



WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.07 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Caroline Reynolds (Deputy Town Mayor/Chair), Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Joe Bambridge, Annabelle Chard, Jemma Coles, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Catherine Gibbons, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Justyna Pecak-Michalowiz, Helen Thornton, Richard Tucker, Charlie Williams and Martin Williams.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearce (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), Charlotte Joefowicz (Senior Development Officer), Inspector Lee Kerslake, Oliver Masley, Leo Hanney, Natalie Pecak-Michalowiz (Members of the Youth Council) and four members of the public.

In the absence of the Town Mayor, the Deputy Mayor chaired the meeting.

128	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gillian Bute, Owen James, Mark Canniford, John Carson, Lisa Pilgrim and Ciaran Cronnelly, prior to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received for Councillor James Clayton from the floor. It was noted that Councillor Mark Aplin was absent from the meeting.
129	Declarations of Interest Councillor Hugh Malyan declared a pecuniary interest in relation to item 12 - Grounds Maintenance Service Transfer - Asset Devolution Programme, as a North Somerset Council cabinet member for Highways and Transport and advised he would leave the meeting.
130	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 29th June 2026 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated.

	An amendment to min no 28 to reflect that Hans Price Academy did in fact have gender neutral toilets was noted. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Annabelle Chard SECONDED BY: Councillor Charlie Williams A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried. RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.
131	To receive the Minutes of Youth Council Meetings held in June and July 2026 The minutes of the meetings had been previously circulated. The Youth Council were invited to provide an update to Council, with the following key points noted: • A desire to strengthen links between young people and local government and collaborate further with the Town Council. • A refresh of the Youth Council's website, newsletter and social media. • Positive feedback on the wellbeing bench initiative, with plans to explore a further location. • Two youth grants awarded and books sourced for a local school. • Litter identified as a key concern, with further community clean ups and an 'Adopt a Spot' initiatives planned. • A request for the Town Council to consider installing a litter bin at the Youth Community Centre due to littering concerns. • A Member advised that surplus books may be available from the Campus. RESOLVED: That the minutes be received and noted. The Chair thanked the Youth Council for their update and continued work.
132	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. Initial update: • Weston-super-Mare remained a priority for policing resources, with positive performance against crime investigation requirements reported. • Business crime had reduced by 4.8% compared with the previous year. • Updates were provided on serious and organised crime and ongoing Operations Aura, Anomic and Align. • Grand Atlantic Hotel: Significant and ongoing ASB and unauthorised access to the condemned building remained a serious concern for the Police, particularly due to the substantial health and safety risks to young people entering the site. Further enforcement options were being explored. Previously submitted Member questions: • Castle Batch: CCTV positioning and monitoring were being reviewed, alongside increased patrols and other preventative measures, asking for the Town Council to review equipment that was being targeted at the moment to ensure where possible it was secure. • Clubland: Police resourcing would be reviewed ahead of next year.

	• Car meets: The Police were aware of planned and previous large scale car meets involving over 100 vehicles and were coordinating resources with neighbouring areas. Warnings and fines were being issued where offences were identified, and landowners had been encouraged to secure car parks. • Updates were also provided regarding the street community and ASB/vandalism within play areas, including engagement with Youth Justice services. Further Member questions and discussion: • Car meets: Members expressed significant concern regarding continued large scale car meets and the effectiveness of reports made through 101. Inspector Kerslake acknowledged that available resources presented challenges in preventing gatherings of this scale but confirmed that enforcement action would be taken where vehicle offences were identified. • Grand Atlantic Hotel: Members expressed serious concern regarding the scale and severity of the ongoing situation, particularly the continued access by young people to a condemned and potentially dangerous building. The significant Police resources committed to the site were acknowledged. • The Police had written to hundreds of parents to highlight the serious health and safety risks. Inspector Kerslake advised that communicating the severity of those risks remained challenging and that further public communications would be undertaken. • It was confirmed that the owners continued to take measures to secure the building. The Chair thanked Inspector Kerslake for his attendance and update and he left the meeting at 7.36 pm.
133	To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor. The Town Mayor's announcements and communications had been previously circulated. The Mayor had attended 17 engagements and the Deputy Mayor 19 engagements, bringing the total number of civic engagements attended to date to 63. The Deputy Mayor reported that she was enjoying undertaking civic duties during the Mayor's absence and expressed her thanks and appreciation to the many volunteers supporting the local community. RESOLVED: That the Town Mayor's announcements and communications be received and noted.
134	Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol Members considered a report seeking to establish a consistent and transparent approach to reporting by Councillors appointed to outside bodies and as Community Champions. The proposed Protocol would clarify reporting expectations, provide a formal route for relevant matters to be brought back to the Council and introduce a standard reporting template. The report also sought the appointment of a Councillor to act as the Council's Flood Warden/Flood Risk Representative, pending a wider review of outside body and Community Champion appointments at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2027. This was not addressed at the meeting. <i>Councillor Charlie Williams left the meeting at 7.38 pm</i> PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

	A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried. RESOLVED: 1. To approve and adopt the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Protocol, attached at Appendix A. 2. To approve the Outside Bodies and Community Champions Reporting Template, attached at Appendix B. 3. To 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. <i>Councillor Charlie Williams rejoined the meeting at 19.40pm</i>
135	Formal Adoption of Council Policies Reviewed by Committees Members considered a report seeking formal adoption of three governance policies following their review and recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The policies formed part of the Council's ongoing policy review programme to ensure that its governance framework remained current, compliant and fit for purpose. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried. RESOLVED: 1. To formally adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, Data Protection Policy and Retention Policy following review and recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. 2. To 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.
136	Local Council Silver Award Members considered a report confirming that the Council had completed the required work to meet the Local Council Award Scheme Silver criteria, following its previous achievement of the Bronze Award. Full Council was required to formally confirm that the necessary requirements were in place before the Silver Award application could be submitted. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried. RESOLVED: 1. 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. 2. 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.

137	Annual Governance Cycle 2026/2027 Members considered a report presenting the Annual Governance Cycle 2026/27, which brought together the individual Committee Work Programmes and key Council, financial, statutory, risk, audit and assurance requirements into a single overarching framework. The Cycle was intended to support forward planning and provide a clear overview of how the Council's principal governance business would progress throughout the municipal year. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey A vote was taken and carried. RESOLVED: 1. To approve the Annual Governance Cycle 2026/27 attached at Appendix A. 2. To note that the individual Committee Work Programmes have been approved by the respective Committees and will operate alongside the overarching Annual Governance Cycle. 3. To note that the Annual Governance Cycle did not alter the Council's existing Terms of Reference, Scheme of Delegation or other constitutional arrangements. 4. To authorise the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk 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.
138	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Final Report and Next Steps Members considered the final LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report, following the Council's first Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in April 2026, together with the Corporate Peer Challenge Council Improvement Action Plan 2026/27, which set out the framework for responding to and monitoring the recommendations arising from the review. The CEO/Town Clerk welcomed the positive findings of the Peer Challenge, which recognised the Council's organisational transformation and progress made to date, whilst identifying areas for further development and improvement. During discussion: • Members noted the changed LGA funding position and the indicative costs associated with commissioning a future Progress Review but no decision was made on this area. • Concern was raised regarding potential duplication between the Peer Challenge improvement work and other governance and accreditation work considered earlier in the meeting. • The CEO/Town Clerk acknowledged the concern and clarified that these were separate processes, with the Peer Challenge actions intended to be integrated into existing corporate, service and management work programmes rather than creating a parallel improvement programme. • Members raised concerns regarding the resources required to progress the recommendations and many of the action had been or were in the progress of implementation. The CEO/Town Clerk advised that significant work had already progressed since the Peer Challenge in April and that implementation would be managed within existing resources wherever possible.

PROPOSED: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley
SECONDED: Councillor Hugh Malyan

A vote was taken and the motion was **carried**.

RESOLVED:

1. To receive and note the final LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report, attached separately at Appendix A.
2. To 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. To approve the Corporate Peer Challenge Council Improvement Action Plan 2026/27, attached at Appendix B, as the framework for responding to and monitoring the recommendations contained within the final report.
4. To 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. To 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. To agree that no commitment to commission a paid Progress Review be 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.

139 Grounds Maintenance Service Transfer - Asset Devolution Programme

7.51pm Councillor Hugh Malyan left at this point in the meeting.

Members considered the report setting out proposals for the phased transfer and future delivery of grounds maintenance services as part of the Council's Asset Devolution Programme.

At the outset of discussion, a Member indicated an intention to seek deferral of the decision until the November Town Council meeting to allow further time to understand the implications for the Council. It was noted that the proposed deferral had previously been circulated to Group Leaders, this was worded as 'a proposed amendment'. Clarity was given that the report contained recommendation from the Devolution Start & Finish Group and that at this stage in the proceedings no proposal had been made to allow an amendment to be put forward. The error was conceded by the member.

Councillor Peter Crew left the meeting at 7.53 pm.

For clarity on procedure, the CEO/Town Clerk advised that the recommendations from the Devolution Start & Finish Group contained within the report first needed to be formally moved and seconded before any amendment to the motion could be considered. The error was conceded by the member in question.

It was therefore:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor
SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton

That the recommendations contained within the report be approved.

During debate on the motion, Members raised concerns regarding:

- the completeness of the financial information available and the implications for the Council;
- the timescales set by North Somerset Council and the consequences of delaying a decision;
- changes to the proposed transfer package and whether these had been fully reflected within the report;
- the implications for sports clubs and existing contractors; and
- the need for clarity regarding the proposed handover arrangements and timetable.

The CEO/Town Clerk advised that the timescales had been set and agreed by North Somerset Council as such they were not able to confirm or deny at this point in time that a deferral would or would not be problematic to NSC. Detailed information, including the developing business case, had previously been provided to the Devolution Start & Finish Group. It was noted that North Somerset Council required direction from the Town Council within the identified timescales, but that the decision remained one for Members.

Members noted that the Devolution Start & Finish Group had understood the timescales provided by North Somerset Council to be time sensitive. Concern was nevertheless expressed that further information was required to enable Members to fully understand the implications of proceeding.

An amendment to defer consideration was then:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Joe Bambridge

That consideration of the recommendations be deferred until the November 2026 Town Council meeting to allow further time for Members to understand the implications for the Council.

A vote was taken on the amendment, which was **lost**:

For: 7 | Against: 11

The amendment having been lost, the original motion remained before the meeting.

A vote was then taken on the original motion, which was **carried**:

For: 14 | Against: 2 | Abstention: 1

RESOLVED:

1. **To 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. To 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. To NOTE that the decision not to continue the Glendale contribution is required now to meet agreed timescales and provide NSC with direction for its 2027/28 financial planning and future contract scope/implementation. 4. To 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. To 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. To 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. To 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. To NOTE that the full developing Phase 1 and Phase 2 Asset Devolution Business Case and detailed supporting evidence are available to Members on request.
	There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.07 pm. Signed: Dated: