1,410 Room2 Spare container fees

£720 Sling - casuals scheduling programme

£105 ICCM membership

£75 ICO GDPR annual cover fee

£525 South West Councils subscription

£1250 AI subscription - annual licence x 5 users

£1,732 WorkNest Indemnity

Insurance – decrease due to revaluation of assets and equipment done in September 2025

IT support & upgrade - £11,657 Microshade (standard support)

£1,890 Microshade (Adobe licenses)

£4,627 Rialtas finance package including new bookings portal

£2,000 Compex Computers Ltd general support

£2,826 – Flotek M365 roll out already agreed by Council



Central Operational Services					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes				
Considered by Committee on:	12th October 2026				
Department	Operational Services				
Cost Centre	113 & 116				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
Operational Services 113					
	4000 Staffing Costs	162,647	81,892	162,647	186,852
	4013 Training	6,216	3,115	4,000	5,000
	4014 PPE / Health & Safety	207	0	200	477
	4035 Telephone	518	357	518	900
	4041 Fees, subs & Conferences	746	0	0	750
	4107 IT support (Microshade)	4,144	1,251	4,144	3,500
Volunteer Costs 116					
	4012 Volunteer Travel & Subsistence	414	152	250	250
	4013 Training	777	0	0	400
	4014 PPE / Health & Safety	104	0	0	100
	4030 Equipment Purchase	207	278	300	300
	4039 Advertising and Marketing	207	0	0	100
	4041 Fees, subs & Conferences	207	75	200	200
	4151 Catering Sundry	311	0	0	900
	4253 Volunteer Events	778	35	200	800
Total Expenditure		177,483	87,155	172,459	200,529
Total Income		0	0	0	0
Total Net Costs		177,483	87,155	172,459	200,529

Comments

Operational Services

Staffing – the staffing figure quoted above is an indicative figure for the purpose of this report

Volunteer Costs

After a general overview of the Volunteer budget some of the budgets have been increased due to a re model of the volunteer offer.

Appendix 10 – Headquarter Costs & Income



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

HQ Overhead Costs					
Committee	Finance & General Purposes - 12th October 2026				
Considered by Committee on:					
Department	Central & Operational Services				
Cost Centre	103 104 115				
Code	Expenditure heading	Budget 2026 2027	Spend month 6	Year end prediction	Budget 2027 2028
Grove House 103					
1100	Misc Income	6,000	3,000	6,000	6,000
Total Income		6,000	3,000	6,000	6,000
4044	Insurance	1,036	1,196	1,196	1,239
4109	Alarm System	643	-	643	694
Total Expenditure		1,679	1,196	1,839	1,933
Grove House net total		- 4,321	- 1,804	- 4,161	- 4,067
Grove Lodge 104					
1100	Misc Income	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total Income		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
4044	Insurance	1,036	1,035	1,035	1,072
4109	Alarm System	570	546	570	571
4132	Rent	5,000	2,500	2,500	5,000
Total Expenditure		6,606	4,081	4,105	6,643
Grove Lodge net total		1,606 -	919 -	895	1,643



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

32 Waterloo Street 115				
4000 Staffing	15,759	10,654	15,759	16207
4014 PPE / Health & Safety	3,108	33	1,000	750
4030 Equipment Purchase*	4,144	2,405	4,144	3,000
4031 Equipment rental	5,853	6,726	7,000	7000
4035 Telephone / mobile phones	7,045	3,980	7,045	7045
4044 Insurance	6,595	8,279	8,279	8,600
4102 NNDR	21,238	14,923	21,238	21,500
4104 Utilites- Water	1,036	511	1,036	1,120
4105 Utilites- Heat & Light	23,828	9,879	23,828	27,000
4109 Alarm System	1,711	0	1,711	1,726
4110 Cleaning purchases	0	0	0	2,000
4111 Window Cleaning	414	195	414	420
4114 Refuse Removal	2,901	4,871	5,000	5,000
4136 Credit card Charges	518	375	518	520
4171 Parking	10,256	10,080	10,080	10,500
4172 Garage Rental	1,606	0	1,606	1,700
Total Expenditure	106,012	72,911	108,658	114,088
1100 Misc Income (BID CCTV)	23,147	5,909	23,147	13,000
1103 Events income				7,500
Total income	23,147	5,909	23,147	20,500
HQ net total	82,865	67,002	85,511	93,588
Total HQ Expenditure	114,297	78,188	114,602	122,664
Total HQ Income	34,147	13,909	34,147	31,500
Total Net Costs	80,150	64,279	80,455	91,164

Comments

Listed below are the budget which may have the most significant changes

Equipment rental -	£1,380 photocopier	£204 credit card machine
	£794 hot water boilers	£2,605 franking machine
	£666 franking machine software	
Telephone/mobile phones -	£5,700 telephone system rental	
	£1,100 mobile phones	
Cleaning -		
	£1,500 other cleaning supplies	
Parking -	£9,900 rental of parking spaces	
Miscellaneous income -	£5,000 BID office rent	
	£12,000 CCTV recharged utilities income	



AGENDA ITEM 8.2

Finance & General Purposes Committee 19th October 2026

Draft Budget 2027/2028: Indicative Budget Level Setting

Report from the CEO/ Town Clerk / Director of Finance & Resources

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Members' initial views and strategic direction on the Council's proposed budget for 2027/2028, including indicative budget levels and priorities, to inform the ongoing budget preparation process and subsequent review of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2. Background

The Council's annual budget-setting process is underway, with officer budget review meetings feeding into the relevant Committee meetings throughout September and October 2026.

Members are considering individual service requirements and proposed expenditure through these meetings, including the F&GP Budget Considerations report (Agenda Item 8.1).

This meeting is taking place in October, rather than November as in the previous budget cycle. Consequently, the detailed budget preparation process remains ongoing, with further financial information and Committee recommendations still to be consolidated.

Members are therefore invited to provide initial strategic direction on the overall approach to budget setting, recognising increasing financial pressures alongside the Council's developing responsibilities and strategic ambitions.

The Review of Fees and Charges and updated Medium Term Financial Plan will follow as part of the continuing budget preparation process, informed by the outcomes of these discussions and Members' indicative budget direction.

3. Current Financial Position – 2026/2027

The Council's approved budget for 2026/2027 provides the financial baseline for planning the forthcoming year.

Financial Measure Approved 2026/2027

Total Expenditure Budget	£5,065,784
Council Tax Precept	£4,465,654
Balance funded from other sources	£600,130

These figures provide the starting point for developing the 2027/2028 budget, recognising that maintaining existing services will be subject to inflationary pressures, contractual commitments and the financial implications of additional responsibilities.

4. Key Budget Considerations for 2027/2028

Members are asked to consider the following factors when providing direction:

Consideration Potential Budget Implications

Inflation and CPI Anticipated increases in goods, services, contracts and operational expenditure.

- Staffing and Employment Costs
- National pay awards, pension contributions, National Insurance and staffing requirements.
- Energy and Utilities Electricity, gas, water and premises-related expenditure.
- Devolution and Asset Transfers, Additional responsibilities for play areas, recreation grounds and public open spaces, including ongoing maintenance, staffing, insurance and replacement liabilities. Confirmed commitments should be distinguished from potential future transfers.
- Play & Sports Strategy 2026–2036, Investment in play and sports facilities, future improvements and asset replacement.
- Existing Assets and Services, Maintenance, statutory compliance, planned preventative works and ongoing service sustainability.
- Capital Programme and Reserves, Future capital investment, appropriate reserve levels and longer-term financial commitments.
- Income Generation, Fees and charges, investment income, grants and other external funding opportunities.
- Council Tax Affordability, Balancing service delivery and future investment against the financial impact on local taxpayers.

5. Indicative Budget Direction

Members are invited to consider the following broad approaches to guide officers in preparing the draft budget:

Option Approach

1. Financial Restraint

Prioritise existing services, limit discretionary expenditure and identify efficiencies. May restrict service development and require reprioritisation to accommodate increasing costs.

2. Sustainable Service Delivery

Provide for inflation, existing commitments, essential asset maintenance and evidenced additional responsibilities arising from devolution. Seeks to maintain service standards and financial sustainability whilst managing the impact on the precept.

3. Strategic Investment and Growth

Provide for existing commitments alongside additional investment in devolution, play provision, Council assets and strategic priorities. May require increased funding, phased investment, external funding or a higher precept.

These options are intended to inform discussion rather than represent fixed financial proposals. Members may wish to indicate a preferred approach or a combination of priorities, recognising that the final budget will need to balance affordability, service requirements and the Council's longer-term financial sustainability.

6. Next Steps and Medium Term Financial Plan

Following Members' initial direction, officers will continue the detailed budget review process, incorporating recommendations from individual Committees, the review of fees and charges, service requirements and updated financial forecasts.

The MTFP will be reviewed following this direction to reflect the Council's emerging priorities, anticipated financial pressures and longer-term commitments.

Given the timing of this year's meeting and significant development occurring with devolution and the Play Strategy as example, Members may wish to consider holding an additional Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting in November 2026, specifically to receive a further budget progress update, consider the emerging financial position and provide additional direction.

Alternatively, the updated MTFP, Review of Fees and Charges and consolidated draft budget can be presented to the scheduled December 2026 meeting, subject to completion of the necessary financial reviews.

The budget and precept-setting process will conclude in January 2027, with the financial implications, including the estimated impact on Band D council tax, presented for consideration.

7. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:



AGENDA ITEM 8.2

1. **Note** the progress of the 2027/2028 budget preparation process, including the ongoing officer reviews and consideration of service budgets through the relevant Committees.
2. **Consider** and provide indicative direction on the preferred budget-setting approach and priorities for 2027/2028, as outlined in Section 5, to inform the ongoing budget preparation process and review of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
3. **Consider** whether an additional Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting should be arranged in November 2026 to receive a further budget update, review the emerging financial position and provide additional direction ahead of the scheduled December meeting.
4. **Note** that the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, Review of Fees and Charges and consolidated draft budget will be brought forward when sufficiently developed, either at an additional November meeting, if agreed, or at the scheduled December 2026 meeting, ahead of final budget and precept setting in January 2027.



AGENDA ITEM 9.1

Finance & General Purposes Committee 19 October 2026

Corporate Asset Management Update

Report of the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Members with a scheduled overview of the Council's corporate asset management arrangements, in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference and agreed reporting cycle. The update reflects the position at the time of writing, based on information available to officers, and may be subject to further developments or changes.

2. Background

2.1 The Council manages a growing portfolio of land, buildings and associated assets, including freehold and leasehold properties, operational facilities and community assets.

2.2 This report provides an overview of key developments, maintenance and compliance arrangements, financial implications and any emerging risks requiring Member attention.

3. Corporate Asset Management Update

3.1 Property, Leases and Licences

Officers continue to oversee the Council's property portfolio, including lease and licence arrangements, landlord responsibilities and associated legal matters.

Update:

Outstanding Completion of Leases/Sub -Leases & Licences with Legal teams:

- Blakehay Theatre (Lease) – imminent final drafts being agreed by parties
- The Food Hub Old Town Quarry (Sub- Lease) for execution Town Council Nov 26
- Artspace Old Town Quarry (Sub-Lease) for execution Town Council Nov 26
- The Maltlands Tree Nursery (Licence with NSC) – ongoing
- Grove Park Toilets - imminent final drafts being agreed by parties

Devolution :

- 8 New Play Areas (Freehold)



AGENDA ITEM 9.1

- 3 Land Parcels (Freehold)
- Play Areas – Existing 16 sites expired licence transfer to Freehold

Recently Completed in year:

- NSC – Noticeboards (licence)

Expired / due for renewal / action:

- Uphill Links Road Toilets (Wessex Water)

Other:

- Boundary dispute – Redpits Allotments

3.2 Property Maintenance and Statutory Compliance

Planned and reactive maintenance continues across the Council's estate, alongside the management of relevant statutory inspection and compliance requirements.

Update:

Significant issues /Expenditure Implications:

- Waterpark Splash pad lifting
- Cemetery Wall MG Section
- Blue Front doors at Weston Museum – realignment of track system (moving alarms and effects to walls)

Project Progress / Milestones:

- Solar Museum – Independent review undertaken to establish load requirements for building. Procurement to commence by end of year.
- Access Ramp @ 32 Waterloo street
- Clarence / Ashcombe toilets – scheduled replacement parts due to Anti social behaviour
- Allotments – Fencing replacements / gate repairs (Kewstoke / Hutton Moor)
- Health & Safety General Risk Assessment (Nov 25) – No critical items remaining

Recently Completed:

- Allotments: Asbestos Removal (Kewstoke / Clark's Field)
- Cyber Security Risk Assessment (via Insurer)
- IT Hardware Review (Internal)



AGENDA ITEM 9.1

- FRA – completed all sites
- Accessibility at Old Town Quarry (cabins)
- Annual General Risk Assessment (Health & Safety) due November 2026

Matters or Risks:

- Topple Testing Cemetery – ongoing reviews
- Damp issues (ongoing) Weston Museum / 32 Waterloo Street

Overall Compliance Position:

Health & Safety – continued review of documents to meet items identified within GRA November 2025:

No Critical Items for H & S

High Items: Development of Monitoring systems

Low Items : Numerous small items (20)

Play Areas: RPII inspections completed Summer 2026

Asbestos: All registers updated and management plans reviewed

Other Building compliance : All up to date

3.3 Capital Works and Asset Improvements

Progress continues on the Council's approved capital projects and improvements to its existing estate, subject to agreed budgets and relevant Committee decisions.

Update:

Significant issues /Expenditure Implications:

None to report

Project Progress / Milestones:

- Ramp at Waterloo Street, design and ability to provide adequate provision being explored.

Recently Completed:

- Old Town Quarry Barn/ Offices
- Old Town Quarry Main renovation – retention due for release October 2026

3.4 Devolution and Additional Assets

The ongoing Devolution Programme continues to inform the Council's future asset-management requirements. Detailed consideration of proposed transfers remains within the established Devolution governance arrangements.

Update: - covered within a separate agenda item and minutes from the Devolution Start and Finish Group submitted to this committee.

3.5 Corporate Asset Database

Work has commenced to develop a centralised corporate asset database, bringing together existing property and asset records to improve the consistency, accessibility and management of information.

The project will support future maintenance planning, financial management, insurance, property records and statutory compliance monitoring.

Update:

Significant issues /Expenditure Implications:

- Ongoing production of central Asset Database

Project Progress / Milestones:

- Asset Data Intern started (September 2026) collation of asset information and duplication identification underway following a staged project programme.
- Second Meeting with Abavus (CRM and data platform) held – order placed and Government contract procurement being concluded.
- Meeting scheduled early November 26 with Abavus and Asset Data Intern / Transformation Manager post holder(if in place).
- Report to Personnel scheduled for October 26 – for Transformation Manager JD approval to work with Abavus / Microsoft 365 / Modern Gov

Recently Completed:

- Internal Financial Contract database updated for SMT review ahead of budget process (October 2026)
- SLA reviews – undertaken by Grants & Governance Sub Committee (October 2026)

4. Financial and Risk Implications

4.1 Asset-related expenditure is monitored through the Council's existing financial reporting arrangements. Any significant budget pressures or future liabilities will be reported to the appropriate Committee.

4.2 The principal areas of ongoing risk relate to property condition, statutory compliance, maintenance liabilities and the potential expansion of the Council's asset portfolio which is being reviewed.

4.3 Council Central Risk Register; The Director of Finance and Resources (DFR) is currently exploring options to replace the councils current LCRS risk system which is no longer supported. Details of which will be forwarded to the committee for approval as required. The objective would be to provide a dashboard of this report to council with automated information rather than manual to help with corporate Governance obligations.

4.4 PPM budgets; will need to be considered following the councils asset portfolio expansion, the DFR is working with the councils professional services team to review the current 60 year cyclical maintenance schedules to enable a breakdown of 5 year plans which will come back to the committee for approval – the current schedule does not include all sites ie Old Town Quarry Early indication is that the current budget level is not likely to be adequate to cover al the building / asset needs.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Officers will continue to progress the Council's planned maintenance, property management and compliance arrangements, alongside development of the corporate asset database and integration of any additional assets.

5.2 Significant matters requiring Member approval will be brought forward separately in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements.

6. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

6.1 Note the Corporate Asset Management Update and the progress being made in managing and developing the Council's asset portfolio.

6.2 Note any significant issues, risks and forthcoming priorities identified within the report.



Finance & General Purposes Committee – 19 October 2026

IT Hardware Replacement and Five-Year Replacement Program

Report from the Director of Finance & General Purposes

1. Purpose of Report

To propose recommendation of General Reserve provision to fund the replacement of legacy IT hardware currently operating on Windows 10 across council services; to consider quotations for replacement equipment; and to establish a planned approach to the future replacement of Council IT hardware.

The report also considers the relationship between the proposed hardware replacement and the Council's 2026-2029 IT Transformation Project, including implementation of Microsoft 365 Business Premium, Microsoft Copilot, Entra ID and SharePoint.

The Committee has previously approved the implementation of Microsoft 365 and associated budget provision. The proposals within this report do not seek further approval for Microsoft 365 but ensure that the Council's hardware infrastructure can support and complement the approved transformation program.

2. Background

A review of the Council's existing IT equipment identified 12 desktop and laptop computers requiring replacement. The equipment comprises devices operating on a combination of Windows 10 Pro and Windows 10 Home and includes hardware of varying ages and specifications.

Windows 10 reached the end of Microsoft standard support on 14 October 2025. Continued use of an unsupported operating system increases risks associated with cyber security, operational resilience, software compatibility and ongoing technical support.

Replacement of the identified equipment will provide the Council with a supported Windows 11 Pro platform and provide greater consistency across the Council's IT hardware estate.

The proposed hardware replacement should also be considered within the context of the Council's 2026-2029 IT Transformation Project. The Finance & General Purposes Committee has previously approved implementation of Microsoft 365 and associated budget provision.

3. Existing IT Hardware and Requirement for Replacement

To date 12 devices have been identified for replacement comprise 7 desktop computers and 5 laptops. The equipment was acquired at different times and varies in age and specification, resulting in an inconsistent IT hardware estate.

The review identified older-generation processors, limited memory and storage and equipment that is no longer considered appropriate for the Council's future operating environment. Several devices have only 4 GB of RAM, while others utilise older processor technology or have limited storage capacity.

Although individual components within some devices may be capable of upgrade, continued investment in ageing equipment would not provide a consistent or sustainable long-term solution. Replacement will enable the Council to standardise its equipment and simplify device management, security, support and maintenance.

The Council is moving towards a modern Microsoft 365 environment as part of the 2026-2029 IT Transformation Project. Replacement of the identified equipment will support the approved Microsoft 365 Business Premium and Copilot environment and the move towards Entra ID and SharePoint.

Replacement of the identified legacy equipment therefore provides a more effective long-term approach than continued investment in individual older devices and establishes a standardised platform capable of supporting the Council's wider digital transformation.

4. Procurement and Quotation Evaluation

Three quotations have been obtained for the replacement of the seven desktop computers and five laptops identified through the Council's IT hardware review. In evaluating the quotations, consideration has been given not only to the purchase price of the replacement hardware but also to the costs associated with installation, configuration and onboarding the equipment into the Council's managed IT environment. This provides a comparison of the total project implementation cost rather than hardware purchase price alone.

The resulting project cost comparison is:

	Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
7 Desktop PCs	£3,801.00	£4,550.00	£4,709.25
5 Laptops	£2,910.00	£3,500.00	£3,099.25
Hardware subtotal	£6,711.00	£8,050.00	£7,808.50
Installation / professional services	£900.00	-	£1,950.00
Managed IT onboarding	£2,280.00	£2,280.00	Included
Total Project Cost	£9,891.00	£10,330.00	£9,758.50

All figures shown are exclusive of VAT. As the Council is able to recover VAT, the evaluation is based upon the net cost to the Council.

Evaluation on the basis of total project implementation cost demonstrates that Quote 3 represents the lowest overall cost, being £132.50 lower than Quote 1 and £571.50 lower than Quote 2.

Quote 3 also provides a single point of responsibility for the supply, configuration and introduction of the replacement equipment into the Council's managed IT environment. On the basis of the total project cost and implementation arrangements, Quote 3 is therefore considered to represent the best value for the Council.

5. IT Hardware Replacement Program

The requirement to replace 12 devices within a single financial year highlights the need for a more structured approach to the future management and replacement of the Council's IT hardware as the council continues to grow.

It is proposed that the Council establishes a rolling five-year IT Hardware Replacement Program, providing forward visibility of anticipated hardware replacement requirements and enabling associated costs to be incorporated into the annual revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Planning.

An indicative five-year lifecycle will be used for desktop computers and laptops for financial planning purposes. This will not represent an automatic replacement date.

Before equipment is replaced, consideration will be given to its condition, performance, security, operating system and software support, warranty position and continuing operational suitability. The program will also take account of Microsoft's published product and support lifecycles to ensure that Council devices continue to operate on supported software and operating systems. Equipment that remains secure, supported and fit for purpose may therefore continue in use beyond its indicative replacement date.

The program will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process and updated to reflect changes to the Council's hardware inventory, technology requirements and prevailing market costs.

Where practicable, future replacements will be staggered to avoid significant numbers of devices requiring replacement simultaneously and to provide a more consistent profile of expenditure.

The IT Hardware Replacement Program will sit alongside the Council's 2026-2029 IT Transformation Project, ensuring that future hardware investment continues to support the Council's developing digital infrastructure and operational requirements.

6. Financial Implications

No specific budget provision was included within the Council's 2026/27 budget for the replacement of the 12 identified IT devices. The expenditure therefore represents an unbudgeted requirement arising from the need to replace the Council's existing legacy equipment.

It is proposed that the total project cost of replacing and implementing the 12 devices is met from the Council's General Reserve.

The Council's General Reserve balance as at 31 March 2026 was £981,986. The recommended total project cost of £9,758.50 represents approximately 0.99% of that General Reserve balance.

The use of General Reserve is proposed as a one-off measure to address the current legacy hardware replacement requirement. It is not intended that General Reserve becomes the normal funding source for routine IT hardware replacement.

From 2028/29 onwards, anticipated replacement expenditure will be identified through the rolling five-year IT Hardware Replacement Program and appropriate provision incorporated into the Council's annual revenue budget. This will enable foreseeable replacement costs to be planned for.

7. Risk and Governance Considerations

The proposed replacement supports the Council's responsibility to maintain a secure, supported and operationally appropriate IT environment.

Continued reliance on ageing equipment and an unsupported operating system increases cyber-security, data protection, operational resilience and business continuity risks. Replacement will reduce these risks and provide a supported platform.

The procurement exercise has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, specifically Regulation 7.2, with three quotations obtained against a consistent requirement to demonstrate competition and value for money.

The introduction of a rolling five-year replacement program will strengthen the Council's asset and financial planning by ensuring that future replacement requirements are identified, reviewed and budgeted for in advance.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for the secure decommissioning and disposal of the equipment being replaced, including the secure removal or destruction of Council data before equipment leaves the Council's control, in accordance with the Council's relevant asset disposal and data protection arrangements.

8. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 1.** Approve the replacement of the necessary equipment (12 items) identified within the Council's IT hardware review.
- 2.** Approve the purchase and implementation of the replacement equipment on the basis of Quote 3 at a total project cost of £9,758.50.
- 3.** Approve the funding of the replacement equipment and associated implementation costs from the Council's General Reserve making recommendation to full council for its use.(there being no specific budget provision for the replacement within the 2026/27 budget).
- 4.** Approve the establishment of a rolling five-year IT Hardware Replacement Program to be reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process.
- 5.** Approve that appropriate provision for planned IT hardware replacement is incorporated into the Council's revenue budget from 2028/29 onwards.
- 6.** Note that appropriate arrangements will be made for the secure decommissioning and disposal of the equipment being replaced, including the secure removal or destruction of Council data.



AGENDA ITEM: 9.3

Finance & General Purposes Committee – 19 October 2026

32 Waterloo Street – Accessibility Improvements Progress Update

Report of the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on progress following the Committee's resolution of 24 August 2026, including initial costs, outstanding WECIL recommendations and proposed next steps.

2. Background

2.1 At its meeting on 24 August 2026, the Committee resolved not to proceed with the proposed front entrance ramp and instead to progress accessibility improvements informed by the WECIL consultation.

2.2 WECIL recognised that a permanent front entrance ramp would provide the most equitable access but identified alternative measures to improve accessibility, independence, safety and dignity for visitors.

3. Progress and Initial Costs

3.1 The Council's Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) contractor has undertaken an initial scoping exercise with specialist contractors, identifying the following works:

- **Front entrance:** Automatic door operation, safety sensors, access controls and associated building alterations.
- **Rear entrance:** Automatic door operation, relocation of access controls/intercom, replacement door with vision panels, wider non-slip metal ramp, potential canopy improvements and associated building works.

3.2 Initial estimated costs are:

Works	Cost (excl. VAT)
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Automatic doors	£5,998
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Access controls	£750
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Electrical works	£450
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Builders' works	£5,834
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Total	£13,032
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AGENDA ITEM: 9.3

3.3 These are initial estimates subject to final specifications, compliance checks and any necessary consents. No provision has been included for a front entrance ramp.

4. Outstanding WECIL Recommendations

4.1 The initial scoping addresses some, but not all, WECIL recommendations. Further consideration and, where appropriate, costing are required for:

- Front and rear entrance signage, tactile/contrasting surfaces and handrails.
- Rear entrance weather protection, threshold and slip resistance.
- External access, including parking, vehicle obstruction and the absence of a continuous pavement.
- Internal door accessibility (lobby area from and to reception) and emergency evacuation arrangements.
- Staff disability awareness and training.
- Website and pre-visit accessibility information, including directions to the rear entrance.

4.2 The rear entrance remains the principal step-free access, approached via an area outside the Council's direct control (ownership). This presents ongoing challenges regarding vehicle obstruction, maintenance and access rights. Any improvements affecting third-party land will require further investigation and appropriate permissions.

