FIRST STEPS FOR BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

INFORMATION SESSION AHEAD OF THE MAY 2027 LOCAL ELECTIONS



HOUSEKEEPING

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

- There are no planned fire drills today. If the alarm sounds, please follow staff instructions and leave by the nearest safe exit.
- Toilets are located in the corridor you came through on the left hand side.
- Refreshments are available throughout the session.
- Please ask questions at any point, or during the Q&A.

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND PURPOSE OF THE SESSION
2. UNDERSTANDING WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL AND NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
3. THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TOWN COUNCILLOR
4. HOW THE COUNCIL MAKES DECISIONS
5. STANDING FOR ELECTION IN MAY 2027
6. TRAINING, INDUCTION AND SUPPORT
7. QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

PURPOSE OF TODAY'S SESSION

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

This session will provide an overview of Weston-super-Mare Town Council's roles and responsibilities; explain what being a Town Councillor involves; outline how to stand for election; and help you decide whether becoming a councillor is of interest to you.

No previous experience of local government is required.

MEET THE TEAM

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Senior Management Team: The CEO/Town Clerk leads the paid service, provides professional advice and ensures Council decisions are implemented. Senior officers lead finance, resources, services and programmes.



Sarah Pearse
Chief Executive Officer / Town Clerk



Fay Powell
Director of Community Services / Deputy Town Clerk



Helen Morton
Director of Finance and Resources (RFO)

MEET THE TEAM

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

The Democratic Services Team: provides dedicated support to councillors, administering Council and committee meetings, providing governance and procedural advice, and supporting members in fulfilling their democratic responsibilities

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Sam Bishop

Democratic Services Manager

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Rebecca Saunders

Civic Officer

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Alison Garner

Democratic Services Officer

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Julie Smith

Senior Customer Services Officer

CLARITY OF ROLE

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

UNDERSTANDING WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is the first tier of local government for the town. It represents local communities, makes decisions about its own services and facilities, supports local organisations and works with partners to improve the town. It is the largest town council in North Somerset.

Starting from May 2027 Weston-super-Mare Town Council will have 29 councillors elected every 4 years subject to future community governance reviews, as well as a number of dedicated staff to implement their decisions.

Weston-super-Mare Town Council provides services including:

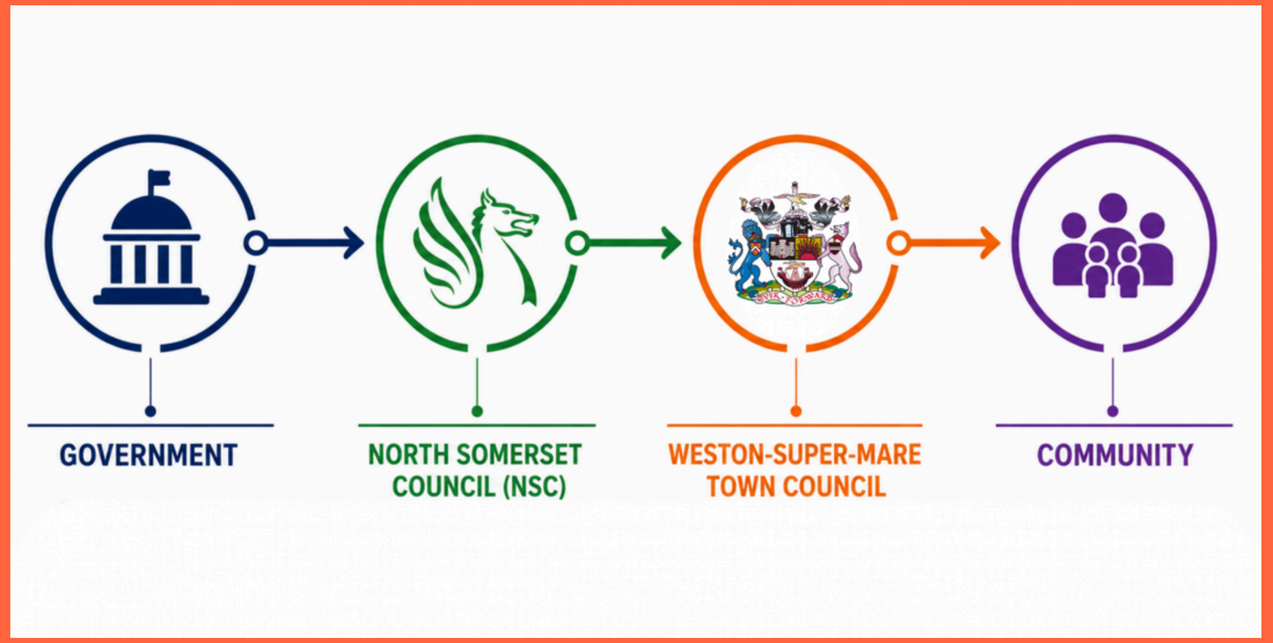
- Weston Museum and heritage services
- Old Town Quarry
- Visitor Information Centre and Super Weston website
- Water Adventure Play Park
- Milton Road Cemetery
- Public conveniences, play areas and selected open spaces
- Bus shelters, noticeboards and public/dog waste bins
- Civic and Mayoral Office
- Community events and cultural activities
- Community grants and support for local organisations
- Support for Weston-super-Mare Youth Council
- Community engagement and consultation
- Fridge of Free Stuff
- Allotments

