



Amenities Culture & Leisure Committee 16th March 2026

Tourism Review / Update – at request of Committee

Report from the Communications & Visitor Experience Manager

Members will be aware that tourism is just one element of the work now managed by myself and the Communications team, following the changes to role responsibilities as Communications & Visitor Experience Manager. As part of this work we are currently reviewing and defining each organisational asset as its own brand to ensure clearer positioning, defined parameters, and consistent delivery over time.

As requested, below is an overview of several projects we are currently working on, along with insights from the data we collect daily. This information helps us improve performance metrics, guide budget decisions, and increase overall efficiency across the department.

Members are reminded that updates on all services are included monthly in the newsletter.

WCAG 2.2 Audit

All Town Council websites must be brought up to the required standards set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). As the current Town Council and Museum websites are somewhat dated, we have commissioned an accessibility audit of both sites.

Once the audit is complete, the council has an obligation to ensure that any necessary updates are made so the websites comply with the standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Visit Weston

Website Statistics

420,000 active users (1st March 2025 – 1st March 2026).

42 seconds per visit – our objective for the new site, is to increase the dwell time per user.

Visit Weston Social Media Statistics (1st March 2025 – 1st March 2026).

9,163,288 Facebook Views.

79,633 visits to our profile page (up 13.7%).

5, 297 new followers (up 56.7%).

10,813 clicks (up 97.9%).

59,950 likes, saves, comments, shares or replies on your content.

NEW Visit Weston site build

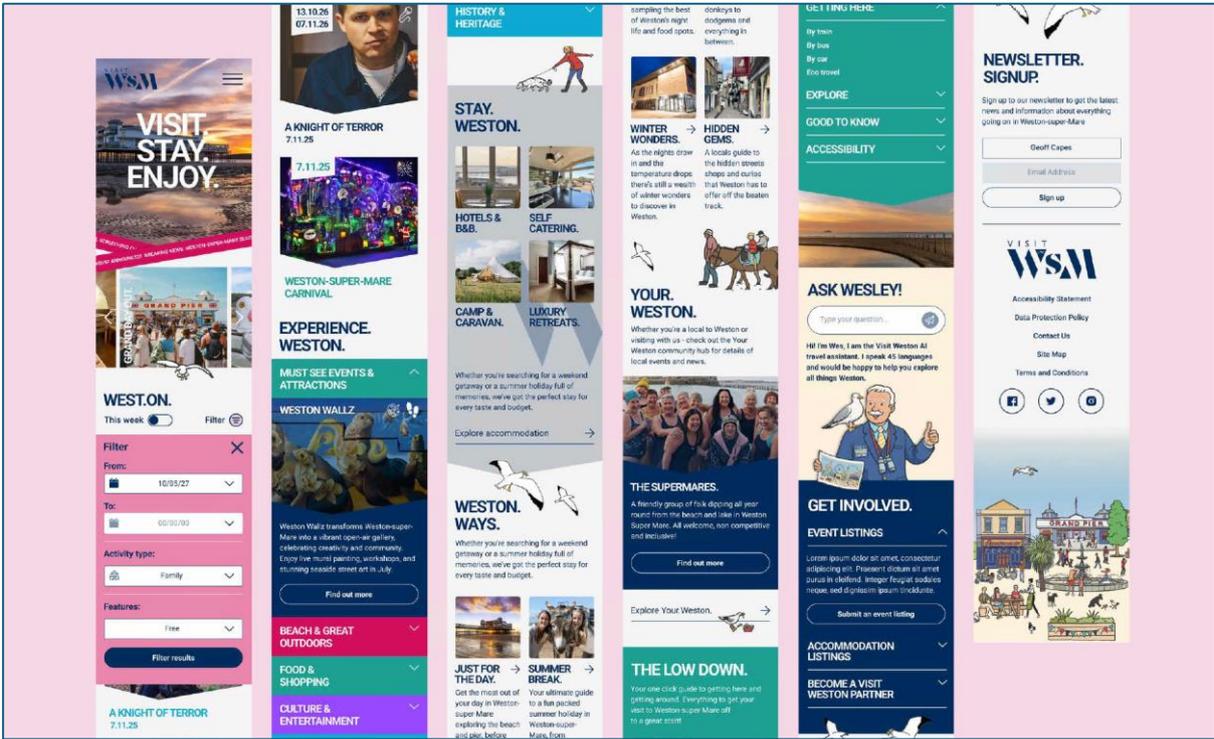


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Progress on the new website build is going very well. The PLASTER team have been excellent to work with and are focused on delivering a platform that is easier for us to manage internally while also improving the experience for both existing users and new visitors.

A key objective is to position the site clearly as “The Official Destination Website for Weston-super-Mare.” The messaging and structure of the site are being developed to support this and strengthen its role as the primary source of visitor information.

The user experience (UX) has now been defined, with a strong focus on simplicity and accessibility. The new structure will allow users to navigate the site much more quickly and easily, guiding them directly to the content and information we want them to engage with. Overall, the new platform will provide a more modern, efficient, and user-friendly experience.



Our domains have now been transferred from Simpleview, and we will begin moving content into the new site architecture while developing the user interface (UI).

The new site will also introduce several new features, including an AI assistant that can answer Visit Weston–related questions. This will provide support 7 days a week, 365 days a year, while also helping us understand the types of questions visitors are asking. This insight will be valuable in shaping future content and ensuring the website continues to meet visitor needs.



Another exciting addition is the integration of artwork by Nick Roberts, bringing elements of his work to life across the website. This will act as an introduction to our wider plans around immersive storytelling, including future augmented reality experiences.

We are aiming to launch the new Visit Weston website around the 27th April, supported by a coordinated launch campaign that will include refreshed social media activity alongside more traditional print promotion.

Data and Insights

We are reviewing several data capture providers to better understand visitor behaviour, including consumer spend, visitor numbers, dwell time, and visit frequency.

The BID has also shared seafront footfall data, between the 1st April and 30th September 2025, there were 1,377,600 visitors, averaging 7,527 per day, measured via mobile phone signals. This data will help inform future planning, focus our activity and marketing decisions.

The Silica

The Silica continues to be used consistently, and we will refresh the video content over the coming weeks. One of the key benefits of the new Visit Weston website is the ability to assign events to the Silica directly from the new CRM. This will allow us to remove the Shopify site that was initially used as a temporary solution, helping us avoid the higher integration costs previously required by Simpleview.

4,068 visitors (1st March 2025 – 1st March 2026).

22,065 touches *5.42 average touches per visit.

VIC @ The Waterpark

We are in the process of setting up the Visitor Information Centre at the Waterpark for a new season with the opening date (subject to the Legionella report) of the 3rd April. There will be new signage on the site, ensuring that the VIC is more prominent this season.



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Partnership Programme

As agreed by the Council, we have the introduction of new price points for web page listings on the new Visit Weston Website and interactive screen at the Silica.

We have received a very positive reaction from this strategic move, with previous partners coming back to us such as South Sands Hotel and The Activity Dome who both recently commented on the fact the original pricing structure was not a viable investment and the return of services did not match the pricing structure or exposure received.

We are confident that we will grow the partnerships ahead of the new website re launch and in addition to all the usual partners, such as The Grand, Puxton Park and Mendip Activity. We have already had new businesses approach us with a view to joining our partnership programme including Cadbury Cars and Ian Phillips Photography, to name just a couple.

We plan to really develop the offering with the launch of the new website and concentrate onboarding more accommodation providers, tour operators and other quality businesses.

Electronic signatures

To simplify and speed up the onboarding process we have developed and new electronic signature system that details all of the purchasing options – Webpage, Silica listing and



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noticeboards and also captures a digital acknowledgement of the contract which is so much more professional and reliable than a paper version.

VISIT WSM

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

APRIL 2026 - MARCH 2027

Official Destination Website for Weston-super-Mare

For more details, please contact...
Warren - 07375 877 583
Warren.Parker-Mills@WSM-tc.gov.uk

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PACKAGES

Full Web Page, on our NEW website.

Visit Weston-super-Mare is the town's official destination website, backed by a thriving social media community with over 9.5 million views per year. We're excited to launch our brand new website and would love to partner with your business.

For just **£185 + VAT** per year, you'll receive a full-page listing to promote your business to over 600,000 site visitors, per year.

- Quality images and full description.
- Link to your own website or booking platform.
- Contact details and location map.
- Links to your Social Media channels.
- FREE Silica listing (worth **£35**) plus other benefits.
- Directory listings in our Visitor Information Centres.

The new website will provide us with better analytics, faster page loading and deliver a more improved experience for users on mobile devices.

The Silica, our interactive touch screen

This is an affordable way for businesses in Weston-super-Mare and the surrounding area, to increase awareness and attract more customers.

- Detailed listing with a Hero image of logo.
- Dynamic QR code generated.
- Splashpage with links to your website, Social Media channel and a Google maps link to take customers to your front door.
- Touchscreen data and analytics.
- Visit Weston window decal.

All of the above and much more, for just **£35 + VAT** per year.

"What's On In Weston" - noticeboards

This is a superb opportunity for you to promote your events on our "What's On In Weston" noticeboards in prime locations, graded A, B & C around the town.

- 20 - A Locations - **£50 + VAT** per calendar month.
- 14 - B Locations - **£40 + VAT** per calendar month.
- 16 - C Locations - **£30 + VAT** per calendar month.

*Noticeboards, are allocated on a first come/first served basis. Check out the locations by clicking this [link](#).

The noticeboards hold B2 sized, waterproof posters, which you can either provide yourself or we can produce them on your behalf for just **£14.00 + VAT** each.

For availability on any of the packages, please call Warren on **07375 877 583**.

It's **FREE** to list your events on the Visit Weston website and the Silica interactive screen.
*Conditions do apply, scan the QR code for more information.

Payments can be made by telephone, debit/credit card or by bank transfer.
visit-westonsupermare.com

We are already finding that our partners are opting for much more of a "Seasonal Campaign" type of approach, which is being allocated before the season starts which perfectly aligns with the start of our financial year.

The noticeboards and advertising opportunities are already generating sales and triggering early commitment from our partners, just in the last week we have received projected orders from Wookey Hole (£2,135), Riverside (£600), Puxton Park (£1,685) plus they still need to plan their noticeboard campaign for the year.

Noticeboards

We have refurbished the noticeboards acquired from North Somerset Council and currently filled them with holding posters promoting Town Council events and activities. As poster



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spaces are sold, signage will be redistributed to other locations. The sites are offered on a tiered basis:

- **A locations** – high footfall along the promenade: **£50 + VAT per month**
- **B locations** – medium footfall: **£40 + VAT per month**
- **C locations** – lower footfall: **£30 + VAT per month**

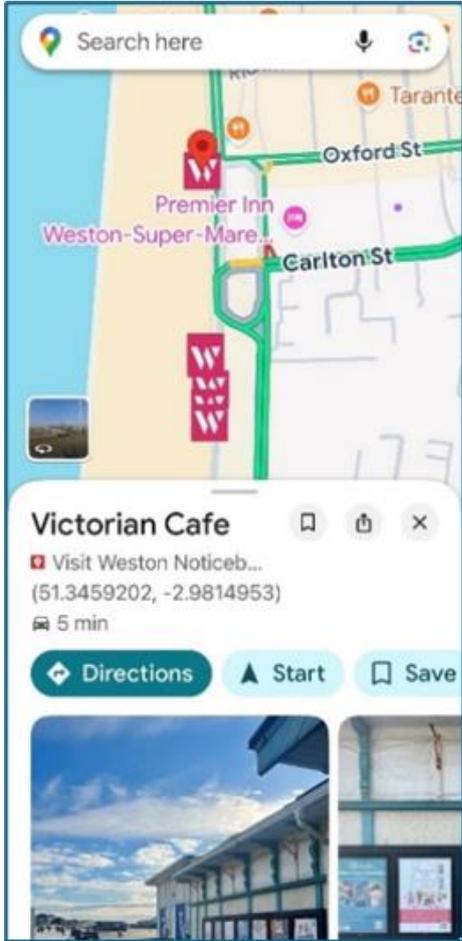
We also offer a printing service where partners supply artwork and we arrange B2 poster printing for a small administration margin.

Some partners will promote specific events, while others will display general business advertising. The Festival at the Beach team has already booked all 20 promenade locations for April and May (£2,000).





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We would also anticipate that the Festival team will also start promoting the 2027 as soon as ticket sales go live. Other interested parties willing to develop a noticeboard campaign include The Beach Race, Super Culture, Noahs Ark, Comicon and the Incider Festival.

We have built a Google Map Noticeboard locator which enables potential partners to see the locations available, along with all the relevant information,

The partners, can also open up a street view window, see the location and travel down the seafront and get a feel for proximity, etc.

Explore Magazine

We have secured a great deal with the Weston Mercury for a four-page pull-out supplement in this summer's *Explore* magazine. This will provide additional print coverage to promote the launch of the Visit Weston website, our seasonal presence at the Waterpark, Silica, and *What's On in Weston*.

The centrefold will feature an upgraded town map, information about the role of Weston Welcomers, and our monthly competition, which has proven effective in growing our database and strengthening partnerships.

Alongside the supplement, we have provided six editorial pieces for the magazine, with a focus on our events, including the return of the Walking Tour, the Seagull Screeching Competition, and free things to do in Weston-super-Mare, highlighting the Museum and Old Town Quarry.





Attractions leaflet

We have also agreed to include the Museum and the Waterpark in an attractions initiative set up by the Grand Pier team, which includes the likes Puxton Park, Allstars and the Activity Dome. The cost is just £200 per asset and 8,000 leaflets will be distributed across holiday parks and caravan sites across the region.

Weston Welcomers

We have recruitment taking place for our 2026 Weston Welcomer Team leader, who will be based at the Waterpark with key responsibilities this year for Admissions, operating of the VIC and managing shift allocations.

Because of reduced hours, the Welcome Hosts team will operate slightly differently this year. Our priority is covering the core shifts first, after which we will begin recruiting additional hosts to deliver engaging activities, events, and more memorable experiences for visitors.



Here's a quick summary of our needs for this season...

Shift cover at the Waterpark for our team leader (min 2 days per week), through Sling.

9 Saturday hosts for our Walking Tour.

Noticeboard implementation/stock rotation (one shift) on the 1st of each calendar month.

Deployment of Welcomers at key events, Eat Festival, Festival At The Beach, Whirligig, Christmas light switch on, etc.

We are looking for entertainers, street performers, mime artists, and actors who can engage audiences while sharing interesting information about the town. These new-style welcomers will go beyond handing out leaflets and become a valued part of the visitor experience.



Other Visit Weston Initiatives

Air Like Wine Walking Tour

Following last year's success, Tony Pass (Visit Weston Welcomer) will continue the tour in 2026. Four extra sessions have been added, running every Saturday in July and August.

Seagull Screeching Returns

The event returns on 22 August at 12 noon at Weston Museum. Returning champions, including European winners Cooper & Shelby, are expected. A local Morris group dressed as seagulls may also perform.

Augmented Reality Interactive Map (potential launch planned for early July).

Festival Merchandise

We are exploring a partnership with the Festival at the Beach team to produce official merchandise. Walker & Ling would act as the main retail outlet, alongside sales at the three-day festival.

Visit Weston Partnership Event

Planned for 4 November at the Town Council building to bring together our partners, review the year and discuss opportunities for 2027.

Warren Parker-Mills
Communication & Visitor Experience Manager
9th March 2026



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Amenities Culture & Leisure Committee 16th March 2026 Development of formal Play Strategy

Report from the CEO/Town Clerk

1. Purpose and Background of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work undertaken to date regarding Weston-super-Mare Town Council's play areas and to seek approval to progress towards the development of a formal Play Strategy for the Council.

With the progression of the devolution programme and the potential transfer of additional play areas from North Somerset Council, it is increasingly important that the Town Council adopts a strategic approach to the management, development and future capital investment of its play provision.

This report clarifies the work undertaken to date and outlines the next steps required to develop a comprehensive play strategy that will guide future decision-making.

Background

Weston-super-Mare Town Council currently owns and manages a number of play areas across the town (22 existing + 8 agreed via devolution = 30) . In 2024 the Council commissioned Sports and Play Consulting Ltd to undertake an independent assessment of the Town Council's existing play provision.

The purpose of the assessment was to review each play area to determine how well they perform in terms of accessibility, inclusivity and play value and to provide guidance on potential future investment priorities.

Following this work, a further assessment was commissioned to review play and recreation facilities currently owned and operated by North Somerset Council which may transfer to the Town Council as part of the ongoing devolution programme – this resulted in 8 from the original list of 17 being agreed to transfer prior to 31.03.26.

These reports provide the Council with a baseline understanding of the current play provision across Weston-super-Mare and potential investment requirements.



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2. Work Undertaken to Date

2.1 Assessment of Existing WSMTC Play Areas

The first report reviewed the Town Council's existing play areas and assessed them against key criteria including accessibility, play value, inclusivity and strategic importance. The report also provided recommendations to guide future capital investment across the play estate over a five-year period.

2.2 Play Area Design Guiding Principles (2025–2030)

Were also developed to inform future refurbishment projects and ensure improvements align with best practice in inclusive and accessible play design.

2.3 Assessment of North Somerset Council Sites

A further report assessed 17 play and recreation facilities currently owned by North Somerset Council which may transfer to the Town Council through the devolution programme. This included site summaries, accessibility and play value scoring, budget estimates for improvement works and prioritisation guidance.

2.4 Initial Capital Improvements

Following the original assessment report, the Council has begun implementing improvements at some sites, including Coniston Green (toddler play refurbishment) and Maltlands play area improvements works due to start imminently following contract award.

3. Need for a Formal Play Strategy

While the reports completed to date provide valuable assessments and investment guidance, they do not constitute a formal strategic framework for play provision across Weston-super-Mare.

Developing a formal strategy would allow the Council to take a more strategic approach to capital investment, identify priority sites serving wider communities, develop a hierarchy of provision (local, neighbourhood and destination play areas), avoid piecemeal improvements and ensure provision meets the needs of residents across the town.

A strategic approach will ensure investment decisions are evidence-based and aligned with the wider devolution programme.



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4. Consultant Engagement and Initial Quote

Following a recent discussion between the Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk and the consultant, Sports and Play Consulting Ltd have indicated that the next stage would be an initial strategic meeting with the Council to review the existing reports and discuss the Council's objectives for developing a Play Strategy.

The consultant has proposed attending a meeting during scheduled for March 2026 The indicative costs to develop a formal Play Strategy are:

- £700 for a full day commitment including travel
- £500 per day if undertaken remotely via Teams

The consultant has also recommended visiting key strategic sites (larger parks) across the town such as Ashcombe Park or Jubilee Park to inform the development of the strategy with the Grounds Manager

All costs quoted are currently exclusive of VAT.

5. Financial Implications

Should Members agree to proceed with the initial strategic meeting, the cost would be £700 (excluding VAT) for an in-person session with the consultant. Further costs relating to the development of a full Play Strategy would be subject to the rates provided in 4 above.

It is proposed that this cost be met from the Council's EMRRP (Emergency, maintenance, repair and replacement programme) budget, which supports the strategic development and improvement of recreational facilities within the town.

6. Risk Considerations

Financial Risk

The monies required for the Play strategy are able to be covered within existing Play budgets. It is envisaged that with a robust play strategy in place the council will be able to utilise budgets more effectively with regard to capital and maintenance investments.

Strategic Risk

Without a formal play strategy, the Council risks continuing to make ad-hoc or piecemeal investments which may not deliver the greatest benefit to residents or maximise available funding detailed in the adopted Play Principles guidance.



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Operational Risk

If additional play areas continue to transfer through the devolution programme (in future stages), the Council will see increased operational responsibilities again. A clear strategy will help prioritise resources and maintenance planning whilst improving commitments to the play provisions it is already responsible for.

Reputational Risk

Failure to plan strategically for play provision could lead to public criticism if facilities deteriorate or investment decisions appear inconsistent. Developing a formal strategy will demonstrate a proactive and transparent approach to improving play provision across Weston-super-Mare and will manage public expectations.

7. Next Steps

Subject to Member approval, officers will proceed to formulate scope of a formal Play Strategy, utilising reports currently undertaken and principles of play design. Formal adoption would come back to committee for comment and approval prior to being implemented.

8. Recommendations

1. Note the work undertaken to date in assessing the Town Council's play areas and those being considered through devolution.
2. Acknowledge that the work completed so far provides a foundation but does not constitute a formal play strategy.
3. Approve the engagement of Sports and Play Consulting Ltd to undertake an initial strategic meeting with the Council at a cost of £700 (ex VAT). Then £500 per day for formal report and plans.
4. Agree that the cost be funded from the Council's EMRRP budget.
5. Request that officers bring forward a further report once a proposal for the full Play Strategy has been developed.

Sarah Pearse

CEO/Town Clerk

6th March 2026



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Amenities, Culture & Leisure 16th March 2026
Christmas Light Switch on dates 2026 & 2027
Rebecca Saunders-Civic Officer & PA to the CEO/Town Clerk

1. Purpose and Background of Report

To approve the dates of the 2026 & 2027 Christmas Lights switch on.

Members are requested to make a decision with regard to suitable date so contractor can be booked in to install lights within timescale and dates can be secured with North Somerset Council for use of the Italian Gardens (Switch non-Event).

2. Options for Council

Consider the below dates for 2026 & 2027 Christmas light switch on event:

- 14th or 28th November 2026
- 20th or 27th November 2027

To note these are the available dates at time of enquiry booking cannot be secured until decision is made.

3. Reason for Recommendation

In order to secure the dates with both contractor and NSC for use of Italian Gardens, due to high demand period in the calendar (dates are already being booked in other locations so there is no guarantee if not locked in with installation contractor). To also ensure contractor has available resource in place to install lights.

4. Expected Benefits

- Event Planning
- Promotion and communication for event

5. Implications

5.1. Legal

The Town Centre Partnership to work with contractor to meet all Health and Safety, Street Lighting and Highways statutory conditions as required – as per Service Level Agreement.



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5.2. Risks

Weather – for switch on event

5.3. Financial Implications

Already accounted for under the Weston BID SLA with £1500 allocated to the event for the year 2026/27.

5.4. Timescales

N/A

5.5. Stakeholders

- Weston super Mare Town Council
- North Somerset Council (Street Lighting and Highways)
- Blachere Illuminations
- Weston BID

5.6. Contractors

Blachere Illuminations

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

n/a

7. Other considerations

The date of **14 November 2026** coincides with **The Grand Pier's Fireworks at Sea evening**. Initial discussions indicate that they would be willing to collaborate on promoting the event, providing an opportunity to demonstrate joined-up working with one of our key partners.



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Members are requested to

Consider and approve dates for 2026 & 2027 Christmas light switch on event.

Rebecca Saunders

Civic Officer & PA to the CEO/Town Clerk

5th March 2026