4.3 Officers will continue to review the outstanding recommendations, including operational improvements and further costs, to establish a prioritised programme of works.

5. Public Correspondence and Complaints

5.1 Following the August decision, the Council has received Freedom of Information requests, correspondence and formal complaints raising concerns about the decision not to proceed with the front ramp, the suitability of the rear entrance, vehicle obstruction and the importance of safe, independent and dignified access.

5.2 These matters have been addressed through the relevant information and complaints procedures. At the Stage 2 complaints panel meeting on 1 October 2026, the Panel acknowledged the concerns raised but recognised that the Committee had previously considered the available options and that its resolution remained under implementation.

5.3 The Panel noted that a progress report would be presented to this meeting and invited the complainant to attend and speak during public participation.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

AGENDA ITEM: 9.3

6.1 Given the proposed improvements, outstanding WECIL recommendations and public concerns, it is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is commissioned with appropriate independent specialist input before any works orders are placed.

6.2 The assessment will consider the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments and the Public Sector Equality Duty, together with the effectiveness of the proposed measures, the complete accessible route and the continued reliance on the rear entrance.

6.3 Its findings will inform the final specification and identify any further adjustments or consultation required.

7. Financial Implications and Next Steps

7.1 The initial estimated cost of £13,032 excluding VAT could be met from existing 2026/27 budget provisions. Further costs may arise from outstanding recommendations and the EqIA.

7.2 Officers will complete the remaining assessments, confirm specifications, costs, permissions and procurement requirements, and prepare a final programme for consideration before works are commissioned.

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

1. **Note** the progress made, initial estimated costs of £13,032 excluding VAT and outstanding WECIL recommendations.
2. **Consider** the concerns raised through public correspondence, FOI requests and the Council's complaints process, as summarised within this report.
3. **Approve** the commissioning of an Equality Impact Assessment with appropriate independent specialist input, to inform the final programme before works orders are placed.
4. **Request** that officers complete the outstanding assessments and prepare a final costed programme of accessibility improvements, seeking any necessary further approvals before implementation.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Civic Handbook

Date	Version	Author	Origin of change e.g. change in legislation	Changed by
19 th October 2026	2.0	Democratic Services Manager	Annual review – general updates, strengthened civic regalia guidance and alignment with the Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol.	Democratic Services Manager

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

Date policy adopted	March 2026 (Town Council)
Review cycle	Annually
Review date	October 2027

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Introduction

Congratulations on your nomination as the Mayor Elect & your subsequent election as the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare. The Town Mayoralty is a position which gives the opportunity to promote and uphold the special character of Weston-super-Mare. It is important that you are as well prepared as possible for the ensuing year. We will do everything possible to support you in your term of office and make it a most enjoyable and a very memorable positive experience.

This Handbook has been produced to provide information and guidance in your new role and should be read alongside the Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol, which sets out the standards and practical requirements applying to civic conduct, representation and the use of civic regalia.

- 1. The Mayoral Candidate and preparing for the role**
- 2. The Office of Mayor**
- 3. Chairing meetings**
- 4. History of the Council and Mayoralty**

The Handbook is a working document that can be referred to during your preparation for the role of Mayor and also throughout your term of office.

Section 1 - Preparing for the role of Mayor

It is important that as a Councillor you are fully prepared for the personal effect the Mayoralty may have on your family, friends and political career. After all you did not come on to the Council for the main purpose of being Mayor.

The role of a modern Mayor can be regarded as;

- A symbol of authority
- A symbol of an open society
- An expression of social cohesion.

Initial Considerations

You may want to use the points listed below to consider how they can have a positive impact on the aspects of Mayoral life. It will help to dispel some of the concerns that you may have, by considering these points, in advance of your election as Mayor.

1. Consideration of how much time will need to be committed to the role.
2. The effect of becoming Mayor on your:
 - a. Yourself
 - b. Mayoral partner
 - c. Family and friends
 - d. Career or job
 - e. Political career
 - f. Personal and religious beliefs
 - g. Non-Council interests
 - h. Relationship with other Councillors
 - i. Relationship with your Parishioners

Initial actions for the Mayor

These actions should be completed before your election at the Annual Council meeting. The Civic Office will provide guidance and information to assist you. Addressing these matters early will help ensure the smooth running of your term in office.

1. **Select a Mayoress/Consort or Mayor's Consort - If required**
2. **Complete a thorough induction process.**
3. **Appoint a Chaplain and Deputy Chaplain, if desired.**

This should be considered before becoming Mayor Elect, allowing time to speak with your proposed Chaplain about the role's commitments and their willingness to undertake them. It is customary for the Mayor to announce their Chaplain for the year ahead at the Annual Meeting of the Council. The Chaplain will assume responsibility for offering prayers of the Council at Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and such like. The Chaplain will offer spiritual guidance to the Mayor as and when required and will assist in organising the Civic and Carol Services.

Upon your election, the Civic Office will issue letters offering roles for your term of office and inviting acceptance. The Civic Office will also provide role-holders with dates of events they will be expected to attend.

Before your election as Mayor Elect, you should:

1. **Appoint a Mayor's Cadet** (if desired). This can be done on a rotational basis, or you may choose a specific cadet force if you have a personal connection or alignment with it.
2. **Provide a biography** to the Mayor's Office. Guidance on possible content can be found on page 11.
3. **Decide whether to adopt a theme for your year** that supports or promotes an aspect of the Town Council Strategy. After your election as Mayor Elect in March, discuss with the Civic Office how activities throughout the year can be planned to promote this theme.
4. **Advise the Mayor's Office of the following:**
 - Important dates when you will be unavailable (e.g. holidays, medical appointments, personal anniversaries, North Somerset Council or other public commitments).
 - Any pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities that may affect your ability to carry out the role (shared at your discretion).
 - Dietary requirements (e.g. vegan, vegetarian, ethnic considerations, food allergies, intolerances) so the Civic Office can advise event organisers of any special requirements. The Protocol Form sent to organisers prior to the Mayor's attendance will cover these matters.
5. **Provide the Civic Office with a personal address list** for invitations to Civic events and Mayoral Christmas cards. This should be planned in advance to ensure timely distribution and may differ between events.
6. **Select a charity or charities** to support during your term-If you so wish
These administrative matters will greatly assist with the smooth running of your Mayoral year.

In addition, you may wish to reflect on questions that will help shape the culture and style of your Mayoralty:

- Who are you?
- What kind of Mayor do you want to be?
- What is your Council like?
- How does the role work in practice?

Planning:

- What do you want to achieve during your Mayoralty?
- How can you realise everything you want to do during your Mayoralty?

Vision:

- What changes do you want to see when you have finished?
- What can you achieve?
- How do you set ambitious and realistic objectives?

Support:

- Where do you need help?
- Who can help you?

Position:

- How can you make sure that everyone from the council supports you?
- Where does the modern Mayor fit in the community?

Further reading

Civic and Ceremonial: A Handbook, History and Guide for Mayors, Councillors and Officers by *Paul Millward*

More than a Chain: How to be a twenty-first century Mayor, Lord Mayor or Council Chair by *Duncan Bhaskaran Brown*

Section 2 - The Office of Mayor

The two distinct parts to the Office of Mayor are; Civic and Constitutional.

Civic - The Mayor is the First Citizen of the Town.

Constitutional - The Mayor is Chair of Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

It is important that the Mayor fully understands the role and the duties they will undertake during their year in office. The Deputy Mayor's role is that of a substitute, not an additional civic representative, and is therefore to deputise for the Mayor when the Mayor is unable to fulfil their duties, as requested.

Mayoress/Consort

There is no legal obligation to appoint a Mayoress or Consort. However, the role can significantly contribute to the success of the Mayoralty by providing support throughout the year. The considerations outlined in the following points apply equally to partners.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must conduct themselves appropriately at all times and avoid any actions that could bring the Council into disrepute.

They should not:

- Attend any function or event that supports an organisation or individual whose objectives are contrary to law and/or Council policy.
- Solicit engagements, visits, or otherwise seek favours by virtue of their office.

1. Roles and responsibilities of the Mayor

The role of the Mayor is to:

1. **Chair meetings of the Council** and ensure that its business is conducted in an orderly and proper manner, in accordance with statutory obligations and the Council's Constitution.
2. **Preside as the ceremonial head of the Council** at civic functions and social occasions.
3. **Act as signatory** to the Council's official seal on documents on behalf of the Council.
4. **Host events** and receive and welcome members of the Royal Family, dignitaries, and visitors.
5. **Attend functions** as a representative of the Council.
6. **Make speeches**, most often expressions of thanks or welcome. If required to speak on the work of the Council, remarks should be factual and align with the strategic aims of the Council.
7. **Promote, raise the profile, and gain publicity** for projects and events that benefit the citizens of the Town - predominantly by attending events (by invitation) to attract publicity for the cause.

8. **Encourage citizenship** and participation in the life of the Town.
9. **Celebrate success** both within the Council and across the Town.

Responsibilities

Detailed requirements relating to civic conduct, representation and the wearing, use, custody and security of civic regalia are contained within the Council's *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol*. The Protocol should be read alongside this Handbook.

Key Points

1. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected Members of the Council and are Town Councillors.
2. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have no additional powers beyond those of a Councillor.
3. The Mayor will normally hold office from the Mayor Making Ceremony for one municipal year.
4. The Mayor will preside over Full Council meetings.
5. The Mayor will meet with the Town Clerk and Leader prior to Full Council meetings.
6. The Mayor must observe the strictest neutrality and impartiality at all times.
7. The Mayor may designate a Mayoress, Consort, or Consorts as appropriate.
8. Irrespective of gender, the Mayor will be known as the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare, addressed as "Mr. Mayor" or "Madame Mayor" and have their name preceded by "Councillor."
9. The Mayor shall be regarded as the First Citizen of the Town.

Election

The Town Mayor is elected each year, for a term of one municipal year, by Town Councillors. Confirmation of the **Mayor Elect** by the full Council takes place at the Town Council meeting in March, allowing the incoming Mayor to prepare for formal election at the Mayor Making in May. The Deputy Mayor is also confirmed in March and formally elected to office in May.

Nature of the Role

For the mayoral year, the role is strictly non-political and representative of every section of the community, with a focus on cultivating a positive image of the Town and enhancing the well-being of its citizens. The Council Leader is responsible for the political leadership of the Council.

The Mayor's role is largely ceremonial. As First Citizen, the Mayor acts as the voice of the Town:

- **In times of celebration** – greeting members of the Royal Family, dignitaries, and distinguished guests.
- **In times of sorrow or crisis** – speaking on behalf of the Town during natural or man-made disasters and major incidents.

The Mayor also lays the wreath on behalf of the Town at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

2. Mayoress/Consort or Consort

The Role of the Mayoress/Consort

The Mayoress/Consort will not normally attend functions in their own right without the presence of the Mayor. They will wear the appropriate pendant or Chains of Office. Further requirements relating to the wearing and use of civic insignia are contained within the Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol.

As previously stated, these roles are not recognised by law. If the Mayor chooses to appoint a Mayoress/Consort, the role may be undertaken by a spouse, partner, friend, or relative of any gender. The role is given precedence alongside the Mayor and typically includes:

1. Providing personal support to the Mayor.
2. Accompanying the Mayor on engagements.
3. Observing civic protocol.

When carrying out their roles, the Mayoress/Consort, Deputy Mayoress or Consort should remember the public nature of their position in supporting the Mayor. Their behaviour and manner must be appropriate at all times and must not bring the Council into disrepute. Advice and guidance are available from the Civic Office.

If the Mayoress/Consort is unable to escort the Mayor to an engagement, the Mayor may either:

- Attend alone, or
- Choose another person to act as escort.

If another escort is chosen, they must not wear the Chain of Office. The Civic Officer should be given advance notice of the person attending so they can inform the individual or organisation hosting the event.

3. Deputy Mayor

Duties and Responsibilities

1. **Deputise for the Mayor** when the Mayor is unable to fulfil the duties of the post, at the request of the Mayor.
2. **Support the Mayor** at annual civic events and other events hosted by the Council, as requested by the Mayor.
3. **Carry out the duties** of the post fairly and without discrimination, in line with the aims and objectives of the Council.

4. Induction and Training

If you have served a term as Deputy Mayor prior to your Mayoral election, you will already have begun the induction process with the Civic Office and been issued with this Handbook. If you have been elected directly to the office of Mayor, your induction process will begin imminently.

It is recommended that the Mayor attends Civic Heads training, ideally prior to taking office. Where possible, this will be arranged during the previous year while serving as Deputy Mayor. If this is not possible - such as in cases where you have not served as Deputy Mayor - it will be provided at the earliest opportunity during your Mayoralty.

Civic Heads training is arranged by the Democratic Services Manager, who is responsible for the provision of civic development. Detailed arrangements will be made on your behalf by the Civic Office.

Other training may also be required, such as:

- Chairing meetings
- Dealing with the media
- Public speaking

Please discuss any development needs you may have with the Civic Officer.

5. Precedence

The legal position of the Mayor in relation to precedence is set out in Section 3(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, which states:

“The Chair of a District Council shall have precedence in the District but not so as prejudicially to affect His Majesty’s royal prerogative.”

If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are present at an engagement, the Mayor takes precedence and should wear the Chain of Office. Unless the civic event is arranged by Weston-super-Mare Town Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not both be present in civic insignia.

The Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, the High Sheriff of Somerset, or the Chair of North Somerset Council - when attending a function or event in an official capacity representing Somerset or North Somerset - take precedence over the Mayor.

A Town Mayor does not have precedence over the Chair of the District Council or the Chair of the County Council. This means that, provided a Member of the Royal Family is not present and attended by the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenant, or High Sheriff in their official capacity, the Chair of the District Council will take precedence.

However, at functions hosted by the Town Mayor within the boundaries of the Town Council, to which the Chair of the District Council is invited, it is customary for the Chair of the District Council to relinquish precedence in favour of the Town Mayor. This is also usually the case at other local civic events organised by the Town Council.

This custom is specifically observed at the Remembrance Sunday Service held at the War Memorial in Grove Park.

6. Mayor's Engagements

The Mayor will have use of a laptop during their term of office. The Outlook calendar is linked to the Civic Officer, who will electronically notify the Mayor via their Town Council email address of any invitations to attend an event or function. The Civic Officer will maintain the Mayor's diary of official engagements on the Outlook calendar.

Once an invitation is accepted, the Civic Office will send briefing and protocol forms to the event organiser, electronically wherever possible. The *Mayor's Briefing Form* (see Appendix 2) is completed by the event organiser after the Mayor accepts the invitation. This form provides all necessary information for the Mayor's attendance.

The Civic Officer will meet with the Mayor at an agreed frequency - determined by the Mayor - to discuss engagements, speeches, transport arrangements, events, and other related matters.

Key Points for Managing Civic Engagements

1. All invitations to engagements, whether received verbally or in writing, should be referred to the Civic Office.
2. The Mayor should not receive any official mail at their home address.
3. The Mayor is expected to send personal notes of thanks for engagements attended. Official stationery is provided for this purpose.
4. The Mayor should not normally accept engagements outside Weston-super-Mare unless they are civic in nature. (*See Appendix 3 – Engagement Scoring Form to assist in evaluating invitations.*)
5. Civic regalia should only be worn when undertaking authorised civic duties. Detailed requirements governing when and how civic regalia may be worn, including at engagements outside Weston-super-Mare, are contained within the *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol*.
6. If the Mayor cannot attend an engagement, they may request that the Deputy Mayor or the Leader of the Town Council attend on their behalf.
7. The Civic Officer will provide a list of all official engagements at each Full Town Council meeting.

7. Biography

There are occasions when outside organisations request information about the Mayor, for example, to assist those hosting the Mayor, preparing speeches, or briefing officials.

The Mayor is therefore asked to provide a biography to the Civic Office. This may include:

- Birthplace and schooling
- Employment history
- Community involvement
- Council elected member roles
- Committee roles to date
- Other roles (e.g. governorships)
- Personal interests
- Personal details

8. Clothing

It is advisable to consider the clothing you will require as Mayor and to invest in these items. The Chair's Allowance includes a sum for purchasing clothing for the Mayoral year, if not already available in your wardrobe.

For the Mayor, this may include:

- Lounge suits or dinner suits
- Day and evening dresses, suits, and jackets (for female Mayors)

On some occasions - such as civic functions - it may be considered appropriate for a female Mayor or Mayoress/Consort to wear headgear.

It has become increasingly acceptable for Mayors to adopt a less formal, business-style appearance, for example, without a tie. While the choice of attire is at the Mayor's discretion, it is important to remember that organisers and attendees will have certain expectations about the Mayor's presentation. Some invitations will specify a dress code (e.g. *Charity Ball*, *Church Service*, *Legal Service*).

The *Mayor's Briefing Form* - completed by the event organiser - usually specifies the attire expected for both the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort.

In line with the Town Council's environmental commitment, the Mayor's calendar and briefing forms are fully electronic.

Practical Considerations When Purchasing Clothing

- The Chains of Office will be worn for many engagements. These are pinned or supported by a fabric loop on the shoulders, so shoulder pads may provide additional comfort and style.

- This is particularly relevant when selecting evening wear that is “off the shoulder” in style.
- Consideration should also be given to jewellery or accessories that may clash or interfere with the Chains of Office.

Wardrobe Suggestions

Smart/Casual
Formal
Cocktail Attire

Overcoats are recommended for inclement weather. Detailed arrangements concerning the security and protection of civic regalia when travelling to and from engagements are contained within the *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol*.

9. Chains of Office, Badges and Robes

Occasions when the Chains of Office are normally worn:

- Full Town Council meetings
- Weston-super-Mare Town Council civic events
- Mayor’s Charity Ball
- Functions and engagements to which the Mayor has been invited, unless the organiser has specifically requested they **not** be worn
- Civic events in other towns, where appropriate and permitted

These are indicative occasions only. Detailed requirements governing the authorised use, correct wearing, custody and security of the Chains of Office and other civic insignia are contained within the *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol*.

10. Mayor’s Robes

Robes are worn at civic events, including:

- Mayor Making
- Civic Church Service
- Armistice Day Service
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Town Christmas Lights Switch-On
- Mayor’s Charity Ball Reception

When the Mayor is wearing robes, the Mace and Mace Bearer will also be in attendance.

Detailed requirements relating to the correct wearing of Chains of Office, civic robes and ceremonial dress, together with the use of the Mace and arrangements for the custody, security and care of civic regalia, are contained within the *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic*

Protocol.

11. The Civic Calendar

These are key events the Mayor is expected to attend, though they do not represent the full calendar of engagements.

May

- Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony

June

- Armed Forces Day

July

- Annual Civic Church Service

November

- Armistice Day Short Service
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Town Christmas Lights Switch-On

December

- Mayor's Annual Carol Service

March / April

- Mayor's Charity Ball
- High Sheriff of Somerset Legal Service
- Annual Town Meeting

Additional Engagements

Visit to Hildesheim

Arranged by the Civic Office following an official invitation from the Lord Mayor of Hildesheim. Traditionally, the civic budget covers the cost of transport to and from the airport and the airfare for the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort only, or alternatively, the airfare may be funded from the Chair's Allowance.

Mayor's Receptions

The Mayor may wish to include receptions as part of their civic events calendar during their year of Office, which will normally be held in the Chamber at 32, Waterloo Street and the Museum.

12. Other considerations

Policy & Finance Committee Resolution – 20 February 2017

At the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held at Grove House on Monday 20 February 2017, it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations of both the Civic Consultation Group and the Events Working Party be approved, as follows:

1. The main role of the Mayor is to act as First Citizen and to promote the Town.
2. The civic expectation is that the Mayor need only preside at or attend - rather than organise - fundraising events. The Mayor may, however, choose to raise funds for charitable causes if they so wish.
3. The priority of the Civic Officer and other staff will not be to attend or organise

fundraising events, except for the Mayor's Charity Ball.

4. From 2017, the practice of sending Service of Remembrance invitations to other Councils' Mayors and Chairs will cease, with the exception of the Chair of North Somerset Council.
5. It is recognised that the Mayor may host receptions during their term, and that these should be proportionate throughout the year.

13. Civic Support Staff

The Mayor's Office is staffed by the Civic Officer and the PA to the CEO/Town Clerk, who works a 37-hour week - 18.5 hours dedicated to civic work and 18.5 hours dedicated to PA duties for the CEO/Town Clerk - plus additional overtime where required.

The Civic Officer is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the Mayoralty. This role requires flexibility, and the Civic Officer will make arrangements to meet the Mayor's wishes and the requirements of the role.

The Civic Officer is supported by the Senior Customer Services Manager in the day-to-day management and coordination of civic engagements and bookings.

The Civic Officer's work is managed and supported by the Democratic Services Manager, who will assist and advise the Mayor in the Civic Officer's absence.

In addition to the Civic team, the CEO/Town Clerk is also available, when necessary, to assist and advise the Mayor.

To maintain a professional relationship between the Civic Officer and the Mayoralty, the following forms of address are always used:

Mayor – "Mr. Mayor"

Mayoress/Consort – "Mayoress" or "Consort"

Deputy Mayor – "Deputy Mayor"

Deputy Mayoress/Consort – "Deputy Mayoress" or "Deputy Consort"

14. Civic Budget

The civic budget is agreed annually by the Town Council in January. When preparing the budget, consideration should be given to the cost of any one-off events (e.g. national celebrations or jubilees). The 2026/27 civic budget, excluding recharge items, is shown in *Table 1*.

The civic budget is managed by the **Civic Officer** and monitored by the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** to ensure appropriate and timely spending throughout the year.

A significant proportion of the budget relates to **recharge costs**, which cover the use of premises, staff, and facilities in delivering the Mayoralty.

Table 1

Civic Budget Item	Amount
Catering	£3108
Civic Insignia	£5491
Chair's Allowance	£4751
Miscellaneous	£1554
Printing	£1036
Hildesheim	£4144
Civic Events	£9842
Travel	£3626
Total	£33,552

15. Chair's Allowance

The Mayor may use the Chair's Allowance to pay for certain gifts, presentations, or donations. More formal presentations - such as Town crest plaques presented to visiting organisations or dignitaries - are provided by the Civic Office. Examples are shown in *Table 2*. This list is indicative rather than exhaustive and should be used as a guide.

The legal reference to the Chair's Allowance is contained in the *Local Government Act 1972*, which gives the Town Council the authority to make this award. The Mayor receives a Chair's Allowance for their term of office; for **2026/27**, this is **£4,751**, paid in four equal instalments.

The allowance must be paid via the PAYE system in compliance with HMRC regulations. Mayors are advised to declare the allowance as income, but any taxation implications are a matter for the individual and HMRC.

Table 2

Chair's Allowance	Civic Budget
Personal bouquets of flowers e.g. 100 th Birthday Party	Mileage & car parking charges incurred when using own vehicle. (Please note that this does not include personal or ward business).
Raffle tickets at events	Business Cards
Church Service collections	Catering at Civic events and receptions
Prizes for raffles to support chosen charities	Mayor's Christmas Cards
Clothing for civic events	Mayoral stationery
Charity event costs	Mayor's Wreath for Remembrance Sunday Service
Purchase of drinks for self & others while at events	Mayors portrait photograph at end of term in office.
Donations to organisations visited during term of office	Plaques, Mayors Awards, presentation items at formal visits to Town Council

16. Transport

Transport Options

Under the Civic Support Budget, the Council provides three optional modes of transport to enable the Mayor to attend functions:

1. Chauffeured Car

- Arranged by the Civic Officer upon the Mayor's request.
- All costs are paid from the **Travel** heading of the Civic Support Budget.

2. Taxi

- The Council holds an account with **Sinclairs Taxis**.
- Bookings are normally made by the Civic Office when finalising arrangements for an event.
- In exceptional cases outside office hours, the Mayor may arrange a taxi by calling **07854 346292**.
- When booking, clearly state that it is **for the Mayor** and should be charged to the "MAYOR 1" account.
- The Civic Officer checks the monthly account.
- Taxis must only be used for **official engagements**.
 - *An official engagement is one arranged by the Town Council, or for which an official invitation and details have been received by the Civic Office.*

3. Mayor's Private Vehicle

- The Mayor may choose to use their own vehicle to attend an event.
- Mileage can be claimed monthly at the agreed Council mileage rate.
- All claims must be submitted on the official **Mileage Claim Form** (see Appendix 4).

Note: All modes of transport are funded from the **Travel** heading of the Civic Support Budget.

Environmental Commitment

In line with the Council's commitment to environmental responsibility, car sharing will be considered - via the engagement scoring matrix - when attending events outside the area. Where practical, car sharing and public transport will be used.

17. Speeches

Speeches

The Mayor's Office does not write speeches for the Mayor. However, the Civic Officer can provide assistance when necessary, such as research or background information. At many engagements, the Town Mayor will be invited to say "a few words." This may range from proposing a toast to delivering a full speech. Event organisers may send anything from a full draft speech to brief notes with key points of thanks. This information is intended to help in preparing your remarks, not to replace your own words.

The Civic Officer will normally advise the Mayor in advance if they will be expected to speak, although this may not always be possible. There will be occasions when you are asked to speak with little or no notice.

Practical Tips

- Keep a short speech in mind - or in your pocket - for unexpected speaking requests.
- A small card with generic bullet points (“The Magic Minute”) can serve as a prompt to ensure essential thanks, acknowledgements, and key messages are included.

Events Requiring a Formal Speech

The following civic occasions typically require the Mayor to prepare and deliver a formal speech:

- Acceptance speech on appointment
- Celebration Dinner speech
- End of term speech at Mayor Making
- Mayor’s Receptions
- Mayor’s Award Ceremonies

18. Weston-super-Mare Town Council Strategy 2020-2030

The Mayor can contribute to the delivery of the Council Strategic Plan, maintaining a non-party role.