OUR POWERS AND DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

POWERS AND DEVOLUTION

The Council holds the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011, allowing it to undertake a wide range of activities for the benefit of its communities, subject to legal restrictions and eligibility conditions. Through its Devolution Programme, WSMTC is working with North Somerset Council to explore the transfer of local assets and services, bringing decisions and delivery closer to local communities.



WHAT DOES NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DO?

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

UNDERSTANDING NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

North Somerset Council is the unitary authority responsible for a wide range of statutory services across North Somerset. WSMTC is a consultee on planning matters, not the planning authority.

North Somerset Council provides a full range of local government services including:

- Council tax billing
- Libraries
- Social services
- Housing
- Processing planning applications
- Leisure centres and sport
- Highways including parking
- Education
- Waste collection and disposal

North Somerset Council has 50 councillors being elected at each election. Some of these councillors are dual-hatted and are on both North Somerset and Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

THE ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR AND OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS HELP TO...

Councillors work together to make decisions about the services, facilities and activities that the Town Council is responsible for, while also **listening to residents** and working with community organisations, businesses, partners and other local authorities.

The role is about more than attending meetings. **Councillors are community representatives**, decision makers and community leaders. They help shape the Town Council's priorities, make decisions about how its resources are used and bring the views and experiences of local people into those decisions.

The Council benefits from having **people with different backgrounds**, experiences, perspectives and skills around the table. Someone may bring financial experience, another may understand communications, business, education, community development, the environment, events, planning, project management or simply have a strong understanding of the needs of their local community.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

"PEOPLE OFTEN DO THEIR BEST WORK WHEN THEY ARE ABLE TO USE THE THINGS THEY ARE GOOD AT AND CARE ABOUT.

AS A COUNCILLOR, UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOUR STRENGTHS FIT WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS CAN HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ROLE"



RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS...

Represent: listen to residents and bring community perspectives into discussions.

Decide: consider evidence and make decisions collectively in Council and committees.

Scrutinise: ask questions and ensure services and resources are managed responsibly.

Engage: work with communities, partners and other authorities.

Prepare: read agendas and reports and attend relevant training.

