WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 29TH JUNE 2026

Meeting Commenced: 7. 00 pm
Meeting Concluded: 9.17 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Owen James (Town Mayor/Chair), Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Gillian Bute, Mark Canniford, Annabelle Chard, John Carson, James Clayton, Jemma Coles, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, Catherine Gibbons, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, Helen Thornton, Richard Tucker and Charlie Williams.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Responsible Financial Officer/Director of Finance and Resources), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager), Rebecca Saunders (Civic Officer & PA to CEO/Town Clerk), Warren Parker-Mills (Communications and Marketing Manager), Inspector Lee Kerslake and 13 members of the public.

Paul Howe addressed the Council regarding the Keep Weston High Street Safe campaign and pedestrian safety within Weston-super-Mare High Street. He welcomed the introduction of additional signage but considered that further measures, including consistent enforcement and partnership working, were required to improve pedestrian safety. He thanked the Council for its continued support of the campaign and encouraged it to continue advocating for improvements with North Somerset Council and partner agencies.

Nick Smart addressed the Council regarding proposals to establish a community library in Worle. He outlined the work undertaken with local stakeholders to explore the proposal and highlighted the importance of maintaining an accessible library service for the Worle community. He emphasised the wider social benefits of a community library and urged the Council to support the motion before it.

The Chair thanked both for their addresses and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting where their concerns may be addressed later on the agenda.

25	**Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Harrison-Morse, Tim Taylor, Martin Williams and John Standfield, prior to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Bambridge and Aplin from the floor.

26	**Declarations of Interest** There were none received. Councillor Charlie Williams declared a pecuniary interest in item 16.1 Community Event Grant Application for Reset Youth Awards on the agenda.
27	**To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28th May 2026** The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.
28	**To receive the Minutes of Youth Council Meetings held in March and May 2026** The minutes of the meetings had been previously circulated. The Chair welcomed members of the Youth Council to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He commended the breadth of work being undertaken by the Youth Council, including its community initiatives, newsletters, website development and social media engagement. Particular reference was made to the *Adopt a Spot* initiative, recognising its contribution to improving local public spaces. The Leader echoed the Chair's comments, congratulating the Youth Council on its continued engagement and effective use of social media. A Councillor clarified that Hans Price Academy did not currently provide gender-neutral toilets, in relation to a point recorded within the Youth Council meeting notes. **RESOLVED:** That the minutes be received and noted.
29	**Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-super-Mare** The Chair welcomed Inspector Lee Kerslake, who provided an update on neighbourhood and response policing across Weston-super-Mare. Due to technical difficulties, the presentation could not be displayed and will be circulated to Councillors following the meeting. Key updates included: • Weston-super-Mare's detection rate currently stands at **43%** against a target of **15%**. • Neighbourhood policing teams are achieving a **78%** success rate in targeted activity, although further work remains.

	• The Organised Crime Panel has recorded **819 disruptions**, with approximately **18%** relating to Weston-super-Mare. • **Operation Anomic** continues to deliver positive outcomes, including arrests, remands and convictions. • **Operation Align** has resulted in bicycle seizures within the town centre. • The independent policing panel, chaired by David Crossman, meets quarterly, with Youth Council involvement encouraged. In response to Councillors' questions, Inspector Kerslake advised that: • Crime prevention concerns at Castle Batch would be discussed further with the Worle neighbourhood policing team. • An arrest had been made in relation to graffiti linked to the flag incidents; however, there was insufficient evidence to identify those responsible for erecting the flags, which had been recorded as criminal damage. • Proactive policing continues through Operation Anomic and Operation Avatar where appropriate, with six officers now regularly patrolling the town centre. • Marine Lake continues to receive targeted patrols, dispersal powers have been used where necessary, and e-bikes have been seized. Although the area is not currently classified as a policing hotspot, anti-social behaviour may be under-reported. Existing CCTV coverage remains in place. • Partnership working with HM Revenue & Customs continues in relation to illegal tobacco sales and drugs. • Additional patrols and Section 35 dispersal powers will continue to be used during the summer period where appropriate. • A written response would be provided to the Councillor who had submitted multiple pre-meeting questions. A Councillor suggested that regular crime statistics would assist the Council in monitoring local policing trends. Inspector Kerslake offered to meet with individual ward Councillors to discuss local policing matters. The Chair thanked Inspector Kerslake for his attendance and update. Inspector Kerslake left the meeting at 7.48 pm.
30	**To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor.** The Town Mayor's announcements and communications had been previously circulated. It was noted that the report contained an error relating to the names of the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Mayor had attended 24 engagements and the Deputy Mayor 3, totalling 27 engagements to date. The Mayor highlighted recent engagements including the Crematorium Open Day, Weston Pride and the Ordination Service at All Saints Church, noting his commitment to promoting the positive aspects of the town. **RESOLVED:** That the Town Mayor's announcements and communications be received and noted.

31	**Appointment of Council Representative to Citizens Advice Bureau** To appoint Councillor Roger Bailey as the Town Council's representative to Citizens Advice Bureau, replacing Councillor Robert Payne. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That Councillor Roger Bailey replace Councillor Robert Payne as the Town Council's representative to Citizens Advice Bureau.
32	**Monthly Financial Reports at Year End 31st March 2025/2026** The monthly financial reports had been previously circulated. **32.1 For Approval** 1.1 Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure (page 19) **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure be approved. **32.2 For Noting** 2.1 Bank Reconciliations (page 20) 2.2 Budgetary Control Report (pages 21-39) 2.3 Bank Interest Report (pages 40-41) 2.4 Schedule of Receipted Income (page 42) 2.5 Outstanding Balances report (page 43) 2.6 Overspend report (page 44) 2.7 Cash Flow Movement between Approved Council Bank Accounts (pages 45-52) **RESOLVED:** That the Financial reports for items 8.2.1-7 be noted.
33	**To receive the Final updated Second Internal Audit Report for the year 2025/2026** The report from Auditing Solutions and Supplementary action report (internal) had been previously circulated (pages 53-62) A Councillor sought clarification regarding the overspend on payroll software and cleaning expenditure. The RFO advised that the additional payroll software expenditure related to the integration of the payroll system with the Council's HR system. In response to the query regarding cleaning expenditure, the CEO/Town Clerk advised that the Council's existing cleaning contractor(s) had failed to meet the required standard, resulting in the appointment of alternative contractors and an increase in costs. She further advised that the matter had previously been reported to the Finance & General Purposes

	and Personnel Committees, following which the Personnel Committee approved bringing the cleaning service back in-house. **RESOLVED:** That the Final updated Second Internal Audit Report for the year 2025/2026 be received.
34	**Year End Accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2026** To note the period for the Exercise of Public Rights in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. **Year End Accounts for the Year 2025/2026** The CEO/Town Clerk introduced the supplementary report and advised that, due to delays in the completion of the year-end accounts by the Council's accounting contractor, it had not been possible to comply with Standing Order 17.5. She confirmed that the statutory deadlines for the approval and submission of the AGAR had nevertheless been met, advised that a meeting with the contractor was scheduled, and that the matter would be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The CEO/Town Clerk apologised for the late circulation of the accounts. The Leader expressed confidence in the accuracy of the accounts, noting that the issue related to the timing of their completion rather than their content. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Reynolds A vote was taken and **carried.** **1a. RESOLVED:** 1. That the report be received. 2. That the Council notes the non-compliance with Standing Order 17.5 arising from the delayed completion of the year-end accounts by the Council's accounting contractor. 3. That the Council further notes that the statutory deadlines for approval and submission of the AGAR were met. 4. That the circumstances surrounding the delay be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee in due course. **.1b To receive the Final Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2025-26** (pages 63-76) A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was: **RESOLVED:** That the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2025-26 be received. **.2 AGAR Year End Accounts for the year ending 31/03/26** As part of the Audit requirement members considered the requirements of the AGAR as follows; a) Consideration of the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) was undertaken by members as a whole; **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

	SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds **RESOLVED:** That the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) be approved. bi) Approve the **Accounting Governance Statement** (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and sign and date as required **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds **RESOLVED:** That following consideration by council the Accounting Governance Statements, the Chair be authorised to complete and sign / date the AGAR – Annual return bii) Approve the **Accounting Statement**s (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds **RESOLVED:** That following consideration of content the **Accounting Statements** the chair be authorised to sign/ date the AGAR – Annual return . b) Receive and Note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the AGAR – Annual return **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly A vote was taken for the above items a – c and **carried**. **RESOLVED:** That the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the AGAR – Annual return be received and noted.
35	**Formal Adoption of Council Policies Reviewed by Committees** The report seeking formal adoption of policies and strategic documents previously recommended by the relevant committees was received. It was noted that: • minor administrative amendments would be made to the Social Media Policy prior to publication. **PROPOSED:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED:** Councillor Hugh Malyan A vote was taken and the motion was carried. **RESOLVED:** That: 1. The Leave of Absence Policy, Social Media Policy, Community Arboretum Management Plan and Roadmap to Zero Monitoring Report be formally adopted; and

	2. the CEO/Town Clerk be authorised to make any minor administrative, formatting, typographical, numbering or legislative amendments prior to publication.
36	**Capital Project installation of Ramp at 32 Waterloo Street** The report seeking approval to include the accessibility ramp project within the 2026/27 Capital Programme and progress to procurement was received.(pages 81-85) Members noted: • planning permission and listed building consent had been obtained; • an updated Quantity Surveyor's cost plan had been prepared following project delays. During discussion, Members: • sought clarification on why project costs had been included within the public report, with Officers advising this reflected procurement and transparency requirements; • expressed concerns regarding the overall project cost and value for money; • noted that no accessibility complaints had been received and that, as a listed building, the property could not be made fully compliant with modern accessibility standards; • questioned the increased costs, funding source and whether alternative options had been fully explored; • noted that the planning permission remained valid until June 2027 and requested further information before reaching a decision. In response, Officers advised that: • alternative options, including a temporary/mobile ramp, had been explored but were not considered viable due to the building's entrance arrangement; • the project had been referred to Full Council following consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee; • a further report reviewing the project, available options and supporting information would be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

	PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford A vote was taken and carried. **RESOLVED:** That Option 2 of the report be approved, namely to defer the project pending a further review of financial priorities.
37	**Devolution Programme Updates for Approval** **37.1 Appointment of Wellers Solicitors for Legal Services (Asset Transfers)** To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 86–90) The report seeking the appointment of Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP as specialist legal advisors for the Council's Devolution Programme was received. Members noted: • the recommendation had been brought directly to Council to avoid delaying the programme ahead of the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting; • Officers had undertaken due diligence and were satisfied that Wellers Hedleys LLP possessed the specialist expertise required. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and the motion was carried (**1 abstention**). **RESOLVED:** That: 1. Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP be appointed as specialist legal advisors for the Council's Devolution Programme; 2. legal work relating to the programme be transferred from the Council's current solicitors; and 3. authority be delegated to the CEO/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, to progress associated legal matters. **37.2 Play Area Transfer – Approval of Interim SLA with North Somerset Council (Play Areas)** To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 91–95) The report seeking approval to enter into an Interim Service Level Agreement (SLA) with North Somerset Council for the maintenance and operational management of eight play areas from **6 July 2026**, pending completion of the freehold transfers, was received. During discussion, Members noted:

	• concerns regarding the proposed transfer of the Thompson Way play area, as the site had not yet been adopted by North Somerset Council, remained in Persimmon Homes' ownership and presented ongoing maintenance issues. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and the motion was carried (**2 abstentions**). **RESOLVED:** That Council: 1. approve the principle of entering into an Interim Service Level Agreement with North Somerset Council for the maintenance, inspection and operational management of the eight identified play areas from **6 July 2026**; 2. note that this forms Phase 1 of the Devolution Programme pending completion of the legal freehold transfers; 3. delegate authority to the CEO/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, to negotiate, finalise, approve and execute the Interim Service Level Agreement and any non-material amendments; 4. confirm that entering into the Interim Service Level Agreement does not constitute acceptance of the freehold transfer or liabilities beyond those set out within the agreement; 5. approve expenditure from the existing Devolution Programme budget; and 6. note that a further report will be presented to Council, if required, following completion of the legal transfer process.
38	**Library Services** Motion received under Standing Order 10 To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Catherine Gibbons concerning Library Services (pages 96–98) Councillor Catherine Gibbons introduced the motion, highlighting the role of library services in supporting education, digital inclusion, community wellbeing and reducing social isolation. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Catherine Gibbons **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly During discussion, Members: • expressed disappointment at the loss of the library service in Worle and acknowledged strong community support for its retention; • noted that Castle Batch Children's Centre could provide a potential location should a community library prove feasible; • agreed that, given the Council's ongoing Devolution Programme and other strategic priorities, it would be premature to commit to supporting a community library before its feasibility, governance, staffing, resource implications, costs and funding opportunities had been assessed; • referred to existing community library models, including Congresbury. Following discussion, Councillor Gibbons agreed to amend the motion to focus on investigating the feasibility of a community library rather than expressing support in

	principle. The CEO/Town Clerk confirmed that the Devolution Start & Finish Group would lead the work, with relevant Ward Councillors invited to participate. A vote was taken and the amended motion was carried (1 against, 1 abstention). **RESOLVED:** That the Devolution Start & Finish Group investigate the feasibility of establishing a community library in Worle, including potential locations, governance, staffing, resource implications, costs and funding opportunities, and report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committee and subsequently to Council.
39	**Grove Park Toilets – Execution of Lease** To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 99-101) The CEO/Town Clerk introduced the report, advising that North Somerset Council had provided confirmation that the matters previously raised by the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee had either been completed, programmed or approved for delivery. Council was therefore asked to consider whether the assurances received were sufficient to enable the execution of the lease agreement for the Grove Park toilet facilities. **PROPOSED BY :** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds A vote was taken and **carried** (2 votes against). **RESOLVED:** That Council: 1. Notes the update received from North Somerset Council regarding the works requested by the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee. 2. Notes that North Somerset Council had confirmed the delivery, programming or commitment of the requested works and considered these assurances sufficient to enable progression of the lease arrangements. 3. Approve the execution of the lease agreement for the Grove Park toilet facilities. 4. Authorise the CEO/Town Clerk to complete all necessary arrangements associated with the execution of the lease.
40	*At 8.55 pm The Council resolved that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person/organisation (including the authority holding that information).* *Councillor James Clayton left the meeting at 8.56 pm.*
41	**41. Community Events Grant Applications** To receive the report of the Senior Development Officer

The report regarding the deferred grant applications from Reset WSM and the British Bangladeshi Association was received. It was noted that both applications had been deferred by the Grants & Governance Sub-Committee pending additional information, which had now been provided for consideration by Full Council due to the timing of the events.

41.1 British Bangladeshi Association – Mela Event (£2,500)

Members noted:

- the requested additional information, including a breakdown of costs, had been provided;
- the Community Events Grant budget for 2026/27 totalled £60,000, of which £25,000 had already been allocated.

During discussion, Members:

- questioned whether annual events should become self-sustaining rather than relying on repeated grant funding;
- noted that the Grants & Governance Sub-Committee had sought further information to encourage reduced reliance on future grant funding;
- noted that the grant criteria do not permit repeat annual applications for the same event.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons
SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds

A vote was taken and the motion was carried (2 against, 2 abstentions).

RESOLVED: That a Community Events Grant of £2,500 be awarded to the British Bangladeshi Association.

41.2 Reset WSM – Youth Awards (£5,000)

Members noted:

- this was the organisation's first application to the Community Events Grant Scheme;
- the requested supplementary information, including a breakdown of costs and bank statements, had been provided.

During discussion, Members:

- supported the aims of the Youth Awards and the recognition of young people's achievements;
- expressed concerns regarding the proportion of funding requested for staffing costs for a one-off event and the organisation's financial reserves, questioning whether sufficient need for grant funding had been demonstrated.

	Councillor Charlie Williams declared a pecuniary interest as a relative of the applicant and abstained from the discussion and vote. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mike Bell **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and the motion was carried (11 for, 1 against, 6 abstentions). **RESOLVED:** That the application from Reset WSM for a Community Events Grant of £5,000 be refused on the grounds that the level of staffing costs and the organisation's available financial reserves did not demonstrate sufficient need for Council grant funding.
	There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.17 pm. Signed: ………………………………………………………………… Dated: ………………………

Weston-super-Mare Youth Council Meeting Notes

A.	**Date of meeting**: 09.06.2026
B.	**Meeting Start Time**: 18.05pm
C.	**Where is the meeting:** The Council Chambers, 32 Waterloo street.
D.	**Attendance** – Isaac **(IS)** Leo **(LH)** Oliver **(OM)** Natalie **(NM)** Ian **(IR)** Zac **(ZR**) Lily **(LAP)** Alexa **(AL),** Zayne **(ZRO)** Alli W **(AW)** -YMCA Youth & Community- Programmes Manager Sam Bishop **(SB)** (Democratic Services Manager – (DSM WSMTC)
F.	**Welcome** – New member Zayne- Members introduced themselves.
1.	**Apologies for Absence** – Ivy **(II)**
2.	**Declarations of Interest** – None
3.	**Notes of Last Meeting** – **OM** noted that a small amendment regarding Item 5 in the questions section. The change from (AL)to (II) asking the first question. Proposed- **OM** Second- **ZR** Noting the amendment above, the meeting notes were approved.
4	**Appointment of Chair brought forward on the agenda** **2 Applications-** **AL-** read her application for chair to the members- attached. **LH –** read his application for Chair to the members- attached. **All members voted** **AL-** 4 Votes **LH-** 3 votes **AL was voted in-** as the new Chair of the Youth Council AL continued to chair the meeting
5.	**Grants-** **None to be reviewed**
6.	**Bench quote – c** Members that were present at the working meeting last week discussed what quotes would be suitable for the wellbeing bench and narrowed it down to the following- 1, Take a seat, take a breath, know you belong! - No votes 2, Take a moment, Breathe, listen and just be! - No votes 3, Every Weston sunrise is proof that new starts are possible! - 7 votes

	4, Sit, pause and let the birdsong do the talking! - 2 votes Members voted and number three was chosen **Action -AW to get the bench plaque made.**
7.	**Adopt a spot- AL** asked if everyone had chosen their area. **OM** said as soon as we had three we could launch it on social media- **AL, LH & ZR** have chosen theirs. **OM** -asked if they could be sent to him ready to be posted online- **NM** asked did they need to download the what three words app- OM- yes in order to know the what three words are for your area. **Action - all member to send their areas to OM as soon as possible.**
5.	**Youth Parliament talk- update** Youth Council members will be attending the Youth Parliament meeting on 15th July As discussed in the working meeting – **IS, AL & LH** will be presenting a talk about what the youth council have been up to- **AW** told members that they would be able to hear the talk before the meeting at the next youth council meeting. **OM** showed members the youth parliament youth charter video. He explained that they could integrate the gender -neutral toilets information into their charter. **OM** said that the chair **AL**, had also been invited to a meeting of youth councils and Youth parliaments in the south west. He will let her know once the date has been confirmed **Actions- IS, AL & LH** to arrange a meeting to put together their talk. **OM** to confirm meeting date for **AL**
7.	**Appointment of Finance and Grants Officer-** No applications for the vacancy
8.	**Appointment of Health & Wellbeing Officer** – **LAP** read her application and members took a vote- 5 votes to 3 votes Lily was elected Health & Wellbeing Officer.
9.	**Appointment of Climate and Well-being Officer-** No applications for the Vacancy Defer communications officer- next meeting **SB**- left the meeting
10.	**School Engagement – update** – **OM** explained that since the last meeting as requested by members, he had sent an email to all local secondary schools with a freedom of information(FOI) request regarding schools offer of gender neutral toilets. Hans Price were the only school to reply saying- They provide both gender neutral toilets and gender-neutral changing rooms- The school would not comment further. **NM -**Those changing rooms are situated in the male and female changing rooms and are actually toilets and very disgusting.

	IS- Yes there may be some at Worle too but a young person has to request to use them, be referred to the DSL, who then escorts them to the area, opens them up for them to be used as they are usually locked. By this time the lesson is nearly over. Not ideal. **AW-** If schools do not co-operate, maybe they could ask someone who is gender neutral at each school to go into their own schools and ask if they can use the gender- neutral toilets and see the reaction they get and compare how schools support gender neutral students. Members said they would ask around. **Action - OM to send a reminder to all schools-**
11.	**Networking Workshop**- **OM** – at the working meeting, it was discussed that a networking meeting between Weston youth council, North Somerset youth parliament and Bristol City youth council would be a great learning opportunity. Members would be able to get together and learn about what each other are working on and swap ideas. This would be a great opportunity to hold a regional network meeting, here in Weston super mare. **AW-** is this something that members think would be beneficial? **LH** – it's a good idea. **OM**- it would be a bit like when we met Crewkerne youth council but on a larger scale. Proposal to take to look at setting up a networking meeting Propose **OM** Second **LH** All agreed-
12.	**Website Design Ideas-** proposed costings- for setting up a website and domain- **£44.58** per year Members were asked if they agreed to the costs **AL-** asked if that was per year- **LH** said yes, it may go up slightly over the years as expected but not by much. It can be reviewed each year. Proposed costings for website- Proposal – **LH** Second – **IS** **LH –** we need ideas on how it will look- **AL-** What's on, **OM-** Section to link newsletter, Blog, meet the members area **AW** do we need both a newsletter & website- **OM & LH**- yes as they will work side by side and those that cannot access online will be able to access the newsletter. **LAP-** Mental health support **IR**- Events **IS** - Applications/ Grants how to apply

	OM- The colours we have chosen I don't think are accessible, can we work on finding a suitable alternative as it is hard to read white on blue and vice versa- we are not accessible for some people that are colour blind- **LH** said he can look at what would work better and did they still want to keep the blue. **IS, IR & ZR** all agreed it would be good to keep blue if we could. **Action- AW to arrange the payment of the website** **LH & OM to look at accessibility of colours.**
13.	**Newsletter Update-** **Actions** - agreed at meeting dated 31/03/26 **IR** – As we have a new chair we will need to have a new entry from AL. **AL**- I can do an introduction. **AW**- We will also need an entry from the new Mayor also. **OM**- I have contacted the mayor's office and waiting for a reply. **IP** – to update list of events nearer the time so they are relevant as agreed in the last meeting (check WSM what's on) **OM** to cover -Mayor making event – **LAP**- to cover- what the YC has been up to **ZR**- to cover- In the spotlight- Axe District scouts. **OM** – Keep sending content for social media, some just has to be sharing others social media, as long as it supports young people. **AW**- everyone scrolls so just share with **OM** so he can share it on our social media. New information needs to be with **OM** by 5th July
14.	**Events -Update** – afro fest are we still attending- **AW**- My team are unable to go as stall holders due to personal commitments, however youth council members can attend the day and do a write up on the event. **AL-** what about pride- Again the Youth team are already attending another event but again. Those attending can do a piece on the event- **Whirly gig- OM –** I attended and it was very wet- **AL-** Summer fest- I attended also on the Saturday. It was very wet. Happy to do a piece. **ZR**- I went Sunday – I can also do a piece. **LH** – I know this isn't an event but I have written to the Bus forum and asked how they support young people in the town. Also, young people up to 15 years get free bus travel in August. **Actions –** **AL& ZR to do a written piece on Summerfest** **OM to do a written piece on the Pride event**
15.	**AOB**- **Councillors attendance at Youth Council meetings- OM** asked for it to be noted that no Council members have attended youth council meetings for 10 months, in fact only two have turned up in the last five years once. It would be good to see them at some stage through their term as a councillor-

	Comms meeting- OM & LH -Met with the town council comms team. They would like to use some of our content on their website. The comms team suggested that we find ways of making members more committed to attending meetings- The meeting didn't quite go as they had thought. They were hoping for more support around getting the Website up and running. **Vice chair position-** It was noted that **NM** was in the vice Chair role and as the other roles had been reviewed, did **NM** want to stay- **NM** said she was happy to continue the position. **AW** asked members to vote on whether they wanted **NM** to stay in the role. All members voted 8 Votes – unanimous decision All agreed **NM** to continue in the Vice Chair role.
12.	**Date of Next Meeting** – 19.30 14.07.26

Weston-super-Mare Youth Council Meeting Notes

A.	**Date of meeting**: 14/07/26
B.	**Meeting Start Time**: 18.05pm
C.	**Where is the meeting: Weston Town Youth Chambers**
D.	**Attendance** – Attendance – Isaac **(IS)** Leo **(LH)** Oliver **(OM**) Natalie **(NM)** Zac **(ZR)** Lily **(LAP)** Alexa **(AL)** Alli W (AW) -YMCA Youth & Community- Programmes Manager Sam Bishop (SB) (Democratic Services Manager – (DSM WSMTC) Councillor Owen James- Mayor
F.	**Welcome** – AL welcomed all members and the Mayor to the meeting
1.	**Apologies for Absence** – Ian (IR), Jess (JJ)
2.	**Declarations of Interest** – None
3.	**Notes of Last Meeting** – **Proposed-** OM **Second**- IS
4.	**Grants-** Two grants are for discussion- **Walliscote school-** has applied for £1,000 to improve engagement with reading and literacy outcomes for our pupils, particularly those experiencing significant disadvantage. -To stock empty shelves with a broad, inclusive and inspiring selection of high-quality texts that our suitable for our diverse pupil community. -To give every Pupil Premium child a new book to keep each term, because research tells us that very few children receiving Free School Meals own a book of their own. By the end of each year, every eligible child would own six new books—a transformational change for many of our families, and an important step in breaking the link between deprivation and poor literacy outcomes The youth council reviewed the application and discussed the options of how the amount would benefit the school. **Outcome-** it was agreed that the school is positioned opposite the main town library so many of the students had access to books. It was also noted that the school had support from the PTA and had applied for several other grants. However, they felt they would like to help towards some of the grant application. **LH** suggested we could also approach the school and help with a local book collection to support the class library intuitive. **Amount agreed - £500** **Elm tree learning** - has applied for £1,000 to help local young people attend local community activities and events increase social connection, wellbeing and community engagement. The holiday projects offer support and guidance to young people and their families in the same way we support schools and learners during

	term time. However, it also continues to help the schools attended by the learners. The projects give the children a positive break from school, new skills, the opportunity to experience success and more. All of this makes the new term an easier transition and a more successful start to the next stage of their education journey. The youth council reviewed the application and discussed the options of how the amount would benefit Elmtree learning. Outcome- Members agreed that this project was in line with their youth strategy and hadn't received any other funding apart from HAF. It supported vulnerable young people in the town offering trips and food that some young people wouldn't be able to access. **Amount agreed £500** **Action- SB/AW** to inform Town council of decision.
5.	**Welcome the Mayor- AP** introduced the mayor and he informed the members of his background as a teacher and how he valued young people's voices. He talked about his role and then took questions from the youth council members.
6.	**Pride in Place speaker-** Paige Barlow- Paige unfortunately never arrived- deferred to another meeting.
7.	**N Somerset Youth Parliament meeting– update & Speech practise** **AP, IS,LH** had prepared a presentation for the youth parliament the following day introducing the youth council to their members and what work they have been up to, but also their proposal for gender neutral toilets be added to the youth charter. They presented this to the youth council member and the Mayor for feedback. The three members received feedback and after a few rehearsals felt confident for the meeting the next day.
8.	**Appointment of Communications officer-** There was only one applicant- **LH** made his talk on why he would be good in the role- I would like to become the Communications Officer because I am committed to changing how our youth council is perceived. Since joining, I have worked to change us from being seen as a casual youth group into a respected, professional organisation. I want to step into this dedicated role to continue driving this, ensuring our collective voice has the platform and influence it deserves. I bring a proven record of strategic thinking, creative design, and networking. I have already contributed significantly to our digital platform by working on our website, helping to increase our social media presence, and helping to establish a coherent, brand identity that now runs across all of our platforms. Furthermore, my ability to communicate professionally with external partners allows me to build relationships that will benefit the youth council. To support potential future campaigns, I took the time to establish a key connection with the North Somerset Council's Transport Team. I led this outreach independently, successfully opening a vital channel of communication.

	I'd integrate it with our Community Spotlights, and I would interview local young people who are already doing environmental work, inspiring others by showing that you don't have to be a global influencer to make a difference All members voted- Unanimous decision- **All in favour- 7 votes** Congratulations Leo **SB left the meeting**
9,	**Gender Neutral Toilets Project- Update & Next Steps- OM** updated the members on the freedom of information request sent to all secondary schools in the area regarding gender neutral toilets. **Please see link for information gathered-** **https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ZEY5Rn9xRjxorn4-yGVK_fS8aRFIT09tRjn-UqxJQAo/edit?usp=sharing** **Summary of information gathered** Responses were received from six schools, with five providing substantive information. All five responding schools confirmed that they have some form of gender-neutral toilet provision. Three schools reported purpose-built gender-neutral toilets, while one uses existing student toilets. The number of facilities varied considerably, with responses ranging from 5 to 14 toilets, although two schools did not provide a number. There was more variation in access arrangements and wider support. Three schools said students need to ask permission or can only access the facilities in certain circumstances, while two reported that no permission is required. Four schools provide some form of gender-neutral changing facility, although these range from dedicated spaces to adapted disabled facilities and private cubicles. Three schools said their facilities are clearly signposted, while two said they are not. Three schools confirmed having a policy supporting trans or non-binary students, while one said they did not and another was unsure. All five responding schools said staff are trained to support students using the facilities. Four confirmed that students can use the facilities without having to explain their situation, although two schools were unsure about this. Four schools confirmed that facilities are available throughout the full school day, with one unsure. Overall, the responses suggest that gender-neutral facilities are available across the schools responding, but there is significant variation in how they are provided, accessed and supported by school policies. The information also highlights potential areas for further discussion, particularly around consistent access without requiring students to seek permission, clear signage, staff training and ensuring schools have clear policies in place. **Action**- to present findings to the youth parliament to strengthen the reason for it to be added to the youth charter.
10,	**Principal-Transport Planning Officer- Meeting update** **LH & OM** met with officers from North Somerset Council to discuss opportunities for young people to get involved in upcoming transport projects in Weston. These included the Weston Town Public Transport Study, the development of an online Independent Travel Training toolkit, bus fares for 16–18-year-olds, and promotion of bus network and late-night services. The Youth Council was invited to contribute through workshops, surveys and testing the new travel training resource.

	A key area of discussion was the recent increase in bus shelter vandalism and anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that this would be the immediate priority for joint work, with the Youth Council exploring a video or campaign highlighting the financial cost of damage and how this can affect funding for other transport improvements. The Youth Council will also help identify locations and youth groups where bus network guides can be distributed, while Council officers will provide vandalism statistics and follow up on the Independent Travel Training toolkit and upcoming free bus promotion. **Action- TPO** to arrange another meeting to discuss how the youth council can support them to raise awareness of vandalism of bus shelters **OM** to contact the Mayor of Bristol to attend a meeting to discuss bus fare for 16-18 year olds
11,	**Youth Strategy & Newsletter- Review-** LH explained that all the changes had been made to the youth strategy and asked all members if the had read and checked the document and also were they happy with it. IR said it looked much better than the previous one. All members approved the youth strategy document **Proposed-**OM **Second-**IP **Action -** Document Approved. **OM & LH** had finished the Newsletter, thank you to all that completed their section information. All members asked to approve the 2nd newsletter- **Proposed-** OM **Second**- IS **Action-** Newsletter approved – LH will send it out to all medias and Town council.
12,	**Website- LH** said he had built the website and it was ready, although a little slow due to not owning the domain**. AW** said that all that is needed is for **LH** and herself to meet to buy the domain. **LH** showed the members the website via the owl- **AP** said it was good**. ZR** said he liked the colours.OM said we might need to do a accessibility check to ensure it is readable by everyone. **LH** asked all members to supply a few paragraphs about themselves to put on the website. He said headshots would be done after this meeting. **IP & IS** to do a meet the member section Approval of Website- **Proposed-** LH **Second-** AP **Action –** Website to be checked for accessibility and then go live Domain to be purchased.
13,	**Adopt-a-spot-** LH said that adopt a spot was going live on social media on Saturday.

	Action- Members to send in their areas, before and after images to be posted.
14,	**Spotlight** **LH** said he was meeting with the Bike project in a couple of weeks - It was suggested that Springboard would be the next organisation for the spotlight section of the next newsletter. **Action** -LH to meet with the Bike Project
15,	**Events-** **Reset Youth Awards – LAP, OM & LH** will be attending the event on the pier on Friday 17th July. **Youth Parliament meeting** – 15th July- **OM, LH, LAP, AP, IS, ZR** are attending
16,	**AOB- ZR** told the members that unfortunately he will be standing down as a youth council member due to other commitments. He said he had enjoyed his time as a member and would be happy to support events in the future. He wished everyone good luck with future projects.
	Meeting ended- 19.35pm
.	**Date of Next Meeting** – 08/09/26

Item 6

REPORT TO WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

21st September 2026

MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

29th June-21st September 2026

Town Mayor

Councillor Owen James

ENGAGEMENTS SUMMARY

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr Owen James	17
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Caroline Reynolds	19
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Cllr Ciaran Cronnelly	0

TOTALS TO DATE

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr Martin Williams	41
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Owen James	22
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Cllr Ciaran Cronnelly	0
TOTAL	63

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

4th July Mela celebration
13th July RBL Coffee morning
17th July RESET Youth awards
23rd July Weston Lions race night
31st August A1 Camera Club Exhibition Launch
18th & 20th September Battle of Britian Service and Dinner RAFA Club
19th September Weston College Graduation

UPCOMING EVENTS

4th October Beavers and Cubs Celebrations
11th October Samaritans Dawn Walk
16th October Ignite Programme Graduation
24th October RBL Poppy Appeal Launch
8th November Remembrance Service
11th November Armistice Service
14th November Christmas Light Switch On

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL TOWN COUNCIL - 21 SEPTEMBER 2026
OUTSIDE BODIES AND COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS REPORTING PROTOCOL
Report from the Democratic Services Manager

1. Purpose and Background of Report

Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol

1.1 To present the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol for adoption by Full Town Council, together with the associated standard reporting template.

1.2 The Protocol has been developed to provide a consistent, proportionate and transparent framework for reporting by Councillors appointed by the Council to outside bodies, partnerships and external organisations, and by Councillors appointed as Community Champions.

1.3 The Protocol establishes expectations for appointed Councillors to act as a link between the Council and the relevant organisation or area, keep the Council informed of relevant matters and report significant issues as they arise. Representatives will also be required to submit a report to the relevant Committee at least annually.

1.4 A standard reporting template has been developed to support the Protocol and provide a consistent and concise format for reporting relevant activity, key matters arising and any issues requiring further consideration by the Council.

1.5 The Council's current appointments to outside bodies and Community Champion roles require a wider review. It is proposed that this is undertaken as part of the Council's annual review of appointments at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2027, in accordance with Standing Orders in terms of the relevance of each body and its relationship with the Council.

Addition Outside Body Consideration

1.6 The Council currently receives information and invitations from the Environment Agency's Wessex Flood and Coastal Risk Management team relating to its Flood Warden programme, including training and information concerning flood preparedness and community resilience.

1.7 To provide a clear Member point of contact for this area of work, Members are invited to appoint a Councillor to act as the Town Council's Flood Warden / Flood Risk Representative, including engagement with the Environment Agency's Wessex Flood and Coastal Risk Management team.

1.8 Any appointment made will be subject to the reporting arrangements contained within the Protocol and will be included within the wider review of Council appointments at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2027.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

2. Options for Council

2.1 Council may:

a) adopt the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol and associated reporting template as presented;

b) adopt the Protocol and reporting template subject to agreed amendments;

c) determine not to adopt the Protocol and/or reporting template; and

d) appoint a Councillor to act as the Council's Flood Warden / Flood Risk Representative, or determine that no appointment should be made at this time.

3. Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Adoption of the Protocol and reporting template will establish clear and consistent arrangements for Councillors representing the Council externally and for Community Champions, while ensuring relevant information is reported through the Council's formal governance arrangements.

3.2 Appointment of a Flood Warden / Flood Risk Representative will provide a designated Member contact for relevant Environment Agency engagement, training and information relating to local flood preparedness and resilience, pending the wider review of Council appointments at the Annual Council Meeting.

4. Expected Benefits

4.1 The proposed arrangements will:

- improve consistency and transparency in reporting from outside bodies and Community Champions;

- provide a clear route for significant matters to be brought to the Council's attention;

- provide Members with appropriate oversight of external representation;

- establish a clear Member link for flood preparedness and resilience matters; and

- enable Democratic Services to maintain a consistent record of appointments and reporting activity.

5. Implications

5.1. Legal / Governance

The proposed arrangements are consistent with the Council's Standing Orders, which require the Annual Council Meeting to review representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back. Appointments made under the Protocol confer no delegated decision-making authority on individual Councillors.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Any matter requiring a formal Council decision must be determined through the Council's normal governance and delegation arrangements.

5.2. Risks

The Protocol reduces the risk of inconsistent reporting or uncertainty regarding the role and responsibilities of Councillors representing the Council externally.

5.3. Financial Implications

N/A.

5.4. Timescales

The Protocol will take effect from the date of adoption.

The wider review of outside-body and Community Champion appointments will be undertaken at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2027.

5.5. Stakeholders

Town Councillors, Community Champions, outside bodies, partner organisations, the Environment Agency and Democratic Services.

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

Appendix A - Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol

Appendix B - Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Template

7. Members are recommended to:

7.1 Approve and adopt the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol, attached at Appendix A.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

7.2 Approve the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Template, attached at Appendix B.

7.3 Note that a wider review of the Council's outside-body and Community Champion appointments will be undertaken at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2027.

7.4 Appoint one Councillor to act as the Town Council's Flood Warden / Flood Risk Representative, including engagement with the Environment Agency's Wessex Flood and Coastal Risk Management team, with the appointment being subject to the reporting arrangements contained within the adopted Protocol and Planning & Environment Committee being the relevant Committee for the purposes of annual reporting.

Samantha Bishop

Democratic Services Manager

Drafted 11 September 2026

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol

1. Purpose

This protocol sets out the arrangements for reporting by:

- Councillors appointed by Weston-super-Mare Town Council to represent the Council on outside bodies, partnerships and external organisations; and
- Councillors appointed by the Council as Community Champions.

The purpose of the protocol is to provide a consistent, proportionate and transparent framework for sharing information arising from these roles with the Council.

For the purposes of this Protocol, the "relevant Committee" will normally be the Committee whose Terms of Reference most closely relate to the subject matter of the appointment. Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk where necessary, will determine the appropriate reporting route.

2. Role of Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Councillors appointed by Weston-super-Mare Town Council to represent the Council on an outside body, partnership or external organisation shall:

a) act as a conduit between the outside body and the Town Council;

b) keep the Council informed of relevant matters arising from their representation;

c) submit a written report at the earliest suitable opportunity following any meeting or engagement where a matter of significance to the Town Council arises, normally through the relevant Committee or, where appropriate, Full Council;

d) submit a report to the relevant Committee at least annually;

e) recognise that appointment to the role does not confer any delegated decision-making or executive authority on the Councillor;

f) not commit the Council to any course of action, expenditure, policy position or undertaking unless specifically authorised by the Council or under an existing delegation;

g) not issue instructions or directions to Council staff, contractors or third parties by virtue of the appointment; and

h) refer any matter requiring a Council decision to the appropriate Committee or Full Council.

3. Role of Community Champions

Councillors appointed as Community Champions shall:

a) act as a point of contact and link between the Council and the community, organisations or area relevant to their Community Champion role;

b) keep the Council informed of relevant activities, developments, issues and opportunities arising through the role;

c) report any significant matter which may require consideration or action by the Council;

d) submit a report to the relevant Committee at least annually;

e) recognise that appointment to the role does not confer any delegated decision-making or executive authority on the Councillor;

f) not commit the Council to any course of action, expenditure, policy position or undertaking unless specifically authorised by the Council or under an existing delegation;

g) not issue instructions or directions to Council staff, contractors or third parties by virtue of the appointment; and

h) refer any matter requiring a Council decision to the appropriate Committee or Full Council.

4. Reporting Arrangements

Council representatives on outside bodies and Community Champions shall use the Council's standard reporting template when submitting reports.

The template shall be developed and administered by Democratic Services and should provide a concise and consistent means of reporting relevant activity, matters arising and any issues requiring Council consideration.

Reports should be proportionate to the activity undertaken and should focus on information relevant to the Council and its functions.

5. Committee Reporting

Council representatives on outside bodies and Community Champions shall submit a report to the relevant Committee at least once in each municipal year.

Where a significant matter arises before the next annual report is due, a committee or Full Council at the earliest suitable opportunity.

6. Full Council

Full Council agendas shall include a standing item entitled:

“Reports from Council Representatives on Outside Bodies and Community Champions”.

Reports received for Full Council shall be circulated with the agenda and presented for noting.

The standing item will provide Councillors with an opportunity to raise questions or seek clarification on matters contained within the reports where appropriate.

This arrangement is intended to ensure effective information sharing while avoiding unnecessary extension of Full Council meetings through routine verbal reporting.

7. Matters Requiring a Council Decision

Reports submitted under this protocol are primarily for information and noting.

Where a Council representative or Community Champion identifies a matter requiring a formal decision, approval, expenditure or other action by the Council, that matter must be referred separately to the appropriate Committee or Full Council in accordance with the Council’s normal governance and decision-making arrangements.

8. Annual Review

As part of the Council’s annual review of appointments, Democratic Services shall maintain a record of:

- appointments to outside bodies;
- dates of meetings held by outside bodies where possible
- Community Champion appointments;
- reports received during the municipal year; and
- any relevant reporting activity.

The operation of this protocol may be reviewed periodically to ensure that the arrangements remain proportionate and effective.

9. Administrative Arrangements

Democratic Services shall be responsible for:

- maintaining the standard reporting template;
- advising Councillors on reporting arrangements;
- coordinating reports for inclusion on relevant Committee and Full Council agendas; and
- maintaining appropriate records of reports received.

10. Effective Date

This protocol shall take effect from the date of approval by Full Council and shall apply to all current and future Council representatives on outside bodies and Community Champions.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

OUTSIDE BODIES AND COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS – REPORT

Name of Councillor:
[Insert name]

Role:
☐ Council Representative on an Outside Body
☐ Community Champion

Outside Body / Community Champion Area:
[Insert name of organisation, outside body or Community Champion area]

Reporting Period:
[Insert period covered]

---

1. Activity Since Last Report

Please provide a brief summary of relevant meetings attended, activities undertaken or engagement carried out since your last report.

[Insert brief summary]

---

2. Key Matters Arising

Please summarise any significant matters, developments, issues or opportunities that may be of interest or relevance to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

[Insert details]

---

3. Matters for the Council's Attention

Please identify any matters that Members should be made aware of, including any emerging issues or matters which may require further consideration.

[Insert details, or state "None"]

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

4. Is Any Council Decision or Action Required?

☐ No – report for information/noting only.

☐ Yes – further consideration or a formal decision is required.

If **Yes**, please briefly explain what is required:

[Insert details]

Please note: Where a formal Council decision, approval, expenditure or other action is required, the matter will need to be referred separately to the appropriate Committee or Full Council in accordance with the Council's normal decision-making arrangements.

---

5. Any Other Relevant Information

Please include any further information which may be useful to Councillors.

[Insert details, or state "None"]

Councillor:
[Insert name]

Date submitted:
[Insert date]

For Democratic Services Use

Relevant Committee:
[Insert Committee]

Date reported:
[Insert date]

Included within Full Council reporting item:
☐ Yes
☐ No / Not applicable

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Council Meeting 21st September 2026

Formal Adoption of Council Policies Reviewed by Committee

Report from the CEO/Town Clerk/Democratic Services Manager

1. Purpose of Report

To seek formal adoption by Town Council of three governance policies which have been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and recommended for adoption.

This report forms part of the Council's ongoing programme of policy review and governance assurance, ensuring that key governance policies remain current, compliant with relevant legislation and aligned with Council requirements.

2. Background

The Council maintains a structured programme of policy review through its committee system to ensure that policies and procedures remain fit for purpose and reflect current legislation, recognised best practice and Council objectives.

In accordance with the Council’s approved Terms of Reference, the Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews governance, financial and corporate policies prior to recommendation to Town Council where formal adoption is required.

Following review by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the policies identified within this report are presented to Town Council for formal adoption.

3. Policies Recommended for Adoption

The following governance policies have been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and are recommended to Council for formal adoption:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Retention Policy

The policies have been reviewed as part of the Council’s scheduled policy review programme to ensure that they remain appropriate, current and reflective of relevant legislative and organisational requirements.

4. Governance Assurance

Regular review and formal adoption of Council policies forms an important part of the Council’s overall governance framework.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Formal adoption of the policies presented within this report will:

- ensure that governance policies remain current and fit for purpose;
- support compliance with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements;
- provide clear and consistent guidance for Members and employees;
- strengthen accountability, transparency and audit assurance; and
- demonstrate the Council's commitment to good governance and continuous improvement.

5. Financial, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report beyond any costs already provided for within existing budgets and operational arrangements.

Maintaining an appropriate and up-to-date policy framework assists the Council in meeting its data protection, governance and organisational responsibilities.

Failure to regularly review and formally adopt appropriate policies may expose the Council to legal, governance, operational and reputational risk.

6. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

6.1 Formally adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, Data Protection Policy and Retention Policy following review and recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

6.2 Authorise the CEO/Town Clerk to make any minor administrative, formatting, typographical, numbering or legislative amendments required prior to publication, provided that such amendments do not materially alter the substance or intent of the policies.

APPENDIX A

Governance Policies Reviewed by Committee and Submitted for Formal Adoption

Policy	Reviewing Committee	Date of Review
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy	Finance and General Purposes Committee	24TH August 2026
Data Protection Policy	Finance and General Purposes Committee	27th July 2026

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Retention Policy	Finance and General Purposes Committee	27th July 2026

Samantha Bishop

Democratic Services Manager

September 2026

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Council Meeting 21st September 2026
Local Council Award Scheme - Silver Award
Report from Democratic Services Manager

Purpose and Background of Report

The Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS), administered by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), provides a framework through which local councils can demonstrate that they meet recognised standards of governance, community engagement and organisational development.

Weston-super-Mare Town Council has previously achieved the Foundation (Bronze) Award, demonstrating that the Council has the documentation, information and arrangements in place to operate lawfully and in accordance with standard practice.

Following achievement of the Bronze Award, Council agreed to progress to the next stage of the Scheme and work towards the Silver Award.

The Silver Award builds upon the requirements of Bronze and demonstrates that a council has additional documentation and arrangements in place to evidence good governance, effective community engagement and council improvement.

Work has subsequently been undertaken to review the Silver Award criteria and ensure that the required policies, documents, information and supporting evidence are in place and, where required, published on the Council's website.

It is confirmed that the Council has now met all of the criteria required for this next stage (Silver) of the award scheme.

The Silver criteria include requirements relating to health and safety, equality, co-option arrangements, community engagement, councillor profiles, grant awarding, the Annual Town Meeting, action planning, promotion of democratic engagement, delegation arrangements, customer service, staff qualifications and appraisal.

Before an application for the Silver Award can be submitted, NALC requires the Council to formally confirm, by resolution at a Full Council meeting, that all required documents, information and conditions are in place and are published on the Council's website where applicable.

Subject to the Council's resolution, the Democratic Services Manager will complete and submit the application, together with the required evidence and relevant website links, to the accreditation panel.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Options for Council

Option 1 - Recommended: Confirm that the requirements for the Silver Award are in place and authorise submission of the application.
Option 2: Defer submission of the application should Members consider that further evidence or work is required before the Council makes the required declaration.

Reason for Recommendation

Achievement of the Silver Award would provide independent recognition that the Council is operating to a recognised standard of good practice across governance, community engagement and organisational improvement.

Progression through the Local Council Award Scheme also provides a structured framework for continuous improvement and supports the Council's longer-term aspiration to progress towards the Gold Award.
The accreditation panel assesses whether the Council's documentation and information are in place, up to date and demonstrate lawful operation and good practice.

Expected Benefits

- Provide external recognition of the Council's governance and organisational standards.
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to effective community engagement and continuous improvement.
- Provide assurance that key policies, procedures and governance arrangements are in place and maintained.
- Support the Council's wider programme of organisational development.
- Provide a foundation for future progression towards the Gold Award.

Implications

Risks

There is no statutory requirement for the Council to achieve LCAS accreditation. The principal risk is that the accreditation panel identifies further evidence or amendments required before the Silver Award can be confirmed. The Scheme is intended to support councils through this process and provides an opportunity to respond where additional evidence is required.

Financial Implications

The current NALC guidance identifies a £50 registration fee and, for a council with annual income over £25,000, a Silver accreditation fee of £100 excluding VAT. Where a lower-level accreditation has been achieved within the previous 12 months, the accreditation fee is reduced by 20%. On that basis, the expected Silver accreditation fee is £80 plus the £50 registration fee, excluding VAT, subject to confirmation at the point of application.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Timescales
Following the Council's resolution, the application and supporting evidence will be submitted to the relevant accreditation panel in accordance with the LCAS process.

Stakeholders
- Weston-super-Mare Town Council
- Elected Members
- Council employees
- Residents and community organisations

Appendices
N/A

Members are recommended to:
RESOLVE: That Weston-super-Mare Town Council confirms that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award, and that these are published on the Council's website, where applicable.
RESOLVE: That the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to submit the Council's application for the Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award, together with the required supporting evidence.

Samantha Bishop
Democratic Services Manager
11/09/2026

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL TOWN COUNCIL - 21 SEPTEMBER 2026
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE CYCLE 2026/27
Joint report from the Democratic Services Manager and Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk

Purpose and Background of Report

1.1 To present the proposed Annual Governance Cycle for 2026/27 for consideration and approval by Town Council.

1.2 During the 2026/27 municipal year, individual Annual Committee Work Programmes have been introduced and approved by the respective Committees. These provide Members and officers with a forward plan of the principal matters expected to be considered during the year.

1.3 The Committee Work Programmes have been developed with reference to the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference, Scheme of Delegation and approved calendar of meetings, helping to ensure that business is considered by the appropriate body and at the appropriate point in the municipal year.

1.4 The proposed Annual Governance Cycle, attached at Appendix A, brings these programmes together within a single overarching framework alongside key Full Council, financial, statutory, risk, audit and assurance requirements. In doing so, it provides a clear snapshot of how the Council's principal governance business is expected to flow through its committee structure during the municipal year.

1.5 The Annual Governance Cycle is a forward-planning, monitoring and transparency tool. It is intended to make the Council's governance arrangements easier to understand by showing, in one place, when key matters are expected to be considered and how Committee business links to Full Council decisions. It does not amend the Council's existing Terms of Reference, Scheme of Delegation or other constitutional arrangements. Each Committee may make recommendations to Full Council on matters within its remit where a Council decision is required.

2. Options for Council

a) approve the Annual Governance Cycle 2026/27 as presented;
b) approve the Annual Governance Cycle subject to agreed amendments; or
c) defer approval and request further information or amendments.

3. Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Approval of the Annual Governance Cycle will establish a single, Council-wide overview of the principal governance requirements and decision points across the

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

municipal year. This will complement the individual Committee Work Programmes, provide a clear route between Committee consideration, recommendations and Full Council decisions, and give Members, officers and residents a more accessible view of how the Council's governance business is planned and progressed and will be published.

3.2 The framework will support timely scheduling and monitoring of statutory, financial and governance responsibilities without altering existing decision-making responsibilities or delegations. By presenting these arrangements in a single coherent cycle, it will also provide a useful reference point for explaining the Council's governance framework consistently over time.

4. Expected Benefits

4.1 The Annual Governance Cycle is expected to:

• strengthen forward planning across the Council;

• provide Members and officers with greater clarity on the annual governance timetable;

• help ensure statutory and proper practice requirements are identified and scheduled at the appropriate time;

• align Committee activity with the Council's financial, budget and precept setting cycle;

• support effective risk management, internal control, audit and governance assurance;

• improve the planning of agendas and reports by Democratic Services and responsible officers;

• support consistent explanation of the Council's governance arrangements for Members and officers, including as part of future induction and governance development; and

• provide residents and other interested parties with a clearer and more transparent overview of when the Council's principal governance business is expected to be considered and how decisions progress through the Council's committee structure.

5. Implications

Legal

5.1 The Annual Governance Cycle is not a separate source of legal authority and does not create, amend or replace any statutory duty, delegation or constitutional provision. Rather, it provides a consolidated snapshot of how the Council's existing governance responsibilities are expected to be discharged through Full Council and

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

its Committees during the 2026/27 municipal year, drawing together requirements arising from the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference, Scheme of Delegation and approved meeting calendar.

5.2 The Cycle supports the Council in demonstrating that key statutory, financial and governance matters are identified, scheduled and capable of being monitored throughout the year. This includes the Council's arrangements for internal control, risk management, internal and external audit, budget and precept setting, and preparation and approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

5.3 The Cycle should therefore be read as an overview of the Council's planned governance programme at a particular point in time, rather than as an exhaustive or legally determinative statement of every matter that may arise. Committee agendas and business may change in response to legislation, Council decisions, emerging priorities or operational requirements. In the event of any conflict, the Council's adopted constitutional documents and applicable legal requirements will take precedence.

Risks
5.4 A structured Annual Governance Cycle reduces governance risk by providing visibility of key annual requirements and helping to ensure that statutory, financial and governance matters are considered within the required timescales. The principal risk would arise if the cycle were not kept under review and key requirements were delayed or omitted.

Financial Implications
5.5 There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of the Annual Governance Cycle. The framework supports the Council's existing financial governance arrangements by aligning budget preparation, financial monitoring, risk management and the budget and precept-setting process within the annual cycle.

Timescales
5.6 The Annual Governance Cycle will apply for the 2026/27 municipal year and will be treated as a live governance document, monitored throughout the year. It will be reviewed annually to reflect changes to legislation, proper practices, Council governance arrangements, Committee responsibilities and the approved calendar of meetings. Maintaining the Cycle in this way will also allow it to serve as a clear reference point for explaining the Council's governance arrangements to Members, officers and the wider community.

Stakeholders
5.7 Key stakeholders are Town Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk, Democratic Services, the Responsible Financial Officer and other officers

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

responsible for matters included within the annual cycle. Residents and other interested parties are also important stakeholders: presenting the Council's principal governance timetable in a single, accessible framework supports openness and transparency by making it easier to understand what is due to be considered, by which body and at what stage of the municipal year. The format also provides a foundation for future explanatory, induction and governance-support material, including information made available through the Council's public-facing channels.

Contractors
5.8 There are no direct contractor implications arising from this report.

Crime & Disorder (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)
5.9 No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified.

Biodiversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)
5.10 No direct biodiversity implications have been identified.

Privacy Impact (consider Privacy Impact assessment)
5.11 No personal data is introduced or processed as a result of approving the Annual Governance Cycle. A Privacy Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this report.

Equality & Diversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)
5.12 No direct adverse equality or diversity implications have been identified. A clear and consistently applied governance framework supports transparent and equitable decision-making arrangements.

6. Appendices
Appendix A - Annual Governance Cycle 2026/27

7. Members are recommended to:
7.1 Approve the Annual Governance Cycle 2026/27 attached at Appendix A.

7.2 Note that the individual Committee Work Programmes have been approved by the respective Committees and will operate alongside the overarching Annual Governance Cycle.

7.3 Note that the Annual Governance Cycle does not alter the Council's existing Terms of Reference, Scheme of Delegation or other constitutional arrangements.

7.4 Authorise the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk, in consultation with the Democratic Services Manager, to make minor administrative amendments to the Annual Governance Cycle where required, with any substantive changes to governance responsibilities or decision-making arrangements being referred to the appropriate Committee or Full Council for consideration.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Democratic Services Manager

Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk

Drafted September 2026

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE CYCLE 2026/27

MAY 2026
ANNUAL COUNCIL
Elects Mayor/ Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs Reviews Governance Arrangements

JUNE 2026
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Programme Approved

JULY 2026
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
Programme Approved

JULY 2026
AMENITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE
Programme Approved

JULY 2026
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Programme Approved

>

OCTOBER 2026
BUDGET PLANNING & SERVICE REVIEW
Committees Consider Budget Proposals

DECEMBER 2026
DRAFT BUDGET & PRECEPT
F&GP Committee Considers Draft Budget & Precept and Makes Recommendations to Full Council

JANUARY 2027
FINAL BUDGET & PRECEPT
Full Coincil considers and approves the Budget & Precept

MARCH 2027
GOVERNANCE & RISK REVIEW
Risk Register, Internal Controls & Governance

JUNE 2027
AGAR APPROVAL
Full Council Council Approves AGAR & Annual Governance Statements

COMMITEES > FULL COUNCIL
All Committees can make recommendations to Full Council within their delegated remit.
Full Council makes final decisions where required.

KEY Establish & Monitor | Budget Cycle | Governance & Assurance

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2026/27

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

JUL 2026
Planning & Enivonmental Monitoring
- Annual Work Programme
- Planning Applications
- Planning Appeals
- Climate Emergency Monitoring
- Biodiversity & Sustainability Update

OCT 2026
Strategic Pllaning & Budget Planning
- Strategic Planning Consultations
- Local Plan & Development Framework Updates
- Climate Action Plan Review
- Biodiversity Duty Review
- Environmental Budget Proposals 2027/28

FEB 2027
Annual Environmental Review
- Annual Climate Emergency Report
- Biodiversity & Environmental Performance Review
- Active Travel & Sustainable Transport Review
- Committee Priorities for 2027/28

Key Outputs
Planning Reponses - Environmental Stewardship - Climate action delivery - budget proposals - strategic advice to Council

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

JUL 2026
Workforce Planning
- Annual Work Programme
- Staffing Establishment Review
- Workforce & Succession Planning
- Staff Wellbeing Review
- Training & Development Programme

OCT 2026
Budget & Financial Planning
- Salary Budget Review 2027/28
- Staffing Establishment Review
- Recruitment Planning
- Apprenticeship &Training Budget Review
- Organisational Structure Review

FEB 2027
Draft Budget & Precept Recommendations
- Staffing Performance Monitoring
- Sickness Absence Monitoring
- Recruitment Update
- Training & Development Review
- Health & Safety Review
- Succession Planning Review

Key Outputs
Workforce planning - Staffing budgets - Policy oversight Employee wellbeing - Organisational development

AMENITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

JUL 2026
Service Monitoring
- Annual Work Programme
- Parks & Open Space Review
- Tourism & Visitor Services Update
- Comunity Events Update
- Asset Condition Monitoring
- Allotment & Public Conveniences Update

OCT 2026
Budget & Service Planning
- Fees & Charges Review
- Service Budget Proposals 2027/28
- Asset Maintenance Priorities
- Events Programme Planning
- Markets & Seasonal Events
- Service Level Agreement Monitoring

FEB 2027
Delivery Planning
- Grounds Maintenance Review
- Parks & Facilities Monitoring
- Events Delivery Planning
- Tourism Programme Review
- Community Engagement Update
- Summer Operational Planning

Key Outputs
Quality services - Well maintained assets - Events & tourism growth - Budget porposals - Community engagement

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

JUL 2026
Quarter 1 Governance Review
- Budget Monitoring (Q1)
- Internal Controls Review
- Risk Management & Audit Monitoring
- Treasury & Investment Monitoring
- Asset Management Review

OCT 2026
Budget & Financial Planning
- Budget & Service Review
- Reserves Strategy Review
- Capital Programme Review
- Financial Risk Register

DEC 2026
Draft Budget & Precept Recommendations
- Draft Budget 2027/28
- Draft Precept 2027/28
- Reserves Strategy Review
- Capital Programme Review
- Financial Risk Register

MAR 2027
Governance & AGAR Preparation
- Risk Register Review
- Internal Controls Review
- Governance Effectiveness Review
- AGAR Preparation
- Year-End Financial Forecast

Key Outputs
Financial stewardship - Risk management - Governance assurance Budget & precept recommendations - AGAR & audit readiness

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Follow us on LinkedIn Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Item 11

Town Council Meeting 21st September 2026

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Final Report and Next Steps

Report from the CEO / Town Clerk

Purpose and Background of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the final report arising from Weston-super-Mare Town Council's first Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge, undertaken between 21 and 23 April 2026, and to agree the Council's approach to the recommendations and next stages of the improvement programme.

The report also advises Members of the requirement associated with participation in the Corporate Peer Challenge process to publish the final feedback report and an action plan, and provides an update on the changed position regarding an LGA Progress Review.

Background

Weston-super-Mare Town Council participated in its first LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in April 2026. The process is a sector-led improvement and assurance exercise, rather than an inspection, and involved experienced elected Member and officer peers reviewing the Council's arrangements and meeting with councillors, officers, partners and stakeholders.

The review considered the five core Corporate Peer Challenge areas of local priorities and outcomes; organisational and place leadership; governance and culture; financial planning and management; and capacity for improvement. At the Council's request, the review also included a specific focus on the devolution of assets and services from North Somerset Council.

Following the onsite review, the LGA provided feedback and worked with the Council and peer team to finalise the written report. The LGA has acknowledged the practical difficulty of coordinating feedback from peers over the summer leave period. The final report has now been received and is attached separately as Appendix A.

Overall Findings

The final report provides a positive external assessment of the Council and recognises the scale of organisational change undertaken over recent years. The peer team specifically notes that the Council has strong foundations and that many recommendations are intended to support the next stage of organisational maturity and continuity, rather than to address fundamental weaknesses.

• the Council has successfully undertaken significant organisational transformation and has established a positive organisational culture;

• staff and councillors are committed to the organisation and to embedding new ways of working;

• partners regard the Town Council highly and see scope for it to strengthen its place-leadership role;

• the Council is taking a measured and sensible approach to devolution, including consideration of financial and reputational risk;

• staff engagement, morale and commitment are recognised as important organisational strengths;

• significant governance improvements had already been implemented before the Peer Challenge; and

• the Council is delivering a breadth and scale of services not always seen at town council level.

The report also identifies areas where existing improvements should now be embedded, refined or strengthened. These include delegation, organisational learning, strategic and financial planning, workforce planning, Member development, communications, community engagement, partnership working and a more programmed approach to devolution.

Key LGA Recommendations

1. Continue progress towards financial resilience, including building reserves, improving financial planning and maintaining robust budgeting practices.

2. Embed and sustain the Council's transformational progress so that new ways of working become established within the organisational culture and are measured through performance management.

3. Strengthen governance through an effective Scheme of Delegation, including appropriate delegation from councillors to officers and from SMT to managers.

4. Embed reflective practice and lessons learned through structured debriefs, shared learning and continuous improvement.

5. Strengthen the Council's leadership role in the place-making agenda.

6. Build on and further strengthen joint working with North Somerset Council in support of devolution.

7. Build and nurture collaborative partnerships with businesses, voluntary and community organisations and local leaders.

8. Develop the long-term Council Strategy into an active and outcomes-based strategy which visibly guides priorities, resources and community outcomes.

The detailed report contains a number of additional recommendations beneath these overarching themes. These have been grouped within the proposed action plan at Appendix B so that related actions can be managed together rather than as a series of disconnected workstreams.

Options for Council

Members may consider the following options:

• Option 1 - Receive the final LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report, approve the proposed Action Plan at Appendix B, publish both documents, and retain the position on a formal Progress Review for later consideration while officers continue to explore external support. This is the recommended option.

• Option 2 - Receive and publish the final report but request amendments to the proposed Action Plan before publication.

• Option 3 - In addition to approving the report and Action Plan, agree at this stage to commission a paid LGA Progress Review. Current indicative costs are £5,700 for an online review or £7,700 for an in-person review.

Reason for Recommendation

The Peer Challenge provides valuable independent external assurance and constructive challenge at an important stage in the Council's development. The final report recognises substantial progress already made while identifying practical opportunities to strengthen governance, financial resilience, strategic planning, organisational capacity, partnerships and place leadership.

The recommended approach is to integrate the Peer Challenge actions into existing corporate, service and management work programmes, rather than create a parallel improvement programme. This should provide clear ownership and monitoring while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

It is not recommended that the Council commits to purchasing a Progress Review at this stage. The change in national funding arrangements is disappointing, particularly as the Council entered the wider process with an expectation that a follow-up review would form part of the scheme. The LGA is continuing to explore possible alternatives and has suggested that the Council also considers support available through NALC. Deferring a decision allows those options to be explored before any additional expenditure is committed.

Expected Benefits

• Provides a clear and transparent response to the independent Peer Challenge.

• Consolidates and embeds recent organisational improvements.

• Strengthens governance, delegation and organisational resilience.

• Improves the connection between strategic priorities, resources, capacity and outcomes.

• Supports continued progress on financial resilience.

• Strengthens partnership working, place leadership and the Council's approach to devolution.

• Creates a proportionate framework for monitoring organisational improvement and demonstrating progress publicly.

Implications

Legal

There is no statutory requirement for a town council to undertake an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. However, participation in the process included a commitment to transparency through publication of the final feedback report and an action plan responding to the recommendations. The LGA final report records that both documents should be considered by Full Council in September 2026 and published with the associated Council papers.

Risks

The main risk is that the Peer Challenge becomes a standalone exercise without clear follow-through. This is mitigated by integrating the recommendations into the Council's existing corporate and service planning arrangements, allocating ownership, and reporting progress to Members.

There is also a risk of creating an unnecessarily large administrative programme if every detailed observation is treated as a separate project. The grouped action plan at Appendix B is intended to avoid this by bringing related activity together under clear improvement themes.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate additional financial implications arising from receiving and publishing the report or approving the proposed action plan. Individual actions may have future resource implications; where this is the case, these will be considered through the Council's normal budget and decision-making arrangements.

The LGA has advised that national government funding is currently not available for a Progress Review. The indicative costs provided to the Council are £5,700 for an online review and £7,700 for an in-person review. No expenditure on a Progress Review is recommended at this stage.

Timescales

The final feedback report and the Council's action plan should be published following consideration by Full Council. The LGA final report records the agreed September 2026 Council timetable, reflecting the delay in finalisation over the summer. Progress against the action plan will then be monitored through the Council's normal management and governance arrangements. The position on a formal Progress Review should be reconsidered ahead of the approximately 12-month point from the original April 2026 review.

Stakeholders

Councillors, employees, North Somerset Council, partner organisations, residents, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and the wider community.

Contractors

No direct contractor implications arise from this report. Any procurement or external support required to deliver individual actions will be considered separately in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and procurement arrangements.

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

No direct implications arise from this report. Individual services and projects will continue to consider crime and disorder implications where applicable.

Biodiversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

No direct biodiversity implications arise from this report. Relevant actions and service decisions will continue to consider the Council's biodiversity duty where applicable.

Privacy Impact (consider Privacy Impact assessment)

No direct privacy implications arise from publication of the final LGA report or the corporate action plan. Any future action involving personal data will be assessed separately as required.

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

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

The Peer Challenge recommends strengthening awareness, knowledge and practical application of equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation, including accessible communications and consideration of differing impacts on communities and staff. This is incorporated within the proposed Action Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A - LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Weston-super-Mare Town Council Final Feedback Report, 21-23 April 2026 (attached separately).

Appendix B - LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Council Improvement Action Plan 2026/27 (included below).

Members are recommended to:

1. Note and receive the final LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report attached separately at Appendix A.

2. Welcome the overall findings of the Peer Challenge and note the positive external assessment of the Council's organisational transformation, culture, leadership, partnership working and capacity for continued improvement.

3. Approve the Corporate Peer Challenge Council Improvement Action Plan at Appendix B as the framework for responding to and monitoring the recommendations contained within the final report.

4. Note that, in accordance with the commitments made through participation in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process, the final report and action plan will be published on the Town Council's website following consideration by Full Council.

5. Note the changed LGA funding position whereby a funded Progress Review is not currently available, together with the indicative costs of £5,700 for an online review and £7,700 for an in-person review.

6. Agree that no commitment to commission a paid Progress Review is made at this stage and that officers continue to explore with the LGA and NALC whether funded or alternative support can be made available, with the position brought back to Council if required ahead of the proposed 12-month review point.

Sarah

CEO / Town Clerk

Drafted 11 September 2026

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Weston-super-Mare Town Council

21-23 April 2026

Feedback report

Corporate Peer Challenge

Contents

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Local Government Association company number 11177145 Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577
Chair: Councillor Eamon O'Brien **Chief Executive (Interim):** Jenny Rowlands **President:** Baroness Grey-Thompson

1. Introduction

A team of local government peers, led by the Local Government Association (LGA) delivered a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) of Weston-super-Mare Town Council (WSMTC) 21-23 April 2026. This was the council's first CPC.

CPC is a well-established and respected improvement and assurance tool that provides robust, strategic, and credible challenge and support to councils. Further details about the CPC process can be found in Appendix A**.**

Our peer team consisted of highly experienced and knowledgeable senior local government councillor and officer peers (see section four). We considered the five core areas covered by all CPCs: local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management and capacity for improvement, in addition to a focus on the devolution of assets from North Somerset Council.

This report provides WSMTC with feedback on the peer team's findings. It provides the council with a set of a high-level recommendations alongside further recommendations under each of the CPC's core areas. There is an expectation the council will publish this report and a clear action plan to respond to all the recommendations highlighted.

2. Executive summary

Weston-super-Mare Town Council (WSMTC) is the council representing local communities and delivering a range of services across the town of Weston-super-Mare. In recent years, it has assumed responsibility for the delivery of a range of services devolved from the unitary council North Somerset Council (NSC), including areas of street cleansing, waste management, and some play areas and parks. As outlined in NSC's devolution strategy, this approach is set to continue. WSMTC has also delivered development and regeneration, for example, regenerating the Old Town Quarry into a hub for creative businesses and the revitalisation of the Weston Museum.

The council recently moved to a new building and appointed a new Town Clerk. The

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council used this as an opportunity to transform how it operates. Peers found the physical move has helped nurture a positive organisational culture, reinforced by significant investment in senior and middle managers, helping to sustain this and promote consistent communication. This transformation has been largely successful with staff and councillors committed to the new culture.

Throughout the report, there are numerous references to substantial organisational change, including the office relocation, governance reforms, introduction of new management and performance frameworks, investment in leadership development, service expansion and the management of an ambitious devolution programme. These achievements provide important context for many of the recommendations and help explain why the focus is now on embedding and refining improvements rather than addressing fundamental weaknesses.

Building on this, more work is needed to ensure that new ways of working are fully embedded. Many officers highlighted the need to revise functional processes, such as communication methods between officers and councillors, timing for papers to councillors, content and style of officer reports to councillors, and delegation of decision-making from councillors to senior officers, and senior officers to relevant middle management officers. Building time to reflect on practices and projects and assess effectiveness and value through structured debriefs will help the town council move even further forward on its improvement journey.

Partners say that WSMTC is well-placed to strengthen its place-making role for the town. The town council could expand its work with the unitary council and partners, as a facilitator of collaborative conversations to create a long-term, outcomes-based vision. The council is in a good position to build and nurture collaborative partnerships to unlock shared opportunities, strengthen service delivery, and support more joined up responses to local challenges.

As it grows its role in place-shaping and service delivery, there is an opportunity for the council to adopt a more clearly defined, long-term strategy for the council and the town. The recent updates to "Town Council Strategy 2020-2030" are a good starting point, but the peer team recommend ensuring that the strategy is underpinned by clear outcome measures for residents and local businesses. Outcomes would be

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locally determined, but could include, for example, specifying an increase in employment within five years and within ten years. These ambitions would need to be developed and agreed with strategic partners in the town, including North Somerset Council (NSC). WSMTC would then use this strategy to help drive decisions and the direction of the council. Service Plans may be shorter-term, and more action-focused, but could be derived from the overall strategy for the town. The strategy would need to be regularly reviewed and visibly drive priorities and resource allocation. This work is already underway.

Partnership with NSC is particularly important and valuable. Many of WSMTC's councillors also sit on NSC, and the council could maximise the insight, intelligence and influence that dual hatters bring. This could be through clearer information sharing and ensuring that WSMTC's strategies and delivery programmes work alongside and with NSC. In addition, early conversations with NSC around planned work in the town, could help to establish shared expectations. This could help to minimise duplication of effort and clarify specific responsibilities between the two councils.

WSMTC is taking a measured and sensible approach to NSC's devolution plans. Council officers carefully assess each potential activity for financial and reputational risk before agreeing to take on responsibility for new devolved services. As the council continues to work with NSC on its devolution plans, there is an opportunity to further strengthen WSMTCs approach to assessing future potential devolved services, capturing all financial considerations, including service delivery models, precept implications and organisational capacity, alongside wider community impacts and opportunities.

The council's general reserves are low, and it remains a priority to strengthen its financial resilience. Continuing to ensure robust budgeting practices and improving councillor understanding of the importance of reserves will help long-term sustainability. The council is already taking action to build reserves.

The team acknowledges that many of the recommendations are already underway, for example the Town Council Strategy, the performance management framework and the development of service planning arrangements. The council has strong

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foundations, and the recommendations are intended to support the next stage of organisational maturity and continuity. Weston-super-Mare Town Council is at a good stage in its development and the peer team hope that the recommendations throughout the report are aimed to help support the council with its plans.

3. Recommendations

The following are the peer team's key recommendations which have been prioritised on the grounds of urgency and importance.

3.1 Recommendation 1: Continue progress towards financial resilience

Maintain momentum in strengthening financial resilience. This includes building reserves, improving financial planning, and ensuring robust budgeting practices that support long term sustainability and the council's strategic ambitions.

3.2 Recommendation 2: Embed and sustain the Council's Transformational progress

Continue building on the strong foundations already established through the council's transformative journey over the last couple of years. Focus on embedding the new ways of working so they become part of the organisation's culture, ensuring improvements are sustained and continually refined, measuring success through the new performance management scheme.

3.3 Recommendation 3: Strengthen governance through an effective scheme of delegation

Clear delegated authority from councillors to officers, and from Senior Management Team (SMT) to managers will streamline decision making, reduce bottlenecks, and enable officers to act confidently within defined parameters. Particularly enhance the scheme of delegation from councillors to officers to support the Planning Committee.

3.4 Recommendation 4: Embed reflective practice and lessons learned

Formalise reflective practice across the organisation to ensure lessons learned translate into meaningful improvements. This includes structured debriefs, shared

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learning mechanisms, and a culture that values and measures continuous improvement.

3.5 Recommendation 5: Strengthen the leadership role of the council in the place making agenda

Position the council as a proactive leader in shaping the future of the town. This includes influencing development, championing local priorities, and ensuring the council's voice is central in wider place making conversations. Build on the existing structures (such as the place making partnership) and re-invigorate what you can do together for the town.

3.6 Recommendation 6: Build on and further strengthen the joint working relationship with North Somerset Council (NSC) in support of devolution.

Clarify shared expectations, establish clearer formal communication and agreements, and be involved early in discussions about matters pertaining to the town. Ensure that dual-hatted councillors help to support smoother transitions and reduce risk through open conversations and priorities.

3.7 Recommendation 7: Build and nurture collaborative partnerships

Prioritise continuing to develop strong, collaborative partnerships locally, with businesses, voluntary and community sectors, and local leaders. Effective partnership working will strengthen service delivery, unlock shared opportunities, and support more joined up responses to local challenges. Monitor and refine as needed.

3.8 Recommendation 8: Develop the long-term strategy into one that is active and outcomes-based

Develop a dynamic strategy that guides day to day decision making. Ensure the strategy is clearly and appropriately communicated, internally and externally, regularly reviewed, and visibly drives priorities, resource allocation, and community outcomes. This should be done with partners to share responsibility for delivery. Identify desired outcomes and ensure relevant data sharing to identify needs and

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goals. This could then feed into the next update to the “Town Council Strategy 2020-2030”.

In addition to the key recommendations, section five of this report captures our detailed feedback and additional recommendations within each of the CPC’s core areas of focus.

4. Peer team

Peer challenges are conducted by experienced LGA peers, including elected councillors and senior officers. The composition of the peer team was shaped by the specific focus of the challenge, with the LGA selecting peers based on their relevant expertise. The peers for this CPC were:

- Cllr Richard Morris, Leader of the Council and Executive Board Member for Economic Growth and Tourism, Wychavon District Council
- Clare Evans, Town Clerk, Houghton Regis Town Council
- Luke Trevaskis, Chief Executive, Morecombe Town Council
- Matt Kirby, Deputy Chief Executive, Chippenham Town Council
- Becca Singh, LGA Peer Challenge Manager
- Rachel Stevens – LGA Project Support Officer (working offsite)

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5. Detailed feedback and recommended actions

This section of the report provides detailed feedback along with additional recommendations related to the five core areas of focus and the additional focus on devolution of assets.

When developing the action plan in response to the CPC's findings, the council should consider both the key recommendations presented in section three and the additional recommendations set out below.

5.1 Local priorities and outcomes

Weston-super-Mare Town Council (WSMTC) is one of the largest town councils in the country. It is increasingly seen as a key partner for organisations and communities across the town, with a growing role alongside the unitary council in supporting and delivering local priorities. Partners who spoke with the peer team welcome the opportunity to work further with the town council in support of shared priorities for the benefit of residents, businesses and communities.

Council priorities based on local context

Staff, councillors, stakeholders, and residents all demonstrate a shared connection to and knowledge of the town, which is a powerful asset for future growth. Councillors and officers demonstrated a strong civic intent for priorities to be grounded in what matters locally, addressing practical issues that residents recognise and value. The recently updated 'Town Council Strategy 2020-2030' is a good starting point for Weston Super Mare.

Large-scale work (such as the Weston Museum and the Old Town Quary) is often opportunistic, but it is well considered and planned. See section 5.6 for more details about services devolved from North Somerset Council (NSC). Well-planned engagement with local communities has led to demonstrable good outcomes in these two examples. WSMTC knows this approach works and is rightly proud of its achievements. This approach could be built into everyday service delivery, demonstrating the clear link between engagement, town council activity and impact on people.

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The current approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is a good base, but the peer team suggest increasing the awareness of how EDI principles interact with day-to-day working practices. This includes varying internal and external communication methods to be more accessible to different groups of people and considering the differential impact changes to service delivery or policies could have on staff and communities. More training may be needed, to ensure that managers are confident to challenge when needed.

Councillors and officers demonstrate a clear desire to respond to community needs. Developing more systematic processes and practices that ensure communities feed into service and policy delivery would help to make this work better. There are good examples of how the council has increasingly embedded community engagement across a wide range of service areas, including devolution, parks, and youth services.

Performance and delivery against priorities

The council's vision: "Ever Forward – ensuring Weston-super-Mare becomes a more vibrant, prosperous, cleaner, greener, safer and inclusive place for everyone to enjoy" is supported by three key values:

- Positive leadership
- Integrity and transparency
- Listening to and working with communities.

Place-based delivery is organised around five pillars:

- Weston View – enhancing civic pride
- Cleaner and Greener – commitment to make the council carbon neutral by 2030
- Healthier and Happier – fostering inclusivity and resident wellbeing through youth services, voluntary groups and improved accessibility
- A Bright Future – strengthening the local economy, maximising tourism and collaborating with local businesses

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- Heritage Arts and Culture – supporting cultural venues such as the Blakehay Theatre, Weston Museum and the Old Town Quarry, alongside funding key festivals.

The council aims to support all residents, communities and businesses using this model.

The new formal performance management framework is beginning to be embedded following the recent transformational changes. The plans illustrate a clear golden thread from the council's vision, through the values and the five delivery pillars, down to individual development plans. Individual development plans have not taken place in recent years, and are being reintroduced in 2026, so it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of the system.

However, current performance measurement often focuses on activity. This reflects the council's increasingly wide-ranging work. The next stage is to connect that activity to what difference it has made. For example, how much has the increase in street cleansing in a particular area supported an increase in footfall and business investment and decreases in anti-social behaviour reports?

Through discussions with staff and partners, peers found examples of high-quality, high-volume delivery of key projects. A strong example of this is Weston Museum. Peers felt that WSMTC is delivering a breadth and scale of services not always seen in town councils, with a strong focus on responsiveness, which is commendable.

Organisational approach to continuous improvement

Many staff told the peer team that the pace of ambition and delivery for residents does not always allow time to fully evaluate and improve. The peer team recommend that delivery is routinely complemented by structured reflection, with teams regularly considering:

- What worked well
- What could be improved
- What should be done differently next time

This can be supported through practical measures such as:

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- Building formal review points into project lifecycles
- Introducing “lessons learned” cycles as standard practice
- Making process improvement an expected part of performance

In addition to key recommendations outlined in section three, we also recommend the council progress the following actions:

- **Develop a community engagement plan to support the strategic vision**. Use the lessons learned from the engagement around the Quarry and the Museum. This can be informal as well as formal, and can help to identify and measure specific outcomes for the council to achieve
- **Ensure council and service plans are outcomes-based**, with relevant outputs and activities supporting the ambitions and objectives set out in the Town Council Strategy 2020-2030.
- **Develop a more structured approach to planning, sequencing, and organisational learning, ensuring that this is consistently aligned with capacity, impact, and long-term priorities.** Link plans for devolution and development to long-term strategic aims.
- **Strengthen awareness, knowledge and skills of EDI.** Consideration of these issues can improve community engagement and service delivery across councillors and officers

5.2 Organisational and place leadership

Both the leader and the town clerk are well respected amongst partners, staff, and councillors. The Leader’s inclusive approach to political decision-making, involving councillors from all parties, and the town clerk’s approach to organisational development are particularly noteworthy.

Staff and councillors both demonstrated understanding of the council’s values, and a clear shared desire to provide and maintain high-quality services. Examples of collaboration across the organisation include developing the new performance management framework, and bringing together relevant officers, councillors, partners

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and communities for the development of Old Town Quarry.

As the council continues to deliver (and potentially grow) devolved services, it may help future plans how it sees itself: as a strategic leader, a delivery organisation, an advocate for the area, or a combination of these. In programming future work, the council can ensure that activity remains aligned to core objectives and capacity is focused on work that genuinely contributes to desired outcomes.

Effective organisational leadership (councillors)

The Leader of the council has introduced a collaborative approach to decision-making, with decisions usually made by consensual cross-party working. There is a 'leaders of political groups' group, which meets regularly, as well as communicating informally outside of these meetings. This helps to build a constructive political environment where all parties are involved in decisions.

Peers heard of some examples where it would help to have a clearer agreed strategic direction (for example, strategic approach to asset management and devolution plans), and a clearer scheme of delegation from councillors to senior officers (and senior officers to managers – see below). This should reinforce the principle that councilllors set strategic direction, while officers provide professional advice on the development of that strategy and lead its delivery.

The election in 2027 will likely result in a high intake of new councillors as several long-standing councillors have publicly stated their intention to stand down. The next twelve months present an opportunity to prepare for the potential intake of several new councillors, ensuring that a comprehensive induction programme is prepared well in advance. This should include planning introductory and mandatory training, and reviewing the council's recent achievements, to be able to share with new councillors and feed into Town Council Strategy 2020-2030 reporting and revision process.

Effective organisational leadership – officers

The leadership shown by the town clerk is impressive, and highly valued by staff and councillors who spoke with the peer team. The town clerk has led the officers through a significant period of transformation and change, new frameworks are in place for

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corporate planning, budget setting, and team objective setting. It also includes the office move from Grove House and a staff restructure. This has been done with strategic investment in management development, introduction of corporate values performance management, regular staff engagement and collaborative leadership arrangements, all of which underpin future improvements.

There is a positive atmosphere around the council building. Staff told the team that they genuinely like working here and are proud to work for the council. Staff are committed, enthusiastic and dedicated to the work that they and the council more widely do. This includes staff who have worked in other councils, including at different tiers of local government. Staff gave several reasons why they wanted to stay working at WSMTC, such as 'partnership working,' 'management', and 'interesting work'. The council should continue to harness this enthusiasm to further build its confidence, working alongside partners and residents, to deliver its agreed priorities for the town.

The council has invested in leadership and management capability and capacity through a programme bringing together managers from across the organisation with the senior leadership team. Managers at all levels described how this has led to an increased sense of 'one team' across the organisation and demonstrated a clear understanding about their role in delivering agreed priorities.

There are sometimes delays in decision-making or actions due to pinch-points at senior officer level for sign-off of projects or plans. Having successfully stabilised and strengthened the organisation, there is now an opportunity for senior officers to increase delegation to managers. Senior officers would maintain effective governance, oversight and appropriate checks and balances, but managers would be empowered to act, ensuring continuity of delivery when key individuals are not at work (for example, on annual leave or through sickness absence).

The management team below SMT demonstrated a strong appetite for professional development, taking ownership of their growth and building the confidence to operate with greater autonomy. There is an opportunity to further strengthen this by supporting the development of political awareness and judgement at this level and below. Over time, this will help to build a more resilient and capable organisation, with leadership that is sustainable and distributed across different levels of management.

All levels of the organisation identified a need to improve practical processes and systems such as administrative arrangements for council committee meetings Although this may be a lengthy piece of work, this is an ideal time. There are several months before the next election, and the council will be in a better position to support any new councillors if practical and logistical systems have already been revised and established. The peer team suggest dedicated additional resources to the democratic services team to enable this with regards to supporting councillors, and in time expand this work across practical arrangements across the organisation.

Partnership working and place leadership

Partners speak very highly of the town council, recognising how effectively it delivers within its available capacity and resources. WSMTC is transitioning from a service provider mindset to a 'place leader' role, demonstrating ambition to shape wider outcomes for the town. There is a keen sense of shared purpose and commitment to delivery, with staff and councillors aligned around improving outcomes for residents. Partners indicated that the town council was in a good position to grow this role.

There are several service level agreements in place with partners, such as the local police and North Somerset Council (NSC), but there are opportunities for the town council to be more strategic. NSC recently secured significant external funding (including £20M in Levelling Up funding and £20M through Pride in Place) for the town. WSMTC could be a core strategic partner with NSC to shape how that investment is deployed. The town council should continue to work collaboratively with NSC to be clear about what it wants to achieve with these funds.

Partners are clearly working with the town council on various community safety initiatives, for example tackling anti-social behaviour, organised crime and money laundering. Partners felt that there is an opportunity for WSMTC to strengthen its involvement in the regeneration of retail spaces to help revitalise the town centre, whilst recognising this is largely in the unitary authority's remit. The council can build on its experience supporting the local foodbank to operate in a vacant shop, but partners and some officers felt that the further revitalisation was needed due to the

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numbers of retail vacancies. The peer team felt there is an opportunity for WSMTC to continue to build on its relationship with North Somerset Council and other partners to support a more joined-up and collaborative approach to these spaces.

Place leadership

In addition to the key recommendations outlined in section three of this report, the peer team also recommend the following actions:

- **Undertake business process review and revision as soon as possible**. This is to ensure that all new processes are effective and in place before the election in 2027. This should include looking at how responsibilities and decisions could be delegated.
- **Continue to work collaboratively with NSC, ensuring WSMTC is actively involved in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of work within the town that NSC has secured funds to deliver.** The town council should be at the heart of this work, supporting NSC, delivering where appropriate, working with partners to ensure that the funds reach where it is most needed.

5.3 Governance and culture

After a period of transformational change, there is a strong culture of respect, transparency, and challenge. This is demonstrated by the collaborative approach at a councillor level and the strength of the management team. Officers and councillors better understand their respective roles and work constructively together.

Significant governance improvements had already been implemented prior to the peer challenge, including revision of Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegations Financial Regulations (all using NALC models), reviewing committee work and report writing frameworks.

The council is at a point where it can continue to move away from traditional perceptions of parish-level operation and towards a more modern, strategic model. This reflects its growing service delivery and responsibility across WSM.

It is important for WSMTC to ensure that governance arrangements and organisational behaviours are clearly understood, confidently applied, and actively enabling delivery at scale. The recommendations at the end of this section represent the next stage of maturity, not fundamental weaknesses.

Robust governance arrangements

There is a committee system in place, which politicians and officers find clear and effective. This is supported by a small democratic services team. As the council's service delivery and activities grow, the council will need to be mindful of capacity pressures on this small team.

The peer team had several discussions about the limited capacity in democratic services team to adequately support committee meetings for different reasons, including frequency of meetings. The peers suggest reviewing committee scheduling alongside other business processes to ensure that they are aligned to agreed priorities. Reducing the frequency of some committees could release capacity to focus on other councillor priorities.

The peer team considered the council's Corporate Risk Register for 2024–2025 and found it to be comprehensive and clearly action-focused, with a strong emphasis on team and operational risks. Building on this, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the strategic focus of the register, including ensuring that reputational risks are consistently identified and understood. This could be supported by enhancing the role of the council's communications function in advising on reputational considerations as part of routine decision-making.

Building councillor capacity and capability

As the council's ambition and profile grow, so too does the importance of supporting councillors in their roles. There is a clear opportunity to invest further in councillor development, particularly in areas such as governance, decision-making, media handling, and the distinction between strategic leadership and operational delivery. Ensuring councillors are well-equipped and confident will be increasingly important as the organisation operates in a more complex and visible environment.

Peers heard from councillors who noted some variation in the standard of reports.

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Clear, evidence-based and balanced reporting, setting out risks and opportunities, supports effective decision-making. Building a consistent approach will support officers to contribute professional insights at the right point in the decision-making process. One option is to establish a short-term task and finish groups to ensure councillor involvement early in policy developments.

The peer team also recommend looking at councillor allowances. There is a good case for ensuring that they recognise the size and scale of the work of WSMTC and responsibilities that have been devolved from NSC.

Organisational culture

The council has achieved a clear, positive, and significant shift in organisational culture. Relationships across the organisation are constructive and collaborative, and there is a stronger sense of shared purpose among councillors and officers. This is reflected in a culture that supports delivery, encourages cooperation, and demonstrates a genuine commitment to improvement. The council has also built increasing civic credibility, with officers showing a strong understanding of the organisation and its role within the community. The overall direction of travel is therefore clearly positive.

As the organisation continues to mature, the peers recommend embedding learning from experience as an integral part of effective governance. Building a culture where staff are encouraged to reflect on how they work, as well as what they deliver, will support stronger collaboration, adaptability, and resilience. This includes recognising personal strengths, identifying areas for development, and understanding how different approaches can influence outcomes.

Communications

Staff and councillors indicated that the council does not always consistently and proactively promote its positive work or use consistent town council branding. This has been a conscious choice. The peer team encourage the council to keep this under review. Council activity is shared through the council’s website and social media channels, but it is not always clearly identifiable as town council led. WSMTC

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should be confident communicate clearly how the council spends its money and the impacts and benefits the services and facilities are having upon the town and its residents. Without doing so, the council does not always get the credit for the work that it does.

An example is the updated town council website. When completed, it will be part of a town-wide partnership website, intending to be more accessible to residents and businesses. This is a decision that has been taken partly in light of town council resources, but also a desire to be a clear part of the town community infrastructure. The peer team suggest that use is monitored, using tools such as Google analytics or similar to ensure that the council knows the impact it is having online. More communications resource may be needed to do this.

While activity levels are high, there is an opportunity to strengthen how this is translated into a coherent external narrative. This includes ensuring that communication reflects not just what the council is doing, but the scale, ambition, and outcomes it is seeking to achieve.

A more structured communications and engagement strategy would support this, including:

- Clearer articulation of who the council is and what it does
- More proactive approaches to addressing misinformation
- Broader and more representative engagement, ensuring the council is not disproportionately influenced by small or unrepresentative groups
- A stronger understanding of resident perception, supported by wider consultation and insight gathering

Several of the key recommendations in section three relate to Governance and Culture. The peer team also recommend the council progress the following actions:

- **Strengthen how proposals and decisions are brought forward to councillors.** Set up a start and finish group to look at preliminary stages in policy changes and in shaping new initiatives. Ensure that councillors feed into the process

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- **Develop a comprehensive councillor induction and ongoing councillor development programme.** This can include online as well as face-to-face sessions.
- **Develop clear council identity and narrative and consider reviewing the policy around branding**. Consider putting the Town's crest visibly on assets and publications or saying, "delivered by the town council for Weston-super-Mare". The peer team recognise the need for the council to achieve the right balance between place branding and corporate recognition. The LGA's communications hub can help with this, [Comms Hub – communications support | Local Government Association](),

5.4 Financial planning and management

The council demonstrates a clear and positive awareness of the importance of financial management. Councillors and officers recognise that financial sustainability matters, alongside a willingness to think differently, explore opportunities and consider income generation. This provides a solid foundation for the next stage of development. Financial governance arrangements are in place, including medium-term financial planning, a cautious approach to devolution proposals, success in applying for external funding and proactive financial management.

WSMTC have published their audited accounts up to 2024. It is understood that the unaudited accounts for 2025/26 remain with the external auditor following a query raised by a member of the public. At the time of the peer challenge, the timing for completion of this audit had not yet been confirmed, and the council continues to engage with the external auditor on this matter.

The peer team received a short statement from the internal auditor indicating no immediate or pressing issues.

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General reserves

The council's general reserves remain below the level recommended in the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioners Guide, (published by NALC March 2026 [Practitioners' Guide 2026/27]). This guide advises holding the equivalent of three months to 12 months of net revenue expenditure. Although the forecast shows reserves improving to around £800,000 by March 2027, this still falls short of best-practice expectations. There is no statutory minimum or maximum, but in parish and town councils, external auditors often seek an explanation where general reserves fall outside this range. The risk remains that, during periods of financial pressure, planned contributions to reserves may be diverted to address other budget gaps.

General reserves play a key role in providing a buffer against unforeseen events, income volatility, or emerging cost pressures. There is an opportunity to establish a clearer position on the appropriate level of reserves, informed by risk, scale of activity and future ambitions.

To strengthen financial resilience, it would be beneficial for councillors to receive training on the purpose and importance of general reserves. Establishing a formal General Reserves Policy and Action Plan would also help by setting a clear target range based on risk assessment and outlining how reserves will be maintained or replenished over time. Taking these steps would significantly enhance the council's ability to respond to unexpected challenges while continuing to deliver its priorities.

Project budgeting

General reserves were reduced due to the capital contribution required for the Quarry project, highlighting the importance of robust contingency planning in future capital schemes., Given the current volatility in construction and materials costs, ensuring that projects are financially resilient from the outset will help support the council's longer-term financial stability.

Devolution and financial planning

The council's cautious approach to devolution is appropriate given the limited reserves available to absorb unforeseen liabilities. The council's process requires

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that any decision to take on new assets or services must be informed by a full understanding of both the immediate revenue costs and the longer-term capital investment required, when significant investment in additional assets is needed (for example, staffing, equipment).

Income generation

The council has demonstrated impressive performance in securing grant funding for capital projects and continues to explore additional income opportunities. The peer team heard from councillors that there is very little Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money available but encourage the council to keep exploring this with NSC. There may be potential for the Planning Committee to advocate for CIL contributions within planning application responses to help strengthen the council's ability to secure funding for essential community infrastructure.

There is a clear appetite and a range of ideas around income generation, from officers and councillors. The peer team recommend that WSMTC develops a more deliberate income generation framework, where:

- Opportunities are prioritised based on impact and deliverability
- Activity aligns to wider strategic objectives
- Income generation is treated as an ongoing programme, rather than a series of standalone initiatives

For example, there may be opportunities to:

- Explore commercial or shared service models, such as extending public realm services to other local parish councils
- Identify ways to maximise local economic benefit, ensuring council activity supports wider town prosperity

Aligning financial planning with strategic priorities

The council demonstrates high ambition, which is a clear strength but needs to be consistently supported by alignment between aspiration and available resources and capacity. This includes a clear understanding of funding sources and constraints and will help ensure that ambition translates into achievable, sustainable outcomes.

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Peers also heard that financial and strategic discussions are not always fully aligned. Embedding financial considerations into all strategic and operational decision-making and strengthening the link between budget setting and delivery planning will help ensure financial decision-making to support the council's priorities and outcomes, ensuring that every pound spent is clearly connected to agreed priorities and the difference it is intended to make.

Develop a clear medium-long term financial strategy

The council has a medium-term financial plan until 2030. This aligns with the Town Council Strategy 2020-2030.

As has already been stated, the council's current financial priority is rebuilding the reserves. The peer team suggest that the councils looks longer-term, accepting the realities of a fluctuating financial situation, affected by many things beyond the council's control.

The peers suggest explicitly considering how council decisions affect financial sustainability and improve the alignment between ambition and available resources. The measured approach to devolution of assets and services from NSC is a good approach, but the council could built on its success in winning funds to explore alternative funding for capital projects, such as the Public Works Loan Board (through NALC).

In addition to the key recommendation in section three, the peer team recommend the following:

- **Establish a General Reserves Policy and Action Plan**
- **Set a target reserves range and a plan for maintaining reserves**
- **Explore income generating activities in a strategic and targeted manner**
- **Improve longer-term financial planning with clear links to the council's ambitions**

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5.5 Capacity for improvement

Despite a prolonged period of organisational change, the peer team highlighted staff engagement, morale and commitment consistently throughout the visit. This forms a significant organisational strength upon which future improvements will be built.

Workforce planning

Peers found that staff are committed, enthusiastic and dedicated to the work they deliver. As the council continues to grow and develop its ambitions, there is an opportunity to further support staff through the production of a dedicated workforce strategy. This will help WSMTC ensure staff continue to be supported, developed and well-deployed so the organisation has the skills and capacity to deliver its priorities now and in the future. As part of this, the council may also need to review and strengthen its recruitment strategy and processes.

Peers heard from some councillors and officers that capacity pressures exist across several parts of the organisation. While financial considerations are well established in major proposals, capacity and delivery implications are not always clearly linked. This is particularly important going forward as the council considers its future appetite for further devolved services.

The peer team also suggests that a skills analysis would be beneficial and help establish a process for future capability mapping aligned to strategic priorities. This would reframe staff from an operational resource to a strategic asset enabling growth and providing a structured working environment where priorities and workloads are clear.

Volunteers

The town council has a significant number of volunteers, working at many different sites across the town. They bring considerable knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and time and are well respected and appreciated by the council. Volunteering is known to support improved mental health and wellbeing, offer valuable work experience for young people and long-term unemployed people, and help reduce isolation, particularly for older and disabled people. Volunteers' feedback to the council and in discussion with the peer team demonstrate that volunteering with the council lead to positive, successful outcomes for those involved.

The peer team suggest that the council quantify and qualify these benefits, for example, through an anonymous survey of volunteers exploring the impact of volunteering. Has volunteering for example at Weston Museum or Clara's Cottage, helped people into employment? Quantifying the value of volunteer contribution will help inform decision-making and support planning for future resourcing needs.

Effective strategic planning and sequencing

The council demonstrates a strong and commendable drive to deliver, underpinned by a clear sense of purpose and commitment to improving outcomes for the community. The delivery focus would benefit from a more structured approach to planning, sequencing, and organisational learning, ensuring that effort is consistently aligned with capacity, impact, and long-term priorities. Clear sequencing will help to minimise the risk of equating activity with progress and will further support prioritisation and clarity.

The peer team recommend strengthening how proposals and decisions are brought forward, ensuring that all council motions and projects include a clear delivery timeline. This should include an indication of how it will integrate into an overall delivery plan if approved and a capacity assessment to identify if it requires additional investment. Encouraging early-stage reflection on deliverability before proposals are progressed will improve decision quality and reduce pressure on delivery teams.

This approach also supports a more strategic use of organisational capacity. In practice, it may mean progressing fewer initiatives at any one time but delivering them to a higher standard with better outcomes. The Weston Museum is a good example of focusing on one well-scoped, deliverable project and executing it exceptionally well.

Organisational development

Within the wider operational framework, the workplace is continually evolving, shaped by changing workforce demographics, expectations, and priorities. As this evolves, there is an opportunity to further embed a culture of self-awareness,

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reflection, and continuous improvement across the organisation. The peer team suggest that the council explores imaginative ways to broaden staff experience. This may include cross-authority learning, shadowing, and exposure to external best practice, all of which can provide valuable insight and act as a form of constructive challenge for officers and members alike.

In addition to the key recommendation in section three, the peer team recommend the following:

- **Develop an active workforce strategy to capture workforce learning and knowledge and consider succession planning.** It should also identify future needs for the council, looking ahead to further devolution of assets
- **Undertake a skills analysis of current staff, identifying skills shortages to target in recruitment**
- **Introduce a sequencing framework for projects (short, medium and long terms).** Ensure councillors are involved in sequencing plans and know where their role lies.

5.6 Devolution of assets and services

NSC has a local devolution programme to “give communities greater influence over the spaces and services they value most” (Local devolution | North Somerset Council). It engages with town and parish councils to devolve and manage local assets, such as parks, play areas and community spaces through flexible delivery pathways. WSMTC have actively engaged with NSC in this programme and intend to continue to do so. The council is clear that it would be willing to take on more but were also clear that they require the resources to ensure they are delivered to a high quality. Councillors expressed concern that the council should not overreach. The current approach has been intentionally developed to protect both councils and local council taxpayers through robust due diligence, long-term financial modelling and partnership with NSC.

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Strategic approach

The town council demonstrates clear ambition to take greater control locally, alongside a recognition that assets, services, and local leadership can drive identity, outcomes, and long-term change. WSMTC has researched and evaluated all options before agreeing to take on activity to ensure financial reliability and has identified additional North Somerset assets it may wish to bring under its control at some point.

Building on the collaborative work already undertaken with NSC, there is an opportunity to develop a clearer, more strategic, programmed approach for WSMTC and its aspirations to take responsibility for further devolved services. This could cover explicit criteria such as aims/benefits for the local community, capacity, financial implications, governance arrangements and taking on devolved assets in a formalised and programmed way agreed with NSC. This will ensure that that transfers are deliberate, planned and outcome focused. This programmed approach could future-proof assets. For example, when considering play areas, early thinking could be given to how emerging trends (including technology, digital engagement, wellbeing and changing patterns of use) may influence how future generations interact with these spaces.

The longer-term approach could mean working with NSC to jointly manage any reputational considerations for either council in the loss of local amenities where WSMTC does not accept their transfer, even where this reflects sound financial judgement.

The peer team also recommend seeking opportunities to acquire or influence income-generating assets, such as car parks or commercial opportunities such as kiosks or retail units, which can help offset costs and create a more sustainable overall asset portfolio.

Focus on outcomes

In addition to physical assets, the council is delivering a youth service. A recent report from UK Youth demonstrates that the Town Council's FY2526 youth budget of £106,711 delivers a benefit to the taxpayer £341,475.20 which enables improved physical and mental health and a reduction in crime

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(https://www.ukyouth.org/2025/02/uk-youth-in-direct-call-to-government-to-realise-benefits-of-youth-work/). The town council now needs to translate all work in this service into tangible metrics demonstrating this return on investment on a regular basis. For example, Sport England's analysis on health and social care savings by improving physical activity (https://www.sportengland.org/news-and-inspiration/sport-and-physical-activity-generates-over-100-billion-social-value) positions the town council's investment in parks, play areas and open spaces including Grove Park, Ellenborough Park East, Clarence Park and Millenium Park as valuable, preventative public health infrastructure.

To quantify this, using Sport England's figures, if these enhanced play areas support in the region of approximately five hundred child play visits per day (as recently reported by the council), this equates to c.3,500 weekly visits. This could reasonably correspond to up to 1,000 regular users achieving moderate weekly physical activity. In turn, Sport England suggests that this level of activity could be associated with up to £230,000 of health and social care savings annually, a significant return on investment.

This also reinforces the council's role as a long-term steward of place. The town council is uniquely positioned to focus on the enduring value of local assets and services, ensuring they are protected, enhanced, and aligned to community need over the long term.

Recommendations:

- **Set out WSMTC's evaluation criteria for potential devolved services or assets.** Ensure these align with the town council's strategy.
- **Work with NSC to look longer-term at assets and services that could be devolved at some point in the future.** These may ultimately become income generating. Keep the conversation going with NSC about the future.
- **Take a more programmed approach to NSC's devolution plans.** Where possible, sketch out or work up project plans ahead of assets becoming available
- **Work closely with NSC to mitigate any negative impacts where closures**

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may occur in the town

- **Consider calculating returns on investment for devolved or potentially devolved assets and services.** Use this information to ensure communities know how much you are working to deliver for them.

6. Action plan

The senior political and managerial leadership of the council should review and reflect on the findings and recommendations from this CPC.

To promote the principle of transparency, the CPC process requires the final report to be published in-full within three months of the review being completed. In this instance, this requires the report to be published no later than 23 July 2026.

Weston-super-Mare Town Council should develop and publish an action plan within five-months of the peer team being onsite, no later than 23 September 2026. Dates were discussed with the town council. Due to summer holidays, the report and action plan should go to full council in September 2026 and therefore published with associated council papers. The action plan should provide clarity on the activity, milestones, and timelines that the council will work to in responding to the team's findings.

7. Contact details

The LGA recognises that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

There have been discussions about the costs involved in a Progress Review in 12 months' time, which could provide space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.

In the meantime, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is able to discuss any further support that you may require by emailing anders.hanson@nalc.gov.uk.

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Appendix A – What is CPC?

CPC is a valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the sector for the sector. It involves a team of senior local government councillors and officer peers undertaking a comprehensive review of key information and spending three days at the council to provide robust, strategic, and credible challenge and support.

CPC forms a key part of the [improvement and assurance framework] for local government. It is underpinned by the principles of [Sector-led Improvement] (SLI) put in place by councils and the LGA to support continuous improvement and assurance across the sector. These principles state that councils are responsible for their own performance; accountable locally, not nationally; share a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector; and rely on the LGA to provide the tools to support them.

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five areas which form the core components of all CPCs. These are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities? Is there an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, reporting on and updating of performance and improvement plans?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management -** Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges? What is the relative financial resilience of the council?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to bring about the improvements it needs, including delivering on locally identified priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

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As part of the five core areas outlined above, every CPC has a strong focus on financial sustainability, performance, governance, and assurance. Weston-super-Mare Town Council also asked that the peer team looked at the Devolution of assets and services from North Somerset Council.

The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are designed to support improvement, not inspection. They are not intended to provide a detailed or technical assessment of plans and proposals. Instead, the peer team uses its experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information shared with them, the things they observe, and the material they review.

To prepare, the peer team looks at a range of documents and information to understand the council and the challenges it is facing. This includes a position statement prepared by the council before the visit, which sets out the local context and highlights areas for the team to focus on. The preparation also involves reviewing an LGA Finance briefing (based on public reports from the council's website).

The peer team then spend three or four days at the council. During this time, they gather evidence, information, and views by meeting with council staff, councillors, and external stakeholders. This helps them build a rounded picture of the council's strengths and areas for improvement.

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Item 12.

Town Council Meeting - 21st September 2026

Grounds Maintenance Service Transfer - Asset Devolution Programme

Report from the CEO/Town Clerk and Director of Community Services

1. Purpose and Background of Report

1.1. Purpose

To present the recommendations of the Devolution Start & Finish Group held on 2 September 2026 in relation to the Grounds Maintenance Service Transfer and the associated Phase 1 and Phase 2 Asset Devolution Business Case, and to seek Full Council direction on the next stages of the programme.

The report is deliberately focused on the grounds maintenance element of the wider Devolution Programme. A concise evidence summary is provided at Appendix A, with separate information appendices for the Phase 2 Amber and Red portfolios. The full developing Business Case and detailed supporting evidence are available to Members on request.

1.2. Background

The Town Council has been working with North Somerset Council (NSC) to explore the phased devolution of grounds, play areas, recreation grounds and other green-space assets within Weston-super-Mare. The developing Business Case supports a controlled, staged approach rather than a single bulk transfer, recognising that Phase 1 is the most mature element while Phase 2 requires further feasibility, due diligence and service-model development before any transfer commitment is made.

1.3. Phase 1 scope and current position

Phase 1 includes 11 devolution sites comprising eight play/park sites and three green spaces. These 11 sites together total approximately 46,994 m² (4.70 hectares). The 4.70-hectare figure therefore relates specifically to the eight play/park sites and the three green spaces; it does not include the six recreation grounds or the Town Council's existing portfolio.

The eight play/park sites are already being managed by WSMTC under an interim management agreement pending proposed freehold transfer. The three green spaces - Verbena Way, Village Green Worle (The Rows) and Milton Rose Garden - remain subject to the current community engagement process.

For operational planning, the wider Phase 1 baseline also includes the Town Council's existing grounds portfolio and the six recreation grounds. On this basis the combined operational Phase 1 scope is approximately 764,400 m² (76.44 hectares).

Current modelling suggests that the incremental workload associated with the 11 new Phase 1 devolution sites is approximately 1,075 productive hours, equivalent indicatively to 0.74 FTE. This is a planning assumption rather than a final staffing requirement and remains subject to validation against confirmed service standards, seasonal demand and operational experience.

1.4. Six recreation grounds and the Glendale arrangement

The six recreation grounds have a distinct historic position. The Special Expenses arrangement was previously abolished, but the proposed freehold transfer of the recreation grounds to WSMTC was never completed. As a consequence, the maintenance arrangements remained within NSC's Street Scene service and WSMTC has continued to make an annual financial contribution to NSC in support of the Glendale grounds maintenance contract.

The Devolution Start & Finish Group supported reopening discussions with NSC regarding the freehold transfer of the six recreation grounds, subject to contemporary legal, property, condition, operational and financial due diligence. This includes clarity over title and boundaries, current occupation and sports club arrangements, pitch and grounds-maintenance responsibilities, asset condition, income and utilities, and the terms of any proposed transfer.

1.5. Phase 1 financial and operational direction

A key recommendation from the Start & Finish Group is that WSMTC should not continue to pay its grounds-maintenance or any other provision into the NSC Glendale Street Scene contract beyond the current arrangement. Instead, from 1 April 2027, the provision should be retained and reallocated by WSMTC to support direct delivery of the transferred grounds-maintenance responsibilities to include the transfer of maintenance of the six recreational grounds.

This decision is required now because NSC needs clarity for its own 2027/28 financial planning and for the future scope and implementation of its Street Scene/Glendale contract. The proposed direction is therefore not simply an operational preference; it determines whether NSC should continue to plan on receiving WSMTC funding as part of that contract from April 2027 onwards.

The current intention is for Phase 1 to be broadly cost neutral, subject to final validation, seasonal fluctuations and confirmation of the exact service responsibilities transferring. The recommendation should not be interpreted as a guaranteed saving; rather, it redirects the existing WSMTC provision away from the NSC contract and towards the Town Council's own service delivery model.

1.6. Phase 2 approach

The developing Business Case divides the wider Phase 2 portfolio into Green, Amber and Red categories to allow the Council to progress in a controlled way. Phase 2 Green is proposed for detailed feasibility only; Amber is not proposed for progression at this stage; and Red assets are not recommended for transfer, although alternative enhanced-maintenance arrangements with NSC may be explored.

1.7. Phase 2 Green

The Phase 2 Green portfolio consists of Grove Park together with 12 sites where WSMTC already has an existing relationship, covering approximately 812,100 m² (81.21 hectares). The purpose of progressing Green is to establish the operational, financial, legal, liability and resource implications before any commitment to asset transfer is made.

The next element of feasibility work will test actual maintenance responsibilities and frequencies, service standards, staffing and supervisory requirements, vehicles and plant, specialist contractors, condition and capital liabilities, premises implications and whole-life cost. Grove Park and the larger Castle Batch landholding will be considered distinctly because their scale and complexity could materially affect the future service model.

The outcome is proposed to return to Members in Summer 2027 as the decision point on whether, and to what extent, any Green assets should proceed towards devolution, with potential operational implementation from 2028.

1.8. Phase 2 Amber and Red

No Phase 2 Amber assets are recommended for progression at this stage. These sites comprise a wider and more varied portfolio of new green spaces, including woodland and natural areas, and require further assessment once the Green work has established a clearer service and resource model. A summary is provided at Appendix B.

The Phase 2 Red portfolio principally comprises highway verges, footpaths, highway-edge areas and associated parcels. These are not recommended for asset transfer because of fragmented responsibilities, highway interface, operational risk and potential disproportionate cost. Officers are instead proposed to explore with NSC whether enhanced maintenance could be funded or commissioned without transferring ownership or responsibility. A summary is provided at Appendix C.

2. Options for Council

Option A - Approve the Start & Finish Group recommendations and progress the staged programme, including ceasing WSMTC's contribution to the NSC Glendale

Street Scene contract from 1 April 2027 and retaining/reallocating that provision for WSMTC delivery. This is the recommended option.

Option B - Option B – Provide alternative direction on the progression of this element of the Devolution Programme.

Option C - Defer a decision. This would leave NSC without the direction requested for 2027/28 financial and contract planning and may constrain the ability of both councils to prepare a coordinated implementation programme.

3. Reason for Recommendation

The recommended approach reflects the resolution of the Devolution Start & Finish Group and provides a controlled route to regularise Phase 1, resolve the historic recreation-ground position, and develop Phase 2 only where the evidence supports doing so.

It also provides the timely financial direction required by NSC: WSMTC should not continue to fund the Glendale Street Scene contract for the devolved grounds-maintenance service from 1 April 2027. Retaining that provision enables WSMTC to plan its own service delivery while avoiding continued payment into an NSC contract for responsibilities the Town Council intends to assume directly.

4. Expected Benefits

• Clearer local accountability and control over grounds-maintenance standards and priorities.

• A phased approach which allows operational learning from Phase 1 before any wider Phase 2 commitment.

• Better alignment between WSMTC funding and the services WSMTC will directly manage and deliver.

• Clarity for NSC in planning the scope and finances of its 2027/28 Street Scene/Glendale arrangements.

• The ability to assess Green assets on evidence before accepting long-term legal and financial liabilities.

• Retention of the option to revisit Amber assets later, while avoiding inappropriate transfer of higher-risk Red/highway assets.

5. Implications

5.1. Legal

No individual asset transfer should complete until the relevant legal, title, boundary, occupation, liability and transfer-term due diligence is sufficiently complete. Reopening discussions on the six recreation grounds does not commit the Council to accepting transfer on whatever terms are offered. Any deed or legal transfer will be progressed through the Council's appropriate governance arrangements.

5.2. Risks

• Service and cost assumptions may change as NSC confirms current responsibilities, standards and asset information.

• Recreation-ground condition, occupation, sports-club arrangements or historic boundaries may create liabilities not yet fully quantified.

• Peak-season workload may place greater pressure on operational capacity than annualised FTE modelling suggests.

• Phase 2 could create additional staffing, vehicle, plant, contractor and depot requirements if progressed too quickly.

• Continuing the Glendale contribution while also building WSMTC delivery capacity could create duplication or poor value; conversely, cessation must be coordinated with NSC to protect service continuity.

5.3. Financial Implications

The central financial decision is that WSMTC does not continue its grounds-maintenance contribution into NSC's for any element of the Glendale Street Scene contract beyond the current arrangement, and instead retains/reallocates the provision from 1 April 2027 to support WSMTC delivery.

The Phase 1 approach is intended to be broadly cost neutral, subject to final validation and seasonal fluctuations. Existing Business Case figures remain indicative and are not authority to spend. Any material change in staffing, capital, contractor, plant, premises or liability assumptions will be brought back through the appropriate budget and governance process.

5.4. Timescales

A Full Council decision in September 2026 is required to provide NSC with sufficient direction for its 2027/28 financial planning and the future scope/implementation of the Glendale Street Scene contract.

October 2026 to March 2027: complete Phase 1 consultation, legal/status work, operational arrangements, staffing actions and mobilisation planning.

From April 2027: implement/regularise the Phase 1 operating model, subject to the required approvals and arrangements, with WSMTC no longer contributing the relevant grounds-maintenance provision into the NSC Glendale contract.

Summer 2027: return the Phase 2 Green feasibility work to Members for a decision on whether and to what extent Green assets should proceed.

From 2028: earliest potential implementation of approved Phase 2 Green transfers, subject to due diligence, affordability and governance approval.

5.5. Stakeholders

North Somerset Council; WSMTC Members and officers; existing sports clubs and user groups at recreation grounds; local residents and community groups; users of parks, play areas and green spaces; and relevant ward Councillors.

5.6. Contractors

NSC's existing Street Scene contractor, Glendale, is directly relevant to the Phase 1 funding decision. Specialist contractors may continue to be required for areas such as arboriculture, specialist inspections and other activities where in-house provision is not appropriate. Any future procurement will be undertaken in accordance with Financial Regulations and the Council's Procurement Procedures.

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

No significant adverse implications are identified at this stage. Effective local maintenance, inspection and stewardship of public open spaces may support perceptions of safety and help address environmental conditions associated with anti-social behaviour. Site-specific issues will continue to be considered as part of operational planning.

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

The phased approach provides an opportunity to align grounds-management regimes with the Council's environmental objectives. Phase 2 feasibility will need to distinguish between amenity grass, conservation areas, woodland and other natural-space typologies so that maintenance standards are appropriate to each site.

5.9. Privacy Impact (consider Privacy Impact assessment)

No material privacy impact is identified from the decision sought in this report. Any future systems or records transferred as part of operational handover will be managed in accordance with the Council's data protection requirements.

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

No adverse equality impacts are identified from the staged decision itself. Future asset and service decisions will need to consider accessibility, inclusive use and any differential impacts on residents and users as part of site-specific due diligence and service design.

6. Appendices

Appendix A - Phase 1 and Phase 2 Green Decision-Support Summary

Appendix B - Phase 2 Amber Portfolio Summary (for information)

Appendix C - Phase 2 Red Portfolio Summary (for information)

The full developing Phase 1 and Phase 2 Asset Devolution Business Case and detailed schedules are available to Members on request.

7. Members are recommended to:

1. APPROVE progression of Phase 1 in accordance with the recommendations of the Devolution Start & Finish Group, including:

• **a.** progression of the eight play/park sites and the three identified Phase 1 green spaces through the appropriate legal and community-engagement decision processes;

• **b.** reopening discussions with NSC regarding the freehold transfer of the six recreation grounds, subject to contemporary legal, property, condition, operational and financial due diligence;

• c. confirmation that WSMTC will not continue its grounds-maintenance contribution into NSC's Glendale Street Scene contract beyond the current arrangement, with the relevant provision retained and reallocated by WSMTC from 1 April 2027 to support delivery of the transferred grounds-maintenance service; and

• **d.** progression of the associated staffing realignment and backfilling requirements through the appropriate Council processes.

2. NOTE that the Phase 1 approach is intended to be broadly cost neutral, subject to final validation, confirmation of service responsibilities and seasonal fluctuations, and that the current financial and staffing information remains indicative.

3. NOTE that the decision not to continue the Glendale contribution is required now to provide NSC with direction for its 2027/28 financial planning and future contract scope/implementation.

4. APPROVE officers progressing feasibility and development work on the assets identified as Phase 2 Green, without commitment at this stage to asset transfer, with the outcome brought back to Members in Summer 2027 as the decision point on whether and to what extent those assets should be pursued for devolution, with a view to potential operational implementation from 2028.

5. AGREE that no Phase 2 Amber assets are progressed at this stage, while reserving the opportunity to reconsider individual Amber assets following progression of the Phase 2 Green work.

6. AGREE that the Phase 2 Red highway/verge/footpath-edge assets are not pursued for asset transfer, but AUTHORISE officers to explore with NSC alternative arrangements to improve maintenance standards without transferring ownership or responsibility, including obtaining further costings for additional grass cuts and associated PDR works for consideration as part of the Summer 2027 review.

7. AUTHORISE officers to undertake the negotiations, feasibility work and due diligence necessary to progress the above recommendations, with any material change in scope, cost, staffing requirement or liability reported through the appropriate Council governance process before commitment.

8. NOTE that the full developing Phase 1 and Phase 2 Asset Devolution Business Case and detailed supporting evidence are available to Members on request.

Sarah Pearse
CEO/Town Clerk

Fay Powell
Director of Community Services / Deputy Town Clerk

Drafted 11 September 2026

APPENDIX A - Phase 1 and Phase 2 Green Decision-Support Summary

This appendix summarises the principal asset and operational information supporting the decisions before Full Council. The complete developing Business Case and supporting schedules are available to Members on request.

A1. Programme at a glance

Stage	Scope	September 2026 direction
Phase 1	11 new devolution sites (8 play/park + 3 green spaces), plus the recreation-ground operational position	Progress and regularise
Phase 2 Green	Grove Park + 12 existing-relationship sites	Detailed feasibility only
Phase 2 Amber	19 new green-space sites	Do not progress at this stage
Phase 2 Red	71 highway/verge/edge items	Do not transfer; explore alternative enhanced maintenance

A2. Phase 1 - 11 devolution sites (4.70 hectares)

The 46,994 m² / 4.70-hectare figure is the combined area of the following eight play/park sites and three green spaces only.

Site	Ward	Approx. area m²	Current status
Castle Batch MUGA	North Worle	234	Management agreement - pending freehold
Diamond Batch	South Worle	85	Management agreement - pending freehold

The Park	Bournville	3,423	Management agreement - pending freehold
Thompson Way	South Worle	2,043	Management agreement - pending freehold
The Shrubberies	Hillside	5,216	Management agreement - pending freehold
Plumley Park South	Winterstoke	1,509	Management agreement - pending freehold
Runway Park	Winterstoke	12,509	Management agreement - pending freehold
Walford Avenue	North Worle	5,863	Management agreement - pending freehold
Verbena Way	South Worle	14,036	Community engagement underway
Village Green Worle (The Rows)	Worlebury	1,768	Community engagement underway
Milton Rose Garden	Milton	309	Community engagement underway

A3. Recreation grounds - key decision context

The Special Expenses arrangement was abolished historically, but the proposed freehold transfer of the six recreation grounds was never completed. Maintenance therefore remained within NSC's Street Scene/Glendale arrangements, supported by a WSMTC financial contribution. The proposed direction is to reopen the freehold position while, separately, ending WSMTC's contribution into the Glendale contract from 1 April 2027 and retaining the provision for WSMTC delivery.

Recreation ground	**Phase 1 position**
Baytree Recreation Ground	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.
Clarence Park East	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.
Drove Recreation Ground	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.
Hutton Moor	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.
Oldmixon Recreation Ground	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.
Worle Recreation Ground	Forms part of the existing operational baseline. Historic freehold transfer was not completed; freehold position to be reopened with NSC and subject to contemporary due diligence.

Contemporary due diligence will include title, boundaries, condition, liabilities, leases/licences, sports club/user arrangements, maintenance responsibilities, income/utilities and transfer terms.

A4. Phase 2 Green portfolio

Site	Approx. area m²	Business-case focus
Grove Park	28,502	Assess separately - strategic park, service scope and liabilities
Castle Batch landholding	76,732	Assess separately - scale, future use, boundaries, condition and liabilities
Lynch Farm Park	42,522	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Summer Lane pond/open spaces/park	52,328	Existing relationship - include water/pond responsibilities
Ashcombe Park	126,462	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Land including Maltlands	50,793	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
WeSEE Trees Community Tree Nursery	2,015	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Land at Uphill Playground	6,461	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Land at Jubilee Park	357,313	Significant site; title currently recorded as unregistered

Byron Recreation Ground	5,534	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Canberra Road	1,801	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Clarence Park	57,360	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility
Coniston Green	4,277	Existing relationship - clarify current/full responsibility

Total Phase 2 Green portfolio: approximately 812,100 m² / 81.21 hectares.

A5. What Green feasibility will establish

• Current responsibilities and the exact activities presently undertaken by WSMTC, NSC, contractors or others.

• Future maintenance standards and frequencies if WSMTC assumes full responsibility.

• Productivity, travel, mobilisation and seasonal workload.

• Staffing, supervisory, vehicle, machinery, contractor and training requirements.

• Trees, paths, structures, drainage, water, boundaries, play/sport and inspection liabilities.

• One-off mobilisation/capital requirements and recurring whole-life revenue cost.

• Transfer terms and any NSC funding, transitional support or other contribution.

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APPENDIX B - Phase 2 Amber Portfolio Summary (for information)

Amber comprises 19 new green-space sites totalling approximately 774,902 m² / 77.49 hectares. No Amber assets are recommended for progression at this stage. The list is included so Members can understand the scale and nature of the portfolio which may be reconsidered after the Green feasibility work.

Site / description	Ward	Approx. area m²	Initial character
Land - AV98379 / AV202650	North Worle	2,071	Grass / mixed open space
Land - AV50234 / AV50155 / L959 / AV51286	Mid Worle	11,570	Grass / mixed open space
Green belt / Trees - ST243846	Mid Worle	822	Grass / mixed open space
Open spaces, green belts, highways, rhynes etc - ST378337	South Worle	49,302	Mixed open space / rhyne considerations
Land - ST245068	South Worle	64,645	Grass / mixed open space
Herons Moor Academy and Recreation Grounds - ST219450	South Worle	51,338	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST179750	South Worle	4,030	Grass / mixed open space
Wooded Area - ST241889	Worlebury	183,778	Woodland / natural space

Land - ST21680	Worlebury	5,940	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST243745	Worlebury	2,421	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST244943	Worlebury	821	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST244768	Worlebury	1,422	Grass / mixed open space
Marine Parade, Prince Consort Gardens and surrounding highways - ST246015	Hillside	14,250	Mixed open space / highway interface
Green Belt / Trees - ST241611	Hillside	316	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST242341	Milton	11,968	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST152354	Winterstoke	146,064	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST242020	Uphill	38,705	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST244991	Uphill	174,261	Grass / mixed open space
Land - ST210862	Uphill	11,178	Grass / mixed open space

Future consideration of Amber, if requested by Members after the Green work, would require site typology, liability assessment, service-standard options and a fresh staffing, plant, vehicle, premises and whole-life financial appraisal before any transfer recommendation.

APPENDIX C - Phase 2 Red Portfolio Summary (for information)

The Red portfolio principally comprises highway verges, footpaths, highway-edge areas, car parks and associated parcels. It contains 71 identified items totalling approximately 333,816 m² / 33.38 hectares. Asset transfer is not recommended at this stage.

Rather than taking ownership, the proposed approach is to explore whether WSMTC can fund or commission enhanced maintenance through NSC where this offers local benefit and value for money, including additional grass cuts and associated PDR works.

Ward	Number of items	Approx. area m²
Bournville	1	9,259
Central	5	37,831
Hillside	4	13,151
Mid Worle	3	6,980
Milton	6	39,237
North Worle	27	111,133
South Worle	13	59,678
Uphill	1	12,844
Winterstoke	6	40,532
Worlebury	5	3,172

C1. Why Red is not recommended for transfer

• Fragmented and dispersed sites create disproportionate mobilisation and inspection requirements.

• Highway-adjacent locations bring additional traffic-management and public-safety considerations.

• Ownership, statutory highway responsibility and operational boundaries can be complex or unclear.

• Specialist plant, training and legal authority may be required for some highway-related work.

• Fragmented responsibility could create confusion for residents and reduce service efficiency.

• The community benefit of ownership may not justify the whole-life operating cost and liability.

The full Red parcel schedule remains within the developing Business Case and is available to Members on request.