This can be done by:

- Considering the types of event that would promote the priorities
- When planning civic events, consider using locations that would support the Council aims
- Advocating the priorities when making speeches, when appropriate
- Engaging with organisations during your term of office that can support these strategic aims. Further information can be found in appendix 1.

19. Gifts and Hospitality

Gifts and Hospitality

During their year in office, the Mayor may receive gifts. These may be:

- **Personal** – such as flowers or hospitality
- **Ceremonial** – accepted on behalf of the Council

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality

For transparency, all gifts and hospitality should be declared. The **Hospitality Book** is maintained by the Town Clerk’s PA at 32 Waterloo Street. Advice on receiving and giving gifts is available from the **Civic Office** and the **Town Clerk**.

Town Clerk’s Guidance

- Gifts or hospitality valued at **over £25** offered to staff should **generally be declined**.
- If you exceptionally wish to accept anything above this value, inform the **Town Clerk** (or, in their absence, the **Deputy Town Clerk**).
- For items below £25, please use your judgment, but remember - we are a body

that raises and spends public money and must maintain high standards of probity so the public can be confident we are not improperly influenced in our actions.

Recording Requirements

- All gifts and hospitality - other than items of trivial value (e.g. office calendars) - must be recorded in the Hospitality Book, whether **accepted or declined**.
- Please complete the entry in person rather than sending an email.
- If a gift is given to the Mayor's charity or donated for hampers, there is no element of personal gain.
- If in doubt, contact the **Town Clerk** or the **Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)** for guidance.

20. Mayoral Awards

During their year in office, the Mayor has the honour of recognising citizens of Weston-super-Mare who have made significant contributions to the Town. The Mayor will determine which awards are presented at the end of their term, as well as the format of the Award Ceremony.

Mayor's Awards

The Mayor's Award was first proposed in 1997 by Charter Trustee Mayor, Councillor Mrs Valerie McGann. She suggested introducing an award that could be presented to local people, organisations, and/or schools in recognition of their achievements in the Town of Weston-super-Mare.

The Award is presented annually, either to a single recipient or to multiple recipients, at a ceremony incorporated into the Mayor Making Ceremony or the Annual Town Meeting. The presentation is made by the outgoing Mayor at the end of their term of office.

This Award helps ensure that contributions to the Town do not go unrecognised, particularly given the restrictions of the Borough Shield, which may be presented to only one person or organisation each year. Throughout their term, the Town Mayor meets many individuals and groups, from which they can identify suitable recipients.

The Mayor's Award is given to those who make an outstanding contribution through inspirational and dedicated work to the local community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for others. The Award formally acknowledges the positive difference made by those who live or work in the Town.

The number of recipients each year is determined by the Mayor. Recipients' names are also recorded on the Town Mayor's Roll of Honour Board at 32 Waterloo Street.

Borough Shield

The Borough Shield is awarded annually to a recipient selected by the Mayor for their charitable work within the Town.

The recipient (individual or organisation) holds the large shield for one year.

A small engraved Town Crest shield is then presented as a permanent memento of the Award.

21. Charities

Supporting a charity is not a responsibility of the Mayoralty. It is entirely the Mayor's decision whether to select a charity (or charities) to support during their term of office. The demands in time and resources placed on both the Town Mayor and Council Officers must be balanced carefully. Priority should always be given to:

- The business of the Council
- Civic engagements and events
- Representing the Council and the Town as First Citizen, particularly in times of celebration or sorrow

These duties should not be underestimated or given second place to charity fundraising. Civic staff will not be able to undertake charity work in its entirety due to the demands of their role.

Alternative Ways to Support Good Causes

Even without formal fundraising, the Mayor can still benefit voluntary organisations, good causes, and charities by **raising their profile** through appearances, speeches, and publicity. This aligns with some of the objectives in the Town Council Strategy.

Organising Fundraising Events

If fundraising is chosen, the Mayor should consider the additional assistance that may be required to organise events.

Policy & Finance Committee resolution:

The priority of the Civic Officer and other staff will not be to attend or organise fundraising events, except the Mayor's Charity Ball.

Charity Information

Details of the Mayor's chosen charity(ies) will be included on:

- Event briefing forms
- The Mayor's Charity information sheet
- The Mayor's page on the Council website

These details should include a description of the organisation, its main activities, and how donations can be made.

Finance and Donations

If the Mayor supports a charity:

- All monies raised will be paid into the **Mayor's Charity Account**, managed by the Finance Office.
- Donations may be received throughout the year, at events or directly into the Mayor's Office.
- The Mayor decides the final apportionment of funds between charities.

When selecting charities, it is advisable to contact them to establish what assistance they can offer - such as administration, volunteers, publicity, or fundraising equipment.

Receiving Donations at Events

- Donations offered during engagements can be accepted at the time.
- For larger donations, the Mayor may wish to invite the donor to 32 Waterloo Street for a formal presentation.
- If requested, the Civic Officer will arrange for a letter of thanks and receipt to be sent to the donor. Alternatively, the Mayor may send a personal letter or note of thanks.

The total amount raised will be presented to the chosen charity(ies) at the end of the Mayoralty.

22. Charity Ball

The Charity Ball can raise funds either for the Mayor's chosen charity or for other worthy local organisations, charities, and voluntary groups. The decision on who will benefit from the proceeds rests with the Mayor. In recent years, the Ball has solely supported the Mayor's chosen charity.

If local organisations are to benefit from the Ball's proceeds:

- A media release will be issued after the event inviting organisations to apply for grants.
- The Civic Officer and Finance Team will advise the Mayor on relevant considerations, such as:
 - Previous recipients of funding
 - Organisations that have already received grants via the Grants and Governance Sub-Committee

If the Mayor wishes to **formally present the grants**, the Civic Officer will arrange both a presentation event and a media release.

Section 3 - Chairing Meetings

23. Town Council Meetings

The Mayor also serves as Chair of Weston Town Council and presides over the bi-monthly **Full Town Council meetings**, held in:

- January
- March
- May (*Annual General Meeting & Mayor Making Ceremony*)
- July
- September
- November

Preparation for Meetings

Before each Full Town Council meeting, the Mayor will meet with the **Town Clerk** and **Democratic Services Manager** to:

- Review the agenda
- Discuss the Mayor's announcements

The Civic Office will also provide details of the number of Mayoral engagements to date for inclusion in the meeting.

Guidance for Chairing Meetings

The **Weston-super-Mare Town Council Standing Orders** provide detailed guidance for the Chair when presiding over meetings. These rules can be complex, so it is advisable to familiarise yourself with them before taking the Chair.

A Chair who demonstrates a working knowledge of these procedures - and remains calm and in control - will inspire confidence and demonstrate effective leadership. The **Town Clerk** will always be present to provide advice during meetings.

Key Areas to Understand

To chair effectively, the Mayor should be familiar with:

- Public participation
- Chairship of the meeting
- Managing the agenda
- Rules of debate
- The role of the Town Clerk and Proper Officer
- Quorum for Council meetings
- Voting procedures and the use of a casting vote

A copy of the Standing Orders can be found in online at: <https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/your-council/policies/#34-34-policies-p4>

24. Annual Town Meeting

The Town Council is also required to arrange an Annual Town Meeting each year, where the Mayor will chair the meeting.

25. Civic Matters Consultative Group

During your year as Mayor you will also chair the Civic Matters Consultative Group. These are held at 32, Waterloo Street approximately 2 times a year. The Group reports to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Group members consist of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor, Council Leader, Political Group Leaders, Town Clerk, Democratic Services Manager and the Civic Officer. The role of the group is to provide strategic member input into the Civic role, profile and development of the Town Council and Mayoralty.

Section 4 - History of the Council and Mayoralty

26. Development of the Town & Councils

1348 Records show Weston-super-Mare, as a settlement in the west on the hill above the sea, although it could be at least 800 years old, and been here when William the Conqueror commissioned the Domesday Book in 1066. Over the centuries the village would have been ruled by a Lord of the Manor and the Rector. Most people however think of it as a Victorian seaside town which grew as a result of the railways. There were no Mayors or Councillors in those days.

1842	A Town Council voted into office, using the Town Hall when it was opened in 1859.
1894	Town Council became an Urban District Council and took on many more powers.
1937	Weston-super-Mare granted a Charter and became a Borough Council.
1974	Avon and Woodspring Councils were created Town Charter Trustees formed
1996	North Somerset Council replaced them both, as a unitary authority. Weston-super-Mare now has two local councils. North Somerset Council which is neither a Town Council and does not have Borough status, and therefore has a Chair. Weston-super-Mare Town Council, which, in law is a Parish Council, has a Mayor who also serves as Chair
2000	Weston-super-Mare Town Council formed

27. History of the Mayoralty

In 1937, the King granted Weston-super-Mare a Charter and established a Borough Council. The Council Chair became the Mayor and civic head of the town's elected representatives. Local philanthropist and businessman Henry Butt was the first Mayor and received the Charter.

The Local Government Acts of 1972 and 2000 defined who can become a Mayor. Since 1937, Weston-super-Mare has had three distinct types of Mayors:

- 1937–1973/74: Mayor of the Borough of Weston-super-Mare
- 1974–1999/2000: Charter Trustee Mayor
- 2000/2001 – present: Weston Town Council Mayor

Coat of Arms

The Borough's original Arms were officially granted in 1928, with the crest and supporters added in 1937. The current Arms were officially granted on 15 January 1960 to the Borough of Weston-super-Mare. Since 2000, the Arms have been used by Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

A full explanation of the Coat of Arms can be found in Appendix 6

Mayoral Robes

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor traditionally wear red robes on ceremonial occasions. The blue robes, worn by Town Councillors, were presented to the Council by Councillor Brenner in 1953 and 2002.

Historically, Aldermen wore burgundy robes. Following the abolition of the Alderman role in 1974, the burgundy robes are now worn by serving Town Councillors who are Past Mayors.

28. Civic Insignia

Weston-super-Mare Town Council's civic insignia form an important part of the Town's civic heritage. The historical background to the principal items is set out below.

Requirements relating to their use, wearing, custody, storage, security, maintenance and insurance are contained within the *Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol*.

Chains of Office

Weston-super-Mare has had three Chains of Office. The current chain, introduced in **1960**, displays the Town's coat of arms and the names of all preceding Town Mayors.

Mayor's Chain

- Gold with an enamelled Badge of Office pendant.
- Chain: 9 ct gold, 18½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1960.
- Badge of Office: 3½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1959.
- Links engraved with the names of previous Mayors.
- Presented in 1960 to coincide with the grant of the new Borough Arms.
- Carried in a protective case.

Mayoress/Consort's Chain

- Gold, 3½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1960.
- Badge of Office: 2 oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1963.
- Manufactured by Deakin & Francis.
- Links engraved with the names of previous Mayoresses/Consorts.

The Mace

Symbolism and Origins

The Mace is one of the oldest forms of civic insignia and represents the Mayor's authority.

- Originally a weapon of war, evolving from wood to metal by the 12th century.
- Later used by Royal bodyguards, often engraved with the Royal Arms.
- Over time, its role changed from weapon to ceremonial symbol of authority.
- In formal processions, the Mayor is preceded by the Mace, carried by the Mace Bearer.
- Like the Mace in Parliament, it symbolises the Crown, and the Crown represents the Law.

The Weston-super-Mare Mace

- Length: 3 ft 1 in
- Weight: 103 oz
- Material: Silver with enamelled Arms of Weston-super-Mare
- Maker: Messrs Walker & Hall Ltd, Sheffield & London
- Supplier: The House of Dossor, 73 High Street, Weston-super-Mare
- Presented by Councillor Leonard Guy on **28 June 1937** to commemorate the granting of Borough status.

Design Details

- **Top:** Maltese Cross and Orb, part of the Imperial State Crown, with alternating Maltese Crosses and Fleurs-de-Lys at the base.
- **Vase:** Displays the former Arms of Weston-super-Mare, surmounted by a King George VI five-shilling coin commemorating his Coronation.
- **Base of Vase:** Decorated with imbricated fish scales and four finely modelled seahorses.
- **Shaft:** Features meandering lines enclosing seaweed, chased in low relief.
- **Knop:** Bold design with double heraldic roses and fish scales, bordered by shell friezes and rope mouldings.
- Presented with a mahogany stand and engraved silver plate.

The Mayor's Parlour

The Mayor's formal office is located at the Council's head office, **32 Waterloo Street**, within the Civic Suite on the first floor of the oldest part of this Grade II listed building.

The Civic Suite includes:

- The Mayor's Parlour (office)
- The CEO/Town Clerk's formal office
- The Staircase Gallery, displaying portraits of all past Mayors

The rooms are furnished with historic furniture, paintings, and artefacts - many linked to the Town's twinning with Hildesheim - reflecting the Council's heritage. They are used for hosting guests and holding formal meetings.

Note: To maintain their formal and historic character, these rooms must remain free of personal items at all times.

Mayor's Parlour History

The Arthur and Winter families were of Lords of the Manor of Weston-super-Mare.