HOW OUR COMMITTEE SYSTEM WORKS

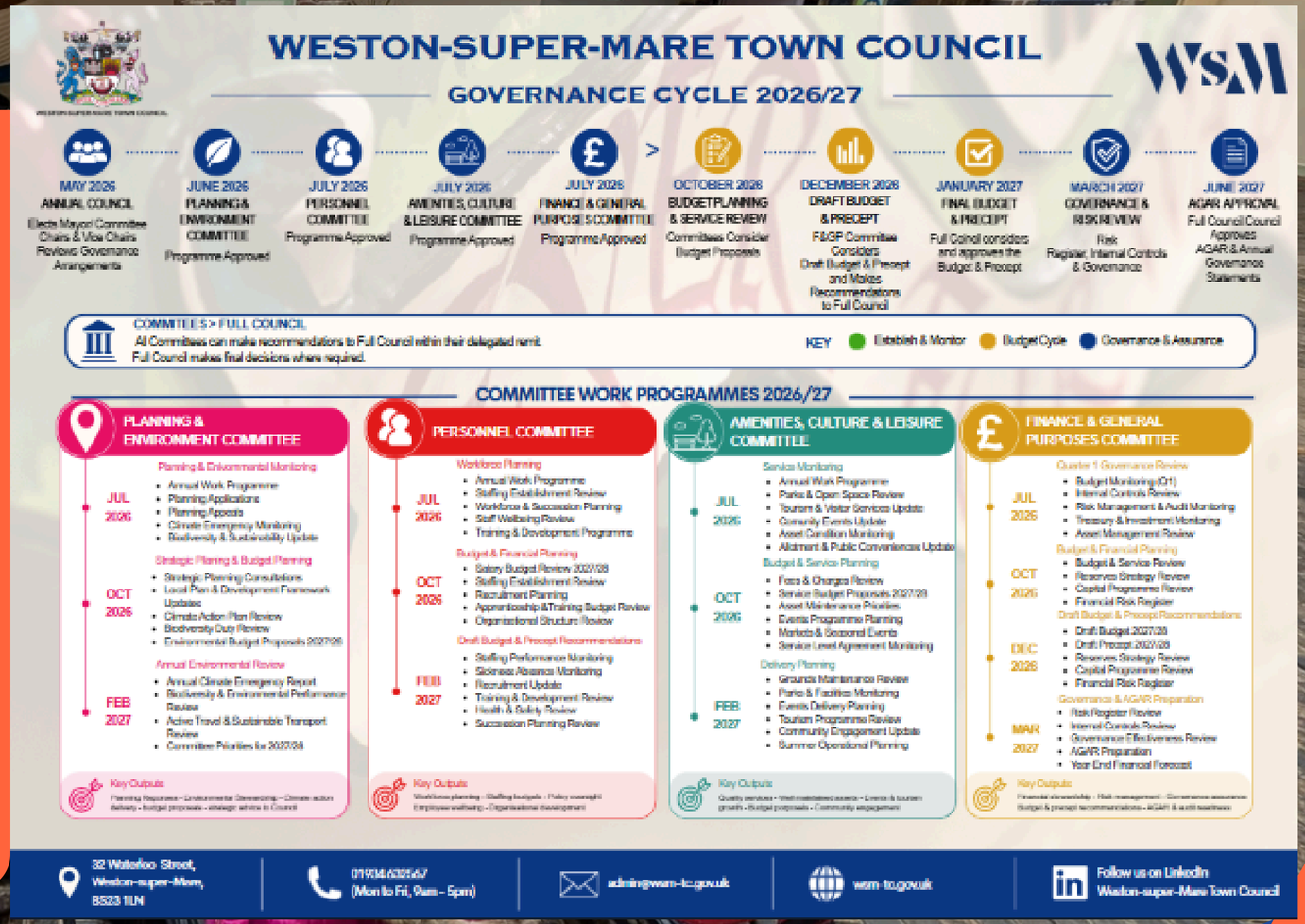
WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE'S

WSMTC operates a committee system. Full Council makes key decisions and delegates defined responsibilities to committees. Members are appointed to committees, which consider reports and make decisions or recommendations within their approved authority.

Officers provide professional advice and implement lawful decisions.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME SILVER



THE RULES THAT GOVERN OUR COUNCIL

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

CORE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

Committee Terms of Reference (CTOR): define each committee's responsibilities.

Scheme of Delegation: identifies who may make which decisions.

Standing Orders: govern meetings, debate, voting and procedures.

Financial Regulations: set the rules for financial management, control and accountability.

Together these documents support lawful, transparent and accountable decision-making.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

CORE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

The Annual Meeting is an important part of the Council's democratic calendar. Councillors elect the Town Mayor annually, who also serves as Chair of Council, and elect the Deputy Mayor:

- Election of Town Mayor (Chair of Council)
- Election of Deputy Mayor
- Required Declarations of Acceptance of Office
- Committee appointments
- Confirmation of committee arrangements and delegations
- Review/confirmation of the meeting calendar
- Other annual governance business required by legislation and Standing Orders

OVERVIEW OF WARDS

- North Worle Ward
- Mid Worle Ward
- South Worle Ward
- Worlebury Ward
- Hillside Ward
- Milton Ward
- Central Ward
- Winterstoke Ward
- Bournville Ward
- Uphill Ward



FOLLOWING NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW, CHANGES WILL APPLY FROM THE MAY 2027 ELECTIONS, INCLUDING A REDUCTION IN TOWN COUNCILLORS FROM 31 TO 29 AND A CHANGE TO THE WORLEBURY WARD NAME.

ELIGIBILITY TO STAND AS A CANDIDATE

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

CRITERIA

You must be at least **18 years old**, and be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union, and meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

1. You are registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
2. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
3. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish.
4. You have lived in the parish or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

KEY DATES

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

DATE	ACTIVITY
Mon 22nd March	NSC Publish notice of election
Tue 23rd March	Start of nominations
Thu 8th April	Close of nominations (4pm)
Fri 9th April	NSC will Publish: • Statement of persons nominated • Uncontested election results • Notice of election agents
Thu 6th May	Polling day: 7am–10pm Verification: 10pm onwards
Fri 7th May	NSC count of ballot papers and publication of results
8th –13th May	New member induction sessions
Thu 20th May	First post election council meeting

STANDARDS IN PUBLIC OFFICE

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Sets the standards of behaviour expected of councillors.
- Requires members to act with respect, integrity and honesty.
- Includes rules on declaring interests, avoiding conflicts of interest, treating officers and the public appropriately, and using council resources properly.

North Somerset Council's Monitoring Officer oversees the statutory standards arrangements, including complaints concerning alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct

THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

- Selflessness - act in the public interest
- Integrity - avoid improper influence
- Objectivity - make decisions on merit
- Accountability - be answerable for decisions
- Openness - be transparent
- Honesty - be truthful
- Leadership - set a positive example

Civility & Respect

IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

WHAT ALLOWANCES DO COUNCILLORS RECIEVE?

For 2026/27, WSMTC Town Councillors do not receive a basic councillor allowance under the Council's current arrangements. Allowances may be reviewed by the incoming administration. Councillors may claim eligible mileage and certain expenses in accordance with approved policies and procedures.

WHAT SUPPORT WILL YOU RECIEVE?

Councillors are supported by a dedicated Democratic Services team, the CEO/Town Clerk. Officers provide impartial professional advice, meeting administration, information and practical support to all elected members.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A COUNCILLOR OR A VOLUNTEER

	Volunteer - A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task	**Town Councillor -** As an elected member, is a person chosen through a voting process to represent a group in a governing body, council, parliament, or organisation
Payment	Unpaid	Unpaid, although allowances may be available
Length of commitment	Flexible, depending on availability and the role	Elected for a four-year term
Stepping down	Can stop volunteering at any time, organisation may need to find another volunteer	Can resign before the four years are up, but must do so formally. Creates a formal vacancy that must be filled through the appropriate electoral or co-option process
Responsibility	Responsible for agreed tasks and activities	Shares responsibility for council decisions, public funds, services and community interests, **Councillors are collectively responsible for the governance of the council**
Accountability	Accountable to the organisation or group	Accountable to residents and subject to formal standards of conduct
Decision-making	May contribute ideas and support activities	Has a formal vote on council decisions
Rules and conduct	Follows the organisation's policies	Subject to statutory requirements, the council's code of conduct and rules on declaring interests
Training and preparation	Depends on the volunteering role	Expected to understand council procedures, read meeting papers and develop relevant knowledge
Public expectations	Usually limited to the agreed volunteering activity	Residents may expect ongoing engagement, representation and responsiveness

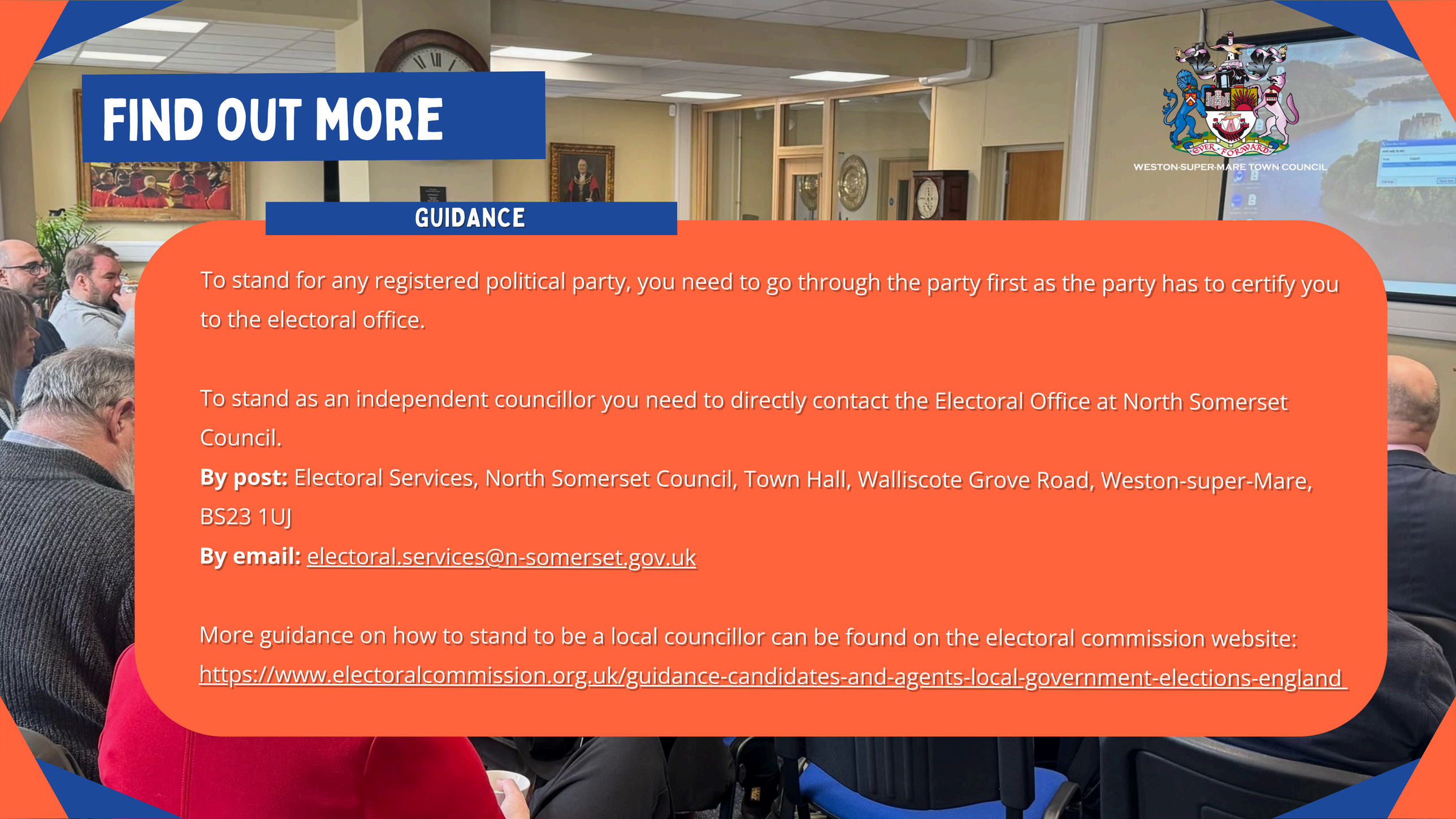
NEW COUNCILLOR INDUCTION SESSIONS

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

A structured programme of New Councillor Induction Sessions will take place between 8th and 13th May 2027, with several opportunities to attend to accommodate newly elected councillors.
Attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure members understand their responsibilities, the Council's procedures and the support available." It will cover the Councillor role, Council and committee procedures, Code of Conduct, interests, governance documents and working with officers.

- ID badge and office access card
- 32 Waterloo Street Parking pass, when applicable
- Website photograph and biography
- Civic robe fitting
- Register Members Interests

Statutory Requirement: Under section 83(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, newly elected councillors must make and deliver their Declaration of Acceptance of Office before or at the first Council meeting following their election, unless the Council permits a later meeting. Failure to do so within the permitted period results in the office becoming vacant.



FIND OUT MORE

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

GUIDANCE

To stand for any registered political party, you need to go through the party first as the party has to certify you to the electoral office.

To stand as an independent councillor you need to directly contact the Electoral Office at North Somerset Council.

By post: Electoral Services, North Somerset Council, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ

By email: electoral.services@n-somerset.gov.uk

More guidance on how to stand to be a local councillor can be found on the electoral commission website: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england


ANY QUESTIONS?
TIME TO TALK!
WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
RING BELL

REFERENCES

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

- **National Association of Local Council Clerks** - https://www.nalc.gov.uk/
- **Electoral Commission Website** - https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/
- **North Somerset Council** - https://n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/voting-elections
- **Weston-super-Mare Town Council Policies -** https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/your-council/policies/
- **GOV -** https://www.gov.uk/become-councillor
- **Society Of Local Council Clerks** - https://www.slcc.co.uk/