

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BLAKEHAY ON TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2023**

Meeting Commenced: 2.33 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.12pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chair), Annabelle Chard, Caroline Reynolds, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, Joe Bambridge and Richard Tucker.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services) Sharon Miles (Grounds Manager), Jane Murch (Visitor and Information Services Manager) and Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer).

164	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Roger Bailey and Mike Bell, with no substitutions.</p>
165	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
166	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 15th August 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that page 6 under Waterpark should read as well not his well.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
167	<p>Finance Reports</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk Informed that reports had not been circulated due to sickness but would be forward to members after the meeting. It was noted there were, no surprises in the finances with the partners packages selling steadily. The Waterpark concluded the season in a strong position.</p> <p>RESOLVED That the reports of the Deputy Town Clerk be circulated to members.</p>
168	<p>Tourism Update</p> <p><u>.1 General update</u></p> <p>The Visitor and Information Services Manager reported it had been a busy end to the</p>

season, the welcome hosts had now finished but were visible until the end of September and two contracted staff had also concluded their employment.

Website statistics had continued to go from strength to strength and social media following had also risen with lots of engagement especially around what to do and food and drink posts. A recent post announcing the knife angel exhibition in spring 2024 had gained 166k engagements.

It was further reported the Tourism team along with Visit Bristol & Visit Bath had travelled to Milton Keynes to host a stand at the annual leisure show on 5th October, this had given the opportunity to network where there was a lot of discussion with coach operators and the need to offer more varied packages which the Visitor & Information Manager would be working on in the coming months ready for next season.

The team had also attended Freshers week which had a footfall of 1 k students. The autumn Job fayre would take place on 2nd November at The Winter Gardens where there would be a Weston Town Council presence in the hope to meet new potential welcome hosts for next season.

Work had begun to introduce an Autumn Ale Trail working with new bars and Pinkers Craft Brewery who would be sponsoring trail maps. It was hoped that following the trail success Pinkers Craft Brewery would become partners. A draft map was circulated to members which when finalised, would go on website and in local bars.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor & Information Manager be noted.

.2 To receive the Tourism Manager's Halloween and Christmas plans 2023

The Visitor and Information Services Manager reported that the new Platform partnership offer for Halloween was going well, with a new offering such as "*Find the golden pumpkin*" every day of half term from one of the Partners. It was hoped that following evaluation of this scheme a similar scheme for Christmas could be explored.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor & Information Manager be noted.

.3 Update Partners Report

5.3.1 New partners and changes to partnership levels

The report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager reported that there had been some new partners signed up such as Willow House and Super Culture both as Gold partners and Loves Café & The Blues Bar taking advantage of the Special offer with some others in the pipeline.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager be noted.

5.3.2 Business Closures & Openings

The Visitor and Information Services Manager noted that she had not been made aware of any closures but openings had been plentiful with the Fat head brewery and substance restaurant to mention a few who had recently launched.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager be noted.

5.3.3 Airbnb in North Somerset

Following previous committee discussion, a member questioned how the Airbnb aspiration to get more on the Visit Weston Platform was going. The Visitor and Information Services Manager informed members that the team had not yet had the opportunity to explore this but would make it a priority and report back at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Visitor and Information Services Manager explore options for promoting Airbnb properties through the Visit Weston website.

5.4 Silca Update – Asset transfer update from the Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that costs for Perspex paneling were being explored to report back to North Somerset Council who would install the wooden alternative if the Perspex could not be sourced. Some officer time would need to be committed to this now the work load of the Summer was over.

The Chairmen indicated that the Perspex option would be favorable as was more aesthetically pleasing and would also provide some shelter and make the space more flexible.

A member felt that information points such as this was much needed to engage with members of the public that do not use social media.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

169 Castle Batch SEN Play Park

.1 Launch Event – PowerPoint presentation produced by the Communications and Marketing Officer

The PowerPoint presentation was shown by The Assistant Town Clerk showcasing the castle batch playpark launch which can all be viewed on the website and the park now has its own Facebook page.

RESOLVED: That the PowerPoint be noted.

.2 Future Steps-Community engagement & safety

The Chair reported that there had been successful negotiations with the PCSO team and Community Response Officers who would now have a base at the Community Centre at Castle Batch and The Campus to provide security for both high risk areas.

It was further reported that the Community Response Officers had undergone training and now had powers to challenge people, take names and addresses and have traffic authority also.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the new security camera approved by Full Town Council would be installed in the coming week.

RESOLVED: That the Report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

.3 Future Area for development from The Development Team

The Chair reported that it was hoped that a next phase would see further exploration and viability studies to see if Weston Town Council could potentially take over The Community Centre building to further enhance the area at Castlebatch. This could enable the opening of a Café, and provide toilet facilities alongside other uses. In

addition there was a recognised need to find ways to expand The Car Park provisions to the area which was currently being repainted with more disabled bays.

It was noted that this site was being discussed by the Youth Offending Board.

The Deputy Town Clerk felt that partners such as Big Worle would be open to discussing further development especially an outdoor gym for older children and there was a need to start more formal discussions with North Somerset Council if the committee wanted to peruse this as a n option, a business plan to enable budget provision to be considered would also need to be undertaken . A community Engagement session would need to be carried out to establish what is wanted for any further development.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

SECONDED BY: Councillor Joe Bambridge.

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

RESOLVED: To agree in principle, to support the installation of an adult gym at Castle Batch in order to enable further conversations with North Somerset Council and the exploration of grant funding and any associated community engagement.

.4 Contract update from Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the contractor was due to return to do some final snagging such as painting . All areas that had been affected by vandalism had been repaired and were back in working order.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

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Waterpark

.1 2023 End of season update from Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services

The Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services reported that it had been a stop start season but overall the splash pad had worked much better than the previous season. The splash pad had now been decommissioned and annual maintenance would be carried out over the winter months. Criminal damage and antisocial behavior continued to be problematic.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the park area on the site needed work and this element of the park had cost £400k back in 2009, so there is a need to manage expectations as to what could be achieved and if investment could not be made, some elements of the park would need to be removed for safety.

RESOLVED: Noted

.2 Future Opportunities from the Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services

The Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services reported that the café concession could successfully be ran in house and would provide the opportunity have complete control of the site and avoid people getting in without paying and help with que management.

The café offering would be kept simple selling hot and cold drinks as well as ice-creams and snacks in environmentally friendly packaging, run by casual staff and volunteers. It would require a multi department operation with resources from the Museum, Grounds

and VIC being utilized. A small set up investment would be needed to purchase fridges and displays but future profit could be reinvested into the site. Staff on site could also undergo training to carry out the routine daily water testing which would decrease demand on grounds staff. It was also believed this could offer a year-round operation.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the committee that a business plan would need to be produced and approved by the Policy & Finance Committee ahead of being fed into the upcoming budget.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse

SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

RECOMMENDED: Members are requested to support the plans outlined and the development of a business plan to enable the Operational Grounds Team to move forward ready for the summer season 2024 to include but not exclusively:

- Feasibility of a 'Kiosk; style café function and waterpark entry point
- Volunteer run VIC satellite supported by Visit Weston staff
- Routine Water Testing to be done by staff on site (overseen by grounds department)

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Parks & Play Areas

.1 To receive the report of the Grounds Manager

The Grounds Manager reported that she was now undertaking park inspections rather than this being carried out by a third party. A schedule of winter works had been identified and were being carried out such as making improvement to wet pour areas. A lot of work had been done to renovate Finger posts around the town and had been well received on social media. Planters at the Train station and Italian gardens had been improved and now looked much more welcoming for residents and visitors.

Hutton Moor skate park was due to reopen to the public soon after the successful removal of the paint from the spray jam earlier in the year and graffiti had continued to be a problem in other parks.

Two new dog waste bins and one general waste bin had been installed in Wyvern Close and Haywood parks.

The Ride on mower would need replacing within the next year as it was now 7 years old and had undergone a lot of maintenance repairs, this is a high use piece of equipment and essential to have in good working order.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Grounds Manger be noted.

.2 To receive List of All Play Areas & Identify priority areas for future investment 2023/24

The Grounds Manager was still awaiting the Stock condition report & Capital Investment Report but informed that in the meantime, routine maintenance works were being carried out but no replacement works.

A member reported receiving lot of complaints around Millennium Green Park from members of public in their ward requesting a safe space that was well maintained for families to enjoy.

The Assistant Town Clerk -Operational Services acknowledged that a large number of Parks required investment but a play strategy was needed to decide what direction would be taken to improve facilities.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised there was a need to talk to communities to see what they wanted in their area, fewer Flagship parks and smaller parks in local areas could be a positive way forward.

A member enquired if grant funding would help for some sites but the Deputy Town Clerk informed that investment in the area was very hard to obtain.

RECOMMENDED: To Circulate the Capital Investment report to members and recommend consideration to the Policy & Finance Committee.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 4.12 pm

Signed: Dated:

Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Committee

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/11/2023

Month No: 8

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
470 Parks & Play Areas							
1076 Water Play Area Kiosk Income	0	3,850	7,000	3,150			55.0%
1077 Water Park Admissions	0	18,381	45,000	26,619			40.8%
Parks & Play Areas :- Income	0	22,231	52,000	29,769			42.8%
4102 NNDR	0	0	449	449		449	0.0%
4104 Utilities - Water	232	536	3,004	2,468		2,468	17.9%
4105 Utilities - Heat & Light	2,948	15,966	11,500	(4,466)		(4,466)	138.8%
4109 Alarm system	0	398	500	102		102	79.6%
4114 Refuse Removal	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%
4138 Water Play Area Rent	989	8,798	10,242	1,444		1,444	85.9%
4140 Recreation Grounds	0	78,060	86,725	8,665		8,665	90.0%
4300 Parks&Play Area EMRRP Holding	0	0	55,584	55,584		55,584	0.0%
4301 Ashcombe Park Lower	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4302 Ashcombe Park Upper	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4303 Broadway Play	0	1,019	1,018	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4304 Broadway Skate Park	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4305 Byron Rec	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4306 Castle Batch Lower	0	13,274	13,274	0		0	100.0%
4307 Canberra Road	0	1,083	1,083	(0)		(0)	100.0%
4308 Clarence Park	237	1,201	1,200	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4309 Conniston Green	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4310 Ellenborough Park East	0	989	988	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4311 Grove Park	0	885	885	0		0	100.0%
4312 Hutton Moor Skate Park	0	1,568	1,568	0		0	100.0%
4313 Jubilee Park	0	885	886	1		1	99.9%
4314 Locking Castle (Maltlands)	0	885	885	0		0	100.0%
4315 Lynch Farm	0	885	885	0		0	100.0%
4316 Millennium Green	0	1,647	1,647	0		0	100.0%
4317 Uphill Junior Play Area	0	4,111	4,113	2		2	100.0%
4318 Uphill Toddler Play Area	0	3,937	3,938	1		1	100.0%
4319 Water Adventure Play Park	2,378	64,200	64,200	0		0	100.0%
4320 Worle Recreation Ground	0	1,313	1,314	1		1	100.0%
4321 Wyvern Close	0	1,112	1,113	1		1	99.9%
4322 Ellenborough Park West	0	885	884	(1)		(1)	100.1%
4324 Dartmouth Close	0	116	115	(1)		(1)	100.6%
6000 Admin Salaries Recharge	1,416	8,147	8,656	509		509	94.1%
6005 Admin Overhead Recharge	331	2,308	2,432	124		124	94.9%
6009 HQ recharges	95	1,133	2,456	1,323		1,323	46.1%
6010 Grounds Salaries Recharge	7,001	42,789	46,360	3,571		3,571	92.3%
6015 Grounds Overhead Recharge	851	8,088	11,352	3,264		3,264	71.2%

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/11/2023

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Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
6030 Operational Staffing Recharge	719	4,030	2,544	(1,486)		(1,486)	158.4%
6035 Operational Overhead Recharge	36	853	512	(341)		(341)	166.6%
Parks & Play Areas :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>17,242</u>	<u>275,522</u>	<u>347,232</u>	<u>71,710</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>71,710</u>	<u>79.3%</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(17,242)</u>	<u>(253,292)</u>	<u>(295,232)</u>	<u>(41,940)</u>			
Grand Totals:- Income	0	22,231	52,000	29,769			42.8%
Expenditure	17,242	275,522	347,232	71,710	0	71,710	79.3%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(17,242)</u>	<u>(253,292)</u>	<u>(295,232)</u>	<u>(41,940)</u>			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(17,242)</u>	<u>(253,292)</u>					

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
480 Tourism & Marketing							
4031 Equipment - Rental	0	13	0	(13)		(13)	0.0%
Tourism & Marketing :- Indirect Expenditure	0	13	0	(13)	0	(13)	
Net Expenditure	0	(13)	0	13			
481 Tourism Love Weston / Dest Mar							
1040 VIC Advertising Income	198	10,076	15,000	4,925			67.2%
Tourism Love Weston / Dest Mar :- Income	198	10,076	15,000	4,925			67.2%
4000 Staffing Costs	6,833	43,506	53,427	9,921		9,921	81.4%
4030 Equipment Purchase	0	34	64	30		30	52.9%
4039 Advertising & Marketing	0	580	9,000	8,420		8,420	6.4%
4041 Fees, Subs and Conferences	0	0	250	250		250	0.0%
4062 Tourism-Love Weston website	861	4,173	11,500	7,327		7,327	36.3%
4107 IT Support & Upgrade	180	1,687	1,003	(684)		(684)	168.2%
6000 Admin Salaries Recharge	1,306	7,517	7,984	467		467	94.2%
6005 Admin Overhead Recharge	376	2,626	2,752	126		126	95.4%
6009 HQ recharges	88	1,043	1,024	(19)		(19)	101.9%
Tourism Love Weston / Dest Mar :- Indirect Expenditure	9,644	61,166	87,004	25,838	0	25,838	70.3%
Net Income over Expenditure	(9,446)	(51,091)	(72,004)	(20,913)			
482 Tourism VIC costs							
1040 VIC Advertising Income	0	99	1,500	1,401			6.6%
1043 VIC Retail/Shop Income	0	5,207	3,000	(2,207)			173.6%
Tourism VIC costs :- Income	0	5,306	4,500	(806)			117.9%
4000 Staffing Costs	1,933	48,047	61,137	13,090		13,090	78.6%
4013 Training	0	136	1,865	1,729		1,729	7.3%
4014 P P E / Health & Safety	0	51	1,000	949		949	5.1%
4031 Equipment - Rental	37	184	1,000	816		816	18.4%
4034 Equipment Repairs	0	71	1,000	929		929	7.1%
4035 Telephone	169	1,212	792	(420)		(420)	153.1%
4036 Stationery	0	179	200	21		21	89.7%
4039 Advertising & Marketing	0	163	1,000	837		837	16.3%
4119 Notice Boards	0	186	1,500	1,314		1,314	12.4%
4136 Credit Card Chgs	41	309	450	141		141	68.7%
4151 Catering	2	89	75	(14)		(14)	118.7%
4225 VIC Stock	0	1,165	2,000	835		835	58.3%
6030 Operational Staffing Recharge	4,318	12,439	25,240	12,801		12,801	49.3%

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/11/2023

Month No: 8

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
6035 Operational Overhead Recharge	218	5,129	3,056	(2,073)		(2,073)	167.8%
Tourism VIC costs :- Indirect Expenditure	6,717	69,360	100,315	30,955	0	30,955	69.1%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(6,717)</u>	<u>(64,054)</u>	<u>(95,815)</u>	<u>(31,761)</u>			
Grand Totals:- Income	198	15,381	19,500	4,119			78.9%
Expenditure	16,361	130,539	187,319	56,780	0	56,780	69.7%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(16,163)</u>	<u>(115,158)</u>	<u>(167,819)</u>	<u>(52,661)</u>			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(16,163)</u>	<u>(115,158)</u>					

5.1 General Update

5.1.1 Website stats for August

Please find below website statistics for www.visit-westonsupermare.com for July to end September (organic):

- 300k unique views
- Accommodation page seeing 45,000 in that time
- Continue to be no. 1 in searches for main enquiries for WsM, when searching by Google (80% of world-wide searches)
- Most viewed pages were (excl home page):
 - Accommodation in WsM
 - Places to each in WsM
 - Places to stay in WsM
 - What's on in WsM
 - Attractions in WsM

5.1.2 – Banner Advertising

Functionality for banner advertising on the website is being developed with website designers and will be ready for January, 2024. This will be a new stream of revenue for Visit Weston.

5.1.2 Social Media

Please find below for Visit Weston social media channels for eight months to December 2023:

- Facebook – 1M reach (902% increase in engagement in 8 months)
- Instagram Impressions – 221k (90 days)

5.1.3 Explore North Somerset

On Wednesday, 6th December the Visitor & Information Services Manager attended the Explore North Somerset event at the Grand Pier. JM presented to over 60 businesses with an overview of the last eight months (since she started the job) and high-level plans for 2024. It was noted that three potential new businesses are interested in joining as partners (two accommodation and one large-scale attraction).

5.2 Partners report update

The Visitor & Information Services Manger will verbally discuss in detail the listings below at the meeting:

5.2.1 New partners and changes to partnership levels

New

- The Criterion (Special Offer) *
- Fat Head (Special Offer) *
- The Vaults (Special Offer)*
- Fork 'n Ale (Special Offer) *
- The Cove (Special Offer)
- South Sands Hotel
- The Woolpack (Special Offer)

Working with /in the pipeline

- The Regency (Special Offer) *
- Black Cat (Special Offer) *
- Brit Bar (Special Offer) *
- The Bay Café (Special Offer)
- The Ginger Pig (Special Offer)
- Unity (Brean)
The Grand Atlantic
- Tyntesfield National Trust

(*refers to those taking part in the Ale Trail)

5.2.2 Business Closures and openings

At the time of writing this report there are no business closures to report.

Openings/Opened

- Merlin Cinema

Members are requested to:

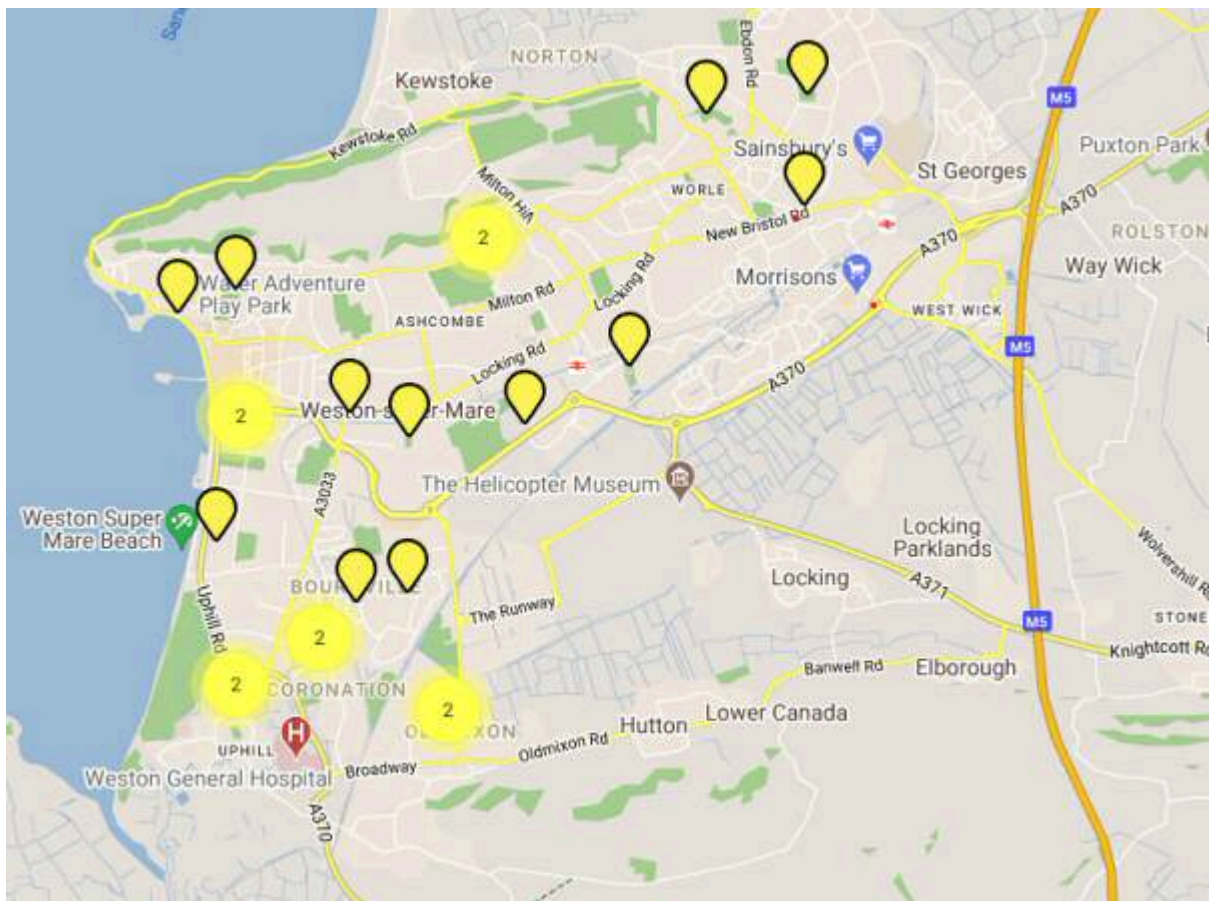
Note the report.

Jane Murch

Visitor & Information Services Manager
12th December 2023

6.1

Please find below a map and list detailing all of Weston-super-Mare Town Council play areas maintained and managed by the Grounds Team.



Site Name	Site Postcode	Ward	Land Ownership
Ashcombe Park Lower	BS22 8AE	Ashcombe Wood	NSC
Ashcombe Park Upper	BS22 8BE	Ashcombe Wood	NSC

Broadway Play	BS22 6AH	Oldmixon	NSC
Broadway Skate Park	BS24 9DD	Oldmixon	NSC
Byron Rec	BS23 3XB	Bournville and Coronation	NSC
Canberra Road	BS23 4PS	Bournville and Coronation	NSC
Castle Batch Lower	BS22 7PQ	Castle Batch	NSC
Clarence Park	BS23 4BE	Clarence	NSC
Coniston Green	BS23 3SQ	Bournville and Coronation	NSC
Dartmouth Close	BS22 6LJ		
Ellenborough Park West	BS23 1XH		
Ellenborough Park East	BS231XQ	Ellenborough	WsMTC
Grove Park	BS23 2LG	Grove	NSC
Hutton Moor Skate Park	BS22 8LY	Hutton Moor	NSC
Jubilee Park	BS23 4QA	Bournville and Coronation	NSC
L. Castle (Maltlands)	BS22 8QS	Hutton Moor	NSC
Lynch Farm	BS22 9JW	Ebdon	NSC
Millenium Green	BS23 3PQ	Wyvern	WsMTC
Uphill Junior Play Area	BS23 4UJ	Broadoak and Uphill	NSC
Uphill Toddler Play Area	BS23 4SE	Broadoak and Uphill	NSC
Water Adventure Play Park	BS23 2BB	Grove	NSC
Worle Recreation Ground	BS22 6SG	Worle South	NSC
Wyvern Close	BS23 3DP	Earlham	NSC

Members are requested to:

Note the report.

Sharon Miles
Grounds Manager

11th November 2023

6.2 Play Area Strategy overview

1. Rational

1.1 Play is vitally important to children's development, learning and health. Play contributes to the emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, psychological and physical development of children and this ultimately benefits the community in which children and young people live.

1.2 Children play in a variety of ways, not all of them at first apparent to on-looking adults. It can vary from physical activities that are already on offer, i.e. playing on a climbing frame –to much more subtle things such as made-up stories and inventive play that need not involve anything other than the child and their imagination.

1.3 Children therefore need their own space in which to enjoy these activities. These spaces come in various forms, from the back garden to the playground at school, to public spaces and parks. Where these spaces concern the Council it aims to make them as inviting, challenging and exciting as possible.

1.4 This play area strategy will give focus to the needs of children and young people throughout Thame. This in itself should bring about change, innovation and the further development of play in the town.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Play Area Strategy is to:

- Deliver a more even distribution of play areas which offer a qualitative play experience across Weston super Mare.
- To ensure that children living in and visiting the town will experience a stimulating, challenging and improved environment for play in the future.
- To find alternative ways of funding play area provision and attract additional resources.

3. Benefits

3.1 This strategy will deliver the following benefits to children and young people 3–17 years:

- More choice in better play provision within walking distance of home.
- Users feeling safe in the local play environment.

- An enjoyable leisure experience in an improved local environment.
- Easily accessible play areas for local residents to walk to.
- Inclusion – better access for everyone regardless of background, age, gender and ability.

4. Context

4.1 The Council has provided children’s play equipment in Weston super Mare for many years. These facilities can be found in the town’s parks and open spaces.

4.2 Pressure on the future maintenance of these facilities comes from a number of factors and is increasing. The age of some of the equipment is so old that parts are increasingly difficult get hold of, alongside the increasing costs and restricted budgets available to do so.

The British and European Safety Standards have required investment to be made in surfacing and there is some safer surfacing that will soon need to be replaced because it will not meet the required standard.

4.3 Clearly major renovation has implications for the Council’s spending decisions. Investment in relation to play equipment has to be taken within the context of the overall Council budget. The possibility of attracting external funding through partnership working, or sponsorship, will be a significant factor in any future provision.

4.4 There are currently 22 sites with children’s play equipment in the town, details of which are included in 6.1 above.

6.2.1 Community Engagement

There will be a need to undertake robust community engagement for each ward within Weston super Mare with the following stakeholders:

- Residents and Park user
- Community Groups
- Partner organisations (ie: Police/ Local Authority)

This should be undertaken within the next financial year to allow robust financial planning for 2025/2026. It is envisaged this would start Spring 2024.

A communication and engagement plan will be implemented to mirror the model used at Castle Batch play area which was a resounding success.

6.2.2 Timescales for Development of the Play Strategy

The play strategy will need to be adopted and in place by the Autumn of 2025 to allow for adequate financial planning and identification of capital requirements etc.

During 2024/2025 the current play areas will be maintained to meet the

required safety standard only.

6.2.3 Appointment of External Play Consultant

In order to develop and understand National Play which should have consideration of the following:

Fields in Trust (FiT) has produced minimum standards for the provision of children's play facilities. These standards are recognised as being a yardstick against which local authorities can judge the distribution and content of play areas

The FiT identify 3 categories of play area:

Local Area for Play (LAP) - a low key games area. Aimed at 4 –6 age group and younger children form play activities close to home. Catchment area = 1 minute 's walking time for an accompanied child or approximately 100m walking distance.

Local Equipment Area of Play (LEAP) – a small play area with about 5 types of equipment. Aimed at 4 –8 age group. Consider needs of under 4s and slightly over 8s. Catchment area = 5 minutes walking time for an accompanied child, or approximately 400m walking distance.

Neighborhood Equipment Play Area (NEAP) – a larger play area with about 8 types of equipment. Aimed at 8 – 14 age group. Facilities for wheeled and ball play should be provided. Catchment area = 15 minutes walking time for either accompanied or unaccompanied children, which is about 1000m walking distance.

It is suggested that the employment of a specialist Play consultant may be required to support the development and interpretation of the FiT standards into a Play strategy document for members to adopt.

6.2.4 Existing Play Area Repairs.

The council has already working with a n external play specialist to provide up to date condition reports on all of the play areas (22).

These reports will provide detail of priority areas or work needed across the councils play provision and will be used to identify essential and urgent works to meet national safety standards.

Reports received to date are included in 6.3 below and are for information only due to the need of completing all reports prior to prioritising areas.

Members are requested to:

1. To approve the timescales for Community Engagement to commence in Spring 2025 detailed in 6.2.1 above.
2. To approve the suggested timescales for Development of a Play strategy detailed in 6.2.2

3. To approve the use of an External Consultant as required (Details of which will be bought back to future meetings prior to appointment).
4. To note and approve the interim maintenance of current play areas in 2024/2025 while the play strategy is in development (during next financial year).

Sarah Pearce

Deputy Town Clerk

Fay Powell

Assistant Town Clerk

12th November 2023

8.2

8.2.1 Overview

The Waterpark play area was designed and built in 2010 at a cost of £425,000.

The play equipment chosen at the time lent itself to the conservation area in which it sits and its design was reflective of its surroundings with a nod to the seaside.

The equipment within the park and the park itself is considered a flag ship location for visitors and residents all year. With many visitors coming back year after year.

From the Easter Holidays to the end of the summer holidays the splash pad within the park is charged. Entry into the park is free for the rest of the year when the splash provision is not in service.

8.2.2 Condition of play provision

The play equipment is almost 14 years old and due to its position on the seafront has weathered many storms and harsh conditions.

Throughout the 14 years Weston-super-Mare Town Council Grounds Team has maintained and inspected this equipment and where necessary used external play equipment providers to replace/repair items out of their remit.

14 years on the equipment has reached a point that requires substantial investment. Some items of equipment have recently been vandalised which has meant it is not cost effective to patch and repair but to actually remove the equipment and replace with new.

8.2.3 Budget

The current EMRRP budget will not be sufficient to replace items within the park. Therefore, in the budget for 2024/2025 it has been suggested there is a capital provision for the sum of £200,000 to replace some of the more significant items of equipment in order for the park to have a safe and meaningful play offer for the summer season of 2024 and beyond.

8.2.4 Design and Build

It is suggested that this process is done through a design and build contract which is a familiar process for the council to carry out with our last park being Castle Batch.

As we are now 14 years on play equipment has evolved and there are now items on the market that can give the wooden effect of our current equipment but made from more robust materials ensuring a long lifespan and possible protection from vandalism.

Working with the appointed contractor we would look to continue to maintain the existing items that have more years in them highlighted in the GB Sports condition survey report (item 6.3) and ensure they complement the new equipment installed.

Members are requested to:

- It is recommended that subject to the budget being approved at Full Town Council on Monday 22nd January 2024 members approve the process of appointing a contractor.
- Members are also requested to note that due to the procurement timescales involved in appointing a contractor the Waterpark as it currently is would need to open for the Easter period, with a closure of the play equipment between Easter and the Summer holidays for works to be carried out.

Fay Powell

Assistant Town Clerk Operational Services
12th December 2023