Date	Event
1696	Ownership passed to the Pigotts of Brockley
1780	Painting of Grove House shows 17th century house with a tiled roof. The 18th century Grove House was used as a holiday cottage for the Manorial family.
1790	The family's second son, the Rev Wadham Pigott, curate-in-charge of Weston-super-Mare, made Grove House his home.
1805	improvements included the building of new garden walls.
1815	Wadham's niece, Ann Provis, moved to The Grove, married John Hugh Smyth of Ashton Court and established a Smyth-Pigott line.
1823	Wadham died and Ann and John occupy Grove House. Their ten children necessitated an extension to the house, in 1835 at the back, 1840s towards the east.
1824	Parish Church of St John Baptist built which replaced a much older (13th century) smaller Church. The adjacent 17 th century Glebe House served as the Rectory until 1889.
1853	John died. His son John Hugh Wadham Smyth-Pigott inherited the estate.
1893	The House moves into public ownership and the grounds converted a public park. Covenant stipulated that both should remain in use for the sole benefit of Weston-super-Mare residents. became the town's first Free Library until 1900. It has also been a cafe, a private dwelling and the official residence of the Town Clerk.
1941	House damaged by incendiary bombs
1952	The shell of the House that remained was demolished by the Borough Council
1958	A bungalow was added to what remained of the 1884 nursery (built by Hans Fowler Price) and occupied by the Parks Superintendent.
1974	Woodspring District Council converted the whole building into the Mayor's Parlour and Council Chamber for Weston-super-Mare Charter Trustees.

2000	Owned by North Somerset Council and occupied, on its inception, by the new Weston-super-Mare Town Council.
2024	32 Waterloo Street formerly The Mercury offices was purchased by Weston-super-Mare Town Council and becomes their new office and Mayor's Parlour.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol

Supporting Protocol to the Weston-super-Mare Town Council Civic Handbook

Document Status

This Protocol should be read in conjunction with the Weston-super-Mare Town Council Civic Handbook. The Handbook provides overarching information and guidance on the Mayoralty and civic role, while this Protocol sets out the practical standards and requirements relating to civic conduct, representation and the use, wearing, custody and security of civic regalia.

Related document	Civic Handbook
Approved by	Finance & General Purposes Committee
Date approved	19 October 2026
Review cycle	Annually
Next review	October 2027

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1. Purpose and Status

This Protocol supplements the Weston-super-Mare Town Council Civic Handbook and sets out the standards and practical arrangements to be followed by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and those supporting the civic function.

The Civic Handbook provides general information and guidance about the role of the Mayor and the operation of the Mayoralty. This Protocol is intended to provide clear rules and standards for the conduct of civic duties, civic representation and the use, wearing and safekeeping of civic regalia.

The Protocol seeks to:

- preserve the dignity and impartiality of the civic office;
- ensure consistency in civic and ceremonial arrangements;
- protect the reputation of the Council;
- ensure the appropriate use of civic regalia; and
- protect the Council's historic civic assets.

Where there is uncertainty regarding the application of this Protocol, advice should be sought from the Civic Officer, Democratic Services Manager or CEO/Town Clerk.

2. Standards of Civic Conduct

When undertaking civic duties, the Mayor represents Weston-super-Mare Town Council and the wider community rather than any individual political group or personal interest.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are expected to conduct themselves courteously, professionally and impartially and to remain mindful that their actions may be perceived as representing the Council.

When acting in a civic capacity, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor should not:

- use the civic office, robes, chains or other civic insignia to promote party-political interests;
- become involved in disputes between members of the public;
- challenge individuals on contentious matters;
- attempt to exercise powers or responsibilities belonging to the Police, Council officers or another authority; or
- act in a way which may bring the office of Mayor or the Council into disrepute.

Where an incident, complaint or contentious issue arises during an engagement, this should normally be referred to the appropriate officer or organisation.

3. Civic Representation and Deputising

The Mayor is the civic head and First Citizen of Weston-super-Mare.

The Deputy Mayor's role is to deputise for the Mayor when requested and is not an additional civic representative.

Where the Deputy Mayor attends an engagement on behalf of the Mayor:

- they remain the **Deputy Mayor of Weston-super-Mare acting on behalf of the Mayor**;
- they should be introduced accordingly;
- they should follow the same standards of conduct and impartiality expected of the Mayor; and
- they should wear only the civic insignia designated for the office of Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor's Chain of Office should not normally be transferred to the Deputy Mayor.

Where both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attend an engagement, the Mayor takes precedence. Unless the event is a civic event arranged by Weston-super-Mare Town Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not normally both attend wearing civic insignia.

4. Civic Precedence and Ceremonial Arrangements

Appropriate civic precedence should be observed at official events.

The Civic Office will advise organisers, where necessary, regarding:

- arrival and reception;
- introductions and forms of address;
- seating arrangements;
- processions;
- speeches;
- wreath laying;
- dress;
- civic regalia;
- the reception of dignitaries; and
- other ceremonial arrangements.

Detailed information regarding precedence is contained within the Civic Handbook.

5. Civic Regalia Protocol

5.1 Status and Ownership of Civic Regalia

The Council's civic regalia are historic assets of Weston-super-Mare Town Council and represent the civic office and heritage of the Town.

For the purposes of this Protocol, civic regalia includes, where applicable:

- the Mayor's Chain and Badge of Office;
- Mayoress/Consort Chain or insignia;
- Deputy Mayor's civic insignia;
- civic robes and associated ceremonial dress;
- Past Mayor and Councillor robes;
- the Mace; and
- other ceremonial items held by the Council.

All civic regalia remain the property of Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

They must be treated with appropriate care and dignity and used only for authorised civic purposes.

5.2 The Mayor's Chain of Office

The Mayor's Chain of Office should only be worn when the Mayor is undertaking authorised civic duties or attending an engagement in an official capacity.

The Chain may normally be worn when the Mayor is:

- chairing or attending formal Council occasions in their capacity as Mayor;
- attending civic and ceremonial events;
- representing the Council at community events;
- receiving dignitaries or official visitors;
- attending civic services, commemorations and Remembrance events;
- attending official openings, presentations and awards; or
- representing Weston-super-Mare at civic events hosted by another authority.

The Chain should **not normally be worn**:

- when attending an event solely in a personal capacity;
- when attending solely in the capacity of Ward Councillor;
- for party political or campaigning activity;
- where its use could reasonably imply Council endorsement of a personal or political position; or
- where wearing it would present an unacceptable security, health and safety or risk of damage.

5.3 Correct Wearing of the Mayor's Chain

The following protocol should be observed:

- The Chain should be worn centrally, with the principal badge or medallion positioned centrally at the front of the body.
- It should be positioned so that the insignia is clearly visible and hangs correctly.
- Care should be taken to ensure that the Chain is not twisted and that links and insignia face correctly.

- Where shoulder pieces, supporting links or other fittings are provided, these should be correctly positioned before entering the engagement.
- Lanyards, accreditation passes, name badges or similar items should not normally be worn over the Chain.
- Scarves and other accessories should be positioned so that they do not obscure or interfere with the Chain.
- Particular care should be taken with delicate fabrics, open-necked clothing or clothing without structured shoulders to ensure that neither the Chain nor clothing is damaged.
- The Chain should not be handled or repeatedly adjusted unnecessarily while attending an engagement.
- The Chain should be removed where an activity presents a foreseeable risk of injury, loss or damage.

The Civic Officer should provide assistance with the positioning of the Chain where required.

5.4 Outerwear

The Chain should normally remain visible while the Mayor is undertaking the formal element of an engagement.

Where an outdoor coat or other outerwear is necessary, consideration should be given to weather conditions, security and the nature of the event.

For formal outdoor civic ceremonies, the Chain would normally remain visible where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Where there is a risk of loss or damage, the Chain may be covered or temporarily removed on the advice of the Civic Officer.

When travelling to or from an engagement, the Chain should be appropriately concealed or securely transported rather than unnecessarily displayed.

5.5 Mayoress/Consort Insignia

Where a Mayoress or Consort has been formally appointed, they may wear the appropriate Chain, pendant or other insignia designated by the Council when accompanying the Mayor at an authorised civic engagement.

The insignia belongs to the Council and is subject to the same requirements concerning appropriate use, security and care as other civic regalia.

Where another person accompanies the Mayor as an escort because the appointed Mayoress/Consort is unavailable, that person **must not wear the Mayoress/Consort Chain or insignia.**

5.6 Deputy Mayor's Insignia

The Deputy Mayor should wear only the civic insignia designated for the office of Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor's Chain should not normally be transferred to the Deputy Mayor.

When deputising, the Deputy Mayor remains Deputy Mayor and should be introduced as:

“The Deputy Mayor of Weston-super-Mare, representing the Mayor.”

Where the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both present, the Mayor takes precedence.

5.7 Wearing Civic Regalia Outside Weston-super-Mare

The Mayor's Chain should not be worn at an engagement outside Weston-super-Mare without the permission of the Mayor, Chair or appropriate civic head of the host authority.

The Civic Office should obtain or confirm any necessary permission before the engagement.

Where the host authority has issued specific instructions concerning the wearing of chains, badges, robes or other civic insignia, these should be followed.

If there is any uncertainty, the Mayor should seek advice from the Civic Office before attending.

5.8 Civic Robes

Civic robes should be worn only for designated civic and ceremonial occasions or where otherwise agreed through the Civic Office.

The Civic Handbook identifies the Council's normal robed occasions, including Mayor Making, Civic Church Service, Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday and other specified civic events.

When robes are worn:

- the correct robes for the civic office should be used;
- the Mayor's Chain should be positioned correctly over the robes in accordance with established Council practice;
- the Civic Officer should assist with robing and positioning where appropriate;
- robes should be handled carefully and protected from unnecessary damage;
- no unauthorised pins, badges or accessories should be attached to them; and
- robes should be returned promptly for appropriate storage following use.

5.9 Hats and Ceremonial Dress

Where ceremonial headwear forms part of the civic dress for an occasion, it should be worn in accordance with established civic practice and advice from the Civic Office.

Appropriate respect should be observed during:

- the National Anthem;
- formal acts of remembrance;
- religious observance where appropriate;
- the giving or receiving of salutes; and
- occasions involving members of the Royal Family or their representatives.

The Civic Officer should advise on the appropriate wearing or removal of ceremonial headwear for individual events.

5.10 The Mace

The Mace is a symbol of the civic authority of the Mayor and forms part of the Council's historic civic insignia.

The Mace should be used only at authorised civic and ceremonial occasions.

Where the Mayor is formally robed, the Mace and Mace Bearer will normally be in attendance in accordance with established Council practice.

The Mace should:

- be carried only by the designated Mace Bearer or other person authorised by the Council;
- precede the Mayor in a formal civic procession;
- be positioned appropriately during ceremonies or formal proceedings;
- not be handled by members of the public or unauthorised persons; and
- be transported and stored securely when not in ceremonial use.

Where the Mace forms part of a procession, participants should respect its ceremonial relationship with the Mayor and should not unnecessarily pass between the Mayor and the Mace.

5.11 Security, Custody and Safekeeping

All civic regalia must be protected against loss, theft and damage.

When not in use, the Mayor's Chain and other valuable insignia should be kept in their appropriate protective case or secure storage.

The Mayor may retain and store the Chain at home between civic engagements **where this has been authorised**, provided that it is kept in a secure and appropriate place and reasonable precautions are taken to protect it from loss, theft or damage.

When the Chain or other valuable insignia is in the Mayor's possession:

- it must not be left unattended in a public place;
- it should not be left unattended in a vehicle;
- it should not be displayed unnecessarily while travelling to or from engagements;
- it should be transported in its protective case where appropriate; and
- reasonable precautions must be taken at all times to maintain its security.

5.12 Loss, Theft or Damage

Any loss, suspected theft or damage involving civic regalia must be reported immediately to the Civic Officer/Democratic Services Manager/CEO/Town Clerk.

Where theft or loss is suspected, the Council will determine whether the matter should also be reported to the Police and/or the Council's insurers.

No repair, cleaning, alteration or restoration of civic regalia should be commissioned without prior authorisation from the Council.

5.13 Inspection, Maintenance, Valuation and Insurance

The Civic Officer should ensure that appropriate records are maintained for the Council's civic regalia.

Arrangements should be made for:

- periodic inspection for damage or deterioration;
- appropriate specialist cleaning, repair and maintenance where required;
- up-to-date photographic and inventory records;
- appropriate insurance cover;
- periodic professional valuations where necessary; and
- secure storage arrangements.

5.14 Handover of Civic Regalia

At the end of the Mayoral year, or earlier where circumstances require, all civic regalia held by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Consort should be returned to the Civic Office.

The Civic Officer should ensure that the items are checked and appropriately recorded before being issued to the incoming civic office holders.

Any damage or maintenance requirements identified at handover should be recorded and addressed.

6. Advice, Complaints and Concerns

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should seek advice from the Civic Officer, Democratic Services Manager or CEO/Town Clerk where they are uncertain about:

- civic protocol;
- conduct;
- civic representation;
- precedence;
- the wearing of regalia;
- invitations or engagements; or
- the appropriate response to a particular situation.

