



## Wells City Council

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<b>Subject</b>	Draft Corporate Priorities 2025–2027 – Approval and Public Consultation
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### **Background**

Wells City Council has not previously adopted a formal set of medium-term corporate priorities. However, there has been planning undertaken over a number of years to determine the views of Councillors, which has been incorporated into the draft 2025-2027 corporate priorities.

In the context of rising financial pressures, increasing expectations on local authorities, and the need for long-term resilience, as with any business, it is proposed that the Council adopt a strategic framework to guide its work over the next two years while laying foundations for the longer term (5–10 years). This will ensure that as we approach the next political cycle, the Council is on a shore footing, following which (in 2028) longer term priorities can then be determined.

The draft Corporate Priorities Plan 2025–2027 sets out four thematic areas of focus, grounded in the city's unique identity and practical responsibilities as a parish council:

- Financial Sustainability and Good Governance
- Climate Change and Asset Stewardship
- Securing the Future of Council Services
- Economic Growth and Tourism in a Heritage Context

The plan is intended to be a working document that guides decision-making, projects and staffing commitments, budgeting, communications, and partnership working.

It is intended that once adopted, the Corporate Priorities will act as the “golden thread” to council business, staff engagement and community consultation and expectation management.

## **Key Considerations**

### Financial Sustainability and Good Governance

A rolling medium-term financial strategy and improved governance structures are essential to meet legal obligations, maintain reserves, and ensure public confidence. Equally, Councillors have been keen to ensure precept rises are only considered in exceptional circumstances. By developing a 5 year rolling medium term financial strategy, the council will be better placed to predict impacts and account for them accordingly, making decisions to offset risk proactively, opposed to reactively.

### Climate and Asset Stewardship

Rather than pursuing broad environmental ambitions, the focus is on the environmental performance of the Council's own assets, where it has direct control and accountability.

### Securing the Future of Council Services

With limited revenue and rising costs, the Council must explore how to optimise the use of its land and buildings either to generate income or increase community value without overextending its resources. Equally, councillors have been keen within their feedback to ensure that staffing structures are fit for the future and able to flex and adapt to the needs of the City.

### Economic Growth and Tourism in a Heritage Context

As a major visitor destination, Wells has significant economic potential. The Council's role is not to lead tourism, but to enable it, protect the city's heritage, and support businesses and events that drive economic vitality. By working collaboratively with partners to enhance and sell the unique offering of the city, further opportunity can be provided to businesses.

### **How we will work**

Within the latter page of the draft, reference is made to how the Council will deliver the priorities. These themes are:

Collaboration, Transparency, Responsibility, Strategy and Innovation.

### **Public Engagement**

To ensure transparency and build community ownership of the plan, it is proposed that a public consultation be carried out over a period of 6–8 weeks. Draft questions are prepared for use via an online survey, paper copies, and local events and can be seen in Appendix B.

The consultation will seek views on the relevance, clarity, and priorities of the plan and invite additional suggestions. Feedback will inform any revisions before final adoption.

**Recommendations**

Council is asked to:

1. Approve the draft Corporate Priorities Plan 2025–2027 for the purposes of public consultation.
2. Delegate authority to the Town Clerk to make any minor formatting or presentation changes.
3. Approve the draft public consultation questions and the approach set out within the paper and Appendix B.
4. Request that a final version of the plan be brought back to Council following the consultation, along with a summary of feedback received.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Draft Corporate Priorities 2025–2027 Plan (one-page document)
- Appendix B: Draft Public Consultation Questions

## **Consultation - Suggested Questions**

### **General Awareness & Understanding**

1. Before today, were you aware of Wells City Council's plans for the next two years?
2. Do you feel the proposed priorities reflect the needs of Wells and its residents?

### **Financial Sustainability and Governance**

3. How important do you think it is for the Council to strengthen its governance and financial planning?
4. Are there specific services or areas where you feel better financial management is most needed?

### **Climate and Asset Management**

5. The Council plans to focus on the sustainability of its own buildings and land. Do you support this localised approach to climate action?
6. What improvements would you like to see in how the Council manages its assets (e.g. public buildings, green spaces)?

### **Council Services**

7. Are there any council services you feel are at risk and should be prioritised for protection?
8. Would you support the Council generating income through better use of its assets if it helps maintain services?

### **Tourism and the Local Economy**

9. What role should the Council play in supporting tourism and local businesses in Wells?
10. How can we make sure tourism benefits the city without negatively impacting residents?

### **Open Feedback**

11. Which of the four priorities is most important to you personally?
12. Is there anything missing from the Council's plan that you think should be included?