Concerns relating to civic arrangements should normally be referred to the CEO/Town Clerk.

Formal complaints concerning the conduct of an elected Member should be dealt with through the appropriate Code of Conduct arrangements and, where applicable, referred to the Monitoring Officer.

7. Review

This Protocol will be reviewed annually alongside the Civic Handbook, and earlier where required following any significant change to Council governance arrangements, civic practice or relevant guidance.



FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 19 OCTOBER 2026

POLICY REVIEW - CIVIC HANDBOOK AND CIVIC PROTOCOL Report from the Democratic Services Manager

1. Purpose and Background of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the revised Civic Handbook and supporting Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol for consideration and approval as part of the Council's policy review programme.

1.2 The Civic Handbook has been reviewed to ensure that the guidance provided to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Civic Office remains current, consistent and reflective of established Council practices.

1.3 The review includes general updates and clarification of civic roles and responsibilities, expectations regarding conduct and representation, ceremonial arrangements and the appropriate use and safekeeping of civic regalia.

1.4 A supporting Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol has also been developed to provide clear, practical guidance on civic conduct, the correct wearing and safekeeping of civic regalia, attendance at civic engagements and ceremonial arrangements.

1.5 The Protocol is intended to complement the Civic Handbook, providing a consistent framework for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor when undertaking civic duties and representing the Council.

2. Options for Council

2.1 Members may approve the revised Civic Handbook and supporting Civic Protocol as presented, approve them subject to amendments, or defer approval pending further consideration.

3. Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The review ensures that the Council maintains clear and consistent guidance on civic responsibilities, conduct and ceremonial practices, supporting the effective delivery of civic duties.

4. Expected Benefits



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

4.1 The revised documents will provide greater clarity for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and supporting officers, promote consistency in civic arrangements and help maintain the dignity and integrity of the Council's civic functions.

5. Implications

5.1 Legal

No specific additional legal implications have been identified. The documents support the Council's established civic and governance arrangements.

5.2 Risks

Clear guidance will help minimise reputational and operational risks arising from inconsistent civic practices or uncertainty regarding roles and responsibilities.

5.3 Financial Implications

No additional financial implications have been identified arising directly from the proposed revisions.

5.4 Timescales

The revised documents will take effect following approval and will be reviewed annually, or earlier where required.

5.5 Stakeholders

Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Town Councillors, Civic Office staff and relevant Council officers.

5.6 Contractors

No direct implications identified.

5.7 Crime & Disorder

No direct implications identified.

5.8 Biodiversity

No direct implications identified.

5.9 Privacy Impact



No direct implications identified.

5.10 Equality & Diversity

The revised documents promote appropriate, respectful and inclusive civic representation.

6. Appendix

- **Appendix A** – Revised Civic Handbook (October 2026)
- **Appendix B** – Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol (October 2026)

7. Members are recommended to:

7.1 **Review and approve** the revised Civic Handbook (Appendix A).

7.2 **Review and approve** the supporting Mayor & Deputy Mayor Civic Protocol (Appendix B).

7.3 **Authorise** the Democratic Services Manager to arrange publication and implementation of the approved documents.

Democratic Services Manager

9 October 2026

Finance and General Purposes Committee – 19 October 2026
NALC: Dependent Carers' Allowance Campaign
Briefing Note of the CEO/Town Clerk

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Members of correspondence received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on 29 September 2026 and to seek consideration of supporting a campaign for changes to legislation relating to dependent carers' allowances for parish and town councillors.

2. Background

Weymouth Town Council has been campaigning since 2019 for a change in legislation to allow parish and town councils in England to reimburse councillors for dependent-care expenses incurred when undertaking official council duties.

Currently, principal authorities in England have the ability to make such payments, but parish and town councils do not have equivalent provision.

NALC has advised that the Government has declined to progress the proposed legislative change. Weymouth Town Council intends to appeal this decision and submit an amended proposal.

The proposed change would give parish and town councils the power, but not an obligation, to reimburse eligible dependent-care expenses.

3. Consideration

NALC has circulated a suggested letter for councils to send to their local Member of Parliament in support of the campaign (included below).

The campaign seeks to remove potential barriers to participation in local democracy, particularly for individuals with childcare or other caring responsibilities.

The matter falls within the Finance and General Purposes Committee's remit for corporate governance and relationships with government bodies and outside organisations.

Supporting the campaign would not commit the Town Council to introducing an allowance or incurring expenditure.

4. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from supporting the campaign. Any future introduction of an allowance scheme, should legislation change, would require separate consideration and approval.

5. Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the correspondence received from NALC dated 29 September 2026.
2. Consider supporting the campaign seeking a legislative change to permit parish and town councils in England to reimburse councillors' dependent-care expenses.
3. If supported, authorise the CEO/Town Clerk to write to the local Member of Parliament expressing the Town Council's support.
- 4.

Appendix:

Dear **[insert name of MP here]**

I am writing from **[insert council name here]** to ask you to support an important matter being raised by Parish and Town Councils in England.

Back in 2019 Weymouth Town Council submitted a challenge to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 regarding the ability of Parish and Town Councils in England to be able to pay dependents care expenses for Councillors when attending Council meetings.

Currently principal authorities have the right to make payments using this allowance to their Councillors to assist them to part pay for childcare and dependent's care while those Councillors carry out official council business such as council meetings. This same right is not currently given to parish and town councils in England, although it is in Wales.

Earlier this year the government responded to Weymouth Town Council saying that MHCLG had decided not to take forward changes to right this inequality.

Weymouth Town Council will be appealing this decision and will be requesting re-submission of an amended Dependents' Carers' Allowance proposal to the Government in the next few months. The change being asked for is that Parish and Town Councils in England are given the ability to pay carer's expenses, not a duty to, so it will not be compulsory.

[Insert council name here] want you to support the forthcoming appeal for two main reasons:

- To ensure that carers in England are no longer disadvantaged in this way. There is no reason for carers in England to be singled out for this disadvantage and that this omission from the audit regulations represents an inequality under the Equalities Act 2010. While not having their own specific protected characteristic, carers are covered by equalities legislation regarding employment, service provision, and education, prohibiting unfair treatment or "discrimination by association".

- To remove this barrier to civic participation, to ensure a diverse range of candidates are able to stand for election to make sure our most local councils reflect our communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope you feel able to support our sector in this vital area of work.

Yours....

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Parish Warding
Arrangements for
Weston-super-Mare
Town Council

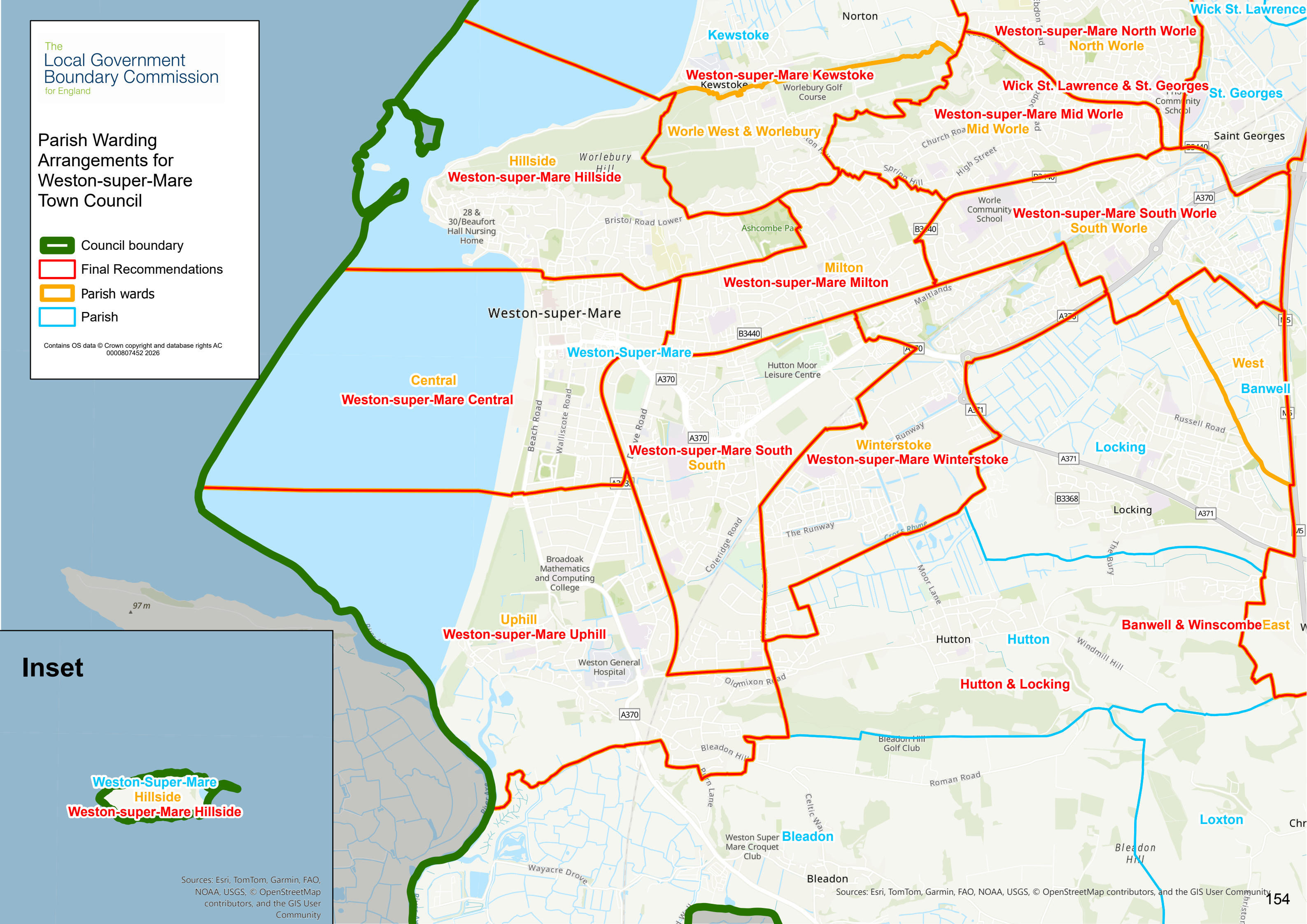
Council boundary

Final Recommendations

Parish wards

Parish

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0000807452 2026



Inset

Weston-Super-Mare
Hillside
Weston-super-Mare Hillside

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO,
NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap
contributors, and the GIS User
Community

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Finance and General Purposes Committee – 19th October 2026 Electoral Review of North Somerset – Final Recommendations Report of: Democratic Services Manager

1. Purpose

To inform Members of the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) final recommendations for new electoral arrangements for North Somerset, including changes affecting Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

2. Background

The LGBCE has published its final recommendations following the electoral review of North Somerset.

The recommendations include changes to the electoral arrangements affecting Weston-super-Mare Town Council. The recommendations will not take effect until the necessary Parliamentary approval has been obtained through a draft Order.

Subject to that process, the new electoral arrangements are expected to take effect for the **May 2027 local elections**.

Democratic Services will reflect the revised arrangements within the Council's preparations for the 2027 Town Council elections and liaise with North Somerset Council's Elections Team as required.

3. Financial / Legal Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Implementation remains subject to Parliamentary approval of the relevant Order.

4. Recommendation

That the Committee notes:

1. the LGBCE final recommendations for the electoral review of North Somerset and the consequential changes affecting Weston-super-Mare Town Council; and
 2. that the revised arrangements will be incorporated into preparations for the May 2027 Town Council elections, subject to Parliamentary approval.
-



Appendix A – Final Recommendations and Mapping

LGBCE – Electoral Review of North Somerset:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-somerset>

Interactive mapping and final recommendations:

Available through the LGBCE North Somerset review page above.

Appendix A: Map of the new electoral arrangements affecting Weston-super-Mare Town Council, as supplied by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Samantha Bishop

Democratic Services Manager

30th September 2026

Finance & General Purposes Committee – 19 October 2026

Public conveniences – potential devolution and future service arrangements

Report of the CEO/Town Clerk

1. Purpose of Report

To advise Members of an approach from North Somerset Council (NSC) regarding the future operation of a number of public conveniences currently managed by NSC within Weston-super-Mare, and to establish whether the Town Council has an in-principle interest in exploring their potential transfer and future service arrangements.

Members are not being asked at this stage to agree to take responsibility for the facilities. If there is an interest in exploring the proposal further, detailed consideration would be undertaken through the Devolution Start & Finish Group before any proposal was brought back through the appropriate governance arrangements for decision.

The matter is being brought to Finance & General Purposes Committee as the next available meeting due to the timescales identified by NSC for determining its future procurement approach.

2. Background

Public conveniences have previously formed part of wider discussions between WSMTC and NSC regarding the devolution of local assets and services.

Earlier in 2026, NSC informally raised the potential future transfer of additional public conveniences, particularly those serving the seafront. At that time, the Town Council did not indicate an interest in progressing these facilities.

NSC has now returned to the matter as its existing concession arrangement expires on 31 August 2027. NSC is considering a replacement concession from 1 September 2027, potentially for a period of up to 25 years. A longer concession is being explored to provide greater opportunity for investment in the buildings and infrastructure.

Before progressing its procurement approach, NSC has asked whether WSMTC wishes to reconsider its position and has requested an early indication following the F&GP meeting on 19 October. Pasted text

3. Facilities Under Consideration

NSC has identified the following facilities:



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- The Cove;
- Oxford Street;
- Atlantic; and
- Royal Sands.

NSC has also referred to the Tropicana and Changing Places facility, although their inclusion is currently considered unlikely.

The basis of any potential transfer has not yet been determined. NSC has indicated that this could potentially include both the assets and operational responsibility, through either a long-term lease or transfer. Pasted text

These matters would require further consideration as part of the Town Council's wider approach to devolution and its adopted principles for asset transfers.

4. Current Financial and Operational Position

NSC has advised that the current annual operating cost of the facilities is approximately £148,222, with approximately £40,000 annual income.

This represents a current gross difference between expenditure and income of approximately £108,222 per annum. This should not, however, be regarded as the cost that would necessarily fall to WSMTC under any future arrangement. The future operating model, service specification, charging arrangements, contractual model and capital investment could all materially affect the position.

NSC has confirmed that there would be no ongoing NSC financial contribution associated with a transfer. Pasted text

There is already some operational alignment between the two councils as both currently use Healthmatic for the cleaning and maintenance of their public conveniences. This is a potentially positive practical consideration and provides a degree of consistency in the current delivery of the service across the town.

There is, however, an important difference in the current service models. WSMTC's public conveniences are currently free to use, whereas the NSC facilities generate income through charging.

No assumption is being made at this stage that the Town Council's existing approach to providing free public conveniences would change. The financial implications of the different models would need to form part of any future business case.

5. Condition and Supporting Information

NSC has provided supporting information including condition surveys undertaken in 2025, indicative capital cost estimates, available usage information and its current cleaning/service specification.

The information identifies capital investment requirements across the facilities. NSC has advised that the estimates are indicative and currently exclude allowances for inflation and professional fees, for which NSC has suggested allowances of 10% and 15% respectively. Pasted text

The information therefore demonstrates that there are potential capital as well as revenue implications which would need to be fully assessed before any transfer could be considered.

The detailed supporting information is available to Members on request. Should F&GP indicate an in-principle interest in exploring the proposal further, this information would be considered in detail by the Devolution Start & Finish Group as part of the development of an options appraisal and business case.

6. Future Service Options

WSMTC's existing contract with Healthmatic runs until 31 March 2029.

There may therefore be scope, should Members ultimately wish to take responsibility for additional facilities, to investigate whether further sites could be incorporated into the Town Council's existing arrangements. This would be subject to the terms of the existing contract and appropriate procurement and legal advice.

There is also a period between the expiry of NSC's current arrangement on 31 August 2027 and WSMTC's contract expiry on 31 March 2029 which would need to be considered.

NSC has separately raised whether there could be merit in exploring a wider future concession arrangement involving public conveniences under the control of both councils. Pasted text

There are therefore potentially several options rather than a predetermined delivery model. These could include incorporating additional facilities within WSMTC's arrangements where permissible, retaining separate arrangements for a period, considering a wider procurement following expiry of WSMTC's existing contract, or exploring a longer-term concession model.

The fact that both councils currently use the same contractor may assist the practical consideration of these options but should not create any presumption regarding future procurement or appointment of a contractor.

7. Considerations and Next Steps

There is an opportunity to consider public convenience provision across Weston-super-Mare more strategically rather than solely on the basis of the historic ownership of individual facilities.

Potential benefits could include greater consistency of service standards, opportunities to consider the facilities collectively and a coordinated approach to future investment and maintenance.

These need to be balanced against the potential financial and property liabilities, particularly the capital investment requirements and the absence of any continuing NSC financial contribution.

There is also a timing consideration. If NSC proceeds independently with a concession potentially lasting up to 25 years, this may significantly affect the ability to consider these facilities as part of the wider devolution programme in the future.

If Members indicate an in-principle interest, officers would therefore continue discussions with NSC and the matter would be referred to the Devolution Start & Finish Group for more detailed consideration.

This is consistent with the Group's Terms of Reference, which include reviewing devolution opportunities, business cases and feasibility studies, monitoring risks and financial implications, and making recommendations to Committee and Council. The Group is advisory and does not itself have delegated decision-making powers.

Detailed consideration would include:

- the property and transfer arrangements;
- condition and capital investment requirements;
- operating costs, usage and income;
- the implications of free-to-use and charged facilities;
- future service standards;
- the relationship with WSMTC's existing Healthmatic contract;
- options for the period September 2027 to March 2029 and beyond;
- contractual, procurement and any TUPE implications; and
- the overall financial and operational business case.

Any resulting proposal would subsequently be reported through the appropriate Committee/Council governance arrangements before the Town Council entered into any commitment.

8. Financial Implications

There is no financial commitment arising from the recommendations within this report.

The information presently available identifies both potential revenue and capital implications. These would require detailed assessment through the business case before any decision could be made to accept responsibility for the facilities.

The timing of the current discussion also enables any potential implications to be considered alongside the development of the Council's 2027/28 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan should Members wish to progress the matter.

9. Conclusion

NSC requires an early indication of whether WSMTC has an interest in exploring the future transfer of these facilities before determining its procurement approach for September 2027 onwards.

There are potential practical and strategic reasons to explore the proposal further, including the fact that both councils currently use the same cleaning and maintenance contractor and the opportunity to consider public convenience provision across the town more collectively.

There are, however, significant matters which would need further investigation, particularly the capital requirements, ongoing revenue implications, charging arrangements, property liabilities and future contractual model.

An indication of interest at this stage would therefore enable these matters to be properly investigated. It would not commit WSMTC to accepting the facilities, changing its existing provision of free-to-use public conveniences, entering into a long-term concession arrangement or appointing any particular contractor.

10. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 1.** Note the approach received from North Somerset Council regarding the future operation and potential transfer of The Cove, Oxford Street, Atlantic and Royal Sands public conveniences.
- 2.** Determine whether the Town Council has an in-principle interest in exploring the potential transfer of these facilities, without commitment to accepting a transfer at this stage.

Noting that this exploratory work does not commit the Town Council to accepting the facilities, changing its existing provision of free-to-use public conveniences, entering

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into a long-term concession arrangement or appointing any particular service provider.

3. If Members indicate an interest, agree that the proposal and supporting information be referred to the Devolution Start & Finish Group for detailed consideration in accordance with its Terms of Reference, with officers continuing discussions with NSC and developing the necessary options appraisal and business case for subsequent consideration through the appropriate Committee/Council governance arrangements.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 19 OCTOBER 2026

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT: DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Report Author	CEO/Town Clerk
Purpose of Report	To update Members on NSC's response to the formal feedback arising from the Devolution Start & Finish Group and seek approval to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding.
Decision Required	Yes
Previous Consideration	Devolution Start & Finish Group – 2 September 2026

1. Purpose of Report

This supplementary report updates the Committee on the response received from North Somerset Council (NSC) following the amendments requested by the Devolution Start & Finish Group to the draft Devolution Programme Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It seeks confirmation that Members are satisfied with the position now agreed in principle, enabling the MOU to be amended, finalised and progressed for signing.

2. Background

At its meeting on 2 September 2026, the Devolution Start & Finish Group considered amendments proposed by NSC to the draft MOU. Members were broadly supportive of the additional clarity around governance, due diligence, risk and the non-binding nature of the MOU, but considered that elements of the original strategic purpose and shared direction of travel should be retained.

The Group therefore recommended that:

- the current asset list and WSMTC Devolution Work Programme should remain referenced in the MOU and be included as appendices, while making clear that their inclusion does not amount to approval or commitment to any individual transfer;
- the MOU should reflect WSMTC's adopted Devolution Framework, including freehold transfer and transfer of the whole curtilage as the preferred starting

point, with alternative mechanisms available where these are not appropriate or achievable; and

- these amendments should be progressed with NSC as part of the further development and approval of the MOU.

3. North Somerset Council Response

Following the Group's consideration, the CEO/Town Clerk wrote to NSC setting out Members' recommendations in detail to allow NSC time to respond. The correspondence confirmed that WSMTC was comfortable with the majority of NSC's amendments, particularly the additional safeguards around governance, due diligence, risk and the non-binding nature of the MOU, but sought to retain the strategic purpose and direction of travel of the document.

3.1 Work Programme and Asset Schedules

WSMTC requested that the current asset list and Devolution Work Programme be reinstated/referenced within the MOU and included as appendices, whilst expressly accepting that these should be indicative and should not create any commitment upon either council to progress an individual asset or service transfer.

NSC has now responded as follows:

“...there is scope to reinstate the current work programme and asset schedules as appendices to the MoU, provided they are clearly identified as indicative working documents and do not imply any commitment by either party to progress, approve or complete individual transfers.”

NSC has further confirmed that this will allow the MOU to reflect the current scope and direction of the programme whilst maintaining the appropriate safeguards around due diligence and governance. This therefore addresses the principal concern raised by the Start & Finish Group regarding the removal of the programme and asset schedules from the MOU.

3.2 Asset Transfer Arrangements and Freehold Preference

WSMTC's formal feedback also asked the MOU to recognise the approach established through its adopted Devolution Framework: freehold transfer and consideration of the whole curtilage of an asset as the preferred starting point, with alternative mechanisms available where these are not appropriate or achievable.

NSC has proposed that:

‘rather than defining preferred transfer mechanisms within the MOU itself, the document should make clear that all devolution proposals will be considered in accordance with NSC’s approved Devolution Framework and the respective governance arrangements of both councils’.

Importantly, NSC has confirmed:

“...we are content for the MoU to acknowledge that Weston-super-Mare Town Council’s adopted Devolution Framework identifies freehold transfer as its preferred approach...”

NSC has explained that this recognises WSMTC's adopted position without prejudging the outcome of any individual proposal. NSC's own framework requires proposals to be considered on their individual merits and provides for a range of delivery mechanisms depending upon the circumstances of the asset and the outcomes being sought.

3.3 Whole Curtilage

The Start & Finish Group's recommendation, and the subsequent formal feedback to NSC, also identified consideration of the whole curtilage of an asset in the first instance as part of WSMTC's preferred negotiating position. NSC's latest response does not expressly address this point.

It is therefore not proposed that this is presented as an agreed principle within the MOU unless subsequently accepted by NSC. It does, however, remain part of WSMTC's adopted approach and should continue to inform the Town Council's starting position when individual asset transfers are developed and negotiated.

4. Officer Assessment

NSC's response is considered to substantially address the principal matters raised by the Devolution Start & Finish Group. The current Devolution Work Programme and asset schedules can be reinstated as indicative appendices; the MOU can expressly recognise WSMTC's adopted preference for freehold transfer; and individual proposals will remain subject to their own business case, due diligence, negotiations and the respective governance arrangements of both councils.

This represents a pragmatic compromise. It retains the strategic purpose sought by WSMTC and records the current scope and direction of the joint programme, whilst recognising NSC's requirement that the MOU should not predetermine the mechanism or outcome of individual asset negotiations.

The only element not expressly addressed by NSC is WSMTC's whole-curtilage preference. As set out above, this can remain WSMTC's adopted starting position for individual negotiations without needing to be presented as an agreed MOU principle at this stage.

On balance, officers consider that NSC's response provides an appropriate basis upon which the MOU can now be finalised, subject to the Committee confirming that it is satisfied with the proposed approach. The full correspondence between the councils can be made available to Members on request.

5. Financial, Legal and Risk Implications

The MOU is intended to remain non-binding and does not, of itself, commit the Town Council to expenditure or to the transfer of any asset or service. Any individual devolution proposal will continue to be subject to its own financial assessment, due diligence, legal documentation and the Council's appropriate decision-making process.

The inclusion of the work programme and asset schedules as indicative appendices provides transparency over the current programme while reducing the risk that their inclusion could be interpreted as prior approval. Recording WSMTC's freehold preference also protects the Town Council's adopted negotiating position without fettering either council's future decision-making on individual proposals.

6. Recommendation

Members are requested to:

- NOTE North Somerset Council's response to the amendments requested by the Devolution Start & Finish Group and subsequently submitted formally by the CEO/Town Clerk in relation to the draft Devolution Programme Memorandum of Understanding.
- APPROVE NSC's proposed approach as an acceptable basis for finalising the MOU, including the reinstatement of the current Devolution Work Programme and asset schedules as indicative appendices, with clear wording that their inclusion creates no commitment on either council to progress, approve or complete any individual transfer.
- CONFIRM that acceptance of the proposed MOU approach does not alter WSMTC's adopted position that transfer of the whole curtilage of an asset should be considered in the first instance when individual asset transfers are developed and negotiated.
- AUTHORISE the CEO/Town Clerk with the Chair of F & GP to agree the final wording of the MOU with North Somerset Council, provided that it remains consistent with the principles approved by the Committee and WSMTC's adopted Devolution Framework, and thereafter to progress the final MOU for signing in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements.