



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL,
WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND, WILL BE HELD IN
WELLS TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2026, 7PM**

Haylee Wilkins
Town Clerk

17th September 2026

Town Hall, Market Place
Wells
BA5 2RB
01749 673091
e-mail: townclerk@wells.gov.uk

Committee Members:
Cllrs: L Agabani, J Browne, T Butt Philip,
S Cursley, D Denis (Mayor), S Eden,
J Edmonds, G Folkard, K Kinshaw,
T Kolizeras, D Orrett, S Powell, G Robbins,
H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

AGENDA

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency. All reports should include climate implications alongside financial, legal, and community impacts to support informed decision-making and minimise adverse effects.

Members are asked to consider whether recommendations align with the Council's corporate priorities, climate emergency declaration, resource constraints, and financial implications.

Please note this meeting will be recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct as adopted 12th May 2022.
- 3 NOMINATION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**
To receive nominations for and appoint to the position of Deputy Mayor
- 4 MINUTES FROM THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23RD JULY 2026**
To be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair (attached).



5 ACTIONS FROM THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23RD JULY 2026

Open actions not on the agenda are listed below:

Date Raised	Description of Action
21.05.2026	26/96/C – Consideration of small sweeper with Somerset Council
25.06.2026	26/111/C – Request to consider quoracy of council meetings within standing orders and best practice.

6 MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Chair.

If you wish to speak at the meeting, you are encouraged to contact

reception@wells.gov.uk to advise in advance, to aid the management of time

7 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sunday 8th November, 9:45am, Civic Remembrance Service and Parade, St Cuthbert's Church
- Wednesday 11th November, 11am, Armistice Day

More information on these events to follow.

Mayor's Diary

25th Sept Cider & Cheese Festival, Wells Cathedral

26th Sept Axbridge Blackberry Carnival

27th Sept Mayor's Charity Quiz, Tramways

4th Oct Somerset YFC Harvest Thanksgiving Service, Wells Cathedral

6th Oct Friends of Wells Cathedral Divine Light Event, Wells Cathedral

6th Oct Floral Art Club, Wells Little Theatre

8th Oct Woolly Rhino Skull Launch, Wells Museum

9th Oct Wells Art Contemporary VIP Private View, Wells Cathedral

11th Oct Moat Boat Race Presentation Evening, Bishop's Palace

15th Oct Lunch at Abbeyfield House

15th Oct Licensing Service for The Revd Sarah Cornick, St Cuthbert's Church

16th Oct Somerset Chair's Award for Service to the Community, Taunton

22nd Oct Wells Festival of Literature 2026 Event for Schools, Cedars Hall

8 OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2026 (attached).

9 STAFFING & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2026 (attached).

10 FINANCE COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2026 (attached).

11 CIVIC & ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2026 (to follow).

12 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of meetings held on 16th July 2026, 31st July 2026 and 17th August 2026, under delegated authority (attached) and 17th September 2026 (to follow).

13 PRESENTATION FROM LEAD SOCIAL PRESCRIBING LINK WORKER WITH THE LOCAL GP PRACTICES (WEST MENDIP PCN)

To receive presentation from Keith Harrison on local implementation and impact.



14 POLICY ADOPTION

To adopt the following policies as agreed by Committees (attached):

1. Tree Policy
2. Staff Handbook
3. Health & Safety Handbook
4. Severe Weather Policy
5. Community Emergency Plan

15 CHRISTMAS LIGHT PROVISION 2026-27

To receive verbal update from the Town Clerk and Chair of Finance on associated decisions for provision in 2026 and 2027.

16 20MPH SCHEME PROPOSAL

To receive the final draft proposal with verbal update from the Town Clerk, and agreed the associated consultation of the scheme (attached)

17 HERITAGE TOURISM

To receive verbal update from the Town Clerk and Working Group Representative

18 LETS CELEBRATE TOWNS BID 2026

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk

19 DEVOLUTION

To receive update and associated decision from the Town Clerk regarding land/asset transfers, as inform to Outside Spaces Committee (attached)

20 CONFIDENTIAL – PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

To received the confidential paper for consideration, from Finance Committee.

Exclusion of Press and Public - The committee are required to consider passing a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Note the agenda item number and name). Where possible, reference the specific paragraph from Schedule 12A:

Personal information - This report contains information relating to an individual and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Commercially sensitive information - This report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

21 CONFIDENTIAL - THRIVE WELCOME HUB

To receive the confidential paper for consideration, from Finance Committee.

Exclusion of Press and Public - The committee are required to consider passing a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Note the agenda item number and name). Where possible, reference the specific paragraph from Schedule 12A:

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1972.

Commercially sensitive information - This report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

22 PLAY & LEISURE STRATEGY UPDATE

To receive verbal update from the Town Clerk on the Strategy progress and next steps.

23 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive any associated reports.

1. Report from the Connect Community Trust based at the Connect Centre which has been renamed **Elim Church Wells** (attached).

24 TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

To receive any associated reports.

25 FORWARD PLAN

Full City Council Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
Customer Charter & Customer Journey	October 2026
Leisure Strategy & Play Project Update	October 2026
Events on Council Land Policy Adoption	October 2026
Corporate Risk Register	October 2026
Leisure Strategy & Play Project Update	October 2026
WRGT Update	October 2026
Adoption of Statutory Annual Policy i. Standing Orders ii. Financial Regulations iii. Scheme of Delegation	December 2026
Adoption of 2026-27 Budget	December 2026
Corporate Risk Register	January 2027
Adoption of 2026-27 Budget (if required)	January 2027
Leisure Strategy & Play Project Update	January 2027
Corporate Risk Register & Annual Risk Profile and Assessment	March 2027
Calendar of Public Meetings	March 2027
Priorities & Project Planning	April 2027
General Power of Competency	Every political cycle

26 ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

27 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 22nd October 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23rd JULY 2026 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on agendas: [Wells City Council](#) website

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, S Cursley, D Denis (Mayor), S Eden, J Edmonds, G Folkard, K Kinshaw, T Kolizeras, D Orrett, S Powell (Deputy Mayor), I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: C Price
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Somerset Cllr for Wells and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
4 members of the public

26/135/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: J Browne, T Butt Philip, G Robbins, H Siggs

26/136/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received

The Mayor thanked WCC Staff for the hard work delivering a successful Freedom of the city award event for L Sweales. She also wished all students who've sat exams her best wishes for their results .

26/137/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 25th JUNE 2026

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

26/138/C ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 25th JUNE 2026

The Town Clerk gave an update on the actions listed below.

Date Raised	Description of Action
21.05.2026	26/96/C – Consideration of small sweeper with Somerset Council The Town Clerk had been in conversations with Cllr T Butt Philip and MP T Munt. No resolution has been reached as yet
25.06.2026	26/111/C – Request to consider quoracy of council meetings within standing orders and best practice. The Town Clerk reported that WCC are quorate in terms of Standing Orders. The best practice processes are being reviewed in more depth

The Mayor asked the Town Clerk if the wording change requested by Cllr G Folkard had been circulated.

The Town Clerk assured that she would confirm that this had taken place.

The Mayor thanks Cllr S Powell for her dedication in getting the table tennis table project completed as it has recently been installed

26/139/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

M Phelps of Palace farm reported that he had received a letter from the Church Commission that had informed him that the car parking in Palace fields must cease immediately. M Phelps was concerned that events such as Rail-Wells, Moat Race and Food festival would be jeopardised. He very much wants to continue offering a parking option and is aware that the decision from the Church Commission is due to their planning applications for development on the land. M Phelps asked that WCC write to the Church commission to request that Palace Farm remain open.



M Phelps asked that WCC write to the Church Commission stressing the importance of this location as a valuable parking provision in Wells.

C Price who is a Rail-Wells volunteer concurred with M Phelps' concerns for the loss of parking.

Cllr L Agabani stressed that trying to find a Plan B for parking other than at Palace fields would be very difficult and he asked that WCC do write a letter to the Church Commission.

The Town Clerk assured that she would write a letter to the Church Commission at the earliest opportunity.

C Simons mentioned that he had emailed all councillors and provided a drawing of the recreation ground to demonstrate the size of the area that would be taken up by the skatepark should it be located there. C Simons believes that there are several locations within the recreation ground that would house the skatepark. He asked that WCC look again where the new skatepark is located as the location next to Portway would in his opinion exclude a lot of people from the centre of Wells.

The Mayor thanked C Simons for his input and mentioned that there would be cost implications for removal of the old skatepark, planning, public consultation. These are aspects that the consideration of location will of to the working group.

A discussion took place about the infrastructure at the old skatepark location which will require removal, and the challenges, savings and expenses that are faced by moving locations. The ownership of the land by Somerset Council was spoken of.

The Town Clerk stressed that WCC have an agreement with Somerset about the land which will need consideration going forward.

26/140/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

22nd September - Honours Board Reception, Wells Town Hall at 6pm. All Councillors are invited to attend.

Mayor's Diary

- i. 6th August Visit to Abbeyfield House for resident 100th Birthday
- ii. 6th August Hiroshima Commemoration, Bishop's Palace
- iii. 8th August Wells Railway Fraternity, Wells Town Hall
- iv. 9th August Twinning BBQ, Wells Museum
- v. 31st August Moat Boat Race
- vi. 4th September Sculpture Exhibition, Stoberry Park Garden
- vii. 13th September Battle of Britain Commemoration, Street
- viii. 16th September Wells Memory Café, Methodist Church Hall
- ix. 19th September Heritage Open Day, Almshouses

26/141/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr G Folkard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2026
No questions received.

26/142/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of meetings held on 29th June (under delegated authority) and 16th July 2026

No questions received.

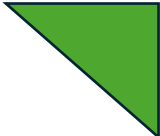
Cllr S Powell informed the meeting that following a meeting with the Town Clerk that the response to the draft local plan had been submitted to Somerset Council.

26/143/C ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr L Agabani presented the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2026 in the absence of Cllrs H Siggs and G Robbins respectively

No questions received.

26/144/C PRESENTATION FROM LEAD SOCIAL PRESCRIBING LINK WORKER WITH THE



LOCAL GP PRACTICES (WEST MENDIP PCN)

The Town Clerk apologised that there had been miscommunication regarding the dates for tonight's presentation and that Keith Harrison would receive an invitation to Full Council in either September or October 2026

26/145/C GRANT POLICY ADOPTION

Cllr S Cursley proposed that Wells City Council adopt the Grant Policy, following endorsement from Finance Committee. Seconded by Cllr P Welch.
Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

26/146/C DEPUTY MAYOR RESIGNATION

Cllr S Powell explained to the meeting her reasons for resignation.
Councillors voted unanimously to accept the resignation.

26/147/C PLAY & LEISURE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update from the Town Clerk on the Strategy progress and next steps. Following a meeting today 23rd July 2026. The items discussed will be presented to the working group and updates at the next Outside Space meeting and Estates meeting.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for taking on the task.

26/148/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Mayor presented the Wells & Rural LCN Draft AGM Minutes and Annual Report and reported that Cllr E Hobbs had agreed to stand as Chair of the LCN.

Cllr L Agabani spoke of the need for Stewards at the Moat Race. Stewards are needed to take up a 2-hour shift between 12.30 and 2.30. He asked that Councillors consider helping the event and/or spreading the word regarding this.

Cllr L Agabani gave an update on the Skatepark charity. He stressed that he is not a Trustee. The charity has made the decision to put an end date to the funding and it will end on 31st December 2026. The figure raised so far is £362k and are £138k short of the desired target. There are still some grants in the works at the moment. If the target is not reached by December, the developers will be approached to look at a plan with the smaller budget. Hopefully in April/May 2027 the build will start. In September/October 2026, there will be a proposal come to Full Council regarding the ongoing maintenance and management of the skatepark once completed.

Cllr T Kolizeras asked about collaboration with quarries.

Cllr L Agabani responded that this was already the case and agreements were already in place.

26/149/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

Somerset Cllr for Wells and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills, T Munt offered to pass on questions anyone might have about the monthly report.

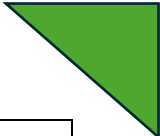
Cllr D Denis asked for information about the Government's issuing of a Best Value notice on Somerset Council.

MP T Munt said that she thought it disappointing in the delivery of the best value notice but that progress was already being made and will continue. Somerset Council are already taking a structured approach after removal of the district structure. T Munt acknowledged that anyone will be able to point to areas where improvements are needed. Somerset Council have appointed a senior Finance/Legal Officer.

Cllr D Orrett referred to the appointment of a new Prime Minister and asked what is needed to stop adult social care being a burden on council finances.

MP T Munt spoke of her hopes that the new Prime Minister looks at social care and understand the issues.

26/150/C



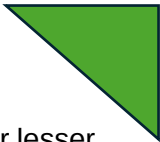
Deputy Mayor Appointment	September 2026
Christmas Light Delivery	September 2026
Heritage Tourism Update	September 2026
Customer Charter & Customer Journey	September 2026
Leisure Strategy & Play Project Update	September 2026
Public Toilet Provision	September 2026
Events on Council Land Policy Adoption	September 2026
Traffic Management – 20MPH proposal consideration	September 2026
Tree Policy Adoption and Green Corridors Policy	September 2026
Tree Supplier Procurement and Appointment of supplier	September 2026
Health & Safety Handbook Adoption	September 2026
Community Resilience Plan Adoption	September 2026
Corporate Risk Register	October 2026
Leisure Strategy & Play Project Update	October 2026
WRGT Update	October 2026
Adoption of Statutory Annual Policy i. Standing Orders ii. Financial Regulations iii. Scheme of Delegation	December 2026
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Calendar of Public Meetings	March 2027
Priorities & Project Planning	April 2027
	Every political cycle

The Town Clerk mentioned that September's meeting had a full agenda and was likely to be a longer meeting than usual. The lack of August meeting may need to be reviewed.

26/151/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr L Agabani reported that the Skateboard charity had approached St Cuthbert Out Parish Council for a contribution to the Skatepark and were disappointed to be refused.

Cllr P Welch asked how much money had been requested.



Cllr L Agabani answered that they asked for £15K but that it is very much the norm for lesser amounts to be donated. Cllr L Agabani mentioned that surveys of potential users had already taken place and this did not require being repeated.

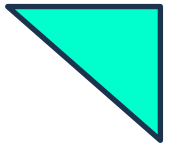
The Mayor asked if there were any communications that could be made tactfully. The Town Clerk believes that communication should come from the charity in the first instance and that perhaps a follow up could be considered.

The RFO presented an amendment to the AGAR for the year 2024/2025. An item on the annual governance statement should have been restated that we didn't provide the opportunity for elector's rights. The Town Clerk assured that this was a simple clarification process.

Councillors voted unanimously to accept the amendment.

26/152/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 24th September 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

Minutes signed by The Mayor.....Date



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: D Denis, J Edmonds, K Kinshaw, T Kolizeras, D Orrett (Chair),
S Powell, G Robbins

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
Outside Spaces Manager: Matt Johnson
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
19 members of the public

26/76/OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllr T Butt Philip

26/77/OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's
Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None received

26/78/OS MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Malcolm Burton spoke on the report regarding the 20mph speed limit. He stated that while the report was professional, and that Somerset has good guidelines regarding speed limits, that the 20mph speed limit across Wales was a failure and is now being revised to 30mph. He questioned the number of recorded accidents in proposed areas in Wells and how many accidents will be prevented.

The Town Clerk has offered to provide the accident data for these locations, especially in regard to Ash Lane and Kennion Road where the main concern is the number of near misses that occurred in these locations, especially within close proximity to the school.

Jane Truman asked the trustees of the recreation ground about the plan to divide the recreation ground into four distinct areas and the proposed pathways. She raised concerns that if this plan were to be implemented, there would be little green space left on the recreation ground.

Cllr D Orrett commented that there had recently been a meeting of the Wells Recreation Ground Trust Working Group (WRGT Working Group), and that the next public meeting would be held on 1st October 2026.

The Town Clerk restated that there is a public meeting of the trust on October 1st, 2026 which will include items such as feedback from the WRGT Working Group. The Town Clerk clarified that the purpose of the Working Group was to look at all options and bring them to the meeting on 1st October 2026, where these will then go to full public consultation.

Paul Truman requested that the trustee of the recreation ground share what the charity commissioners' reaction to the car park proposal was.

The Town Clerk clarified that at this time, the proposal was being discussed within the Working Group, and that any program of work would be supported by full consultation at the correct time. The map being referred to was created to depict the space, to support the Working Group's discussions. Currently there is no decision made as this is the decision of the WRGT. The charity

commission would also need to be consulted on decisions to seek their feedback.

Rosa Kell spoke on the green spaces, sharing that many people use the recreation ground to meet and spend time there and are against the hedge and wall coming down. She is against the car park being extended due to the road being narrow, overused and prone to accidents, and suggested the car parking spaces of shops nearby be used as public parking spaces rather than private parking.

Christine Costello stated that the recreation ground has nothing wrong with it. The trees in the area by the bandstand were used as a shaded area over the summer, the recreation ground is well used and loved. Accessibility in her opinion is perfect even if the bumpy paths need work. The wall being removed is a historic wall within a conservation area within the precincts of the Bishop's Palace.

June Hodgson stated that she'd heard Plane Trees are diseased and wondered what the truth was regarding this.

The Town Clerk clarified that the trees are surveyed regularly which are overseen by The Outside Spaces Officer. If actions are required they will be completed. Updates on trees are provided by the Outside Spaces Manager at the Outside Spaces committee meetings.

The Outside Spaces Manager asked for clarification as to which trees were being referred to. June Hodgson confirmed she was referring to the trees by the houses. He informed the meeting that contractors took out dead wood from these trees last summer.

Cllr D Denis recalled the report from before this work was done, stating that some of the top branches had a virus and the work that was completed will limit and control the spread of the disease.

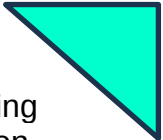
The Town Clerk clarified there had been no recent survey completed by the Council as they are completed on a rotational basis. The trees are surveyed in 3 to 4 years. The Town Clerk has requested more information on who completed the survey, and will be in contact with June.

Jo Brown agreed with Christine on her opinion on the recreation ground and asked why it wasn't valued as an open green space. She stated the improvements reduce green space and that the addition of furniture and equipment that will be often left unused will leave the green space looking ugly. She asked why the space isn't valued as it is, as it's a treasured asset of the people of Wells.

Liz Pedley and Liz O Sullivan (Campaigners for improvements at the Ash Lane and College Road's A39 junction)

They reported that they have not yet had a meeting with Cllr T Butt Philip and asked for this to be brought to his attention.

They've sent data over to The Town Clerk and met with Tessa Munt who supports their concerns and attended the LCN workers group. The government is promoting active travel but parents are choosing schools based on safe crossing points. They set up a speed camera for a week which wasn't particularly helpful. Police won't set up enforcement as average speeds were about 31mph. They are hopeful that the new Wells Speed-watch team will help in monitoring this junction. Many near misses have been witnessed, and in 2014 there was a fatality. A freedom of information request has been completed



to gain further information. Somerset are due to reline the area and adding signs, though can't provide an assessment report that led to that decision, leading to the feeling that not much difference will be made from this.

Liz O Sullivan has researched data regarding collisions and found a UK road collision map that features a cluster of accidents at the junction in question. The Town Clerk thanked them both for their data, and mentioned a future proposal of the purchase of our own speed indication devices.

Shirley Garner complained that the weeds around the city were offsetting the beauty of the planters, and asked the council if they object to the weeds being removed for ecological or financial reasons.

Cllr D Orrett stated that some weeds are kept as pollinating plants, and that weed removal does have to be volunteer led as we don't have the resources or pesticide policy.

The Town Clerk stated that Somerset Council are responsible and that Wells City Council do add additional values when possible and when resources allow. Shirley commented that in regards to some people preserving weeds for ecological reasons, she cannot find evidence that this is the case.

Christopher Hornridge asked about the progress for the improvement of Wi-Fi connectivity in Wells.

The Town Clerk confirmed that we have been reaching out to telecommunications companies regarding this, and that update is due to be provided to the next Full Council meeting.

26/79/OS APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr J Edmonds was put forward for nomination by Cllr D Denis, seconded by Cllr D Orrett. The vote was unanimous.

26/80/OS MINUTES FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4th JUNE 2026

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

26/81/OS ACTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4th JUNE 2026

Date Raised	Description of Action
30.04.2026	Confirm the placement of the table tennis table within the recreation ground
30.04.2026	To provide details of pollinators within the 2027 planting of the city.
30.04.2026	Confirmation of the removal of the map board posts outside the Town Hall.
30.04.2026	Town Clerk to review the "red circles" marked on trees in the recreation ground.

The Town Clerk gave updates regarding the following actions:

- The table tennis table is in situ and in use.
- The pollinators details are on the agenda for this meeting.
- The map board post removal has been completed.

Additional actions:

Tinknells Roundabout Sponsorship – proposal is for discussion this evening.

Cllr T Butt Philip raised an suggestion regarding sponsorship for Somerset which is within the agenda for this meeting.



Cllr S Powell asked for information about the benches on the moat walk. The church commissioners have been approached regarding works and maintenance of that location. The City Council has submitted a bid.

Cllr S Powell also asked for tree guards for the trees on the Cathedral Green after tree came down. Work is in progress with work regarding the trees mentioned.

Publication of pollinators has been completed following a request from the previous meeting.

26/82/OS SASP PRESENTATION

Nobody was available to present and has been deferred to the next meeting.

26/83/OS REPORT FROM OUTSIDE SPACES MANAGER

The drought made it a challenging month. The trees on the Cathedral Green that came down due to the dry weather as the roots had become brittle and had lost support.

The Outside spaces team have been doing tidy up tasks around the band stand and tidying up hedges. The drought has significantly affected the timber in the playground.

The Town Clerk stated fingerposts are not our responsibility however they have been maintained by Wells City Council as these posts provide added value to the city.

Cllr D Denis asked if flowers for the bandstand barrier baskets could be single head flowers for pollinators?

The Outside Spaces Manager commented that the flowers are not guaranteed to flower for as long as she would like if the planting is rescheduled.

Cllr D Denis has asked to trial this at the bandstand.

The Town Clerk clarified that she had asked the Outside Spaces Manager to use leftover products already purchased within these baskets at the moment.

Cllr D Denis asked if the playground castle and the trees on the rec were an outside spaces decision or a WRGT decision.

The Town Clerk confirmed that any work in relation to the trees in the recreation ground were reported to the Wells Recreation Ground Trust, however the trust only meets twice a year so delegations allow the committee to make operational decisions.

26/84/OS TRAFFIC UPDATES & CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED TRAFFIC SCHEME

The Town Clerk reported that new locations were added to the report and inconsistencies highlighted. New locations added to the proposal are Kennion Rd, Ash lane and Welsford Avenue. The Committee were asked if they are comfortable to open this to consultation.

D Denis commented that Cllr T Butt Philip has asked for the consideration of additional points of a 20mph zone starting before reaching Budgens, Little Entry lane to be included, Beryl Lane, Lethbridge Road and Golding Close.

The Town Clerk commented that Somerset Highways recommend the scheme be broken into phases and other areas looked at afterwards.



Cllr S Powell commented that it seems quite messy and requires a lot of new signage, and asked why it can't be a blanket 20mph zone. The Town Clerk responded that Somerset isn't able to deliver a blanket 20mph zone, and that a phased approach is recommended as moving from a higher speed zone to lower required phasing and in some areas this couldn't be achieved.

A brief discussion took place about the effectiveness of small 20mph zones compared with blanket 20mph areas.

The Town Clerk asked if councillors were comfortable with Appendix F, the survey, which cover other amendments

Cllr S Powell asked for clarification on the new loading and disabled bay amendments and what the changes were.

The Town Clerk responded that the bays would be disabled and loading bays for 2 hours longer, lasting until 8pm. The purpose is to increase disabled parking spaces.

Cllr S Powell pointed out that with this, delivery drivers may not be able to get into loading bays to access shops due to the bays being used as disabled parking, and asked what can be done about this.

The Town Clerk responded that the increase won't impact that, but that it will stop others from parking in loading bays, though suggested doing a campaign to support this and could do a consultation on wider engagement and understanding of who bays were accessible to and when. Equally there is due to be consideration of changes by Somerset Council in due course on street provision.

Cllr S Powell commented that, in regards to the survey, it seems quite complicated, and asked if it was possible to simplify the survey.

The Town Clerk responded that the City Council needs to evidence every element of change, in order to be able to evidence to Somerset Council that the scheme is viable and accepted. Equally, if not accepted, which elements require further amendment based on public opinion.

Cllr S Powell asked a question regarding the 20mph survey and what the survey relates to?

The Town Clerk clarified that the survey has sections explaining the areas listed, and the online survey would be a lot clearer.

26/85/OS POLICE AND CRIME UPDATES

The Town Clerk reported that there was nothing of significant note. Sgt Simon Lancey and the Town Clerk continue to meet monthly and the statistics provided show no significant areas of concern. The Town Clerk advised that following community feedback, the City Council have asked for support for speeding vehicles through the city, and targeted action regarding cyclists riding against traffic and threatening pedestrian safety.

26/86/OS RECREATION GROUND TRUST (WRGT)

Cllr K Kinshaw reported a fruitful discussion had taken place within the Working Group, with a range of ideas raised. No decisions have been made as of yet and all decisions will go to the Outside Spaces Committee as well as to the next Trust (WRGT) meeting in October, as well as relevant public consultation being completed for specific projects at the appropriate time.



Cllr G Robbins would like to have talking benches installed in the recreation ground.

The Town Clerk clarified that the WRGT meeting 1st October 2026 will include all feedback and proposals raised and previous proposals. Assuming the trust agree to proceed then it will proceed to public consultation and then back to the WRGT.

Cllr S Powell stated that it was necessary to ensure a wide range of views were represented regarding the changes being made. Cllr K Kinshaw agreed with this.

26/87/OS OPERATIONAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The Outside Spaces Officer explained that this document gives transparency regarding the work that takes place explaining the frequency of grass-cutting etc. From this document a master map will be created to improve transparency and provide specifics of what the team do and when.

The Town Clerk added that it allows the Outside Spaces Officer to plan and deliver the work and allows us to communicate with the public and manage expectations.

The Outside Spaces Officer added that this sets out our position. This year has been odd and work done was driven by the weather. An end of year performance review will allow budget management .

S Powell asked about the frequency of the grass-cutting at St Cuthbert's Churchyard

The Outside Spaces Officer advised that he would provide a specific answer in writing, but that if alterations to the scheme, or cutting schedule were viable, these could be worked into the plan for that space.

The Town Clerk clarified there were other churchyards maintained for the church so this would be acceptable.

Cllr D Denis added that mixed mowing takes place at St Cuthbert's Church and there are areas for wildflowers. Tor Hill Lane among other areas have an MOU (Memorandum of understanding) to take into consideration.

The Outside Spaces Officer stated that, considering devolution, this would be the framework for what to do with our assets.

Cllr D Orrett commented that people often view wildlife meadow areas as neglected areas, and asked how to manage this.

The Town Clerk suggested providing education information regarding these meadows in advance, which has been positively received in the past.

Cllr D Orrett invited proposals to adopt the Land classification document

Proposal made by Cllr D Denis

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/88/OS TREE POLICY & GREEN CORRIDORS

The Outside Spaces Officer presented the document created to firm up how WCC operate and for Councillors to consider the four options identified in the report. He described it as a tree policy that takes the scientific approach, looking at trees throughout their life cycle.

Cllr D Denis commented that it was a great report and asked that volunteer wardens to be used as takes place in Swindon.

Cllr S Powell stated that she's all for leaving dead trees, but to consider the trees in the recreation ground.



The Outside Spaces Officer responded that we need to be pragmatic in our approach to felling trees.

The Town Clerk added that delegated authority has to be with the Outside Spaces Officer or herself in an emergency.

Cllr T Kolizeras spoke about the importance of standing dead wood.

The Outside Spaces Officer spoke briefly:

Item 13B - Regarding green corridors, currently there are no formal organisations working together on this at the moment. We are one of the biggest asset holders so we need to encourage biodiversity, use Raptors for example to manage pigeons.

Item 13C - WEN is looking to survey/log ancient trees. The Outside Spaces Officer does not feel he is in a position to authorise it and is concerned that volunteers are registering ancient trees which may impact the planning committee.

Cllr D Denis mentioned that Wells City Council's main trees are not on ground where planning applications are likely and that trees are already TPO'd.

The Outside Spaces Officer agrees with the process, however the principle needs to be that councillors are happy with the process being followed.

The Town Clerk suggested that the volunteers collecting information return the information to the Council before it is officially logged.

The Outside Spaces Officer commented that the trees that are added to that register could add a weight to proposed plans in an area.

The Town Clerk added that there are pros and cons in each direction of this.

A brief discussion took place regarding the rationale and the process used when using volunteers to survey trees.

Cllr. D D Orrett invited a proposal to adopt the policy.

Cllrs were in agreement with all recommendations for items 13A, 13B and 13C, and Option 2 on page 9 of the volunteers' survey document:

Cllr K Kinshaw proposed to adopt the above policy with Option 2.

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/89/OS ROUNDABOUT REDESIGN

The Outside Spaces Officer confirmed that the Tinknell roundabout re-design was being funded by Somerset Council with no financial risk to Wells City Council.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Cllr T Butt Philip referenced historical funding that was available. Somerset have confirmed that funds are available, however have not confirmed how much. They've asked for a Purchase Order associated with the works, and will then confirm if they can cover the costs. If Somerset cannot cover the costs, WCC will not proceed as funding is not available.

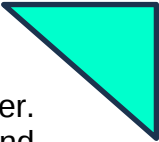
Cllr. S Powell proposed the Roundabout redesign.

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/90/OS KNAPP HILL PROJECT UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the project is progressing well. Draft plans are underway, which will lead to a funding request being sent to Somerset River



Authority. Our role is to support the funding elements, acting as the bid holder. A potential of £20,000 which will provide the necessary drawings and topographical surveys to allow the scheme to move forwards. It will be up to the Golf Club to deliver and they are budgeting accordingly. Local supplier, Penny's, are keen to support the project for free. WCC have facilitated engagement and funding progress will be seen next year.

26/91/OS LEISURE AND PLAY STRATEGY

The Town Clerk reported that the strategy is progressing with a draft coming forward to future council meetings. All changes will go to consultation. Cllr T Butt Philip had requested looking into locations within 10 minutes of an open space or play provision of some type, which has been completed. Currently play areas are all less than a 10 minute walk away for those in the city. The allotments are more sparse comparatively. There will hopefully be an outline draft at the next meeting.

26/92/OS MARKETS UPDATE & CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk reported that she'd received a petition/feedback from Market traders regarding the Terms and Conditions offered by the Council. These are no different than they were previously under Somerset or Mendip council, though we are enforcing terms that have been laid out.

Cllr G Robbins added that under Somerset Council the enforcement of terms and conditions were comparatively lax.

The Town Clerk spoke of a discussion she had with Cllr D Orrett regarding verbal feedback. The Market moving forward will become a standing item on every Outside Spaces Agenda. The best way to proceed is to consult everyone who uses the space, however we can anticipate that the concerns will be related to holiday entitlement. The importance for Market Officers is to keep the market full, and allowing us to bring new traders in the market, which also applies to the monthly market.

Cllr L Agabani, who received the feedback/petition has acknowledged receipt and responded directly in support of officers and refuted incorrect claims made, but had not responded in general to the petition/feedback. The Town Clerk thanked Cllr L Agabani for that support. The trader who sent the petition claims to be representing 80% of traders however this has yet to be proven. The consultation will get a balanced view. The councillors were asked if they would be happy to consult.

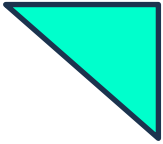
Cllr D Orrett asked for clarification on how stalls were managed during holiday periods of traders.

The Outside Spaces Manager clarified that traders need to set a criteria to retain their status as a regular trader as WCC need to maintain the business to business deal.

The Town Clerk added that WCC have supported stallholders who needed to take extended leave, ensuring their pitch will still be available when they return. There is guidance to ensure consistency for both us and traders. The Sunday markets were always required to be a different provision to the weekly markets.

Cllr K Kinshaw stated that she believes we should respond to the petition/feedback and suggested asking for what the expectation is regarding the number of days suitable as a holiday entitlement.

The Town Clerk responded that there is an expectation that consultation will lead to a variety of responses. There will be a response issued soon to the petition explaining the upcoming consultation.



Unanimous agreement to consultation.

26/93/OS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Town Clerk confirmed we have a community preparedness template, which uses similar elements to the business continuity plan. We've taken the community emergency plan and applied the community elements from this, forming a plan for how Wells City Council will respond to issues within the community. The Town Clerk's new officer will create a process around education and support, which will lead to the creation of a comms plan around preparedness.

Cllr D Denis asked if there would be a working party set up to work on some of the issues within this. She also asked about weekend cover for this plan, and about the 24 hour contact for this plan being the Town Hall number.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, in regards to the Town Hall contact number, the phone lines are in the process of being updated to have a directory which will allow contact with this 24 hour phone line. The emergency out of hours rota that allows for 24/7 cover is not being applied as of yet.

Cllr D Denis raised the voluntary organisations asking to be included in the working party.

The Town Clerk reported that part of the community preparedness plan, there would be at least an annual test event that could be extended into a working group.

Cllrs voted unanimously to adopt the Community resilience Plan.

26/94/OS DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Town Clerk stated that, while we await the completion of land transfers by Somerset legal team, we are managing areas of land whilst awaiting Title deed transfers. Following communication from Somerset Council, the Town Clerk reported that some areas are not as we thought, predominantly around waterways. The title deed for some areas of land are significant and include areas of hard standing and waterways. Somerset are not willing to split the deeds and incur the costs of that. This paper lists the multiple anomalies, including The Rugby Club and areas of land which are included in two current draft planning applications. Devolution has been temporarily suspended until these planning applications are decided. This timeline has no limit and it is recommended that this area is removed. The area including Charter Way and play area, can be proceeded with and perhaps more appropriate for Section 106 money.

- i. Tor Hill Lane. The whole area is significant to WCC. The Town Clerk recommends taking the Title deed for this area and the risk of the waterway because of this, though we would want at least 2 years support for waterway supportive maintenance.

Cllr S Powell asked if the path would be included.

The Town Clerk clarified that the area from Tor Street to the end of the playing field is not included, however the rest is as depicted in the adjoining plan. This gives WCC greater ability to affect change in this area, specifically regarding accessible travel. It's a significant area with an MOU already in place that will benefit the city. The flooding risk associated will potentially be reduced over time

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- ii. The Hawkers Lane play area, which is split into three title deeds. The first is the area from the culvert up to halfway into the ditch, which the Town Clerk recommends taking the risk of this area with a 2 year agreement for support. The second area has several properties which overhang into the area, The Town Clerk recommends taking the play area but not the risk from the properties, leaving the risk of this with Somerset. The third area is Drake Road which, similarly to above, is not worth the risk of taking the title deeds of the properties within this area.
 - iii. Osmond Drive, Jocelyn Drive, etc. There are no major issues in this area, however we should still have a 2 year agreement.
 - iv. Sealey Crescent and Churchill Road. There are concerns around parking provisions as much of this is used as informal parking, which we are in no position to enforce. The Town Clerk suggests continuing to manage the grass here under our current management agreement however to not take the title deed due to the parking concerns.
 - v. Churchill Road East., Durkheim Drive, Woodbury Avenue. The proposal is the same as listed above, with the same concerns.

The Town Clerk asked if councillors are comfortable with these proposals being raised at Full Council.

The Town Clerk stressed the point that market rights were provided to the city of Wells making these the rights of the city rather than the current custodian.

All councillors agreed to all recommendations as noted within the report and proposed to recommend to Full Council.

26/95/OS FORWARD PLAN

Topic	Month
Christmas Light Update	October 2026
Dog Fouling Policy and Publication	October 2026
Police and Crime Updates	Every Month
Traffic Updates	Every Month
Recreation Ground Trust (WRGT)	Every Month

The Town Clerk stated that there are some associations related to Christmas lighting that will be raised at the Finance meeting. Some surveys have been completed that have revealed a significant financial impact leading to us likely needing to do an interim solution this year rather than the traditional installations. The infrastructure is not as it should be, and the costs to repair this are significant. There will be proposals raised as to what we will be able to do in the interim.

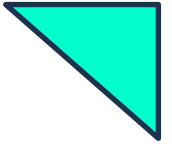
26/96/OS ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Nothing to report.

26/97/OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5th November 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence it will be proposed by the Chairman that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended, excluding the press and public, in order that confidential items can be discussed.



Minutes signed by The Chair: **Date:**

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 6PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL**

COMMITTEE Cllrs: T Butt Philip, S Cursley, S Eden (Chair), J Edmonds, D
MEMBERS PRESENT: Orrett,

IN ATTENDANCE: Officer: Town Clerk, Haylee Wilkins

26/46/S APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
S Eden (Chair)

26/47/S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
There were no declarations

**26/48/S ACTIONS FROM THE STAFFING & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 11TH JUNE 2026.**
There were no actions to report.

**26/49/S MINUTES OF THE STAFFING & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON THURSDAY 11TH JUNE 2026.**
The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

26/50/S MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
No public present.

26/51/S STAFF REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE
No issues noted by representative to report.

26/52/S STAFFING UPDATE
The Town Clerk advised of staffing implications associated with sickness, Maternity and the impact and benefits of cross skilling in advance to manage this impacts.

The Town Clerk updated on staffing matters associated with disciplinary and probation.

It was advised that the pay award for 2025-26 had been agreed at 3.3% and would be retrospectively applied to 1st April 2026 and notification has been provided to all staff accordingly.

26/53/S EMPLOYMENT ACT 2025 UPDATE

The Town Clerk provided a synopsis of changes from April 2025 and the current level of compliance for WCC. It was noted that the Council was fully compliant and that further changes were being applied for the next phase, applicable from 1st October and in readiness for changes in January 2027.

Cllr Butt Philip asked if there was any increase in risk associated with the changes.

The Town Clerk advised, that by amending policy positions now, there was no increased risk of challenge or non-compliance.

26/54/S ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

The Town Clerk advised that the policy looked to implement best practice and was in support of the existing Staff Handbook.

The Policy was unanimously agreed with recommendation and endorsement to Full City Council for adoption.

26/55/S HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

The Town Clerk advised, that this document looked to support and ensure compliance, as well as being in support of other Council documents such as the aforementioned policy and Staff Handbook.

The Policy was unanimously agreed with recommendation and endorsement to Full City Council for adoption.

26/56/S PENSIONS REVIEW

The Town Clerk advised that the LGPS scheme provider had requested a formal resolution of acceptance be provided. The following motion was read out.

Eligibility of the Local Government Pension Scheme

As a member of the LGPS, administered by Peninsula pensions, Wells City Parish Council confirms that all permanent and casual posts within the Council are eligible to join the scheme. That eligibility backdated to commencement of peninsula pensions for Somerset in 2013

The resolution was unanimously agreed with recommendation and endorsement to Finance Committee.

26/57/S FORWARD PLAN

There were no items expressed by Councillors to add to the forward plan.

26/58/S ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

26/59/S DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6pm, Thursday 12th November 2026

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date:

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, T Butt Philip, S Cursley, G Folkard (Chair), S Powell, H Siggs,

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Facilities Manager: L Wassell
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Cllr D Denis (Mayor)
2 members of the public

26/91/F APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllrs: S Eden, I Von Mensenkampff

26/92/F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

Cllr D Denis declared an interest in agenda item 6 as YMCA is the Mayor's Charity and for her involvement with WEN.

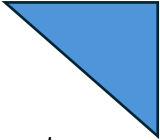
Cllr S Powell and G Folkard declared their interest in 26/96/F for involvement with WEN

26/93/F MINUTES FROM THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 9th JULY 2026
Cllr D Denis asked for information regarding the details for YMCA central costs and details of income and frequency of the Valentine's Coffee van. The RFO reported that a payment had been received from Valentine's Coffee and that discussions were taking place regarding their contract. The Town Clerk reported that she had been informed by YMCA that the CEO had resigned and details of the new contact has been provided. This person has been invited to the October Finance meeting to give their quarterly update ahead of budget setting.

The minutes for the previous meeting were signed as a true record by the Chair.

26/94/F ACTIONS FROM THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON 9th JULY 2026
Open actions not on the agenda are listed below:

Date Raised	Description of Action
May 2026	Explore graphical reports to aid understanding of information, for both cashbook, forecasting.
July 2026	Consideration for future growth and savings Following verbal request from Chair of Committee for any known/expected in year growths or savings to inform forecasting



The Town Clerk reported that the RFO would discuss the graphical reports during the meeting.

The RFO mentioned that some elements of the upcoming reports do demonstrate consideration for future growth and savings

Cllr H Siggs would like growth items pertaining to Estates be given consideration at Finance meetings.

The Town Clerk suggested that the RFO extends an invitation to each committee chair to gain understanding of any items for consideration ahead of budget setting.

26/95/F

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

C Simons spoke about Agenda item 9. He referred to the issue of uplift on the Markets which he believes incurs vat. C Simons declared that in his opinion vat should have been charged from inception and is likely to be in the region of £15K

The RFO reported that this was correct and following advice from a tax consultant that contact would be made with HMRC to correct the situation. The figure is unlikely to be less that C Simons referred to.

A discussion took place about advice received prior to WCC taking over the market.

The Town Clerk agreed that VAT had not been applied prior to WCC running the markets and that WCC are looking into the criteria which may show that payment of VAT won't be applicable. Advice from a reputable source is that WCC are required to pay VAT on market fees. We will challenge this, but need to be prepared. WCC have contacted National Association of Markets and are awaiting a response. which will be passed on to this meeting when it is received.

Cllr S Cursley asked if this issue had contacted the internal auditor.
The RFO will be contacting them.

The discussion took place about payment implications should payment of VAT be required.

The Town Clerk requested that the RFO further explore the matter and present a report to the next meeting on associated implications, risks and HMRC and auditor notification requirements.

TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

Request	Compliance with policy	Value of request
YMCA – Spencer House	Yes	£ 300.00
St Joseph and St Teresa's Church	Yes	£ 500.00
Wells Environmental Network	No accounts received	£ 500.00
Theatre Festival	No accounts received	£ 500.00
RAW Mosaics	No accounts received	£ 500.00
Jazz and Blues Festival	Yes	£ 500.00
Accessible Wells	No accounts received	£ 500.00

Cllr S Powell questioned why applicants who have applied who don't meet the necessary criteria, have been included in the application process, given that the Finance committee set out new qualifying criteria last year.

A lengthy discussion took place about the necessity for applicants to provide accounts, when an organisation may not yet have a year's accounts. It was discussed that other financial information could be provided which would be acceptable in certain circumstances and discretion should be applied by the RFO.

Cllrs excluded The Theatre Festival and the Jazz and Blues Festival, as accounts had not been submitted or where not deemed acceptable. .

YMCA – A discussion took place regarding the application.

Cllrs declined the application.

2 votes in favour of supporting the application and 4 votes against

St Joseph and St Teresa's Church - A discussion took place regarding the application.

Cllrs approved the application 5 votes in favour with 1 abstention.

RAW Mosaics - A discussion took place regarding the application

Cllrs voted unanimously to support the application

Accessible Wells - A discussion took place regarding the application.

Cllrs declined the application. 5 votes against with 1 abstention

WEN - A discussion took place regarding the application.

Cllrs voted unanimously to decline the application

FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS CITY COUNCIL

The RFO presented the monthly reports for July and August.

Cllr H Siggs asked for clarification on the duplication of pension payment. Page 1456 on July accounts.

The RFO explained that there was an error made in her absence during a payroll payment and the payment was paid twice, which corrected itself in April 2026.

The Town Clerk assured those checks had been put in place to prevent further errors.

Cllr H Siggs asked for details on page 398 payment regarding a First 4 repairs payment for £2000 itemised as "First 4 repairs"



The RFO confirmed she would provided clarification to committee ahead of the next meeting.

Cllr H Siggs asked why uniform expenditure had increased?

The Town Clerk explained that PPE such as protective footwear for the Outside spaces team had required replacement due to the end of its life. The Town Clerk assured the meeting that all purchases are signed off and that rather than historical ad-hoc purchasing, quarterly consideration was now in place and being monitored

Cllr H Siggs stressed that local businesses and independent traders should be supported by WCC when purchasing goods, following review of expenditure to larger chains/businesses

The Town Clerk assured him that this is WCC policy and adhered to where possible.

Cllr G Folkard asked the RFO for her opinion on WCC's current financial position if there are any decisions that require attention in the next three months.

The RFO mentioned that additional expenditure has been on salaries and associated contributions due to upskilling of staff to cover staff sickness, maternity leave and to give resilience to staff cover. The RFO demonstrated a graph which demonstrated that the budget is even paced. The forecast for the Portway Annexe is slightly over budget but being managed with amended spend for the next quarter.

Cllr L Agabani expressed his views on which style of chart gave more clarity. The RFO said that she is trialling different options and would bear in mind the preferences offered.

Cllr G Folkard asked if there are decisions that will need to come back to this committee between now and year end.

The RFO replied that only the items on the agenda tonight. The RFO also explained that expenditure had been higher due to CCTV costs and there was expenditure of a large civic event. No other variances were highlighted.

26/98/F

FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

The RFO presented the reports for July and August.

There is an item of income on Page 28 from Valentine's coffee and other Bishop's Barn income.

There has been some expenditure in September due to equipment purchases for the renovation of the bandstand and for the table tennis table.

Cllr L Agabani asked what period the Valentine's coffee covered and was informed it was for the previous quarter.

Cllr D Denis mentioned that Valentine's coffee attendance is not as much as used to take place.

The Town Clerk acknowledged that this was being looked at and that a tender process will be required in the coming months as the agreement with the current supplier had reached its end and is now a rolling agreement.

Cllr L Agabani asked for a copy of lease arrangements. The Town Clerk advised the tender details could be shared in due course.

FEES AND CHARGES

The RFO presented the draft fees and charges in order that Cllrs approve any uplift from 1st April 2027

Wells Cemetery

A discussion took place about price increases for areas in the cemetery.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked about the age limit for plots for child burials as currently Wells cemetery limit for children is aged 16 and he felt that age 18 should be applied.

The Town Clerk agreed and suggested that this could be applied through discretion immediately. .

Cllrs voted on the 5% uplift of cemetery fees with immediate application of the age change for child burials.

Room Hire

The RFO explained that prices for room hire were last uplifted in January 2026. As part of this process, there is a second uplift in order to support the longer term hirers rather than they have one large increase. In addition to inflation uplift, new items such as stage hire have also been added as these were previously not accounted for and in these instances, there is significant setup time.

Storage fees

Storage fees have been suggested at £2.50 per square meter per week.

Cllr D Denis asked if there could be different rates. A community rate and commercial rate.

The RFO reported that a community rate could be investigated.

A discussion took place about usage of the Town Hall for storage

The Estates Manager advised that they would break down information on individual users regarding their current storage use to allow Cllrs to understand the impact of this proposal

Cllr H Siggs asked if the purpose of issuing charges is to increase income or deter users from storing property at the Town Hall.

The Estates Manager reported the purpose was to manage the corporate space being used for minimum return. We have little room but a significant amount of property is stored at the Town Hall.

A discussion took place about the potential proposed costs per month.

The Town Clerk reported that the proposal allows WCC to open up conversations and rationalise use for community use and free up space if possible.

Cllr G Folkard asked for information to be presented at the next Finance meeting before a decision is made on storage fees.

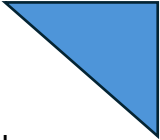
Room Hire Fees

The RFO explained that the increase of 3.4% applied to room hire

All Councillors agreed to the increase.

Bookings

The Town Clerk reported that these fees are for additional items which are currently not taken into consideration such as officer time with stage hire etc.



Cllr L Agabani proposed charges apply immediately.
The Town Clerk assured that bookings taken after 1st October 2026 will have these costs applied.
The Estates Manager mentioned that stage hire was already on the booking form but that a charge is now proposed for tablecloths, glasses, crockery.
All Councillors agreed to the increase.

Marriage Ceremonies

The RFO announced that these prices have not received an uplift since 2023 and that a 10% increase will keep WCC at a competitive rate.

Cllr L Agabani asked about VAT for room bookings?
The RFO reported that all room bookings require VAT
Cllr L Agabani asked in future reports that net values are included.
All Councillors agreed to the increase of 10% for Marriage Ceremonies

Portway Annexe

The RFO reported uplift of 3.4% as at Town Hall.
All Councillors agreed to the increase.

Car Parking costs

The RFO reported that currently the charge is £98.40 per space including vat. and is suggesting an uplift in line with inflation.
All Councillors agreed to the flat rate increase in line with inflation.

Bishop's Barn

The RFO suggested an inflationary increase.
All Councillors agreed to the increase

Market Pitches

The Town Clerk suggested that with reference to the earlier conversation with regards to VAT that this item be deferred to the next Finance meeting agenda.

Allotments

The RFO suggested that these did not require an increase as it is a statutory function and that there had not been any increase in expenditure to warrant increase.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked how the expenditure calculation is made.

The Town Clerk asked the RFO to report running costs for two years be documented to committee and presented to the next Finance meeting so there is a more accurate picture of the expenditure to allow decision.

Sponsorship Fees and charges

The RFO reported that these costs were agreed in June and that they appear in the report as information.

The RFO presented a document which demonstrated income on individual rooms and the growth and changes between functions
The Town Clerk informed the committee that this shows a positive picture of usage and change towards a corporate and community hub model.

26/100/F

GRANTS – MULTI YEAR AGREEMENT POLICY

RFO presented the policy for consideration of its implications regarding next year's budget setting and adoption.

Cllr H Siggs spoke of his opinion that the multi-year agreement should be used to develop better community development.

Cllr L Agabani concurred and asked about how the authority would be delegated. Would it be Town Clerk and officers deliver the policy on an ongoing basis.

The RFO confirmed that information on running costs etc will be with the Finance Committee next month.

Cllr G Folkard when the first draft would be available.

The RFO informed the committee that she would provide that information directly to members and report to the next meeting of the Committee.

26/101/F

PENSIONS REVIEW

The Town Clerk informed the committee that Staffing committee have received this resolution and that the resolution is required to evidence the decision of the Council to the LGPS provider.

The RFO read out the resolution for the purposes in order that it be minuted.

Eligibility of the Local Government Pension Scheme

As a member of the LGPS, administered by Peninsula pensions, Wells City Parish Council confirms that all permanent and casual posts within the Council are eligible to join the scheme. That eligibility backdated to commencement of peninsula pensions for Somerset in 2013

Finance Committee voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

26/102/F

ANCHOR TESTING REPORT

Estates Manager presented the report that states the anchor points have been surveyed as per the request of the Estates Committee and that the existing infrastructure is requiring maintenance. Complications are such due to the multiple buildings, landowners and inconsistent wayleave agreements.

The anchor point faults cause issues for the placement of Christmas lights. A resolution is being sought that will provide a festive light provision, which will be cost effective and will suit the infrastructure as it is, until such time the anchor points are repaired. The Estates Manager has sourced icicle lights at a cost of £7203 plus vat and throughout the procurement of testing, the supplier will provide installation. This can be extended to a two year agreement if committee wishes, at an additional cost (year 2 cost) of £2500.

A brief discussion followed and a description of icicle lighting was given.

The Town Clerk stressed that the only option for provision of Christmas lights was the icicle lighting. The other option being no Christmas lights in 2026

The discussion continued about the length of the agreement, whether it be one or two years.

Cllrs voted unanimously for a two year provision of icicle lighting and a phased roll out of anchor point and electrical testing to support future needs. The committee asked for visual representation to be provided to them to confirm the colour requirements of the lighting.

26/103/F

ASBESTOS WORKS AT PORTWAY ANNEXE

Estates Manager informed the committee of work associated with removal of asbestos behind external barge boards at Portway Annexe is previously discussed with the Estates Committee. The costs associated for removal will be £11385 plus vat.

Cllr H Siggs requested details of any previous knowledge of the presence of asbestos, given that the building was purchased from Somerset Council and a register must have been kept.

The Estates manager confirmed that details of the asbestos were noted in the required register and therefore, should have been known at the time of purchase.

The Estates Manager confirmed That the contamination unit will be housed within the car park and some closure would be needed to support the project.

26/104/F

SPEED INDICATION AWARENESS DEVICE PURCHASE

Town Clerk reported that three quotes have been received for the purchase of three Speed Indication devices (SIDS) as discussed and agreed through Outside Spaces Committee. The cost just exceeds the spend budget hence being brought before committee. There is an established budget in the earmarked £25000 and the intention is to draw down from that budget.

Cllrs voted unanimously to proceed with the purchase and delegated to the Town Clerk to resolve and apply the function.

26/105/F

FORWARD PLAN

Topic	Month
RFO Budget Report and Variances	RFO Budget Report and Variances
Q2 Forecasting report	October 2026
Budget - 1 st Drafting	October 2026
Budget – Final Draft	November 2026
Budget – Sign off	December 2026

The Town Clerk confirmed that she will include Fees and charges deferments to the Forward Plan

26/106/F

ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr S Cursley asked that VAT be added to the Forward Plan

26/107/F

CONFIDENTIAL - PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

To receive confidential report. Vote to be take on the below motion associated with confidential content.

The committee are required to consider passing a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Note the agenda item number and name). Where possible, reference the specific paragraph from Schedule 12A:

Personal information - This report contains information relating to an individual and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

AND

Commercially sensitive information - This report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information)

26/108/F CONFIDENTIAL – THRIVE WELCOME HUB ANNUAL REPORT

To receive confidential report. Vote to be take on the below motion associated with confidential content.

The committee are required to consider passing a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Note the agenda item number and name). Where possible, reference the specific paragraph from Schedule 12A:

Personal information - This report contains information relating to an individual and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

26/109/F DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 8th October 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date:

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 16th JULY 2026 AT 7PM AT WELLS TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: J Browne, J Edmonds, G Folkard, D Orrett, S Powell (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
Estates Manager: L Wassell
The Mayor: Cllr D Denis
Somerset Cllr for Wells and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
4 members of the public

26/81/P APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr: L Agabani, S Eden, I Von Mensenkampff

26/82/P DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor declared a personal interest on items 2 & 3.

26/83/P MINUTES OF THE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Cllr S Powell signed the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2026 and the meeting held under delegated authority on 29th June 2026.

26/84/P ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Date	Action
	None

26/85/P MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

4 members of the public wished to speak

Mr West spoke regarding issues with Lidl deliveries between the hours of 11pm through until 5am explaining the disruption in sleep caused to residents adjacent to Lidl.

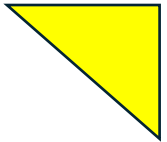
Mr Chris Charles spoke around his concerns for St Cuthbert Out and the impact of the wider City including travel links and cycle routes. The Town Clerk requested Chris to send in his concerns via email.

Mr Orrett spoke relating to his provision of comments on behalf of the Civic Society for Wells City Council consideration for feedback relating to the consultation for the Somerset Local Plan.

Ms Ravenscroft spoke relating to item 6.3 and concerns relating to the dormer window and render works. She was concerned regarding the method in which the render removal was due to take place and potential contamination of the immediate area. Her concerns relating to the dormer window associated to overlooking adjacent properties.

26/86/P PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1** [2026/1213/LBC](#)
Installation of sprinkler system & additional fire safety mitigation to comply with Building Regulations Part B (Fire Safety) following the approval to convert the house to original state to create two dwellings (Ref: 2021/0933/FUL & 2021/0934/LBC).
Location: 1 - 2 Somerset Cottages South Street Wells Somerset BA5 1SN
Recommendation: Support (design and appearance)
- 2** [2026/1082/LBC](#)
Installation of approx.. 5 metres of fibre telecom cable to front elevation up to the first floor to then re-enter property.
Location: 1 New Street Wells Somerset BA5 2LA
Recommendation: Support (design and appearance)



- 3 [2026/1254/HSE](#)
Removal of non-original, modern cement-based render to expose and restore the underlying masonry. Repair and sympathetic replacement of existing front-facing timber sliding sash windows. Installation of external gas supply riser pipe on the front elevation.
Location: 14 Tor Street Wells Somerset BA5 2US
Recommendation: Support (design and appearance) with consideration to timings of works and to be conducted sympathetically to surrounding neighbours

26/87/P NOTIFICATION ONLY

- 1 [2026/1200/TCA](#)
Common Lime (T1) - Reduce the stem to approximately 6-8m in height to retain the lower growth while stabilising the retained stem.
Location: Land South West Of Park House Bristol Hill Wells Somerset

- 2 [2026/1234/TCA](#)
T1-2 - Lime - Crown reduction by 4.2m - please see report for details.
Location: East Vicarage St Thomas Street Wells Somerset BA5 2UZ

26/88/P TREES

[2026/1250/TPO](#) – NOTIFICATION ONLY

G1 (M1079) - Multiple Western Red Cedar, 1 Ash, 1 Beech & 1 Yew - Crown lifting & pruning works to improve clearance. See application form for details.
Location: Wells Recreation Ground Silver Street Wells Somerset BA5 1UN

26/89/P APPEALS

[2026/0365/CLE](#)

Application for an existing lawful development certificate for use of the stone building as an office (use class E)
Appeal Location: The Office Willmotts Yard Southover Wells Somerset
Representations to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 28th July 2026

26/90/P SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN

The Chair has sent comments to the Town Clerk.

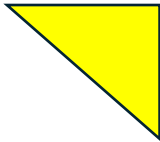
The key points outlined were:

- the number of developments happening within St Cuthbert's Out and the implications to the wider city infrastructure.
- Consideration of climate change as part of planning i.e. ability to retrofit listed buildings with measures such as modern glazing and awnings should be more achievable.
- Active travel
- Accessible homes
- Parking considerations
- S106 clarification in processes on applications

The Mayor added:

- Spatial strategy in relation to missed opportunity for alternatives for primary care
- Environment: RSPB statement read
- Draft engagement not widely advertised or known about

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Town Clerk and the Chair to respond to the consultation.



26/91/P PLANNING & LICENSING ENFORCEMENT

The Chair addressed the comments made by Mr West and agreed to delegate to the Town Clerk to correspond with Lidl and Somerset Council as the enforcement authority and copy Mr West in on that correspondence.

The Town Clerk advised that planning licensing enforcement will become a standing item on the agenda to consider any license or planning issues raised.
The Mayor queried regarding license application and if noise caps could be applied. The Town Clerk to discuss with MP Munt.

The Mayor asked for an update in relation to the Nail Bar. The Town Clerk to receive an update from Somerset Council, it has been reported to enforcement.

The Chair provided an update to committee relating to the application from Budgens, Somerset Council voted against extended operating hours.

Cllr Browne raised concern relating to South Street where a resident has installed a ramp from the road, passed the pavement, resulting in restricted access to the pavement due to parked vehicles. The Town Clerk to report to Somerset Council.

26/92/P ANY OTHER MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

The Mayor wanted clarification and update relating to TPOs for Palace fields. The Town Clerk to confirm with Somerset Council on TPO progress.

Cllr Browne requested an update relating to the trees on the Cathedral Green application on agenda, the Town Clerk updated that emergency works have been conducted and an update will be provided to the next Open Spaces Committee.

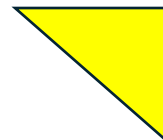
The Chair requested an update in relation to Rona Mezze Bar, the Estates Manager to liaise with Somerset Council.

26/93/P DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES

To delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to decide any urgent matters arising before the next meeting

26/94/P DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 13th August 2026, 7pm (urgent matters only)

Minutes Signed by the Chair Date



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY ON 31st JULY 2026 AT 9AM AT WELLS TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: S Powell (Chair), D Orrett

IN ATTENDANCE: Estates Manager: L Wassell

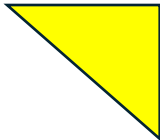
26/79/P DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs S Powell (Chair) and D Orrett declared an interest in item 2026/1196/FUL

26/80/P PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION

All planning applications can be viewed in detail on <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/> Members of the Public are welcome to express their views at the Parish Council Planning Advisory Committee as well as direct to Somerset Council. Click on planning application reference numbers to link to Somerset website for further details or comments.

- 1** 2026/1280/VRC
Variation of condition 2 (Plans List) on consent 2026/0823/HSE (Enlargement of existing bungalow to include front & rear extensions).
Location: 29 Milton Lane Wells Somerset BA5 2QS
Recommendation: Support – Design and appearance
- 2** 2026/1296/LBC
Removal of a non-original internal kitchen wall to form an openplan living space.
Location: Flat 2 East House 11 Chamberlain Street Wells Somerset
Recommendation: Support – Design and appearance
- 3** 2026/1196/FUL
Replacement single storey tennis pavilion
Location: Wells Sports Club Rowdens Road Wells Somerset BA5 1TU
Defer to Somerset due to declarations of interest received
- 4** 2026/1384/FUL
Change of Use from Class E (office) to Class C (residential)
Location: 23 Union Street Wells Somerset BA5 2PU
Recommendation: Support – Design and appearance
- 5** 2026/0331/REM
Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 059850/005 Development of Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 business uses, highway works, landscaping, drainage works and parking (as amended by further revisions to the design of access arrangements including amendment to position of spine road and exclusion of mini roundabout) (DEL) Matters of access/appearance/landscaping/layout/scale to be determined
Location: Site East Of 4 Bishopbrook House Cathedral Avenue Wells Somerset
Recommendation: Support – Design and appearance



6 2026/1406/LBC
Part reconstruction of eastern and western rear boundary walls including brickwork repairs, re-pointing and replacement of coping stones.
Location: Natwest Bank 7 High Street Wells Somerset BA5 2AD
Recommendation: Support – Design and appearance

26/80/P DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 16th July 2026

Minutes Signed by the Chair Date
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WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY ON 17TH AUGUST 2026 AT 9AM AT WELLS TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, S Powell (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: RFO: C Woodland

26/81/P DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr L Agabani an interest in Agenda item 2.2: 2026/1127/LBC

26/82/P PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION

All planning applications can be viewed in detail on <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/> Members of the Public are welcome to express their views at the Parish Council Planning Advisory Committee as well as direct to Somerset Council. Click on planning application reference numbers to link to Somerset website for further details or comments.

1 2026/1435/FUL

The conversion of The Old Chapel Bakery into 3 No. 1 Bed residential units (following previous application 2023/0096/FUL, change of use from commercial (E) to residential (C3) 2 new residential units)

Location: The Old Chapel Bakery Union Street Wells Somerset BA5 2PU

Recommendation: Application rejected due to discrepancies between application documents re: parking spaces. Clarification needed.

2 2026/1127/LBC

The proposed repairs comprise the stitching of cracked stone stair treads, the stone column, and cracks within the stone walls using stainless steel dowels, resin, and Helibars as Page 2 of 4 appropriate. All repaired cracks will be finished with lime mortar to match the existing appearance of the stonework.

Location: 14 Market Place Wells Somerset BA5 2RE

Somerset update

The application was previously recorded as 14 Market Place, Wells. The proposal itself relates solely to The Bishop's Eye, which is attached to 14 Market Place, and the application address has therefore been amended to reflect this more accurately.

This amendment is important because The Bishop's Eye is a Grade I listed building, whereas 14 Market Place is a Grade II listed building. We were concerned that the previous address could cause confusion regarding the building to which the application relates.

Recommendation: Referred directly to Somerset Council due to declaration of interest

3 2026/1518/HSE

Single storey rear extension

Location: Sycamore House 2 Mountery Close Wells Somerset BA5 2QW

Recommendation: Approve, design and appearance

4 2026/1520/FUL

Change of use from dwellinghouse (Class C3) to music studio (Class E), changes to roof over link between house & garage & erection of rear extensions to house & link

Location: 3 Mountery Close Wells Somerset BA5 2QW

Recommendation: Approve, design and appearance, ecological habitats

5 2026/1532/FUL

Change of use premises into a single dwelling, demolishing existing two-storey flat roof extension on rear elevation, single storey skittle alley projections and other structures.

Location: The Venue 42 South Street Wells Somerset BA5 1SL

Reject – clarification needed re: number of dwellings, as floors appear to have no interconnecting door.

- 6 2026/0431/FUL and 2026/1295/LBC
Conversion of existing outbuilding to dwellinghouse.
Location: Sherston Mews Priory Road Wells Somerset BA5 1SU
Recommendation: Approve, design and appearance
- 7 2026/1548/FUL and 2026/1549/LBC
The installation solar photovoltaic panels on the west-facing inner roof slope of the Jocelin Range.
Location: The Bishops Palace Market Place Wells Somerset BA5 2PD
Recommendation: Approve, design and appearance, no impact on listed buildings
- 8 2026/1566/LBC
Internal alterations to convert into 2no. residential units. Reconfigure ground-floor retail unit to confirm with 2025/1121/PED. Install Solar PV Panels to roof and block existing door on front elevation. Part retrospective.
Location: 2 Priory Road Wells Somerset BA5 1SY
Recommendation: Approve, design and appearance

26/83/P NOTIFICATION ONLY

- 1 2026/1382/CLP
Certificate of lawfulness of proposed development of Erection of a rear dormer to facilitate a loft conversion; demolition of existing conservatory and formation of rear patio; replacement flat roof and installation of rooflight to rear extension; installation of timber French doors and replacement rear windows; blocking up of selected rear openings; and replacement rainwater goods
Location: 14 Tor Street Wells Somerset BA5 2US

26/84/P TREES

- 1 2026/1440/TCA - **NOTIFICATION ONLY**
SG3 - Mixed Species Shrubs - Removal at ground level, treat stumps & T5- Pittosporum - Removal at ground level, treat stump.
Location: St Thomas Vicarage 94 St Thomas Street Wells Somerset BA5 2UZ
- 2 2026/1440/TCA - **NOTIFICATION ONLY**
SG3 - Mixed Species Shrubs - Removal at ground level, treat stumps & T5- Pittosporum - Removal at ground level, treat stump.
Location: St Thomas Vicarage 94 St Thomas Street Wells Somerset BA5 2UZ
- 3 2026/1430/HDG - **NOTIFICATION ONLY**
Section of 5m of temporary hedgerow removal is required to facilitate a sewer relining scheme being undertaken by Wessex Water Services Ltd. The temporary removal is required to facilitate access for construction machinery to the working area, in the neighbouring field. Upon completion of the scheme, the hedgerow will be replanted following STD836 standards; a copy of this has been submitted with this hedgerow removal application.
Location: Land At 353728 145077 Bubwith Walk Wells Somerset

26/85/P APPEAL DECISIONS

- 1 **Appeal Decision by V Simpson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**
Decision date: 10th July 2026 - Appeal Ref: 6004112
66 Bath Road, Wells BA5 3LQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Wellington Pub Company against the decision of Somerset Council.
- The application Ref is 2025/1762/FUL.
- The development proposed is change of use and partial demolition of existing building to form a single dwelling together with the erection of four new dwellings.

Decision. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use and partial demolition of existing building to form a single dwelling together with the erection of four new dwellings, at 66 Bath Road, Wells BA5 3LQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2025/1762/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

2 **Appeal Decision by Alison Fish BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

Decision date: 17 July 2026 - Appeal Ref: 6005993

20 St Thomas Street, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
- The appeal is made by Carwardine Developments Ltd against the decision of Somerset Council.
- The application Ref is 2025/1956/PED.
- The development proposed is prior approval of proposed change of use of a building from commercial (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3).

Decision. The appeal is dismissed.

26/86/P DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 17th September 2026, 7pm

Minutes Signed by the ChairDate

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy

A lifecycle framework for planning, planting, retaining, managing and renewing the Council's tree population

Document control	Details
Policy status	For adoption
Version	1.0
Policy owner	Open Spaces
Approval body	To be completed on adoption
Adoption date	To be completed on adoption
Effective date	Date of adoption
Review period	Five years from adoption, or earlier if required

Right tree | Right place | Right reason | Managed for its whole life

Purpose and vision

Wells City Council will manage trees as living ecological, cultural and heritage assets whose value develops over decades and, in some cases, centuries.

This policy establishes a whole-life approach to trees on land owned or managed by Wells City Council. It covers the full lifecycle from site selection, planting and establishment through maturity, veteranisation, decline, death and decay. It gives equal importance to responsible public-safety management, ecological continuity, landscape character, climate resilience, cultural history and prudent use of public money.

The Council's starting point is retention. A tree will be kept and managed where this can be done reasonably and proportionately. Intervention will be guided by evidence and will address the actual source of risk or conflict. Felling will be a last resort, but the policy does not prevent decisive action where a tree presents an unacceptable risk to people, property or essential infrastructure and that risk cannot reasonably be managed in another way.

The Council will plan beyond the life of individual trees. It will seek a continuous population of young, maturing, mature, veteran and future-veteran trees so that shade, habitat, carbon storage, landscape character and community value are not lost through gaps between generations.

Policy commitments

- **Retain first.** Retain sound, valuable and safely manageable trees and conserve the conditions they need to continue ageing.
- **Manage risk proportionately.** Use a documented, risk-based system that reflects tree condition, likelihood of failure, site use and the consequences of failure.
- **Protect irreplaceable trees.** Give ancient and veteran trees the highest level of protection and manage them through individual, specialist-led decisions.
- **Plan successors.** Identify, plant and protect future-veteran trees and maintain a range of age classes across the Council's land.
- **Plant native trees.** Use native species for all new and replacement tree planting, matched to site conditions and future climate, including rare native species where ecologically appropriate.
- **Keep deadwood where safe.** Retain standing, attached and fallen deadwood where it can be accommodated without creating an unacceptable risk.
- **Protect wildlife and soils.** Treat roots, soils, fungi, cavities, bark and associated habitats as parts of the tree ecosystem, not as incidental features.
- **Build resilience.** Diversify native species and genetic provenance, improve biosecurity and avoid dependence on a narrow range of trees.
- **Explain decisions clearly.** Make significant tree decisions evidence-led, recorded and communicatable to residents, councillors and those affected.
- **Invest for the long term.** Balance urgent work with planned inspections, establishment care, preventive management and future canopy renewal.

Scope and status

This policy applies to trees, groups of trees, hedgerow trees, small woodlands, orchards and standing or fallen tree hulks on land owned, occupied or managed by Wells City Council. It applies to staff, contractors, volunteers and partners acting on the Council's behalf.

It covers operational management, inspection, maintenance, planting, procurement, construction near trees, responses to disease, community activity and decisions about retention or removal. It also guides the Council when commenting on proposals that affect its land or tree assets.

The policy does not transfer to Wells City Council the statutory functions of Somerset Council as local planning authority or highway authority. Tree Preservation Order consent, conservation-area notifications, highways coordination and other statutory approvals will be sought from the appropriate authority where required.

Current legislation, statutory notices, court orders and emergency duties take precedence. Where standards or guidance are updated, the current edition will be used without waiting for the next formal policy review.

How decisions will be made

Decisions will be made at the lowest level consistent with competence, delegated authority and the significance of the tree. Complex cases involving veteran trees, protected species, subsidence, major infrastructure, high public interest or potentially irreversible loss will be escalated for specialist advice and, where appropriate, committee consideration.

Definitions

The following terms are used consistently throughout this policy. Age alone is not an adequate classification because different species age at different rates and site conditions strongly influence development.

Term	Meaning in this policy
Ancient tree	A tree exceptionally old for its species and context, normally with a combination of great age, size, decay features, ecological value and cultural or heritage significance. Every ancient tree is also a veteran tree.
Veteran tree	A tree with significant features arising from ageing, damage or decay - such as hollowing, cavities, water pockets, exposed wood, dead limbs or a retrenched crown - that give it exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. A veteran tree need not be ancient.
Early veteran / veteranising tree	A tree beginning to develop veteran characteristics but not yet supporting the full range or continuity of features associated with a veteran tree. This is a management category, not a separate legal designation.
Future veteran tree	A tree deliberately selected and protected as a successor because it has the species, form, setting, health and long-term space to develop veteran characteristics.
Notable tree	A tree of local importance because of age, size, rarity, form, history, landscape contribution or community association, whether or not it is veteran.
Retrenchment	The natural process by which an ageing tree reduces crown height and spread while maintaining a lower, more compact crown. Specialist pruning may sometimes imitate this process in carefully phased work.

Term	Meaning in this policy
Deadwood	Dead branches, trunks, roots and fallen woody material, whether attached, standing or on the ground. Deadwood is a habitat and nutrient resource, not simply waste.
Target	A person, property, route, structure or activity that could be harmed if a tree or branch failed.
Competent person	A person with the training, knowledge, experience and ability appropriate to the inspection, assessment or work being undertaken.

Legal, policy and professional framework

Tree management sits within overlapping duties relating to safety, biodiversity, planning, protected species, plant health and public administration. The Council will apply the following framework proportionately and seek specialist or legal advice where the position is uncertain.

- **Duty of care.** The Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984, common-law negligence and, for work activities, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require reasonable care and proportionate management. The Council is not required to guarantee that every tree is free from risk.
- **Biodiversity duty.** Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, requires public authorities to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, agree policies and objectives, and act to deliver them.
- **Protected wildlife.** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 protect wild birds, bats and other species, together with breeding sites and resting places. Tree work will be planned and checked accordingly.
- **Protected trees.** The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 regulate work to protected trees. Somerset Council procedures for Tree Preservation Orders and conservation areas will be followed.
- **Felling and woodlands.** The Forestry Act 1967, felling-licence controls and the UK Forestry Standard will be applied where relevant. The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 may also apply.
- **Highways.** Where a Council tree affects the public highway, the Highways Act 1980 and Somerset Council's role as highway authority will be recognised and coordinated.
- **Professional standards.** Tree work will follow BS 3998, Tree work - Recommendations. Development-related assessments will follow BS 5837, Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Planting and establishment will follow BS 8545, Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape, together with current national guidance.
- **Local nature recovery.** The Council will have regard to the Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, published in 2026, when planning tree, woodland and habitat actions.

The whole-life management model

A successful tree policy is not measured only by how quickly hazards are removed or how many saplings are planted. It is measured by whether trees are given the conditions, care and continuity needed to reach maturity, old age and ecological significance.

Each lifecycle stage has a different objective. The Council will avoid treating all trees in the same way and will move resources towards the stage where intervention has the greatest long-term value.

Lifecycle stage	Primary objective	Typical management
Planning and site preparation	Choose a site that can sustain the intended mature tree. Protect soil volume, drainage, rooting space, light, access and future crown room before a tree is ordered.	Site survey; utilities check; soil assessment; species and provenance decision; funded aftercare plan.
Planting and establishment	Achieve independent establishment rather than simply completing a planting event.	Correct planting depth; watering; mulch; guards and stakes only as needed; inspection; formative pruning; replacement of failures.
Young tree	Build sound structure and avoid predictable conflicts while pruning wounds are small.	Formative pruning at appropriate intervals; protect stem and roots from mowers, strimmers, compaction and vandalism.
Semi-mature tree	Allow crown and root development, monitor emerging conflicts and avoid unnecessary cyclical pruning.	Review clearance and structure; improve rooting conditions; retain lower canopy where space permits.
Mature tree	Retain full canopy benefits and manage identifiable defects or conflicts proportionately.	Condition-led inspection; targeted pruning; soil and root care; avoid routine size reduction without a clear objective.
Early veteran / veteranising	Recognise developing habitat features and adjust management before those features are lost through conventional arboriculture.	Record veteran features; reduce disturbance; plan successor habitat; specialist advice for significant work.
Veteran and ancient	Prolong life, preserve habitat continuity and retain the tree in its setting for as long as reasonably possible.	Individual management plan; target management; staged retrenchment only if justified; haloing, propping or access change where appropriate; deadwood retention.
Decline, death and decay	Continue ecological and heritage value after physiological death while managing the changing risk profile.	Retain standing hulk or monolith where suitable; keep fallen trunk and large limbs on or near site; record replacement and successor actions.

Planning and site selection

The mature dimensions and ecological needs of the tree will be considered at the start. A small, constrained pit is not an acceptable substitute for adequate rooting volume. Planting decisions will consider existing habitat, archaeology, visibility, access, neighbouring property, utilities, drainage, future maintenance, water availability and the ability of the site to support the intended tree for its full life.

The Council will favour locations capable of supporting large-canopied native trees because larger, long-lived trees usually deliver substantially greater shade, habitat, carbon storage, rainfall interception and landscape value. Small species will be used where genuinely required by site constraints, not as a default response to avoid future management.

Establishment and early care

Every planting scheme will include an establishment plan and budget. Care will continue until the tree is independent in the landscape, normally for at least five years and longer where site conditions require it. Watering will respond to soil moisture, weather and tree need rather than a rigid calendar.

- Trees will be planted at the correct depth, with the root flare visible and no avoidable root deformation.
- A mulch area will be maintained without herbicide, and the stem will be protected from mower and strimmer damage.
- Stakes, ties and guards will be checked and adjusted and will be removed as soon as they are no longer needed.
- Formative pruning will address weak unions, competing leaders or foreseeable clearance problems while cuts are small.
- Planting records will include location, species, provenance where available, stock size, planting date, contractor or group, aftercare responsibility and survival checks.
- Failed planting will trigger a review of cause, not automatic repetition of the same species and method in the same conditions.

Maturity and ageing

Mature trees will not be reduced or lifted merely because they have become large. Size is a normal outcome of successful establishment. Cyclical pruning will be used only where it meets a defined arboricultural, safety or access objective. The Council will protect rooting areas from soil compaction, excavation, storage, repeated vehicle use and changes to drainage or levels.

Ageing features such as cavities, hollow trunks, fungal fruiting bodies, dead branches and retrenched crowns will be assessed in context. Their presence does not by itself establish that a tree is unsafe. Decisions will consider the structure that remains, the likelihood and size of potential failure, the use of the area beneath and the consequences of failure.

Ancient, veteran, notable and future-veteran trees

Ancient and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats. New planting is essential for continuity, but it cannot reproduce the ecological and cultural value accumulated in an old tree within any normal planning or budgeting period.

Identification and records

The Council will maintain a register of confirmed and candidate ancient, veteran, notable, early-veteran and future-veteran trees on its land. Classification will be based on species, age-related characteristics, veteran features, historical evidence, setting and ecological value. Absence from a national or local inventory will not be treated as evidence that a tree is unimportant.

Where appropriate, verified records may be shared with the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory and local environmental record systems, taking account of ownership, site sensitivity and public access.

Management principles

- **Minimal intervention.** Do only what is needed to meet a clear objective and avoid tidying away important ageing features.
- **Individual management plans.** Use a documented plan for significant veteran trees, including condition, habitat features, targets, past work, objectives, inspection interval and contingency actions.
- **Target management first.** Where possible, move benches, paths, parking, events or other targets away from the potential failure area before altering an irreplaceable tree.
- **Rooting environment.** Prevent compaction, excavation, cultivation, surfacing, pollution, changes in drainage and repeated vehicle access within the functional rooting area.
- **Gradual haloing.** Where competing younger growth threatens an open-grown veteran, release the crown progressively to avoid sudden exposure, sun-scorch or wind loading.
- **Phased retrenchment.** Where crown reduction is justified, use small, staged interventions that reflect the tree's natural retrenchment and capacity to respond. Large one-off reductions will be avoided unless required by an urgent risk.
- **Support and exclusion.** Consider propping, bracing, fencing, rerouting or seasonal access management where these conserve more of the tree than pruning or felling.
- **Habitat continuity.** Retain cavities, loose bark, water pockets, decay columns, attached deadwood, standing hulks and fallen wood wherever the risk context allows.

Future veterans and age continuity

Future-veteran selection will be deliberate. Trees will be chosen for longevity, habitat potential, stable form, genetic value, historic association and sufficient space to remain open-grown or develop naturally. The Council will identify age gaps around existing veterans and establish successors close enough to maintain ecological connectivity but outside damaging competition with the old tree.

Veteranisation techniques that deliberately create decay features in younger trees may have a specialist conservation role. They will not be used as a routine substitute for natural ageing or protection of existing features. Any such work will have a clear ecological objective, baseline record, competent specification and monitoring plan.

Tree risk and public safety management

Tree risk will be managed, not eliminated. The Council will take reasonable and proportionate care while recognising that trees provide substantial public benefits and that no inspection system can predict every branch or tree failure.

Risk zoning

Land will be divided into broad zones according to the level and pattern of use. Zoning allows inspection effort to follow potential exposure rather than treating a lightly used woodland edge in the same way as a busy play area or market route.

Zone	Typical setting	Inspection approach
Higher use / higher consequence	Play areas, principal paths, frequently occupied buildings, formal event spaces, car parks, busy roads or locations with sustained public presence.	Planned inspection by a competent person at an interval set by condition and use, supported by routine staff observations and post-event checks where justified.
Normal public use	Parks, cemeteries, allotment common areas, secondary paths and open spaces with regular but intermittent use.	Periodic planned inspection, routine observations during normal duties and responsive assessment following reports or significant change.
Low use / natural area	Woodland interiors, habitat areas and locations with infrequent access and limited targets.	Proportionate walk-over or landscape-level review; retain natural processes; detailed inspection only where a target, condition or report justifies it.

Inspection system

- **Routine observations.** Staff working in open spaces will be encouraged to notice and report obvious change, damage or obstruction. This is not a substitute for a competent tree inspection.
- **Planned inspections.** Competent persons will inspect defined sites or trees at intervals based on use, condition, species, age, known defects and management history.
- **Detailed assessments.** An arboricultural specialist will assess complex defects, veteran trees, suspected root instability, subsidence allegations or cases requiring climbing, decay detection or other diagnostic work.
- **Event-driven checks.** Additional checks may follow exceptional wind, flooding, drought, fire, vandalism, construction impact, sudden canopy change or a credible public report.
- **Prioritised action.** Recommendations will state the defect or concern, target, proposed control, priority and review need. Action timescales will reflect risk, not merely convenience.

Records and response

Inspection records will be sufficient to show what was inspected, by whom, when, the relevant condition and targets, the decision made, action priority and completion. Photographs, maps and follow-up evidence will be retained where they add value. Superseded records will remain available to show management history.

Immediate controls may include temporary closure, exclusion, moving a target, altering use or carrying out emergency tree work. Where a protected tree is involved, Somerset Council will be notified and consent or notice procedures followed. Where circumstances allow, written notice for exempt safety work will be given in advance in accordance with Somerset Council procedures; genuinely urgent work will be recorded and notified as required.

Tree work and intervention standards

Tree work will have a written objective and specification appropriate to its complexity. Contractors will be competent, adequately insured and able to demonstrate safe systems of work, wildlife awareness and biosecurity. Work will follow current legislation, BS 3998 and accepted arboricultural practice.

Intervention hierarchy

- **Confirm the objective.** Identify the actual risk, conflict, access need, ecological objective or legal requirement.
- **Check constraints.** Confirm ownership, Tree Preservation Orders, conservation-area status, felling controls, protected species, archaeology, utilities and site access.
- **Manage the target or use.** Consider moving people, property, paths, benches, parking or events before altering a valuable tree.
- **Improve the environment.** Consider soil care, mulching, decompaction, drainage correction, protection from vehicles, selective haloing or removal of damaging infrastructure.
- **Use the least harmful tree work.** Choose targeted pruning, staged reduction, support or other reversible measures before major crown loss or felling.
- **Fell only where justified.** Record why reasonable alternatives are insufficient and how replacement, deadwood retention or habitat continuity will be addressed.

Pruning principles

- Topping, indiscriminate lopping and flush cutting will not be accepted.
- Crown reduction will specify a clear objective and an approximate final size or percentage appropriate to the tree; it will not be described only as a vague percentage without reference to structure.
- Crown lifting will retain an adequate live crown and avoid unnecessary removal of established lower limbs.
- Deadwood removal will be limited to the size and location necessary for the risk context; habitat deadwood will be retained elsewhere in the crown or site where possible.
- Root pruning will be avoided. Where unavoidable, it will be designed and supervised with arboricultural advice and coordinated with utility or engineering requirements.
- Pruning timing will consider species biology, sap flow, disease risk, drought stress, nesting birds, bats and other protected wildlife rather than relying on a single universal season.

When felling may be justified

- Felling may be approved where one or more of the following applies and reasonable alternatives have been examined:

- an unacceptable and reasonably foreseeable risk to people or property cannot be reduced adequately by target management, access control, pruning or support;
- a statutory plant-health notice, legal order, approved development or other binding requirement necessitates removal;
- a tree is causing serious, evidenced damage to a building, structure or essential service and engineering or arboricultural alternatives are not reasonable;
- removal is part of an approved woodland, habitat-restoration or succession plan and will deliver a clear ecological benefit;
- a newly planted tree has failed, is fundamentally unsuitable for its site or cannot develop safely, and early replacement is the best whole-life decision;
- an invasive tree is causing demonstrable ecological harm and removal forms part of an approved restoration plan;
- a tree obstructs an essential authorised project and the avoidance hierarchy has been fully applied.

A dead tree will not automatically be felled. Its value as standing habitat and the actual exposure beneath it will be assessed. Likewise, fungal fruiting bodies, cavities, lean, dead branches or great age will not, by themselves, be treated as reasons for removal.

Requests that will not normally justify tree work

Subject to individual circumstances, the following will not normally justify pruning or felling of a healthy, safely manageable Council tree:

- leaf, blossom, seed, cone, twig, sap or fruit fall;
- bird droppings, insects, honeydew or lichens;
- shade, loss of a view or seasonal reduction in light;
- interference with television, radio, mobile, satellite or renewable-energy reception;
- a tree being perceived as too large solely because it is close to property;
- minor root lifting of paths where a practical engineering solution can retain the tree;
- a general preference for a tidier appearance where deadwood or natural form has ecological value.

Subsidence and property damage claims

Allegations that a Council tree is causing subsidence or structural damage will be investigated using proportionate evidence. The Council may require relevant soil information, foundation details, crack and level monitoring, drainage checks, root identification and arboricultural or engineering analysis. A request from an insurer or agent will not by itself establish causation.

Where evidence shows that a Council tree is a material cause of serious damage, the Council will consider engineering, root-zone, pruning and monitoring options as well as removal. The selected response will balance safety, legal exposure, repair practicality, tree value and the likelihood that pruning will provide an effective and sustainable control.

Deadwood, tree hulks and habitat continuity

The ecological life of a tree continues after branches or the whole tree die. Decaying wood supports fungi, invertebrates, birds, bats and nutrient cycling and can remain valuable for decades.

- **Attached deadwood.** Retain unless its size, condition and position create an unacceptable risk to a target. Where removal is needed, restrict it to the relevant part of the crown.
- **Standing dead trees and monoliths.** Retain at a height and location compatible with the risk context. A reduced standing hulk is often more valuable than removing the tree to ground level.
- **Fallen trunks and large limbs.** Leave close to the parent tree where safe and practical, with as much bark contact, shade and humidity continuity as possible.
- **Habitat piles.** Use selected smaller arisings in stable, unobtrusive piles where this will not obstruct access, create an unacceptable fire risk or spread a regulated pest or disease.
- **Stumps and roots.** Retain where they do not obstruct an essential use. Grinding will not be automatic.
- **Continuity.** Avoid removing all deadwood from a site at once. Retain a range of sizes, positions and decay stages.

Diseased material will be retained, moved or disposed of only in accordance with current plant-health and biosecurity guidance. Statutory notices and pest-specific controls take precedence over general deadwood-retention objectives.

Native planting and future canopy

All new and replacement planting by Wells City Council will use native tree and shrub species. Selection will be based on ecological suitability, mature size, site function, heritage context and future climate - not simply availability or lowest initial cost.

Species selection

A diverse native population will be created across the Council's land. Diversity will be considered at city, site and project level so that a pest, pathogen or climatic event cannot remove a disproportionate share of the canopy. Genetic and provenance diversity within native species will also be considered, using documented, biosecure stock.

The indicative palette below is not a planting prescription. Some species require highly specific soils, hydrology, exposure or space and must not be planted merely to increase a species count.

Planting role	Indicative native species	Key consideration
Large and long-lived canopy	Pedunculate oak, sessile oak, small-leaved lime, beech where locally appropriate, yew, Scots pine where site and character support it	Primary future canopy and future-veteran candidates; allow generous rooting and crown space.
Wet ground and waterside	Alder, downy birch, white willow, goat willow, aspen, black poplar	Hydrology-led selection; protect watercourses and avoid inappropriate planting on species-rich wet habitat.
Medium and small trees	Field maple, wild cherry, rowan, silver birch, holly, crab apple, hawthorn	Useful where large trees cannot be accommodated; retain potential for natural form and habitat connectivity.

Planting role	Indicative native species	Key consideration
Woodland edge and understorey	Hazel, spindle, guelder rose, wayfaring tree, dogwood, blackthorn	Build layered native habitat, seasonal food and structural diversity; place thorny species away from access pinch points.
Rare or specialist natives	Native black poplar, wild service tree and common juniper	Use only with appropriate site assessment, verified native stock, genetic considerations and a clear conservation or landscape objective.

Rare native species

Native black poplar, wild service tree and common juniper will form part of the Council's future planting where site conditions are suitable. Their inclusion will be ecologically purposeful rather than tokenistic.

- **Native black poplar.** Use verified *Populus nigra* subsp. *betulifolia* stock, provide wet or seasonally moist alluvial conditions and substantial space, and avoid reliance on a single clone. Where practical, genetic and sex diversity will be planned with specialist advice.
- **Wild service tree.** Use in appropriate woodland-edge, hedgerow, parkland or open-grown settings with suitable soils, allowing it to mature without being suppressed by faster-growing neighbours.
- **Common juniper.** Use on suitable open, well-drained sites and protect from shading, browsing and plant-health risks. It is a specialist shrub or small tree and will not be treated as a universal urban planting species.

Replacement and canopy continuity

Every planned felling decision will include a recorded replacement or ecological-succession decision. Replacement will normally be at least one tree for one tree, but numbers, species, eventual size and location will be chosen to recover and improve future canopy and ecological function rather than to satisfy a simple numerical ratio. Where replanting in the same position is unsuitable, an alternative Council site will be identified.

Planting does not compensate for the loss of an ancient or veteran tree. In those cases, the Council will retain as much of the original tree and deadwood habitat as possible, protect nearby old trees, establish successors and improve connectivity.

Climate resilience, pests and disease

Climate change is expected to increase drought, heat, intense rainfall, waterlogging, storms and interactions with pests and disease. The Council will use adaptive management rather than assume that past performance guarantees future suitability.

- match native species and provenance to soil, hydrology, exposure, urban heat and projected climatic conditions;
- avoid site-wide or city-wide dependence on a narrow species, genotype or age class;
- prioritise soil health, rooting volume, mulch and establishment watering as core resilience measures;

- use natural regeneration where it supports native diversity, site objectives and safe public access;
- monitor emerging threats through Forestry Commission and Forest Research alerts and report suspected notifiable problems through the appropriate route;
- review planting and management practice after significant losses, droughts, storms or disease outbreaks.

Ash dieback

Ash dieback will be managed through identification, monitoring and proportionate risk assessment, with particular attention to trees near roads, buildings, paths, play areas and other frequently used locations. The Council will retain healthy, tolerant or safely manageable ash where possible because surviving trees may be important for genetic resilience and habitat continuity.

Removal will be prioritised by actual risk and operational safety, not by disease presence alone. Work on severely affected ash will recognise the additional hazards to arborists and contractors. Losses will be mitigated through native species diversification, retention of safe ash deadwood and early establishment of replacement habitat.

Biosecurity and procurement

Plant health will be considered from procurement through delivery, planting and maintenance. The Council will prefer British-grown native stock from suppliers that can demonstrate recognised plant-health management and traceability. Procurement will seek Plant Healthy certification or equivalent evidence where proportionate and available.

- Inspect stock on arrival and reject material with serious defects, symptoms, root problems or inadequate traceability.
- Clean tools, footwear, machinery and vehicles where there is a risk of transferring soil, pests or pathogens between sites.
- Plan movement, retention and disposal of arisings in accordance with pest-specific and statutory guidance.
- Comply with any Statutory Plant Health Notice and retain records of affected sites and actions.
- Use local propagation and community-grown stock only where plant health, provenance and quality can be demonstrated.

Biodiversity and protected wildlife

Tree management will consider the entire tree-associated habitat: canopy, bark, cavities, roots, rhizosphere, fungi, epiphytes, deadwood, surrounding vegetation, dark corridors and links to hedgerows, water and other trees. The Council will apply the avoid, minimise, restore and, only as a last resort, compensate hierarchy.

Before significant work, the Council or contractor will carry out proportionate checks for nesting birds, bats and other protected or priority species. Features with bat-roost potential, active nests or other evidence will trigger competent ecological advice and, where necessary, rescheduling, method changes or licensing. An absence of existing records will not be treated as proof that protected species are absent.

Routine tree work will be timed to reduce ecological harm, but safety work will not be delayed where doing so would expose people to an unacceptable risk. In urgent cases, the Council will use the least harmful safe method and obtain ecological or statutory advice as circumstances allow.

Trees, development, construction and utilities

The Council will involve arboricultural advice at the earliest stage of projects that may affect trees. The starting point will be avoidance through design. Tree constraints, root protection, working space, access and aftercare will be considered before layouts, service routes and budgets are fixed.

- Use BS 5837 surveys, constraints plans, arboricultural impact assessments, method statements and protection plans where proportionate to the project.
- Install effective protective barriers before works begin and prevent excavation, soil storage, fuel, cement washout, fires, vehicle access, compaction or level changes within protected areas.
- Route utilities away from roots. Where conflict is unavoidable, consider trenchless installation, hand excavation and arboricultural supervision.
- Protect retained trees through construction and for the establishment period after completion; handover will include outstanding tree actions.
- Value significant trees and their ecosystem services where this improves option appraisal, damage assessment or transparent use of public assets.

Ancient and veteran tree buffers

For Council projects and responses affecting ancient or veteran trees, the current Natural England and Forestry Commission standing advice will be treated as a minimum starting point. At the date of this policy, the buffer should be at least 15 times the stem diameter, or extend 5 metres beyond the edge of the canopy where that produces a larger area. A larger buffer may be necessary because of hydrology, topography, pollution, access, veteran features or the nature of the proposed activity.

Buffers will be kept free of development and damaging use and, where possible, will support semi-natural native habitat and ecological connectivity. Existing poor condition is not a reason to reduce protection: damaged soils or trees may be capable of recovery under better management.

Heritage, landscape and community value

Trees can be living records of historic boundaries, former land use, commemorative planting, traditional pollarding, parkland, orchards and community events. Management will consider archival evidence, designed landscapes, archaeology, views, local stories and the contribution of individual trees to the character of Wells.

Where traditional management such as pollarding or coppicing has created important form and habitat, continuation or careful restoration may be appropriate. Long-abandoned cycles will not be restarted abruptly without assessing structural and ecological consequences.

Public information and involvement

The Council will improve public understanding of tree lifecycles, veteran features, deadwood, seasonal change, disease and the time required to replace mature canopy. Communication about significant work will explain the objective, evidence, alternatives considered, ecological or heritage safeguards, timing and replacement or succession plan.

Public-facing explanations will be positive, practical and communicatable. They will distinguish between a tree being imperfect and a tree presenting an unacceptable risk, and between natural-looking habitat management and neglect.

- Use on-site notices, web updates or direct contact where planned work is significant or likely to cause concern.
- Encourage responsible community surveys, citizen science, historical research and recording of veteran trees under appropriate supervision.
- Support community planting only where sites, species, establishment care, ownership and future management have been agreed in advance.
- Investigate credible reports promptly and record the outcome, while avoiding unnecessary work in response to pressure alone.
- Treat unauthorised pruning, poisoning, root damage, fixing of objects or removal of Council trees as damage to a public asset and respond proportionately.

Governance, competence and resources

Responsibilities

1. **Wells City Council.** Adopts the policy, sets the overall level of ambition and provides resources through its annual budget and work programme.
- **Relevant committee.** Receives performance information, considers significant policy or resource decisions and provides democratic oversight in accordance with standing orders and delegated authority.
 - **Town Clerk.** Holds overall organisational accountability and ensures that governance, procurement and statutory responsibilities are addressed.
 - **Open Spaces Manager.** Owns the policy operationally, maintains the management system, programmes work, keeps records, commissions specialist advice and coordinates communication.
 - **Competent arboricultural adviser.** Provides inspections, detailed assessments, specifications and advice appropriate to qualifications and experience.
 - **Council staff and volunteers.** Work within training and instruction, report obvious changes or damage and do not undertake tree work beyond their competence or authorisation.
 - **Contractors.** Deliver the specification safely, comply with wildlife and biosecurity requirements, report unexpected conditions and provide completion records.

Resources and whole-life value

The annual tree budget will distinguish between planned inspection, programmed maintenance, urgent work, planting and establishment care. The Council will seek to reduce avoidable emergency cost through reliable data and forward programming, while maintaining flexibility for storms, disease and unforeseen defects.

Planting will not be approved without a credible aftercare resource. External grants, sponsorship and volunteer support may add value but will not replace the Council's core duty to inspect and manage its own tree assets. Decisions will consider whole-life cost and public benefit rather than initial price alone.

Data and asset management

The Council will maintain a proportionate tree asset system linked to mapped sites. The level of individual-tree data will reflect risk, value and management need; low-use woodland may be managed by compartment, while significant or higher-risk trees will have individual records.

- ownership or management responsibility and mapped location;
- species, approximate age or lifecycle class and significant attributes;
- veteran, ancient, notable or future-veteran status where applicable;
- inspection history, observations, recommendations and completed work;
- Tree Preservation Order, conservation-area or other known constraints;
- planting, provenance, aftercare and survival information;
- relevant photographs, reports, claims, ecological records and management plans.

Monitoring, reporting and review

Progress will be reported at least annually through a concise tree-management summary. The first reporting cycle will establish reliable baselines; measurable targets may then be adopted through the annual work programme without requiring the policy text to be rewritten.

Theme	Measure	Reporting frequency
Asset knowledge	Proportion of priority sites mapped and risk-zoned; completeness of records for higher-use sites and significant trees.	Annual
Inspection delivery	Planned inspections completed; overdue actions; emergency and event-driven assessments.	Annual
Risk management	Actions completed by priority; temporary controls; balance of programmed and reactive work.	Annual
Planting and establishment	Trees planted; species mix; survival at years 1, 3 and 5; causes of failure; aftercare completion.	Annual / planting season
Canopy renewal	Trees felled; replacement or succession decisions; expected mature canopy contribution.	Annual
Veteran-tree continuity	Confirmed and candidate veteran, ancient, early-veteran and future-veteran trees; individual plans and condition trends.	Annual summary; detailed review as scheduled
Biodiversity	Deadwood retained, habitat measures, protected-species constraints and actions supporting Somerset nature-recovery priorities.	Annual
Resilience and biosecurity	Species and provenance diversity, pest or disease incidents, statutory notices and changes made after losses.	Annual

Theme	Measure	Reporting frequency
Public value	Significant communications, community involvement, heritage records and recurring enquiry themes.	Annual

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least every five years, aligning with the requirement to reconsider biodiversity actions at least every five years. An earlier review may be triggered by significant legislative or policy change, a major tree incident, new scientific guidance, substantial changes in Council landholdings, emerging pest or disease threats, or evidence that the policy is not delivering its objectives.

Annual operational changes, inspection frequencies and technical specifications may be updated within the policy framework by the responsible officer, provided that they remain within delegated authority and do not weaken the adopted commitments.

Implementation priorities

Following adoption, the Council will use the priorities below to move from policy to a consistent management system. Timing will be integrated into the annual service plan and budget.

Priority	Initial action
Confirm the baseline	Verify ownership and management responsibilities, map priority tree sites and identify information gaps.
Establish risk zones	Classify sites by use and consequence, then set inspection arrangements based on condition and exposure.
Create the veteran-tree register	Record ancient, veteran, notable, early-veteran and future-veteran trees and prepare individual plans for the most significant.
Formalise planting aftercare	Use a single planting and survival register with named responsibility and funded care to independence.
Embed work controls	Adopt standard specifications for pruning, wildlife checks, biosecurity, protected-tree consent and completion records.
Build the renewal programme	Use age-class and canopy information to prioritise native planting, including appropriate black poplar, wild service tree and juniper projects.
Report annually	Provide a concise public and committee summary using the monitoring framework in this policy.

Decision record for significant tree work

For planned felling, major crown reduction, work to veteran trees, subsidence cases or other significant decisions, the record should address the following questions in proportion to the case:

- What tree or group is affected, who owns or manages it and what protections or constraints apply?

- What is the lifecycle class, condition, ecological value, heritage value and landscape contribution?
- What is the specific risk, conflict, objective or legal requirement?
- Who or what is exposed, how often, and what would the credible consequences be?
- What target-management, engineering, environmental or lesser tree-work options have been considered?
- What wildlife checks, specialist advice, consents and work methods are required?
- Why is the selected option proportionate and what residual risk will remain?
- How will deadwood, replacement planting, future canopy, successor habitat and public communication be handled?
- Who authorised the decision, who will complete the work and how will completion and future review be recorded?

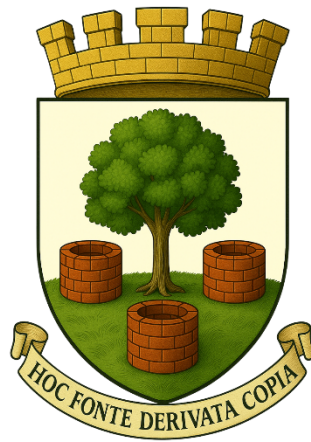
Reference sources

The policy has been prepared with reference to current legislation and the following national and local guidance. The current edition or successor document should be used.

- Natural England and Forestry Commission - Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Complying with the biodiversity duty
- National Tree Safety Group - Common sense risk management of trees
- Forestry Commission - Managing ash dieback in England
- Forestry Commission - Prevent the introduction and spread of tree pests and diseases
- Forest Research - Tree species diversity and climate adaptation
- Forestry Commission and Natural England - Manage and protect woodland wildlife
- Natural England - Bats: advice for making planning decisions
- Somerset Council - Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Somerset
- Somerset Council - Tree Preservation Orders and conservation-area procedures
- Ancient Tree Forum - Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management

Associated documents and standards

- Wells City Council Grounds Maintenance Strategy and Pollinator Action Framework.
- Wells City Council asset, risk, procurement and health and safety procedures.
- BS 3998 - Tree work - Recommendations.
- BS 5837 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations.
- BS 8545 - Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations.
- UK Forestry Standard and current Forestry Commission practice guidance where woodland management or felling controls apply.



Wells City Council

Employee Handbook

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to Wells City Council. Our strength as a Council is due to the skills and abilities of colleagues like you. We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

This handbook

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all employees. The contents of this handbook do not form part of the terms of your contract of employment unless otherwise stated. The Council may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the business. Any such change will be notified to all employees.

The Council recognises the 'Green Book' which includes enhancements above the statutory minimum to certain employee benefits. These additional benefits are mainly detailed within your contract of employment, however if detailed within this handbook, they will be clearly identifiable.

We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action; in appropriate cases, up to and including dismissal.

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KEY PRINCIPLES

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Council to its employees – and the key commitments expected from employees in return.

Council Code of Conduct

The behaviour of employees is central to the continued success of the Council. This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Council and the fair treatment of all employees. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on gifts and hospitality;
- The policy on smoking;
- The policy on alcohol and drugs;
- The policies on driving and the use of Council vehicles;
- The policy regarding social media; CCTV and
- The rules concerning the use of computers, the internet and email;

Dishonesty

It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty, however minor, will be regarded as gross misconduct. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Council, colleagues or any third party. However, it also includes an employee seeking to gain any advantage through deception – such as making a false claim for expenses or overtime, falsely claiming to be sick or falsely claiming to have completed a particular task.

It does not matter if any amount of money at issue is small. The Council regards any dishonesty by employees as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

Refusal to carry out instructions

The Council expects employees to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and managers for the good of the business as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their managers' instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so will be gross misconduct.

If you believe that you have been instructed to do something that does not fall within your duties or which is in some other way unreasonable then the appropriate way of dealing with this is to raise a grievance under the grievance procedure (see Section 5.4). However, doing so will not prevent a refusal to carry out an instruction from amounting to gross misconduct if it is found to have been a reasonable one in all the circumstances.

Health and Safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Council is to ensure that you are safe while you are at work. Similarly, all employees are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues or any other person.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of key staff members for ensuring that the Council meets its commitment to health and safety is available from the Town Clerk. In addition, there is information on health and safety displayed throughout our premises and processes and procedures can be found in the Health and Safety Process folder within Citrix

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Council's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. These are also regularly reviewed. Any employee who is concerned that any aspect of the Council's activities poses a risk to health and safety should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Employees are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may amount to gross misconduct, for example, where employees are required to wear personal protective equipment.

Ethical Conduct

The Council aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual employees to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may amount to gross misconduct and therefore to dismissal without notice.

Gifts and Hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from clients/customers, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that employees or the Council may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make in respect of clients/customers, suppliers or in any other aspect of their work.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, of whatever value, must be entered in the Register kept by the management team.

No personal gifts of a value in excess of £10 should be accepted from a client/customer, supplier or potential supplier without express permission from the Town Clerk.

Acceptance of hospitality, such as lunch or drinks receptions, should be kept within common sense limits and should always be authorised by your manager. Offers of hospitality must always be authorised by your manager.

You may also be instructed to return any gifts which your manager considers to be inappropriate, or to refuse to accept hospitality from a particular supplier or potential supplier. Failing to obey such an instruction will be treated as misconduct.

Allowing gifts or hospitality to influence any purchasing/business decisions that you may make on behalf of the Council or to otherwise influence the way in which you perform your duties is an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

It is also an act of gross misconduct to seek to influence any other person to behave in an improper way or to confer a business advantage on you or the Council through the giving of any gift or hospitality.

Whistleblowing

The Council encourages employees to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the business. Wrongdoing in this context means any breach of a legal obligation, risk to health and safety, a criminal offence being committed, a miscarriage of justice occurring or likely to occur, sexual harassment occurring or likely to occur, damage to the environment, or an attempt to conceal any of the above.

Any initial concern should be raised with the Town Clerk. However, if this is not appropriate then you should contact another member of the management team who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Employees who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result, however the employee must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from your manager, colleagues or any other employee of the business. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Council, a fellow employee or any other person will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing, then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Good Faith and Loyalty

The employment relationship is one built on trust and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Council has a duty to provide reasonable support to employees and employees have a duty of good faith towards the Council.

In practice this means not doing (i) anything that undermines the Council's standing with members of the public and fellow employees, and (ii) anything that undermines the Council's position by acting in competition with it, providing information to competitors or undermining the Council's standing with clients, customers and fellow employees.

Data Protection

We will process personal data and sensitive personal data (also known as 'special categories of personal data') relating to you in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Data Protection Privacy Notice (provided to you separately), as well as in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

We may monitor staff in accordance with our policies relating to email, internet and communications systems and monitoring at work, as detailed in this Employee Handbook and in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

You will comply with your obligations under our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies as directed.

Environmental Statement

In the undertaking of their daily duties, we accept that all staff associated with Council will have an influence on the environment. We will commit to adopting working practices that will help to have a positive effect, assist towards continued environmental improvement, prevent pollution and reduce unavoidable negative influences caused by our working practices.

The Council therefore maintains a policy of 'minimum waste' which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of all our operations. Every employee has a responsibility to promote this policy by taking extra care when carrying out normal duties to avoid unnecessary or extravagant use of services, materials, lights, heating, water etc.

HOW WE DO THINGS

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your employment and sets out the standards the Council expects of employees in various situations.

Proof of Identity

The Council is legally obliged to ensure that all employees are permitted to work in the UK. It is a condition of your employment that you comply with all reasonable requests to provide details of your identity, right to work in the UK and place of residence. This will include allowing the Council to take copies of your passport or other appropriate documents and to check their authenticity. Copies of any such documents will be kept in your personnel file for such a period as is deemed necessary in compliance with current data protection laws.

The Council may dismiss any employee who cannot demonstrate that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

Dress Code

All employees should dress in a manner appropriate to the work that they do. Key factors include whether or not the employee meets clients or customers and whether the requirements of health and safety require particular clothing. How you dress is largely a matter of common sense. If your manager feels that you are dressing in an inappropriate way they may ask you to dress differently the next time you come into work. A persistent refusal to comply with a reasonable standard set by a manager will amount to misconduct.

Where an employee dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans, then they may be sent home to change. Any time taken to go home and change will be unpaid.

Employees required to wear Uniform

If you are provided with specific uniform for your role, you will be expected to wear this at all times whilst at work, especially if you may come into contact with the public in the performance of your duties.

You must ensure you look presentable for work and your uniform is maintained in a good condition. If you lose your uniform, or do not look after it, then the Council will be entitled to make a deduction from your remuneration to cover the cost of replacing this. General wear and tear will be taken into account and the Council may exercise its discretion to replace uniform.

Personal Protective Equipment

If you are provided with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you must ensure you wear this at all times, especially in any designated area which may pose additional risk. Failure to do so is likely to result in disciplinary action.

Timekeeping

Good timekeeping is essential in any team; however, we recognise the commitment that staff dedicate to their duties and therefore are happy to show some flexibility in terms of time keeping. This having been said, in the case where any employee who is seen to abuse this goodwill, their Manager will raise the issue. Persistent abuse of this goodwill will likely result in disciplinary action.

Where it is clear that you are going to be late for work you must contact the Town Clerk as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an estimate of your arrival time. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend work on time, then you should discuss this with the Town Clerk. In some cases, the Council may be able to accommodate a reasonable need for flexibility, but this will be subject to the requirements of the business as well as avoiding placing an unfair burden on your colleagues (see Section 4).

Core hours for Council operations will be defined in individual contracts; however, flexibility may be permitted by agreement with the Town Clerk. Persistent lateness or failure to adhere to agreed hours may result in disciplinary action.

All employees must complete a weekly timesheet detailing hours worked each day, including start/end times and breaks. Timesheets should also record any overtime or TOIL accrued. Timesheets must be submitted to the Town Clerk by 9AM on the 23rd of each month in order to meet payroll timescales. Accurate timesheet completion is the responsibility of the employee and forms part of performance monitoring.

Overtime is defined as hours worked in excess of contracted hours and must be pre-authorized by the Town Clerk. Wherever possible, flexible working arrangements should be used to avoid overtime, especially where a working pattern may fluctuate and may require rationalisation over a longer period than one week. For example where morning shifts and afternoon shifts interchange and therefore the hours worked over the month would be used as an average opposed to the weekly balance.

Where overtime is essential and authorised, it may be compensated either:

Through payment at the employee's standard hourly rate (unless otherwise agreed within their contract); or Through Time Off in Lieu (TOIL).

Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) is offered in place of paid overtime where mutually agreed and must also be authorised in advance. TOIL must be taken within three months of being accrued unless agreed otherwise by the Town Clerk. A TOIL log must be maintained and submitted alongside timesheets and should be recorded within the Council's leave processes as TOIL.

Unused TOIL will not normally be carried forward beyond the financial year, nor paid in lieu unless in exceptional circumstances (e.g., upon leaving employment) and only by agreement.

The Clerk is responsible for monitoring adherence to the time management terms within the Staff Handbook. A quarterly review of timesheets and TOIL/overtime records will be conducted to ensure fairness and appropriate workload management.

Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption

The Council's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather means this cannot be achieved and the workplace needs to close then all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances employees will be paid in full for any working time they have lost.

If the need to close the workplace persists, the Council may invoke the lay-off clause in employees' contracts.

If the workplace remains open, it is the responsibility of employees to attend work if they possibly can. While the Council understands that this is not always possible, additional paid leave will not be provided for employees who are unable, for whatever reason, to travel into work.

Where it is clear that you are unable to get to work you must contact the Town Clerk as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to your manager or the Clerk directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If you are unable to attend work due to severe weather or other travel difficulties then you will either be required to take time from your annual leave allowance to cover any absence, or to take unpaid time off as agreed with your Manager. There may be circumstances in which employees are able to work at home, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the Town Clerk.

Rest Breaks

All employees are encouraged to take full advantage of scheduled rest breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of employees and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents.

A rest break should be taken away from your workstation wherever possible. If you leave the premises you should bear in mind the time that it will take you to return from the break so that you can ensure that you begin work again on time.

Different areas of the business may have different arrangements for ad hoc breaks such as to make a cup of tea or coffee. These arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth running of the business and to prevent putting unfair pressure on colleagues. You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time.

Smoking

The Council operates a smoke-free workplace. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is therefore strictly prohibited throughout all Council premises, including any Council vehicle.

Smoking is only permitted during designated break times and in the designated outside areas.

Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet

It is very important that the Council is able to keep its data secure. To assist with this, all employees are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned IT or communication systems.

You should ensure that when leaving your workstation for any lengthy period, that you lock your IT devices or log off if appropriate.

You must not attach any device to Council IT equipment without authorisation from the Town Clerk and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source. Council portable IT devices must be kept secure and password protected at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Council's IT and communication systems will amount to gross misconduct.

Internet Use

Employees with access to the internet on Council-owned IT devices should use this access responsibly.

Personal use during working hours will be treated as misconduct. From time to time the Council may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, employees must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material. Any attempt to do so may, depending on the circumstances, amount to gross misconduct leading to dismissal.

Employees must not download any software, plugins or extensions on to Council-owned IT devices unless this is first cleared by an appropriate manager. Employees should also refrain from downloading music, video or any other entertainment content on any Council-owned IT device.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's IT and communication systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without express permission from management.

Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence.

If you have a Council email account you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Council. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from any email address associated with work.

Using a Council/work email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, is strictly prohibited and may amount to gross misconduct. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should inform a member of management of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it is removed from the system.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' / 'confidential' and not copied into those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.

Privacy

Monitoring of email usage takes place without notice. You should have no expectation of privacy in respect of personal and business use of email and the internet whilst at work.

Your email remains the property of the Council and therefore you should not use your Council email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its business, read emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will try to avoid reading personal emails if possible.

Social Media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council.

You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage our business interests or reputation, even indirectly. You must not use social media to:

- defame or disparage or make any other inappropriate comment about us, our staff or any customer, client or other third party;
- harass (including sexually harass), bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff, customers, clients or other third parties;
- make false or misleading statements; or
- impersonate colleagues or third parties.

Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

You should make it clear in social media postings, or on your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal email address. Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

You must not operate a social media account or profile or express an opinion that purports to be operated/made on behalf of the Council without express permission to do so from your manager. You must not comment on social media about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance, or do anything to jeopardise our trade secrets, confidential information and intellectual property. You must not include our logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media.

You should not attempt to access social networking sites, such as Facebook/X (formerly known as Twitter) or similar on Council computers. This includes during break times.

Any misuse of social media that you see should be reported to your manager.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. You may be required to remove any social media content that we consider constitutes a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Telephones

Council telephones must be used for legitimate business purposes only.

Calls and texts on personal mobile phones should wherever possible be restricted to formal rest breaks

Alcohol and Drugs

The Council's approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and other substances (including new psychoactive substances) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as "other substances") is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

An employee will be regarded as 'under the influence' of alcohol, drugs or other substances if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is in any way affected. An employee will also be regarded as under the influence if they fail a drug, other substance or alcohol test.

Dependency

Employees who have a dependency on alcohol, drugs or other substances may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Absence arising from treatment or counselling related to drug, alcohol or other substance abuse will be treated as sickness absence under the Council's absence management policy. However, while the Council will always try to be supportive toward employees with a drug, alcohol or other substance problem, this will not prevent disciplinary action being taken when employees act in breach of the rules laid out in this policy.

Wherever an employee informs the Council that they have a drug, alcohol or other substance problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However, the Council may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers, regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering and/or intoxicating substance, including new psychoactive substances, on Council premises or during working time is strictly prohibited. The Council will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance at work or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the Town Clerk of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the work can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to work.

Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the work of an employee and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit to work in the morning.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol.

You must not consume any alcohol during working time, lunchtime or during any break unless this has been specifically authorised by your manager.

Where alcohol is available at Council organised events or occasions when you are representing the Council – even outside working hours - it is important to behave responsibly and not drink to excess. Behaviour that reflects badly on the Council will be a disciplinary matter and in serious cases may amount to gross misconduct.

Driving

Where driving is required as part of your job, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive.

Licences will go through the Council inspection procedure which requires us to check individual licences once a year with the DVLA, or as otherwise requested. The Council will require you to share your driving licence information by supplying it with your driving licence number and a check code provided by the DVLA. If you receive any points on your licence you must inform the Council of this immediately.

If you use your own vehicle to drive on Council/work-related business, it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. The Council may require you at any time/annually to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in our records.

You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Council's reputation and can amount to gross misconduct. If you are banned from driving for any reason, the Council is not obliged to find alternative work for you and may choose to dismiss you if the ban renders you incapable of performing your duties as required.

It is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving. This includes texting etc.

Employees should **never** use their mobile phone whilst driving on Council business unless they do so on a properly installed hands-free system and traffic conditions mean that it is safe to do so. In most cases, it is preferable to make any calls when the vehicle is stationary.

Any journey carried out on Council business must be scheduled in such a way as to allow adequate rest breaks – usually one break of 15 minutes for two hours of driving. Where possible, driving on Council business should be avoided either late at night or very early in the morning.

Safety is the Council's prime responsibility and you should not be required to compromise safety in any way when driving on Council business. If you are concerned about any driving requirements you may have, then you should discuss these with the Town City Clerk and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that any work-related journey can be completed safely.

Council Vehicles

If a Council vehicle is provided to you as part of your contract of employment or you are required to drive a Council vehicle as part of your job, it is your responsibility to take care of the vehicle, keeping it in a clean and roadworthy condition, including checking the oil/water levels are at the required levels. You should report any damage or fault immediately. The Council will arrange for appropriate maintenance or servicing to be carried out. If you incur any reasonable expenses in connection with the vehicle then these will be reimbursed, but you must check with the Town Clerk first and comply fully with our expenses policy. The Council will not be obliged to reimburse any expenses incurred without authorisation.

Any personal use of a Council vehicle, other than a vehicle provided for your exclusive use as part of your contract is at the sole discretion of the Council and must in any event be kept within reasonable limits. Your manager may at any time instruct you not to use – or to cease using - a Council vehicle for private purposes.

If you have possession of a Council vehicle overnight or at the weekend then you must ensure that it is securely parked in an appropriate location. In general, equipment or stock should not be left in a vehicle overnight. Where this is unavoidable then you must ensure that the vehicle is parked in a locked garage. If this is not possible then you should discuss appropriate parking and security arrangements with the Town Clerk.

Lone working guidance

Introduction

People who work by themselves, either on a regular, permanent or occasional basis can be at greater risk from assaults and accidents than other workers. This guidance is to assist managers and staff, to reduce the risk of harm occurring to lone workers.

With proper management and control of the risks, those who work alone can be as safe as everyone else at work.

Who is a lone worker?

Lone workers are simply those people who work by themselves, without close or direct supervision. This situation can occur in fixed establishments, where one person works in an area separate from others, or works outside of the normal office hours. More frequently it is staff working away from their fixed base e.g. maintenance workers.

People will generally know when they are working alone, but there are situations where even when an office is normally crowded, people can be working in isolation e.g. in a meeting or interview room.

Risk assessment

The need to assess the risks associated with any work activity applies to staff who work alone. The risk assessment process is the responsibility of managers, and this will ensure that the hazards and level of risks are identified, and if necessary action taken to avoid and/or control the risks.

Control measures may include; issuing safe working instructions, training, supervision, issuing personal protective equipment. Managers should ensure that control measures are implemented. The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is always kept up to date if situations change. These can be seen within the Health and Safety Folder on Citrix.

It is important that employees are consulted on the risk assessment, as they can provide valuable information and advice. Where risk assessments identify that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place.

If a lone worker carries out their work at another employer's site, information should be provided about any risks for the manager to carry out the risk assessment and ensure that the right action is taken to ensure the safety of the lone worker.

Lone worker advice

It is impossible to identify all of the hazards that a lone worker may face, many may be transient in nature. It is important to protect staff against all known risks and to equip them with adequate training and information to assist them in dealing with any risky situations that they may encounter ranging from dealing with aggressive clients to entering an unsafe building. Specific safe working arrangements should be implemented and developed.

Lone working in premises

- Ensure that you know relevant emergency procedures and can act appropriately when an alarm is raised
- Be aware of any other procedures intended for your safety and use them.
- If dealing with clients/the public, find out if there have been problems that may affect your safety and implement agreed protocols - if in doubt, have another member of staff available.
- Know where and how to obtain help if needed, e.g. first aid assistance.
- Know the security measures for your workplace and use them correctly.
- Where lone working devices or mobile phones are provided, ensure that they are charged and deployed in line with the operating instructions at all times when lone working.

Lone working in the community

- Ensure that your line manager knows your intended movements and inform them if they change.
- Ensure that any communication device, such as a telephone, or alarm, works and that it is checked regularly.
- Plan your route to avoid quiet streets, dark areas and possible dangerous areas.
- Use well frequented streets on your route.
- When travelling at night stay in well-lit areas.
- If travelling by car, park as close to the site you are visiting as possible.
- Do not leave items within clear sight in a vehicle.
- If you feel threatened in any way, do not continue to your destination.

Visiting other people and unknown premises

- Ensure that your line manager/colleague is aware of your intended visit and inform them if there is any problem or changes.
- Follow the procedures for maintaining contact with your manager.
- If you have doubts about potential risks, from the place or person you are planning to visit, check if it is safe to visit alone.
- Try not to visit alone for the first time, and especially not after dark.
- Do not allow any doors to be locked behind you.
- Always follow other people into a room and make sure your exit is clear.
- Be aware of dogs, other animals or other people at the site.
- Suggest that dogs and other animals be kept in a separate room if possible.
- If you are in any doubt about your safety, do not enter the premises.
- Be aware of your surroundings and look out for unstable or slippery surfaces, Do not under any circumstances enter confined spaces or dangerous structures.
- Report incidents or hazardous conditions.

Manual handling

- Avoid manual handling, if at all possible, by using mechanical aids,
- Always assess the situation, and if there is any doubt about the safety of carrying out a manual handling task, do not do it.
- Follow good practice handling technique as you have been advised in your training and safe working instructions.
- If the task requires more than one person, do not do it until assistance is provided.

Working at home

- Develop a routine; this will help to avoid stress.
- Communicate regularly with your line manager.
- Be aware of any hazards around and inside the house.
- Know what to do in an emergency situation.
- Check that equipment is safe to use.
- Follow the good practice as advised in your safe working instructions.

Other risks

It is not always possible to be prepared for every eventuality but you need to be aware and judge the risks and take appropriate action. If you are unsure of what to do, talk to your manager. Above all do not put yourself at risk, if there is any danger stop work or leave the location.

What to do if an incident occurs

- Try to remain calm.
- In a potentially violent situation, talk quietly, as your training advises.
- Whenever possible, remove yourself from the scene as soon as possible.
- Do not attack a potential assailant, - run away if possible towards a friendly group or busy and well populated area.
- If you witness an incident, try to remember as much as you can to help in any investigation.
- Report the incident immediately to your manager.

- Complete an incident report form and follow your reporting procedures.
- Report the incident to the police, if necessary.

Further assistance and advice

Refer to the Town Clerk, and the Council's Health and Safety processes within Citrix. Alternatively, guidance can be found within the Health and Safety Executive Website and Leaflet - Working Alone In Safety INDG 73, available from www.hse.gov.uk / Tel: 08701 545500

Eye Care and DSE Assessments

The Council will provide an annual eye care scheme upon request. Vouchers can be exchanged for an eye care test in line with national schemes. Vouchers can be obtained from the Town Clerk or RFO.

DSE assessments will be completed upon request and the council will provide reasonable adjustments in support of any recommended outcomes of assessment in line with the employees role and responsibilities.

Expenses

You will be reimbursed for authorised and legitimate expenditure reasonably incurred in the course of the proper performance of your duties, i.e. travel, accommodation, agreed out-of-pocket expenditure.

In order to claim expenses you must complete an expense claim form and support the claim by submitting valid receipts.

Travel expenses are paid at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles in any one year. 25p per mile, thereafter. This is in line with current approved HMRC Mileage Allowance Payments. An additional 5p per mile is payable for a passenger required to attend the same meeting, event or training course.

Reimbursement is made against a valid bus or train ticket for standard class air fare, standard bus fare or agreed air fare. Taxi fares will only be reimbursed in urgent or exceptional circumstances.

Insurance

Anyone claiming travel expenses from the use of their own vehicle must demonstrate that they have the appropriate insurance for the purpose of using their vehicle for work related matters. If they are to make a claim they must produce a valid copy of the certificate of motor insurance.

Council Property

You are not permitted to use Council property for any purpose other than its intended use. Council property must not be removed from the premises unless with prior approval.

Damage to Council Property

Any damage to or loss of Council property must be immediately reported to your manager.

If, following an investigation, it is found that as a result of your carelessness, negligence or failure to comply with Council procedures, or by wilful act, the Council suffers loss or damage of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings or property (including vehicles), this will be construed as serious breach of the rules, which could result in your summary dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct.

You may also be liable to pay the full, or part, cost of making good the Council's loss in respect of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings, or property (including vehicles).

In the event that the Council makes a claim to its insurers, for repair or replacement, or other losses incurred, it reserves the right to require you to pay any insurance excess that may accrue.

It is an express term of your contract of employment that if Council property is damaged, lost or stolen through your negligence or fault, then the Council may deduct the cost of repair or replacement from your salary.

Before any decision is made to deduct, the matter will be fully investigated and you will be given an opportunity to state your case and appeal any decision.

Return of Council Property

Upon termination of employment for whatever reason, you must return to the Council all property belonging to the Council including vehicle, computer, equipment, keys, records and documents within your possession or control belonging or relating to the affairs and business of the Council and its customers.

The Council may deduct the cost of replacement of any items not returned, or repair of items that are returned damaged, on termination of your employment from your salary or any monies owed to you.

Employees' Property

The Council does not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises, and in particular, not to leave any items overnight.

Any loss or theft of items must be reported to your manager.

Lost Property

If you find any items of lost property they should be handed to your immediate Manager, who will retain the items for three weeks. The property will either be handed over to the police or disposed of accordingly.

General

Statements to the Media

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television etc. in relation to our business will be given only by those managers with appropriate authority.

Parking

If parking is provided by the Council, all cars parked in such parking areas are parked at the owner's risk and must be parked so as not to obstruct access. It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is parked in a safe area.

Probation

Your contract of employment will confirm whether your appointment is subject to a probationary period and the length of that period. The purpose of probation is to allow both you and the Council to assess your suitability for the role and to provide an opportunity for you to become familiar with the standards, duties and responsibilities expected of you.

During your probationary period your performance, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and progress in the role will be monitored. Your manager will provide appropriate guidance and support and will raise any areas of concern with you so that you have a reasonable opportunity to improve. Probation review meetings may be held during the period and a final review will normally take place before the probationary period is due to end.

Where the required standards have been met, your appointment will be confirmed. If further time is reasonably required to assess your suitability or to allow you to demonstrate the necessary improvement, the Council may extend the probationary period. You will be informed of any extension, the reasons for it, the standards expected and the period over which these will be reviewed.

If your performance, conduct, attendance or suitability for the role does not meet the required standard during or at the end of probation, the Council may terminate your employment in accordance with the notice provisions in your contract. The Council may also take action before the end of the probationary period where concerns are sufficiently serious. Nothing in this section affects any statutory rights which apply to you.

ABSENCE

This section sets out the approach the Council takes when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off.

Unauthorised Absence

Employees who deliberately fail to attend work without proper reason or in breach of management instructions will be committing gross misconduct which could result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu.

Medical Appointments

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should be made outside of working hours. Paid leave will not normally be granted for non-emergency visits.

The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted. In most cases, employees will be required either to use part of their annual holiday entitlement or to make up any lost time.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for cancer screening.

Ante-natal Care/Adoption Appointments

Pregnancy Related Appointments

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid-time off to attend ante-natal appointments provided that attendance is based on medical advice. For second and subsequent appointments you may be required to produce an appointment card or similar evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

While there is no limit on the number of appointments that an employee can attend, the Council does have the right to refuse time off where it is reasonable to do so. Employees are therefore expected to take reasonable steps to arrange antenatal appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off. Part-time workers should attempt to arrange appointments for days when they are not required to work and all employees should try to avoid appointments in the middle of the working day in order to minimise disruption.

If your partner is pregnant, you are entitled to unpaid time off for up to two antenatal appointments. If you wish to exercise this right you should notify your manager of the date and time of the appointment. You may be asked to provide written evidence that an appropriate appointment has in fact been made.

Adoption Appointments

Employees who are adopting on their own, or have elected to be the primary adopter may take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments in certain circumstances.

If you are the partner of the primary adopter, you may take unpaid time off on up to two occasions to attend an adoption appointment.

Sickness Absence

Regular and reliable attendance at work is an important commitment that the Council asks all employees to make. Unjustified or excessive absence can put unfair pressure on colleagues and seriously damage the Council's business, to everybody's detriment.

Nevertheless the Council will always try to be supportive when an employee is genuinely too ill to attend work. This policy sets out the Council's approach and the steps that you need to take if you are off sick.

Infectious Disease

An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay whilst absent from work in consequence of this. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

If an employee contracts an industrial disease, or is involved in an accident or assault arising out of, or in the normal course of their employment, this will be considered entirely separately from normal sickness absence and therefore will not be offset against an employee's sick pay entitlement under the sick pay scheme.

Reporting Sickness Absence

If you are too ill to come into work you should personally inform the City Clerk of this fact as soon as possible and in any event by no later than your start time. When you phone in sick you must make every effort to speak to your manager directly. Do not simply leave a message with a colleague or send an email or text. If you need to leave a message for your Manager, then they may contact you during the day to discuss your absence with you.

It is important that you keep in touch with your manager about the likely length of your absence so that appropriate arrangements can be made for cover and you should phone in sick on every day of your absence unless either you have previously informed your manager that you will be off sick for a particular period of time or your absence is certified by a GP 'Fit Note' (Form Med 3).

Hangovers are not regarded as legitimate reasons to take sickness absence. Absence by reason of hangovers will be regarded as a disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu. You should also be aware of the rules governing the consumption of alcohol set out in the Alcohol and Drugs Policy.

The Council requires any absence of up to and including 7 calendar days to be certified by a 'self-certification form' (Form SC2). Any absence of more than a week must be certified by a 'Fit Note' (Forms Med 3 or Med 10). Uncertified absence may be treated as misconduct and will not be paid.

Where any period of sickness absence occurs immediately before or immediately after a period of annual leave then the Council may require such absence to be certified by a GP at your own expense.

Where you are absent for an extended period of time (three weeks or more) the Council may refer you to an occupational health professional or seek a medical report from your GP. The purpose of this will be to ascertain when you are likely to be able to return to work and to identify any measures that can be taken to help you return as soon as possible.

Employees who are off sick should not undertake any activities likely to be detrimental to their recovery and should cooperate with the appropriate medical professionals in taking steps to ensure that their recovery is as swift as possible.

The Council will maintain regular contact with employees who are off sick for an extended period.

Employees will be required to attend a return to work meeting after any period of sickness absence. The purpose of the meeting is to check on the employee's general health and wellbeing, to catch up with regard to anything that the employee may have missed, and to discuss whether there are any concerns in respect of absence levels.

Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

Employees may request annual leave during any period of sickness absence in the normal way. If you intend to spend any time away from home during your sickness absence you should inform your manager of this fact in advance and provide contact details. The Council does not expect employees to take holidays while off sick. In exceptional cases only, where this may assist in an employee's recovery, the Council may agree to holidays being taken during sick leave. It is essential however that any such holidays are agreed in advance with the Council following the normal holiday request procedure.

Phased Return to Work

As an employee recovers from illness or injury it may be possible for them to undertake a limited range of duties as a preparation for returning to normal work. The Council will try whenever appropriate in light of medical advice to allow for a phased return to work from any long-term illness. This may involve reducing the employee's hours, or the scope of their duties or both. The purpose of a phased return, however, is to provide a bridge between sickness absence and normal working and so any such arrangements will be time-limited and will not normally extend over more than three months.

Alternative Work

The Council may consider agreeing changes to an employee's duties or other working arrangements when it becomes clear that due to sickness or injury they will not be able to return to normal working. Any such changes will be subject to the needs of the business and there is no guarantee that permanent arrangements of this sort will be possible.

Where duties or working hours are varied in this way then the job being done by the employee will need to be reassessed to determine the appropriate level of remuneration. This will then need to be agreed with the employee. If an agreement is not reached then the Council may proceed to dismiss the employee in accordance with the procedure for long-term sickness absence.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Council needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with their line manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Council is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment. Nor will the Council agree to an adjustment which will not result in a commercially practicable working arrangement.

Contractual Sick Pay

In addition to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) the Council also offers an enhanced Sick Pay scheme in line with the Green book provisions. An employee's entitlement under this scheme is linked to their length of service, and will be as follows:

Service not exceeding	Full Pay	Half Pay
4 Months	1 month	Nil
1 Year	1 month	2 months
2 Years	2 months	2 months
3 Years	4 months	4 months
4 Years	5 months	5 months
After 5 Years	6 months	6 months

For these purposes, entitlement to sick pay is on a rolling 12 month basis which means that we will add up all absences due to sickness or injury in the 12 months before your current absence.

NB: 'Full Pay' period = Sick Pay shall include SSP and any Incapacity Benefit

'Half Pay' period = Half pay plus SSP and Incapacity Benefit, so long as this total does not exceed an employee's normal pay.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are sick the Council will pay you Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), if you are eligible. Further details of this are contained within your contract of employment.

Jury Service/Other Time Off

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate or school governor. Where a need for such time off arises you should discuss the matter with the Town Clerk who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Council will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited.

Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the business, the Council may require you to seek a deferment.

Employees undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies, or undertaking public duties, will be entitled to paid time off. Where an allowance is available for loss of earnings, the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the employing authority.

Compassionate/Bereavement Leave

In the event an employee suffers a bereavement in their immediate family, the Council will exercise its discretion to allow reasonable time off to attend a funeral. Immediate family is referenced to be:

- Parents
- Children
- Spouse
- Sibling
- Grandparents

What is reasonable will be determined on a case by case basis and the type of leave, whether paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances and the relationship the employee had with the individual and at the discretion of the Town Clerk.

In addition, there may be occasions where it may be necessary for an employee to take compassionate leave. Again, this will be considered on a case by case basis and dependant on circumstances, may be paid or unpaid and at the discretion of the Town Clerk.

An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement or compassionate time-off benefits while off, or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave (SPBL) if a child for whom they have or were due to have parental responsibility has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, on or after 6 April 2020.

Leave can be taken as one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks, at any time within the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

Notification

During the first eight weeks after a child has died, you, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to the Council to take SPBL before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. If you have already started work, then officially your SPBL period will start on the following day. If you want to cancel it at any time during the first seven weeks you can do so as long as it has not started.

After eight weeks, you need to give at least a week's notice to the Council to take SPBL. You can cancel it with a week's notice, or re-book it by giving a week's notice.

When giving notice to take SPBL, you must tell the Council: the date of the child's death; when you want your leave to begin; and whether you want to take 1 or 2 weeks leave). You can give notice by telephone or by email or by letter.

Parental Bereavement Pay

To qualify for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) during such leave you must have at least six months' continuous employment and normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit. It is paid at the same rate as other statutory family leave pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

To claim SPBP, you must confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of SPBL: your name; your entitlement to SPBP; the dates of SPBL you want to claim the pay for; the date of the child's death; and your relationship to the child. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SPBL, as set out above, so long as it is in writing.

Other leave entitlements

In addition to parental bereavement leave, if you qualified for:

- maternity or paternity leave and pay and your child has died or been stillborn, you are still entitled to such leave and pay.
- adoption leave and pay, then the adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

If your planned period of SPBL coincides with another statutory family leave right, your SPBL will end at the start of that other leave. If you wish to take SPBL at the end of the other statutory family leave period, then a fresh notice to take the leave will be required, as per the above notice requirements.

Compassionate or Dependants leave may be available under our Compassionate or Dependants Leave Policy at our discretion. Please speak to your manager if you require time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

Emergency Time Off for Dependants

The Council recognises that situations arise where you need to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. Your husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely solely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify. For further detail as to who counts as depending on you and guidance on individual circumstances, please speak to your Manager.

Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform the Council as soon as possible that you need this time off, you will be allowed reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with such emergencies.

The right to time off only covers emergencies. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you will not qualify for this type of leave and you therefore should arrange this with the Council by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave, parental leave etc.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform your manager in advance of any absence you should contact your manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

If you suffer some other personal emergency you should talk to the Town Clerk who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Council and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the business. However, the Council will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

Annual Leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This section of the handbook outlines the general approach taken by the Council to requests for annual leave.

All annual leave must be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk. You should not make firm travel plans or commitments until a request for leave has been granted and the Council will not take such plans into account when dealing with conflicting holiday requests.

Further, no more than two consecutive weeks' holiday can be taken at one time. In certain circumstances, and at the discretion of the business, a longer period may be permitted. If this is required, you should discuss this with the Town Clerk, to establish whether this can be accommodated.

What notice do I need to give?

All requests for leave should be made at least 4 weeks in advance. The means of requesting leave may change from time to time and you should comply with whatever procedure is in place at the time of the request.

Your manager may refuse any request for leave if it would result in the workplace being understaffed or otherwise prejudice the business. Leave is likely to be refused if it is requested for a particularly busy period or a time when other employees have already had leave approved.

Certain times of year are particularly popular times for requesting holiday. Generally, subject to the needs of the business, leave will be granted on a first come first served basis, but exceptions may be made in the interests of ensuring that holiday is spread through the year on a fair and equitable basis.

Our Holiday Year

All employees are encouraged to take their full holiday entitlement during the holiday year which runs from 01 April to 31 March. However, it is your responsibility to schedule your holiday so that it can be taken at an appropriate time.

You cannot usually carry forward untaken holiday from one holiday year to the following holiday year unless you have been prevented from taking it in the relevant holiday year by one of the following: a period of sickness absence or statutory maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental, parental, parental bereavement, carer's, or neonatal care, or bereaved partner's paternity leave. In cases of sickness absence, carry-over is limited to four weeks' holiday per year less any leave taken during the holiday year that has just ended. Any such carried over holiday which is not taken within eighteen months of the end of the relevant holiday year will be lost.

If you do not take your annual leave within the leave year in which it accrued, you will lose the right to take it, unless one of the carry forward provisions referred to above applies.

Employees who leave their employment during the course of a holiday year will be entitled to a pro-rata payment reflecting leave accrued but not taken. Where an employee has, at the time their employment ends, taken a larger proportion of their leave entitlement than the proportion of the holiday year that has expired, then a deduction will be made from the final payment of salary to reflect the holiday which has been taken but not accrued.

The Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times depending on the needs of the business and these are set out in your contract of employment. We will give reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Council requires the employee to take).

The Council may require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

Reserve Forces

The Council supports employees who are also member of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with their line manager.

Carer's Leave

All employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave in any 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. A "week" for these purposes will be equal in duration to the period you are normally expected to work in a week at the time of making the request. How that is calculated will depend on whether you have non-variable or variable hours of work.

A dependant is:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- someone who lives in the same household as you, otherwise than by reason of being your boarder, employee, lodger or tenant, or;
- anybody else who reasonably relies on you to provide or arrange their care.

A dependant has a long-term care need if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, or
- they require care for a reason connected with their old age.

The minimum period of carer's leave that can be taken at one time is half a working day, with the maximum period being one continuous week. Leave need not be taken on continuous days.

You must give notice of your request to take a period of carer's leave. This can relate to all or part of the leave to which you are entitled. The notice must:

- Specify that you are entitled to take carer's leave;
- Specify the days on which you would like to take carer's leave and if you will take a full or a half day; and
- Be given with the following minimum notice periods depending on how many days of leave you want to take: Half a day to 1 day - 3 days' notice; 1.5 to 2 days - 4 days' notice; 2.5 to 3 days - 6 days' notice; 3.5 to 4 days - 8 days' notice; 4.5 to 5 days - 10 days' notice; or 6 days (if you work 6 days a week) - 12 days' notice.

The notice does not need to be in writing, but it would be helpful if it was in order to maintain an accurate record of what is being requested.

The Council may, in our absolute discretion, waive the notice length requirement above, and as long as the other requirements are met, the request will be treated as one for carer's leave.

If the Council reasonably considers that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if your request was granted, we may postpone the start of the carer's leave after consulting with you to agree an alternative date(s) which is/are no later than one month after the earliest day or half day of the request. In these circumstances, the Council will give written notice to you of the postponement, setting out the reason for the postponement and the agreed dates you can take the leave. This notice will be given no later than the earlier of: (a) seven days after your notice was given to the Council, or (b) before the earliest day or half day requested in your notice.

FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY RELATED LEAVE

The Council understands the particular issues faced by employees trying to balance their work and family life. This section sets out the Council's policies in this area and the specific rights given to new parents.

Flexible Working

The Council will try, subject to the needs of the business, to accommodate requests from employees who wish to make changes to their working hours or place of work.

Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by any employee. Two requests per employee may be made in any 12 month period (which includes requests that have been withdrawn). However, you may have only one live request for flexible working with the Council at any one time. The request must:

- be made in writing and state this is a flexible working request;
- be dated;
- set out the change requested, including when you would like the change to come into effect; and
- set out if and when you have made a previous request for flexible working to the Council.

When a request is received, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential change.

The meeting will normally be conducted by the employee's line manager.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee to assist in making any representations that may be appropriate.

The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

- a burden of additional cost;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- an inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental effect on quality;
- a detrimental effect on performance;
- an insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work;
- a planned structural change; and
- any other ground allowed by regulations.

Before refusing a request, the Council will consult with you to discuss the application further, which may include exploring any alternatives that may be available. If no agreement is reached and the request is rejected, this will be confirmed in writing and your terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to your right to appeal the decision. The process (including any appeal) will be concluded within 2 months of the request being made, unless a longer period is agreed.

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent managers agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The Council may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the Council can tolerate without detriment to its interests, employees must accept that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the Council to grant it to another.

Maternity Leave

All employees who give birth are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. Employees with at least six months' service immediately before the 15th week prior to the expected week of childbirth will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but if you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to a member of the management team who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

Notification

To qualify for maternity leave you must provide the Council, no later than the end of the 15th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) (when you are approximately 6 months' pregnant) with the following information:

1. that you are pregnant;
2. the date of the week your baby is due (EWC);
3. when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below); and
4. you must also provide the Council with the original Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) issued by your doctor.

In some circumstances the Council may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATB1 certificate you should discuss this with your manager.

If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Council of this fact at the same time as you notify the intended start date of your leave.

Start of Maternity Leave

Generally it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC.

Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth. However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Council of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date, if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice then you should explain the situation to an appropriate manager and the Council will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Council may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Council of this fact as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Duration of Maternity Leave

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Council will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Council of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it would be sensible to contact your manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which this is not reasonably practicable. In such a case, the Council will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions.

Dismissal or Resignation

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Council and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Council will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave, then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

Enhanced Maternity Pay

The Council offers enhanced maternity pay in line with the provisions of the Green Book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to enhanced Maternity Pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal pay;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal pay, plus Statutory Maternity Pay at the relevant rate; (capped at 100% of normal pay) and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SMP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance. The Council will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate.

To pay SMP, the Council needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Council of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings (this is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth) and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation (this changes each year).

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than 'Keeping in Touch' days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Council immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

Returning to Work Early

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

In order to make arrangements to accommodate an early return to work the Council is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date and, if that is not given, may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

Returning to Work Late

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date, then you should follow the sickness absence procedure set out in Section 5.2 of this handbook.

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons)

Depending on the nature of your job, there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Council has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy, then the Council will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

Maternity Support Leave

Paid Maternity Support Leave of 5 days will also be granted to the child's father or the partner or the nominated carer of the expectant mother at or around the time of the birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

Adoption Leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to individuals fostering a child under the "Fostering for Adoption" scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (regardless of gender) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with an appropriate manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Council of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out:

- the date when the child is expected to be placed with you; and
- the date when you want to start your adoption leave.

As with maternity leave, you can change your mind about the start date provided the Council is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Council is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave is the same in duration as that of maternity leave and will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement. After that period you will be expected to return to work as normal.

Adoption Pay

The arrangements for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) are similar to those for SMP (set out above).

Enhanced Adoption Pay

The Council offers Enhanced Adoption Pay in line with the provisions of the Green book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to Enhanced Adoption Pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal weekly earnings;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal weekly earnings, plus SAP at the relevant rate (capped at 100% of normal pay); and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SAP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

Paternity Leave

Employees are entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. T

For births or adoption placements before 6 April 2026, you will only qualify for paternity leave if you have 26 weeks' continuous service, either ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or ending the week in which the agency notified you have been matched with a child. This qualifying period does not apply to births where the baby is due on or after 5 April 2026 but is born prematurely, or in any case where the mother or primary adopter has died.

There are a number of administrative requirements that must be met in relation to taking paternity leave and employees should discuss their plans with the Clerk at as early a stage as possible. The following paragraphs set out the basic requirements, but there are additional requirements that must be met when adopting a child from overseas and employees in this position should talk to their manager who will make sure that full information is provided.

Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to two weeks of leave, which can be taken as two consecutive weeks, or two non-consecutive blocks of one week.

Paternity leave cannot start before a child is born or placed and must be taken at some stage within the first year following birth or adoption (except when the child is born prematurely in which case the leave must be taken within the 52 weeks following the expected week of childbirth).

Most new parents choose to begin paternity leave on the date their child is born, but you may if you wish begin the leave at any time you choose provided that the whole of the leave is taken by the end of that year.

In order to qualify for paternity leave with regards to birth, you must notify the Council at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth, and give at least 28 days' notice before the date you would like to take each period of leave. As an exception to this, if your expected week of childbirth falls between 5 April and 25 July 2026 and you had less than 26 weeks' continuous employment at the end of the 15th week for the expected week of childbirth, 28 days' notice can be given before the date you would like to start paternity leave in order to qualify for paternity leave. For adoption cases, you must notify the Council within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption. Your notification should specify how much leave you intend to take and when you intend the leave to begin. Should your plans change, you will need to give the Council 28 days' notice of any revision.

Statutory paternity pay (SPP) is payable during paternity leave, provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or the week in which the adoption agency notified you of a match, and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year, or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). You can check the most up-to-date figure with the Clerk.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

This policy is intended to reflect the statutory provisions and provides guidelines only. If there is any conflict between this policy and the statutory provisions, the latter will prevail.

Employees are entitled to take statutory bereaved partner's paternity leave (BPPL) if a child's mother/primary adopter has died within 52 weeks of the child's birth/adoption placement and the employee is the child's father or partner of the mother/primary adopter and they have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing and be taking the leave to care for the child.

Leave can start at any time after your bereavement and be taken as a single period that can last up to 52 weeks after the date of birth/adoption placement. If the bereavement takes place at any point in the last two weeks of that 52-week period, you can take the leave for up to two weeks after the bereavement.

Notification

To start BPPL in the first eight weeks after the bereavement

You, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to us to do so before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. Notice can be given verbally or in writing. You must tell us: the bereavement date; the child's date of birth/adoption placement; and the leave start date. If you have already started work, then officially your leave period will start on the following day.

In addition, and no more than eight weeks after the bereavement and at least one week before the return date, you must tell us in writing how long you intend to be absent and the date you intend to return to work. If you intend to return to work more than eight weeks after the bereavement, you must also include, in this written notification, the child's date of birth/adoption placement and a declaration that you meet the necessary relationship condition to the child or to the mother/primary adopter and that you are taking the leave to care for the child.

If you want to cancel starting such leave or change the start date to another date also falling within the first eight weeks after the bereavement, you can do so by giving notice no later than the day before it was due to start or the day before the new date (if earlier). If you want to change the start date to a date falling more than eight weeks after the bereavement, the notice must be in writing and given before it was due to start and at least a week before the new date.

To start BPPL more than eight weeks after the bereavement

To do so, you need to give us at least a week's written notice which contains all the information above, namely: the bereavement date; the child's date of birth/adoption placement; the leave start date; how long you intend to be absent; the date you intend to return to work; and a declaration that you meet the necessary relationship condition to the child or to the mother/primary adopter (including having the main responsibility for the child's upbringing) and that you are taking the leave to care for the child.

You can cancel starting such leave, or change the start date, with at least a week's written notice before it was due to start or before the new date (if earlier).

Changing the return to work date

You can change your return to work date by giving us one week's, or eight weeks' where it was more than eight weeks after the bereavement, written notice before that date or before the new date (if earlier). Your return date cannot be later than 52 weeks after the date of birth/adoption placement.

Pay and other leave

BPPL is unpaid, save for, if you are entitled to statutory paternity pay and have not yet claimed it, you may do so during your BPPL. Please see our Paternity Leave policy.

If you are eligible for statutory shared parental leave and pay, this is likely to be more beneficial than BPPL. Please see our Shared Parental Leave policy.

Compassionate, Bereavement or Dependants leave may be available, at our discretion, under our separate policies.

Parental Leave

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for their children. Parental leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday and is available to employees who have formal parental responsibility for a child.

The basic entitlement is to 18 weeks of unpaid leave in respect of each child.

Parental leave must usually be taken in blocks of one week or more and no more than four weeks' leave will be granted in a single year. However, more flexibility is available in respect of disabled children and you should discuss your requirements with the Town Clerk if this applies to you.

A request to take parental leave should be submitted 21 days in advance. While the Council will always try to accommodate requests for parental leave, it has the right to postpone any leave for up to six months in order to accommodate business need.

No postponement will be required if you choose to take your first instalment of leave immediately after the birth or adoption of your child. In such circumstances you need only inform the Council of your intention 21 days before the expected date of birth or placement. The leave will then begin automatically when your child is born or placed with you.

Parental leave is an entitlement that can be transferred from one employment to another. You may therefore join the Council with some outstanding parental leave attaching to a particular child.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Council 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Council. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Council may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Council's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks for which payment will be made will vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with the Town Clerk who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

Keeping in Touch Days

Employees during a period of maternity, adoption, bereaved partner's paternity or shared parental leave are entitled to 10 Keeping In Touch days (KIT days). These allow the employee to attend work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development activity, or to take part in important meetings without losing their right to subsequent pay entitlements. Employees on shared parental leave are entitled to a further 20 KIT days.

These KIT days are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part, nor is the Council under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days.

Any payment for attending work on such days will be agreed between the Council and the employee at the time the KIT day is arranged.

There is no legal requirement to receive pay for these days.

During Maternity/Adoption/ Bereaved Partner's Paternity or Shared Parental Leave

The Council is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the business. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, your manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Council may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

Neonatal Care Leave

This policy is intended to reflect the statutory provisions and provides guidelines only. If there is any conflict between this policy and the statutory provisions, the latter will prevail.

Employees are entitled to statutory neonatal care leave (SNCL) if a child born on or after 6 April 2025, for whom they have parental responsibility, is receiving, or has received, “neonatal care” which started within 28 days of birth and has lasted for seven full consecutive days, not counting the day on which the care starts (and in adoption cases, not counting any time spent in neonatal care before being placed/entering GB) (the “qualifying period”). “Neonatal care” means medical care in hospital or any continuing hospital outpatient care (including monitoring and home visits from healthcare professionals directed by a consultant and arranged by the hospital), or palliative/end-of-life care. The SNCL must be taken for the purpose of caring for the child (save for a subsequent bereavement).

SNCL can be taken in weekly blocks for every uninterrupted week their child received neonatal care, starting no earlier than the day after the qualifying period (as above), up to a maximum of 12 weeks, and must be taken within 68 weeks of the birth. So, for the first week of SNCL taken, the earliest it can start is on day 9 of being in neonatal care.

Up until the 7th day after the child stops receiving neonatal care (including if it stops but starts again within 28 days of birth and providing the qualifying period is met), the weekly blocks can be taken either continuously or non-continuously. After that, the weekly blocks must be taken continuously.

Notification

Up until the 7th day after the child stops receiving neonatal care you only need to give notice to us to take SNCL before you are due to start work on the first day of each week of leave or, where this is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. If you have already started work, then officially your SNCL period will start on the following day.

When giving notice you must specify: the child's date of birth; in adoption cases, the date of placement or the date the child entered GB; the date(s) the child started to receive neonatal care; if it stopped, the date(s) it ended; the date(s) you wish SNCL to begin and how many weeks for; confirmation you are taking the leave to care for the child; and if it is the first notice for that child, confirmation you meet the eligibility requirements as to family relationship with the child.

Where the neonatal care is ongoing, you must notify us of the date the care ends, as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the child starts to receive neonatal care again, you must notify us of the start date and the end date, as soon as reasonably practicable in each case.

You can give the above notice by telephone or by email or by letter. However, if telephoning, it would be helpful if it was subsequently put in writing at least within 28 days of the first day of your SNCL in order to maintain an accurate record of what is being requested, and in any event must be done so if claiming statutory neonatal care pay (see below).

After 7 days after the child stops receiving neonatal care, you need to give us at least 15 days' notice if you want to take a single week of SNCL, or at least 28 days' notice if you want to take two or more consecutive weeks' of SNCL. The notice must be in writing and specify the same information as set out above. You can cancel it and/or rebook it with the same amount of notice.

Neonatal Care Pay

To qualify for statutory neonatal care pay (SNCP) during SNCL, you must have average weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit and at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the relevant week, which is: the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (in birth and surrogacy cases); the week in which the adoption agency or local authority notified you of a match (in UK adoption cases); or the week before the neonatal care starts (in any other case). You will already meet these criteria if you have qualified for statutory maternity/paternity/adoption/shared parental pay. It is paid at the same rate as statutory paternity pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

Up until the 7th day after the child stops receiving neonatal care, to claim SNCP you must give notice in writing stating the week(s) in respect of which the payments are to be made and with the same information specified as when claiming SNCL, within 28 days of starting any period of SNCL you are claiming SNCP for. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SNCL, so long as it is in writing.

After 7 days after the child stops receiving neonatal care, to claim SNCP you must give us the same amount of notice and same information, in writing, as you must give if you want to take SNCL and state the week(s) in respect of which payments are to be made.

Interaction with other family leave

SNCL is in addition to other forms of statutory leave, so long as it is taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth. So, for example, if you are taking maternity / adoption / paternity leave, you may add a period of SNCL onto the end of that leave. It acts as a "top up" to give back an amount of statutory family leave that an employee has effectively lost while their child is receiving neonatal care.

If your SNCL is interrupted by the start of another pre-booked period of statutory family leave (such as paternity leave, parental leave or shared parental leave) then the interrupted SNCL period will resume straight away after the end of the other leave, provided the neonatal care is still ongoing or has ended within the last week. If the neonatal care ended more than a week ago, the remainder of the interrupted NCL must be taken consecutively with any further period of NCL that you are intending to take. Also, if the neonatal care ended more than a week ago and you want to book NCL, you should ensure that it will not be interrupted by the start of another period of family leave you have booked.

HOW WE RESOLVE ISSUES

When problems arise in the employment relationship it is important that they are dealt with fairly and promptly. This section sets out the procedures that the Council will follow in such cases.

Recording of meetings: Due to the confidential nature of disciplinary and grievance proceedings you must not make electronic or audio recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under the procedures set out in section 5. You should ensure that any companion you may bring with you to such meetings is also aware of this rule.

Performance Improvement Procedure

It is in everybody's interest for employees to perform well at their jobs and the Council aims to ensure that all employees are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the employee should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns. Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. This procedure is designed to be used when such informal discussions do not lead to the employee's performance improving to an acceptable level.

Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate neglect, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Council then it may be more appropriate to use the disciplinary procedure. Which procedure to use shall be at the discretion of the Council.

The Council also reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any formal meeting held under this procedure by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companions with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the meeting. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the meeting.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the meeting then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The companion's role is to advise you during the meeting and make representations on your behalf. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient meeting. The companion is not entitled to answer questions on your behalf.

Stage One

The employee's manager will inform them of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. The employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issues raised by the manager's concerns. The meeting will be conducted by the Disciplinary Panel. The Disciplinary Panel will consist of the Chairman and two members of the Staffing Committee, to be selected by that Committee. The Panel will consider any representations the employee may make about their performance, whether it needs to be improved, and if so what steps can be taken to help the employee reach the appropriate level.

Following discussion of the problem, the Panel may choose to take no further action; to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure or to issue a written warning and Performance Improvement Plan which will remain current for a period of 12 months.

Performance Improvement Plan

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help improve the employee's performance. Each measure will ideally be agreed with the employee, though the Council reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the PIP in the absence of such agreement.

Each PIP will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:

Timescale: the overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved will be set out, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Targets: The PIP will specify the particular areas in which improvement is needed and set out how and on what criteria the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set which will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it.

Measures: The PIP will specify what measures will be taken by the Council to support the employee in improving their performance. Such measures may include training, additional supervision, the reallocation of other duties, or the provision of additional support from colleagues.

Feedback: As part of the PIP the employee will be given regular feedback from their line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan

If at any stage the Council feels that the PIP is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting the employer may amend or extend any part of the plan.

Review

At the end of the PIP the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made the employee will be notified of this fact in writing. If the Panel feels that progress has been insufficient then they may decide to extend and/or amend the PIP to such extent as seems appropriate. Alternatively, the Panel may refer the matter to a meeting under Stage Two of this procedure.

Following the successful completion of a PIP the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If at any stage during the lifetime of the first written warning the employee's performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, the Panel may decide to institute stage two of this procedure.

Stage Two

If a PIP has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal Performance Management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the Panel believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by the Disciplinary Panel.

At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of their performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.

If the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken which should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard but that these measures have not worked then a **formal final warning** may be issued. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement which is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that if this improvement does not take place then the employee may be dismissed. Where it is appropriate, the warning may be accompanied by an extended or revised PIP.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which time it will cease to have effect.

Stage Three

If an employee has been issued with a warning under Stage Two which remains current, and the appropriate manager believes that the employee's performance is still not acceptable then the matter may be referred to a further Performance Management hearing.

The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds of which the hearing is being convened and in particular will be told of the respects in which their performance continues to fall below an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by the Disciplinary Panel.

At the meeting the employee will be able to respond to any criticisms made of their performance and make representations about how the situation should be treated.

The Panel conducting the meeting may take such action as is judged appropriate up to and including a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any dismissal under this procedure will be with notice or payment in lieu of notice and the decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any decision taken under this procedure. The appeal should be submitted in writing within one week of the action complained of. An appeal hearing will then be convened to consider the matter. Any PIP that is in force, together with any measures or objectives included within it, will continue in place during the appeal process.

The Appeal will be heard by the Council's Appeal Committee which will consist of three Councillors with no direct involvement in the disciplinary case in question; the Chairman of the Appeal Panel will normally be the Mayor, or another Councillor who has not been involved in the case.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing explaining the grounds of which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Redeployment

There may be circumstances in which it becomes clear that an employee would be better suited to a different role within the Council. However, any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be made when the Council is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role and where there is a suitable available vacancy.

Redeployment may be offered as an alternative to dismissal where the Council is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in their current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available in these circumstances will usually be dismissal.

Sickness Absence Procedure

The Council may need to dismiss an employee whose attendance does not meet an acceptable standard either because of a long-term absence or because of a series of short-term absences. Such dismissals do not depend on any wrongdoing on the employee's part and do not mean that the Council does not accept that their absences are genuinely due to illness or injury. Rather, dismissal is recognition that unfortunately the employee is no longer able to perform their role, or attend work on a sufficiently regular basis to make their continued employment a viable option.

Short-term Absence

An employee who the Council considers to have an excessive sickness absence record will be spoken to informally and usually have specific attendance targets set and be advised if these are breached, they will be invited to a meeting to discuss their attendance. The meeting will usually be conducted by the employee's line manager and the employee will have a right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official on the same basis as set out in the Performance Management procedure.

At the meeting the employee will be asked to explain the level of their absence. Where there is any indication that the absences are caused by an underlying medical condition then the matter may be dealt with under the procedure for long-term absence set out below. The Council may also seek medical evidence from either the employee's doctor or an occupational health specialist in which case the meeting will be adjourned for a report to be obtained

Subject to any medical evidence, the manager conducting this first-stage meeting may decide to issue a warning to the employee setting out the Council's expectations regarding attendance and indicating the level of improvement needed. A review period will normally be set which may range from one month to 12 months depending on the circumstances.

If the employee's attendance does not improve to the extent required they may at any stage in the review period be invited to attend a second-stage meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting will again be conducted by the line manager and the employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official. This meeting may result in an extension of the review period or the issuing of a final written warning requiring the employee's attendance to improve and setting out the level of improvement required over a specified period of up to one year.

If the employee does not meet this standard and there is no underlying condition where reasonable adjustments would assist the employee to attend then they may be dismissed. A final meeting will be convened which shall be conducted by a manager with appropriate authority to dismiss and will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee who will once again have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Any dismissal arising out of this meeting will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated.

Long-term Sickness Absence

Where an employee is absent for an extended period – or it is clear that their absence is likely to continue for some time – then the Council will want to investigate the prospects for their return and consider what actions can be taken to facilitate this. The extent to which the Council can continue to accommodate an employee's absence will depend on a range of factors, including the role of the employee and the prevailing circumstances of the business.

The Council will seek medical advice as to the employee's condition either from the appropriate professionals caring for the employee or from a specialist occupational health practitioner. The focus will be on ascertaining when the employee will be able to return to work and what steps the Council can take to facilitate this.

An employee is not obliged to consent to any medical reports or records being shared with the Council as part of this process. However, in the absence of medical evidence the Council will have to work on the basis of what information is available in reaching its decision.

One or more meetings will be arranged with the employee to discuss their condition, the prospects for any return to work, and whether anything more can be done by the Council to help. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Every effort will be made to make suitable arrangements for the meeting to allow the employee to attend. Where the employee is simply too ill to take part in the process, however, the Council may proceed to dismissal in the absence of a meeting taking into account any representations made on the employee's behalf.

Where it appears that the employee will be unable to return to work within a reasonable time frame then the Council may need to consider dismissal. Any dismissal will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated.

The Council reserves the right not to follow these procedures in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

Disciplinary Procedure

The Council always tries to deal with disciplinary issues fairly and promptly. This procedure sets out the framework under which allegations of misconduct will be investigated and considered. While the procedure set out in this policy will be appropriate in most cases, there may be situations in which it is not practicable to comply with a particular requirement of it. When this happens the Council will do its best to deal with the matter fairly and will pay particular attention to the need to give the employee every opportunity to explain their version of events.

The Council reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

Definition of Misconduct

Behaviour which is disruptive, disrespectful to colleagues, or which falls short of the requirements set out in this handbook will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. While employees will not usually be dismissed for a first offence a failure to remedy the behaviour or to adhere to required standards may ultimately lead to dismissal once appropriate warnings have been given.

Definition of Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour which is fundamentally at odds with the employee's duty to the Council and their colleagues. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice, even in cases of a first offence.

It is not possible to list every example of gross misconduct which may arise, but the following provides an illustration of the sort of conduct that will fall into this category – some of which are then explained in more detail below:

- Theft;
- Unlawful acts of discrimination or harassment;
- Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions;
- Violent or intimidating behaviour;
- Wilful damage to property;
- Reckless behaviour posing a risk to health and safety;
- Any act or omission constituting serious or gross negligence/or dereliction of duty;
- Sleeping on duty;
- recording audio and/or video of any meeting, conversation or discussion with another person or people without the express prior consent of the person or people being recorded;
- Any illegal act during working time or on Council premises; and
- Any act described as gross misconduct elsewhere in this handbook.

Informal Action

Most minor acts of misconduct can be dealt with informally through discussions between an employee and their line manager. This may consist of management guidance or an informal warning given orally or in writing. These steps are an everyday part of the management process and no formal procedure needs to be followed in respect of them.

Where informal action of this kind fails to resolve an issue, or where the misconduct alleged is considered too serious, then the matter will be dealt with formally under this procedure.

Investigation

If it is alleged that you have committed misconduct, an appropriate investigation will be carried out aimed at gathering all of the relevant evidence. You may be interviewed as part of this investigation and will have the opportunity to point the investigator towards any evidence that you feel is relevant. The right to be accompanied (see below) does not apply to any investigatory interview.

Suspension

If an allegation of misconduct is made against you, then you may be suspended from your duties on full pay while the matter is being dealt with. The Council will make every effort to ensure that any period of suspension is kept as short as possible. The purpose of a suspension is either to allow an unhindered investigation to take place, or to protect the interests of the Council and its employees. During any period of suspension you may be instructed not to contact other members of staff except for the purposes of preparing for any disciplinary hearing, where specific arrangements will be made with you. This is not a disciplinary sanction and should not be seen as a predetermination of any disciplinary process.

Hearing

Once the investigation has been carried out, the investigating officer will make a decision about whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a disciplinary hearing. If there is, you will be informed of this and an appropriate date for the hearing will be arranged. This will take place within normal working hours wherever possible.

To ensure that you have adequate time to prepare for the hearing, the Council will provide you in advance with a copy of all of the written evidence that will be considered at the hearing. In exceptional cases the Council may need to withhold the identities of certain witnesses or hold back sensitive items of evidence. This will only be done where it is considered necessary to protect individuals or the essential interests of the Council and every effort will be made to ensure that you are given as much information as possible so that a fair hearing can be conducted.

You will be given sufficient notice of any hearing to allow you to prepare for it. While this will vary from case to case, the Council will generally try to give at least two days' notice of any hearing and in complicated cases a longer period of notice may be given.

The purpose of the hearing will be to consider the evidence gathered during the investigation and to consider any representations made by you or on your behalf. The hearing will be conducted by the Disciplinary Panel. The Disciplinary Panel will consist of the Chairman and two members of the Staffing Committee, to be selected by that Committee.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any disciplinary hearing by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companion with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the hearing. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the hearing.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the hearing then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The companion's role is to advise you during the hearing and make representations on your behalf; it is not to answer questions for you. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient hearing. The companion cannot answer questions on your behalf.

Evidence

The hearing will consider any evidence you choose to present. Should witnesses be prepared to appear on your behalf they will be permitted to do so provided that their evidence is relevant to the issues that need to be decided. The Council will not compel or require any employee to appear as a witness on your behalf and in most circumstances evidence arising from the investigation will be presented in written form. You will be entitled to challenge any of the evidence presented but will not be entitled to cross-examine witnesses.

Disciplinary Action

After considering all of the evidence, including any submissions made by you or on your behalf, the Panel conducting the hearing will decide on the outcome. If misconduct is found to have taken place then the usual outcome will be a **written warning** which will be placed on your personnel file.

A warning will stay active for a period of 1 year, after which it will not be taken into account in any future disciplinary action.

If however a further instance of misconduct is found to have occurred (in accordance with this procedure) during the currency of a warning – or if any misconduct is considered to be serious enough to warrant it – then, subject to the formal process above being followed, you will be issued with a **final written warning**.

A **final written warning** will usually remain active for one year, but a longer period may be specified if the Panel conducting the hearing feels that the circumstances warrant it.

An employee who is found to have committed further misconduct during a period covered by a final written warning will, following a hearing conducted in accordance with this procedure, generally be dismissed.

Dismissal

An employee will not normally be dismissed under this procedure for a single instance of misconduct unless a final written warning is already in place. However, where gross misconduct is found to have occurred then dismissal without notice or payment in lieu will be the usual outcome.

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it fundamentally undermines the relationship between employer and employee. If you are accused of gross misconduct this will be made clear when you are invited to a disciplinary hearing. A wide range of behaviours can amount to gross misconduct but the most common involve dishonesty, violent or aggressive behaviour, the wilful destruction of Council property or a deliberate refusal to obey a reasonable instruction.

Appeal

The employee can exercise the right to appeal by writing to the Chairman of the Staffing Committee within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the disciplinary sanction. The letter should state the grounds upon which the appeal is being lodged. The Appeal will be heard by the Council's Appeal Committee which will consist of three Councillors with no direct involvement in the disciplinary case in question; the Chairman of the Appeal Panel will normally be the Mayor, or another Councillor who has not been involved in the case.

The appeal will consider any grounds the employee chooses to put forward and they will have the same right to be accompanied as at a disciplinary hearing. The result of the appeal hearing will be final.

Employee Absence

It is important that disciplinary issues are dealt with promptly. The Council may therefore need to proceed with a disciplinary hearing even if the employee is absent due to ill health or simply does not attend. Before hearing the matter in an employee's absence, the Council will attempt to arrange the hearing in such a way that the employee will be able to attend or to submit written representations to the hearing and/or to arrange for an appropriate representative to attend the hearing on their behalf.

Grievance Procedure

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your manager or in the case of the Clerk this should be addressed to the Personnel Committee on an informal basis. If that is not possible then you should speak to another manager who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

Any written complaint or grievance raised which alleges that a member or co-opted member of the authority has failed to comply with the authority's Code of Conduct will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct Procedure.

Raising a Grievance

If you feel that the matter needs to be raised formally you should raise a grievance by making a written complaint, stating that it is being made under this procedure. You should give as much information about your grievance, including any relevant dates and times, as you can, so as to allow for any investigation into your concerns to take place.

A grievance will normally be dealt with by the Town Clerk and should be addressed to them directly. If the grievance relates directly to the action or omission of the Town Clerk, the grievance should be submitted in writing directly to the Chair of the Staffing Committee who will investigate and respond to the grievance as outlined above.

Grievance Hearing

A grievance hearing will then be arranged so that you can explain the issue and suggest how it can be resolved. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1, above. The Town Clerk conducting the hearing will consider what you have said and may either deal with the matter immediately or decide to carry out further investigations. In that case the hearing will be adjourned until the investigation has been completed.

Once the investigations are concluded, if new information comes to light and if it is considered appropriate, you may be invited in to a reconvened meeting to have the opportunity to consider and respond to the findings of the investigation. Following this a decision on the outcome of your grievance will be made.

Allegations of Misconduct

Where an employee is making allegations of misconduct on the part of other employees then the Council may need to carry out an investigation into the allegations and pursue the matter through the disciplinary procedure. Where this happens, the grievance will be held over until the disciplinary process has been concluded.

Relationship with Other Procedures

Where your grievance relates to the conduct of other procedures such as the disciplinary or performance management procedures then the Council may choose to either delay the consideration of the grievance until that procedure has been completed or to deal with the grievance in the course of that procedure or by way of appeal if that appears to be a fairer or more straightforward way of dealing with the issue.

Redundancy

Redundancy will be considered as part of business need and in line with the Councils redundancy policy.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance, then you may appeal. You should submit your appeal in writing within one week of being informed of the outcome of your grievance. Your appeal should be directed to the Chair of the Council. An appeal hearing will then be convened and conducted by a panel of members of the Staffing Committee. You will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1. The outcome of any appeal will be final.

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your line manager. If that is not possible then you should speak to a member of the management team who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Equal Opportunities Statement

We are equal opportunity employer and are fully committed to a policy of treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including: recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "Protected Characteristics".

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. We will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any of the Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw to the attention of your line manager any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.

- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Our Commitment

Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people when advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristics. However, where having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular Protected Characteristics is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, we will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. We will ensure that this equal opportunities policy is available to all staff, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.

The selection of new staff will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specification and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job.

With disabled job applicants, we will have regard to our duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

All applications will be processed consistently. Those responsible for short listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

Training, transfer and promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, our systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe all employees, irrespective of gender, should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to share this information with your line manager so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, we request that you discuss these with your line manager so that any necessary reasonable adjustments can be made that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying, which includes sexual harassment, and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions or on social media.

It covers harassment and bullying by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as clients, customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

We have carried out an assessment to assess the risk of sexual harassment (including third party sexual harassment) occurring in our workforce, including in different roles, the steps we could take to reduce those risks and which of those possible steps are reasonable. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal **conduct** that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. Harassment can occur whether or not it is intended to be offensive, as it is the effect on the victim which is important, not whether or not the perpetrator intended to harass them. Harassment or bullying is unacceptable even if it is unintentional.

Unlawful harassment may involve **conduct**:

- **related to a protected characteristic** of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- of a sexual nature (**sexual harassment**); or
- of **treating someone less favourably because they have submitted, or refused to submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender**

reassignment e.g. where a manager gives a junior employee a poor performance review because they rejected the manager's sexual advances.

Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group, religion or belief, or gender;
- b. disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's sexual orientation or gender identity against their wishes;
- c. offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content; or
- d. mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

Sexual harassment does not need to be sexually motivated; it only needs to be sexual in nature and may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- b. continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- c. sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- d. unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- e. intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life; or
- f. sending sexually explicit e-mails or text messages or sexual posts/contact on social media.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment; or sexually harassed by pornographic images displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace.

What is victimisation?

Victimisation includes subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are suspected of doing or intending to do, any of the following protected acts:

- a. Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- b. Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- c. Doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010.
- d. Alleging that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. Denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about harassment/sexual harassment.
- b. Excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about harassment/sexual harassment.

- c. Failing to promote someone because they accompanied another staff member to a grievance meeting.
- d. Dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of another staff member at an employment tribunal hearing.

Harassment/sexual harassment and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers in the course of their employment. All staff are encouraged to report any harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy. Workers are also entitled to raise concerns about sexual harassment through the whistleblowing procedure instead if they reasonably believe the matter is in the public interest. Harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice if they are committed:

- a. In a work situation.
- b. During any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- c. Against a colleague or other person connected to us outside of a work situation, including on social media.
- d. Against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out your role.

We will take into account any aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

If any harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include updating relevant policies, providing further staff training and taking disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

What is third-party harassment?

Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed/sexually harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the same employer, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment. Third-party harassment could include, for example, derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, pregnancy, colour, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or unwelcome sexual advances, from a client, customer, supplier or visitor visiting the employer's premises, or where a person is visiting a client, customer or supplier's premises or other location in the course of their employment.

While an individual cannot bring a claim for third-party harassment alone, it can still result in legal liability when raised in other types of claim and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy. Any harassment by a member of staff against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. Action may include: warning notices to customers/third parties or recorded messages at the beginning of telephone calls; information in terms and conditions; providing regular training for managers and staff to raise awareness of rights related to sexual harassment and of this policy; provide specific training for managers to support them in dealing with complaints; take steps to

minimise occasions where staff work alone; where possible ensure that lone workers have additional support; carry out a risk assessment when planning events attended by clients/customers and/or suppliers.

If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing information with other branches of the business.

What is bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. physical or psychological threats;
- b. overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- c. inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

However, legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

If you are being harassed/sexually harassed/victimised/bullied

If you are being harassed/sexually harassed/victimised/bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager or the Clerk who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue informally or formally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our **Grievance Procedure** and it will be dealt with under that procedure, taking into account the below.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship and/or to provide protection between you and between other staff and the person accused during the investigation

If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer, supplier or other visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and other staff pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider that there is a case to answer and the harasser or bully is an employee, the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. The outcome of our investigation may be put on hold while disciplinary action is taken. Where the disciplinary outcome is that harassment/sexual harassment/victimisation/bullying occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it. We will also consider what additional measures need to be taken to prevent future sexual harassment of staff.

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any disclosure that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur may amount to a protected disclosure under the rules on whistleblowing if you reasonably believe the matter is in the public interest. Workers may raise concerns about sexual harassment under this policy or under our Whistleblowing Policy.

We will review this policy regularly and monitor its effectiveness. This will include monitoring the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

- a. The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com).
- b. Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk).
- c. Victim support (www.victimsupport.org.uk).
- d. Rights of women (England and Wales) (www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).

Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about a staff member may be placed on their personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Menopause Policy

We are committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause. We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that, for some, menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

All women will experience menopause at some point during their life. Menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female. Most of those who experience menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some

start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

The majority of those going through menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate. Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression and anxiety.

Menopause is preceded by perimenopause, during which the body prepares itself for menopause. Perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause includes perimenopause.

Open Conversations

Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it.

We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by menopause in the workplace.

Anyone affected by menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager or the Clerk about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties menopause can cause them at work.

Line managers and the Clerk should be ready to have open conversations with staff about menopause and what support is available. These conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Risk Assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing menopause.

Support and Adjustments

While many who experience menopause are able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work. If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager or the Clerk.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, we may also consider more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We may refer you to a doctor nominated by us or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work.

Monitoring equal opportunities and dignity at work

We will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions, personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunities and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of working practices. If changes are required, we will implement them. We will also make reasonable adjustments to standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

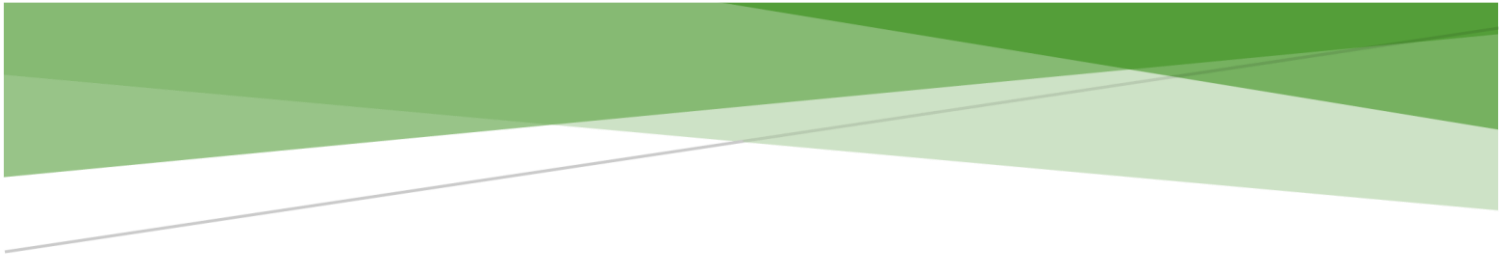
If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Bullying & Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Related Policies

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures which can be found in this Employee Handbook:

- (a) Grievance Procedure.
- (b) Disciplinary Procedure.
- (c) Flexible Working Procedure.
- (d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.
- (e) Parental Leave Policy.
- (f) Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- (g) Data Protection Policy.
- (h) Redundancy Policy.



HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

August 2026

Lisa Wassell
fm@wells.gov.uk

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Version History

Date	Changes	Distributed to
August 2026	Created	Staffing and Personnel Committee

Introduction

This handbook contains the health and safety information you require to comply with our Health and Safety Policy. All employees are required to read this document and ensure they keep abreast of updates. If you have any queries relating to the contents please do not hesitate to ask a member of management or the Town Clerk.

Wells City Council acknowledges its legal duty of care to protect the health and safety of employees and others affected by its activities. Wells City Council have committed to a programme of progressive improvement that requires input from all its employees. If you see anything during your work that gives rise to concern you are positively encouraged to report it to your supervisor or manager.

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to fulfil these responsibilities, therefore we will;

- Establish a clear organisational structure defining health and safety responsibilities.
- Regularly monitor performance and update policies for continuous improvement.
- Allocate sufficient resources to manage health and safety risks.
- Encourage staff to report hazards to improve workplace safety.
- Communicate and consult with employees on matters related to their health and safety.
- Maintain premises and take all reasonable steps to manage equipment and tools utilised by staff as their duties dictate.
- Provide necessary information, instruction, and supervision for employees.
- Offer adequate training to ensure employees are competent in their tasks.
- Conduct and review risk assessments to implement effective risk-reduction measures.
- Eliminate risks wherever possible through design and selection of facilities, equipment, and processes. Where risks remain, they will be minimised through physical controls, safe working procedures, or protective equipment.
- Engage contractors who demonstrate high health and safety standards.
- Ensure this policy is made available to all employees.

This handbook will be reviewed annually and updated as needed, with changes communicated to employees.

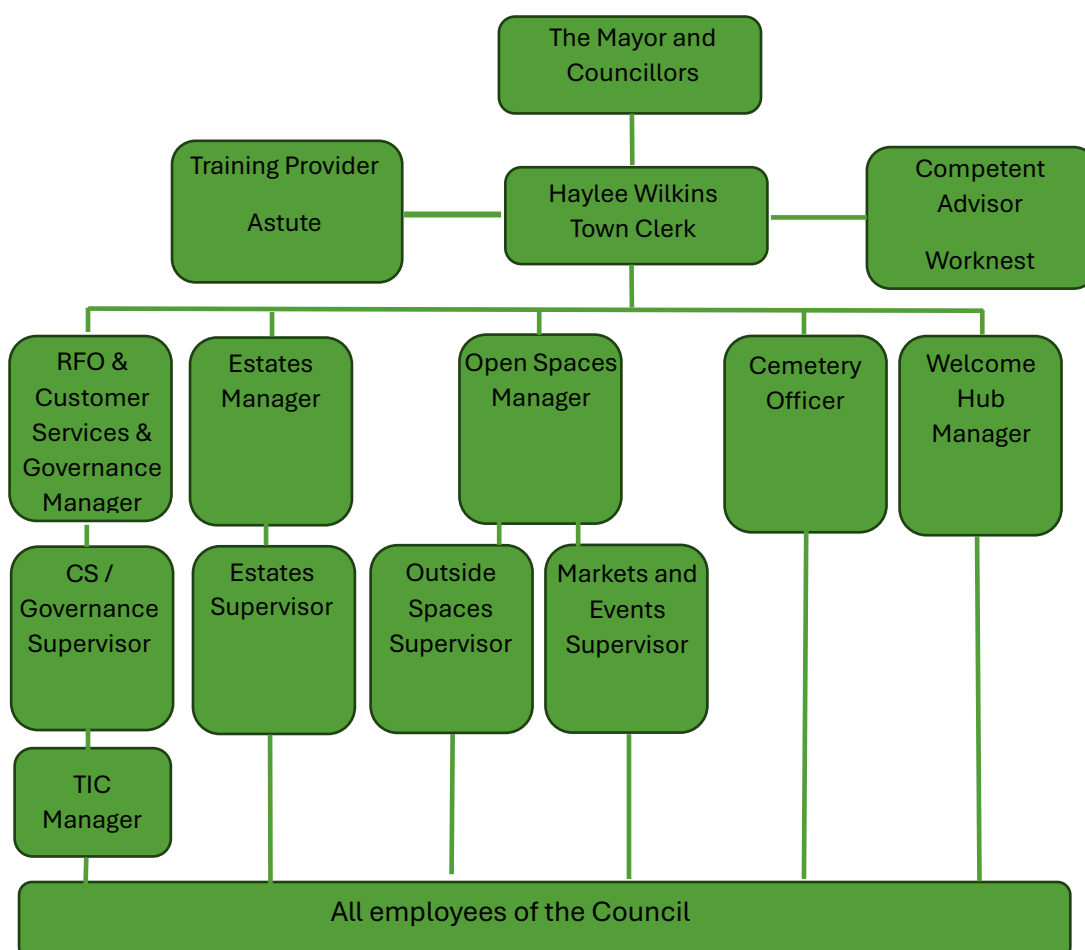
Roles, Responsibilities and Arrangements

The following individuals and groups are responsible for overseeing health and safety measures within Wells City Council:

- The Mayor and Councillors
- Town Clerk
- Open Spaces Manager
- Outside Spaces Supervisor
- Markets and Events Supervisor
- RFO and Customer Services and Governance Manager
- RFO and Customer Services and Governance Supervisor
- Estates Manager
- Estates Supervisor
- Cemetery Officer
- Tourist Information Centre Manager
- Welcome Hub Manager

The Health and Safety Structure

The health and safety structure may vary from the organisational chart as it recognises the enhanced responsibilities held by supervisors and officers who directly oversee staff, contractors, and/or visitors.



Employee Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees to co-operate in the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Handbook. Employees have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure their own safety and the safety of others, including colleagues, visitors, and contractors.

They must:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.
- Comply with the Health and Safety policy.
- Follow all written or verbal safety instructions.
- Dress appropriately for their working environment.
- Conduct themselves in an orderly manner, avoiding pranks or reckless behaviour.
- Use all required safety equipment and protective clothing.
- Report any safety hazards, accidents, or equipment malfunctions to their supervisor.
- Attend health and safety training as required.
- Follow procedures related to processes, materials, and substances.
- Observe fire evacuation procedures and be aware of fire equipment and exit routes.

General:

- Employees must cooperate with management in meeting legal health and safety obligations.
- Employees must not interfere with anything provided for safety or welfare.
- Unsafe activities, items, or situations must be reported to management.
- Risk assessments will be conducted for all practices within the Council and will be updated annually or in line with changes or feedback from dynamic risk assessments.

Working Practices:

- Employees must not operate equipment unless trained and authorized.
- Equipment guarding must be used properly.
- Moving machinery must not be cleaned.
- Employees under 18 must be supervised when operating equipment.
- Repairs and maintenance must only be carried out if authorized.
- Chemicals and substances must be used as directed and by those employed to handle them.
- Smoking is only allowed in designated areas.

Hazard/Warning Signs and Notices:

- Employees must comply with all displayed hazard and warning signs. If employees are unsure of relevant actions they must seek stop immediately and clarification from their manager.
- Employees must utilise safety signage provided to them to inform others of risks, such as but not limited to; wet floor, out of order, works ahead etc

Working Conditions and Environment:

The Council strives to provide a professional, pleasant work environment. The Council provides welfare facilities for all staff, including access to drinking water, clean toilets and washing facilities.

- Safety equipment and facilities must be used correctly, in line with manufacturer's instructions.
- Workspaces must be kept clean and clear of obstructions.
- Rubbish, waste materials, and spills must be cleared up and properly disposed of.
- Employees are required to read and adhere to risk assessments conducted for their duties including any mitigating controls in place.

Slip, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are the leading cause of major injuries in workplaces and public spaces. Good housekeeping reduces the risk significantly as it allows for walkways to remain clear, storage areas to be organised and clutter free reducing risk and spills to be mopped up immediately.

The Council will:

- Carry out a risk assessment and put in place any control measures deemed necessary
- Designate locations for storage to reduce hazards
- Reduce unnecessary retention of redundant equipment and stock
- Provide required PPE as identified
- Keep walkways clear
- Implement good housekeeping procedures
- Consider routes of any new installations to avoid creation of trip hazards such as additional cabling trailing
- Maintain flooring, repairing any splits, cracks or bumps within flooring surfaces where reasonably practicable
- Install and maintain adequate lighting

Employees will:

- Wear appropriate footwear including but not exclusively PPE
- Clean up spills immediately

- Consider hazards in the procurement process of new equipment and locations in which they will be stored or utilised to minimise additional hazards
- Report any damage, raised or uneven flooring to Estates immediately to allow action
- Not place any items within walkways or near exits which may cause a slip, trip or fall hazard

Risk Assessments

Under the Council's duty of care to its staff it must undertake risk assessments for the activities it conducts and identify hazards, likelihood and severity. It then must identify any and all reasonably practicable control measures and mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce the risk and record this via a written risk assessment. The Council's risk assessments are reviewed annually in line with best practice or should a change in legislation or dynamic risk assessment result in changes.

Employees must make themselves aware of the risk assessments and follow the actions identified to help ensure the safety of themselves and others. Employees that have any concerns with the outcome and/or actions of the risk assessment should report this to their manager immediately.

Protective Clothing and Equipment:

The Council provides personal protective equipment (PPE) when the risk presented by a work activity cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled by other means. PPE is designed to reduce the risk associated with the use of chemicals, equipment and safe systems of work.

- Protective clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided by the Council in accordance with the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations. PPE will be issued based on the individual's role, responsibilities, and the findings of relevant risk assessments. The Town Clerk will authorise the purchase of all required PPE within approved purchasing limits.
- Employees wishing to use non-standard or upgraded, but compliant PPE for personal preference rather than operational necessity, the Council may agree to procure the item. In such cases, the employee may be required to contribute to or cover the additional cost, and the Council will reimburse only up to the value of the standard PPE that would normally be provided
- Employees must use and maintain protective clothing and equipment correctly.
- Damaged or faulty protective equipment must be reported immediately, work must cease until replacement PPE is provided.
- Any loss of protective clothing or equipment must be reported to the relevant manager, work must cease until replacement PPE is provided.
- Employees must make themselves aware of blue PPE required signage to ensure they are compliant with safe working practices.

- PPE must be worn in accordance to manufacturers instructions, any alteration or tampering to PPE will make the use of such invalid. Employees tempering with PPE for themselves or others may be liable for disciplinary action.
- Employees may be required to remove items of jewellery or watches whilst using PPE, employees must refer to the risk assessment and manufacturers instructions to comply.

Signage such as the below should be adhered to at all times:



Health and Equalities;

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure the safety of all employees. If a medical condition could pose a risk to the individual or others, disclosure may be necessary. If an employee has a disability, disclosure may be needed to determine appropriate workplace adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

If known the Council will make any and all reasonable adjustments to accommodate ill health and disabilities.

- Employees are encouraged to report any medical conditions or medications affecting their safety and others to their manager.
- All disclosures will be strictly confidential and only disclosed to those by consent of the employee to allow the Council to manage the safety of the employee.
- The Council will implement a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if necessary.
- Employees are encourage to suggest improvements relating to the premises or tasks to their line managers.
- Employees must cooperate with occupational health provisions
- Employees are encouraged to report any issues or concerns regarding their mental wellbeing to their manager or to the Town Clerk. The Council's free, confidential Counselling Service Helpline is provided by CareFirst and is available via 01179340105.
- Employees may face disciplinary action if found in breach of the Equality Act 2010, by treating those with a disability or ill health with less than expected standards of respect and dignity.

Fire and Emergency Precautions:

The Council is required to ensure appropriate evacuation procedures are in place, including provision of trained employees responsible in the safe evacuation of the occupants and visitors to the Council's premises. The Council does not require persons to attempt to extinguish a fire, but extinguishing action may be taken if it is safe to do so and the individual deems themselves competent to do so.

- Employees must ensure they are aware and follow emergency procedures, for all sites in which their duties may require their attendance.
- Employees must help ensure fire escape routes, equipment, and doors must not be blocked or misused.
- Employees should under their duty of care to themselves and others take any and all mitigating actions to prevent fire.
- Fire equipment should only be used by trained or competent individuals, used equipment must be reported to the Estates Manager.
- Nominated Fire Wardens must ensure they keep up to date with changes in procedures and attend necessary refresher training.
- Employees must follow the instructions of the fire wardens and subsequently upon arrival the fire brigade

The following chart advises the extinguisher use for reference only.

Class & Type of Fire		A	B	C	D	(E)	F	
Type of Extinguisher	Colours	Wood, Paper, Plastic	Flammable & Combustible Liquids	Flammable Gases	Combustible Metals	Electrically Energised Equipment	Cooking Oils and Fats	
Water		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	DO NOT USE on energised electrical equipment, flammable liquids & cooking oil/fat fires.
Carbon Dioxide (CO2)		LIMITED	LIMITED	✗	✗	✓	✗	Not ideal for use outdoors or large class A fires.
Dry Chemical Powder (ABE/BE)		✓ AB(E) ✗ B(E)	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗ AB(E) ✓ B(E)	Be careful to select the correct extinguisher, ABE and BE fire extinguishers are different.
Foam		✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	LIMITED	DO NOT USE on energised electrical equipment.
Wet Chemical		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	DO NOT USE on energised electrical equipment.
Fire Blanket		LIMITED	LIMITED	✗	✗	✗	✓	Effective on small oil/fat fires within kitchens. Also used to extinguish clothing fires (replace a fire blanket after use).

Fire notices such as the below are displayed throughout our site(s);



Fire Evacuation Procedure

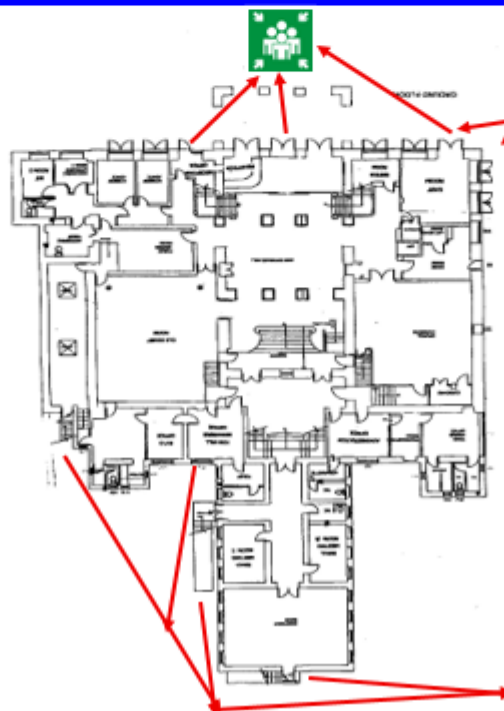
On Discovering a Fire:

- Operate the nearest alarm system



On Hearing the Alarm:

- Close all doors & windows if safe to do so
- Calmly leave building by nearest emergency exit
- Do not stop to collect personal items
- Do not use lifts
- Proceed to Assembly Point, on the Raised Area in the Market Place
- Await Fire Warden/Fire Brigade instructions
- Do not re-enter the building until authorised by the Fire



For reference only, please refer to individual notices for each site, stored electronically under Health and Safety or as displayed.

Terrorism:

The Council is required to evaluate the risk to ensure our premises is prepared for an attack. The Council must ensure they have an ability to warn people on the premises, implement lock down procedures and evacuate the premises. The Council must where reasonably practicable implement procedures in accordance within government guidelines and legislation and update accordingly.

- Employees must report any suspicious activity
- Employees must ensure they are aware and follow emergency procedures, for all sites in which their duties require their attendance.
- Employees must follow all instructions given to them by other authorities such as the police, fire brigade to ensure the safety of themselves and others.
- Take care when handling fuel to avoid spills or contact with skin and clothing. Follow the fuel station's procedures for reporting and dealing with spills.
- Keep vehicle keys and personal belongings secure and do not leave valuables visible inside an unattended vehicle.
- Be aware of your surroundings, particularly when refuelling alone or at quiet, unfamiliar or poorly lit locations.
- Where possible, use reputable, well lit fuel stations and avoid stopping at locations where you have concerns about personal safety.
- If you feel threatened or unsafe, return to the vehicle if it is safe to do so and move to a safer location. Contact your designated work contact or the emergency services where necessary.
- If a fuel spill, fire or other emergency occurs, follow the fuel station's emergency instructions and notify the appropriate person.
- If access to a fuel card is not provided, for business travel retain receipts and provide to the Responsible Finance Officer for reimbursement. Only authorised valid travel will be reimbursed.

Adverse weather

Adverse weather such as snow and ice affects the way in which our staff, the public and contractors access our buildings and land. Additional measures are required to ensure we manage our assets accordingly and safely; this may involve the discussion to close any building from use/prohibit access to land to help ensure everyone's safety.

The Council will, as reasonably practicable put in place policy and procedures for the management and restrictions put in place by adverse weather. The Council has a duty of care to our staff, visitors and the public, anyone else who can access our buildings and land. This duty extends to persons who access the site illegally.

The Council will;

- Conduct seasonal risk assessments to evaluate vulnerability of the Council's assets, facilities and staff travel routes to extreme weather events

- Monitor national data, receiving national early warning notification, to pre-empt adverse weather events and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Implement and maintain a business continuity plan to establish remote operations, communicate temporary closures and updates

Employees must;

- make sure they are aware and adhere to adverse weather policy and procedures
- report localised weather hazards or safety concerns to managers whilst undertaking their duties
- carry out mandatory site safety checks prior to starting work in extreme heat, cold or high winds in line with Council due process.

Accident recording, reporting, and investigation:

An accident is an unplanned event that caused injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both.

A near miss/incident is an unplanned event that does not cause injury or damage but could do so.

A work-related illness is a prescribed illness that is obtained by an employee through the course of work or from a non-employee as a result of activities carried out by the Council.

All incidences resulting in personal injury must be recorded via the accident/incident form located on the shared files, under Health and Safety. A copy of the form must either be submitted to the relevant manager.

- Employees must seek medical treatment for work related injuries they receive by contacting a designated first aider. Upon returning from treatment they must report the incident to their supervisor.
- Employees must ensure that any accident or injury treatment is properly recorded via the completion of the accident/incident form.
- Employees must notify management of any incident in which damage is caused to property.

Asbestos and Hazardous Materials:

Asbestos was a substance used within building materials due to its heat resistance, strength and insulation properties pre 1999 and was officially outlawed from use in the UK in 2000. If Asbestos is properly managed then there is no concern for the presence of Asbestos. You cannot see or smell asbestos, it is a fibrous material embedded in materials such as but not limited to; ceiling tiles, artex, sink pads, corrugated roofs, soffits, downpipes etc. Effects of the exposure of asbestos can take many years to present themselves and therefore every effort should be made to ensure to mitigate the exposure to staff and visitors.

The Council will, as reasonably practicable, protect employees from exposure to asbestos or any other hazardous materials. Procedures are in place to minimise risk to employees such as permit to works, restricted access areas and asbestos registers.

The Council will create a written management plan for Asbestos Containing Materials and keep this up to date, this will be accessible to employees via the shared folders or a copy can be requested from their manager at any time.

- Employees must ensure they are aware of the Asbestos within the Council's assets prior to conducting any intrusive works.
- No work can be conducted if an asbestos register is not available for inspection or the results are non-conclusive.
- All asbestos containing materials (ACM's) will only be handled by trained competent individuals.
- All ACM's will be disposed by licensed contractors only.
- Employees have a duty of care to themselves and others to report any damage seen to the fabric of the building in the course of their duties to their manager.
- All reports of damage will be investigated by the manager and if indicated by the register of containing Asbestos, a competent licensed asbestos company will be contacted to reseal the exposed area.
- In the event of an exposed source the area will be taken out of use until a repair can be conducted.
- Employees must adhere to the Asbestos Management Plan.
- Employee must ensure discuss arrangements with their manager relating to working on unfamiliar sites which may contain asbestos

Radon

Radon is a natural gas which is present throughout the world. If the level of radon breaches the safe limit then remedial actions need to be taken to lower the risk. The Council is required to test for radon presence and carry out any necessary remedial works to reduce the risk of exposure to radon.

The Council will;

- Conduct tests of the Council assets to determine the level of risk associated to each asset under its control and send for analysis
- Get sample tested by an certified scientific service to ensure accurate results
- Carry out any remedial works in line with Council due process, to mitigate the risks associated to radon
- Implement a radon register to ensure compliance

Employees must;

- Under any circumstance attempt to move or interrupt the collection of data via radon detection devices
- Alter or interfere with radon management equipment

Communication and Consultation:

The Council have established effective lines of communication so as to involve and consult our employees.

These may include:

- Staff Newsletters and other internal publications
- Individual conversations
- Notice boards
- Staff meetings

In addition the Council will display the Health and Safety Law poster at each site owned and managed by the Council.

The Council will consult with employees and provide information on any changes that may affect their health and safety, including but not limited to;

- Changes to procedures, equipment, or working practices.
- The hazards and risks associated with work activities, the measures in place to eliminate or reduce those risks, and the actions employees should take if they encounter them.
- The planning and delivery of health and safety training.
- The health and safety implications of introducing new technology.

The Council is committed to meaningful consultation and recognises that effective communication relies on the active involvement of both the Council and its employees. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns, share suggestions, and contribute to discussions on health and safety matters.

Contractors:

When working on our premises, all contractors are considered joint occupiers for the duration of the works and therefore both parties have liability to ensure that safe working practices are maintained and those completing the works are competent/trained to do so. All contractors are required to complete the relevant permit to work(s) documents and provided a written method statement and risk assessment which is reviewed by the Council prior to the beginning of the works.

- Employees are responsible for ensuring that contractors are adhering to the Permit to Work system.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring that contractors are adhering to the contractors code of conduct.
- Employees should report any dangerous or unprofessional behaviour and actions to their manager.
- Managers must challenge behaviours if reported to them, this may require them halting work until the situation can be resolved/addressed.

- Employees instructing contractors, must view and agree their risk assessment and method statement prior to the beginning of the works.
- Contractors must maintain a safe and compliant working area in line with their risk assessment and method statement.

Disabled Persons:

In line with the Council's Equals Opportunities Statement and Staff Handbook, the Council will give full and proper consideration to the needs of disabled employees and visitors.

To achieve this, the Council will:

- Treat all disabled employees and visitors with respect and dignity, both in the provision of a safe working environment and in equal access to the organisation facilities, where reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that risk assessments are undertaken of the special needs of the disabled and carry out reasonable adjustments to the premises and/or employment arrangements
- Encourage employees with special needs to suggest premises or task improvements to their supervisor
- Discipline any employees found treating their disabled colleagues with less than expected standards of respects and dignity, in line with the Council's code of conduct.
- Adjust/implement or manage where reasonably practicable, emergency evacuation, to ensure suitable plans (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans PEEPs) are in place which will assist disabled people to leave the premises swiftly.
- Encourage all hirer(s) to consider the location of chosen facilities (ground floor/first floor etc) are suitable for hire for their customers, and where appropriate, the Council will suggest alternative resources available to the hirer (as much as possible) to help mitigate the risk of any delayed evacuation.

Employees are not required to disclose a disability or medical condition solely because they have one, the Council encourages the disclosure of any disability where the disability;

- may affect their ability to carry out their duties safely;
- may create a significant health and safety risk to themselves or others;
- means they may require reasonable adjustments, equipment, support or changes to working arrangements; or
- has changed in a way that may materially affect their ability to work safely or effectively.
- Employees should report the impact or workplace restriction, rather than being required to disclose a specific diagnosis or unnecessary medical details.

Employees are not required to report a disability, diagnosis or medical condition where it has no relevant impact on their duties, workplace safety or need for reasonable adjustments. Where a disability is disclosed, the organisation will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Any personal or medical information provided will be handled confidentially and in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

Display screen equipment:

The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees who work with display screen equipment. The Council have DSE self-assessment and escalation processes in place to manage concerns. The Council provide access to free eye tests and provide a contribution to corrective eyewear to the minimum value of basic eyewear.

- Employees are responsible to completing a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) self-check list upon the commencement of their employment and annually thereafter, at any time of workstation changes or if physical circumstances change, such as injury or pregnancy. Completed assessments must be provided to the Town Clerk.
- Employees must report any training needs on DSE equipment and comply with instructions given on their use and set up positions. Employees must ensure they take charge of their own visual breaks and activity changes in line with the Council's recommendations.
- Employees must inform the Town Clerk or their line manager of any disability, medical condition, or health issue that may affect their ability to work safely with display screen equipment (DSE), or that may be aggravated by DSE use.
- Employees should also report any discomfort, pain, or health concerns they believe may be associated with using DSE. Any health information provided will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with the Council's data protection and confidentiality requirements.
- Employees will use any DSE equipment in line with the staff handbook.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring they adjust their position/activity as often as practicable to avoid long periods of extensive sitting, activities such as filing, photocopying etc to allow for breaks.

Below guidance for users;



First Aid:

The Council is committed to providing sufficient provision for first aid to deal with accidents and injuries that arise at work.

The Council will;

- Appoint sufficient numbers of first aiders to ensure the cover of all working patterns
- Provide and maintain suitable first aid equipment and supplies

Employees must;

- Make themselves aware of first aid procedures and policies
- Report any first aid incident/accident through the accident incident reporting procedure
- Report missing/out of date equipment or supplies from designated first aid kits

Hazardous substances (COSHH):

In line with Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations, the Council will take all practicable steps to ensure the safe handling, storage and use of chemicals.

- Only competent and trained employees should handle substances deemed hazardous under COSHH.
- Employees are responsible for safe storage and management of chemicals within their workplace.
- Employees are responsible for returning chemicals to their designated COSHH cupboard upon completion of use.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring the COSHH cupboard remains locked when not in use, allowing no unauthorised access to the area.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring the chemicals are used accordingly to manufacturer's instructions, including but not limited to the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), reviewing COSHH and/or Data sheets.
- Employees must report any misuse or mishandling of chemicals to their Manager.
- Employees must ensure no cross contamination
- Employees must report any accident/incident involving chemical storage or usage.
- Employees must review COSHH data sheets prior to use of chemicals
- Employees must regularly check controls remain in place, any spillages are cleaned up immediately, unless doing so put you at more risk.

Classification Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations 2015:

What do the COSHH symbols mean?		
 Dangerous to the environment	 Toxic	 Gas under pressure
 Corrosive	 Explosive	 Flammable
 Caution – used for less serious health hazards like skin irritation	 Oxidising	 Longer term health hazards such as carcinogenicity

Exposure to hazardous substances can be via:

- Inhalation e.g dust/particulate or vapours/fumes
- Contact with eyes or cuts
- Absorption through skin
- Ingestion
- Injection

Effects on health may be short-term or long-term and will generally vary according to the levels and duration of exposure.

To control exposure the principles below should be applied, in this order;

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Engineering controls (isolate from people by design i.e. local exhaust ventilation)
4. Administrative (information, training, supervision)
5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hazards and good hygiene

It is important to look after your skin, washing hands using the steps below to remove any contamination from your skin promptly, and remember to thoroughly dry your skin after washing. Using moisturising creams can also help protect skin.

Best Practice: How to hand wash step by step images

Steps 3-8 should take at least 15 seconds.



Adapted from the World Health Organization/Health Protection Scotland
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*Any skin complaints should be referred to local occupational health or GP.

Flexible Working

The Council have the same duty of care for those who work flexibly including their place of work if approved in line with the Staff Handbook process.

Those approved to work remotely must ensure they work inline with the Council's policies and procedures;

Employees whilst working remotely must ensure;

- Conduct annual Display Screen Equipment assessments for 'remote' set ups are completed, copies must be provided to the Town Clerk and renewed annually or before if any changes should occur.
- adequate workspace allocation
- suitability of the space for remote working
- well maintained access routes to and from the location
- there is a readily available water supply
- sanitary and washing facilities are available
- that communication with colleagues can be maintained via phone and email.

Employees will be provided equipment to facilitate remote working should their be approval granted to conduct business remotely. Some roles will naturally be unavailable for flexible working due to the nature of the role and or requirements to be on site for business needs.

Infection Control

For some work activities, staff may be at higher risk of infection or of spreading infection. The Council aims to prevent the spread of infection through work-based activities by adopting suitable control measures.

The Council will:

- Provide training and information to all employees who are identified from the risk assessments conducted as being potentially exposed to infections. Provision will contain, but may not be limited to, tasks requiring completion, equipment they will be using and safe procedures to adopt
- Identify employees at risk of infection will where possible be offered vaccinations without charge. Arrangements can be made via your manager

Employees must;

- Follow any procedures set out and good hygiene practices.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as directed, including changing PPE when moving locations and changing activities as required.

Reporting of illness

It is important to remember that infection can also be passed between staff, physical contact with objects and furniture and sharing of facilities. The Council employs individuals to conduct regular cleaning of facilities and surfaces although staff have a duty of care to themselves and others to ensure their own workstations, shared or individual are cleansed on a regular basis utilising antibacterial wipes provided.

Employees must inform their manager if they are sick or unwell from any infectious disease that may affect work or people around you, including but not limited to:

- Skin infections or exposed area of infestation
- Severe respiratory infections (e.g. pneumonia, TB)
- Severe diarrhea
- Jaundice
- Hepatitis
- Chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella
- Norovirus
- Gastroenteritis
- Zoonotic (e.g. Weil's Disease, Lyme Disease)
- Legionnaires disease

The Council will take any and all applicable action relating to the infectious disease reported.

Employees MUST report any workplace accident/incident immediately, in line with Council procedures.

Accidents involving needles or other contact sharps which have resulting in the spread of infectious disease may be reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 2013 (RIDDOR)

Any and all reports of infectious diseases will be handled with strict confidence. Access will be restricted to the manager/senior officer reported to, and the Town Clerk for internal management purposes. The only exception is if the illness triggers a statutory legal obligation, such as a mandatory report as detailed above.

Pandemics and Epidemics

When notified that the country is experiencing a pandemic or epidemic, the Council will aim to prevent the spread of the infection through work-based activities by adopting suitable control measures.

Employees must:

- Assist the Council with implementing measure specified by the government agencies including adopting alternative methods of working such as home working where needed.
- use any required personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed and in accordance to manufacturers guidelines.
- Ensure they inform the Council regarding any notifiable changes in medical circumstances
- Follow good hygiene practices as outlined within notices, policies and procedures accordingly.

Cleaning

Cleaning activities can expose employees to a range of hazards, including cleaning chemicals, bacteria and viruses, bodily fluids, contaminated surfaces, sharps, dust, waste and slips and trips.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable,

- ensure that suitable cleaning arrangements are in place to maintain a safe and hygienic working environment
- provide employees with relevant PPE outline with the risk assessment
- provide employees a schedule of cleaning tasks to adhere to
- provide a relevant risk assessment, COSHH sheets and manufacturers' instructions alongside Council procedures.

Employees must;

- Follow all cleaning procedures, risk assessments and COSHH assessments applicable to the work they are undertaking.
- Use the appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products for the area and type of contamination being dealt with.
- Use cleaning products only for their intended purpose and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- NEVER mix cleaning products or chemicals, particularly bleach with other cleaning products, as this may create harmful or potentially fatal gases
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as identified by the relevant risk assessment and COSHH assessment
- Ensure suitable ventilation is provided when required when using cleaning products
- Wash their hands thoroughly after undertaking cleaning activities and before eating, drinking or smoking
- Use appropriate warning signs when cleaning floors or other areas where there is a risk of slips to staff or members of the public
- Report damaged, leaking or incorrectly labelled cleaning products to their manager
- Ensure cleaning products and equipment are stored safely and securely when not in use and cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons or members of the public.
- Report any spillages, contamination, damage or other hazards that cannot be safely dealt with immediately to their manager.
- not use any cleaning product which is unidentified, incorrectly labelled or which they have not been instructed or trained to use.
- not, deliberately contaminate ground or water by incorrectly disposing of chemicals
- Wherever possible avoid direct contact with bodily fluids and ensure that any cuts, grazes or broken skin are covered with waterproof dressings.
- Prevent members of the public from entering areas where cleaning activities present a significant risk.
- Report any damaged fixtures, fittings, flooring, lighting or other defects which may present a risk to their manager.
- Report evidence of pests, significant contamination, drug use or other hazards to their manager.
- Ensure cleaning equipment and chemicals are not left unattended where they could be accessed by members of the public.
- Not tamper with or remove hygiene waste receptacles from there designated areas. Any hygiene waste found should not be directly handled put provided equipment used to place within the hygiene receptacle only.

If contamination is significant or cannot be safely dealt with using the equipment, PPE and procedures provided, the area should be isolated where reasonably practicable and the matter reported to the relevant manager.

Sharps and Needles

If a needle, syringe or other sharp object is found within a public toilet or other Council premises, employees must not handle it with their hands or place it in a normal waste bin.

The immediate area should be kept clear of members of the public where reasonably practicable and the matter reported in accordance with the Council's procedures for the safe removal and disposal of sharps.

Only employees who have been appropriately trained and provided with suitable equipment should handle or dispose of sharps.

Any needlestick injury, cut or other injury involving a potentially contaminated sharp must be reported to the employee's manager immediately and appropriate medical advice must be sought.

Cleaning Equipment

Cleaning equipment must be maintained in a clean and suitable condition and used only for the purpose for which it has been provided.

Equipment should be cleaned and stored appropriately after use to prevent the spread of infection between locations or areas. Where equipment is used in areas presenting a higher risk of contamination, appropriate arrangements must be made to prevent cross-contamination.

Employees must report defective or damaged cleaning equipment to their manager and must not use equipment which could present a risk to themselves or others.

Legionnaires' disease

Legionella is a bacteria which forms when water systems are not managed correctly and store water for periods of time. If legionella is present within a water system you could contract legionnaire's disease which for certain individuals with weakened immune systems can be life-threatening.

You cannot get legionnaires from drinking the water, the water vapor contains the bacteria and therefore it is only if an outlet has not been used in some time should you take precautions and check in with the relevant building manager.

The Council will, as reasonably practicable, protect employees from exposure to legionnaires disease. Monitoring is in place to minimise risk to employees.

The Council will create a written management plan for all assets including a written scheme of control and keep this up to date, this will be accessible to employees via the shared folders or a copy can be requested from their manager at any time.

The Council have appointed competent person(s) to carry out monthly checks on our property portfolio, with risk assessments and quarterly visits undertaken by a third party contractor.

- Employees are responsible for the reporting any failure in equipment which may increase risk of legionella bacteria growth, such as boiler failures and point of use heaters to the estates manager.
- Employees must report any symptoms or diagnosis of legionnaires disease to the Town Clerk.

Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)

Weil's disease, also known as leptospirosis, is a bacterial infection which can be contracted through contact with water, soil or mud contaminated with the urine of infected animals, particularly rats. The bacteria can enter the body through open wounds or broken skin and through the eyes, nose or mouth. Outdoor workers, including those involved in grounds maintenance, grave digging and work around water or areas where rats are present, may be at increased risk.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable, protect employees from exposure to Weil's disease. Employees who work outdoors or undertake activities where there may be a risk of contact with contaminated soil, water or animal urine will be provided with appropriate information, instruction and protective measures.

The Council will;

- assess the risk of leptospirosis where applicable
- outline mitigating actions to minimise exposure
- provide employees PPE as outline in the risk assessment
- provide employees access to first aid provisions

Employees are responsible for:

- Covering cuts, grazes and breaks in the skin with waterproof dressings before undertaking work
- Wearing suitable protective gloves and other PPE where identified by the risk assessment
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and clean water before eating, drinking or smoking and after completing work
- Avoidance of touching their face, mouth or eyes while working
- Reporting evidence of rats, including droppings, burrows or other signs of infestation, to their manager
- Reporting any damaged or inadequate PPE to their manager
- Following any site-specific arrangements relating to pest control and contaminated water or ground
- reporting any circumstances which may increase the risk of exposure to Weil's disease to their manager

- reporting any symptoms or diagnosis of Weil's disease to the Town Clerk. Symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle aches, vomiting and flu-like symptoms
- informing their healthcare professional if they have been working in an environment where they may have been exposed to rats, contaminated water or soil if they feel unwell or require to attend a medical practice, hospital or private health care professional

Lyme's Disease

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection which can be contracted following the bite of an infected tick. Ticks can be found in areas of long grass, woodland, heathland, scrub and other areas of vegetation. Employees undertaking outdoor work, including grounds maintenance and grave digging, may therefore be at increased risk of exposure.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable;

- protect employees from exposure to Lyme disease.
- provide appropriate information and instruction
- implement any control measures to mitigate the risk outlined in the risk assessment

Employees should take reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of tick bites, including but not limited to:

- Wearing long trousers and long-sleeved clothing where reasonably practicable.
- Keeping to established paths where possible and avoiding unnecessary contact with long vegetation
- Checking clothing and exposed skin regularly when working in areas where ticks may be present
- Carrying out a thorough tick check after working outdoors, paying particular attention to areas such as the backs of the knees, groin, armpits and around the waist
- Removing any attached tick promptly using fine-tipped tweezers or a suitable tick-removal tool
- Following any site-specific control measures identified by the risk assessment.
- Employees are responsible for reporting any circumstances which may increase their risk of exposure to ticks to their manager
- Employees must report any symptoms or diagnosis of Lyme disease to the Town Clerk. Symptoms can include a spreading circular or oval rash, fever, tiredness, headache, muscle or joint pain and flu-like symptoms
- Employees who develop symptoms following a tick bite should seek medical advice and inform their healthcare professional that they may have been exposed to ticks through their work

Digging (including Grave Digging)

Digging involving excavation work can present a number of health and safety risks, including collapse of the excavation, falls into pits or graves, falling materials, unstable ground, underground services, contact with contaminated soil and interaction with vehicles or mechanical plant.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable,

- protect employees and others from the risks associated with ground excavation
- appropriately plan and undertake digging activities in accordance with the relevant risk assessment and safe system of work. Consideration must be given to the condition and stability of the ground, the location of underground services, adjacent graves, memorials, trees, walls and other structures, as well as access and egress from the excavation.
- provide employees with identified PPE as detailed in the risk assessment
- suitable measure are used to prevent the collapse of excavation, including if necessary battering of side walls or use of temporary support or shoring

Employees must:

- Follow the relevant risk assessment, method statement and safe system of work
- Ensure that suitable barriers or other controls are in place to prevent people falling into the excavation
- Keep spoil, materials, equipment and vehicles a safe distance from the edge of the excavation
- Use designated access and egress arrangements
- Not enter an excavation which has been identified as unsafe
- Report any cracking, movement, water ingress or other signs of ground instability immediately to their manager
- Report any unidentified underground service or obstruction encountered during excavation and stop work until it has been assessed
- Use the PPE identified within the relevant risk assessment.
- Grave excavations must be inspected by a competent person where required and following any event which may have affected the stability of the excavation
- Employees are responsible for reporting any concerns regarding the condition or stability of a grave excavation to their manager
- never enter an unstable or collapsed grave excavation to attempt a rescue. Emergency procedures must be followed and assistance obtained from emergency services or trained personnel
- Conduct dynamic risk assessments should alterations in the conditions such as weather, soil assessments change

Lone working

The Council will, as reasonably practicable, minimise the risk of lone working, by the creation of a Lone Working Policy, which will be periodically reviewed. The Council

under its duty of care will ensure a lone risk assessment is in place to ensure roles identified as high or medium risk receive necessary mitigating actions.

- Employees must utilise lone working devices if provided to them under the risk assessment
- Managers must review their staff's risk annually or as and when required. Employees must follow all instructions and training provided for the safe use of lone working devices and ensure they remain competent in its operation. Any request for additional/refresh training should be directed to the Estates Manager.
- Equipment must only be used for work-related purposes and must not be taken for personal use outside of working hours.
- Employees are responsible for keeping the equipment clean, in good condition, and fully charged or prepared for use at the start of each shift.
- Employees are responsible for reporting damaged or broken devices to their manager immediately.
- Employees must familiarise themselves with the Cautionary Contacts Register (CCR).

Hazards and checks

Working alone can involve a number of scenarios, However, the following is practical tips will apply to all of these;

- Should your visit be to anywhere but your normal place of work and lone working is already a known and assessed factor, you must notify someone of where and when you are going and your expected return. Those known to be lone working regularly have lone working devices available for their use.
- Always take a mobile phone with you and ensure it is charged at the beginning of your visit, keep it on your person should you need to use it
- Keep valuables and cash on your person to a minimum
- Maintain regular contact with colleagues and or your manager

Home visits

In the unlikely event that your duties require you may visit individuals in their own home, you must always recognise this is a greater higher risk to your person.

- Home visits are only able to be authorised by the Town Clerk.
- Wherever possible home visits should only be conducted with two individuals, eliminating the lone working risk.
- Always where possible conduct checks on the individual you are due to meet, check the Cautionary contacts register to ensure they are not listed
- During visits ensure your exit is never impeded
- Do not enter the property if the person you expect to see is not there
- Remain alert at all times
- Be aware of pets, they can be used to intimidate, request they are put in another room prior to attendance

- If a situation arises stay calm and do not return aggression as this may aggravate the situation, remain calm and activate your lone working devices or contact the agreed upon colleague.
- Trust your instincts and act accordingly, make excuses to leave should you feel concerned or threatened
- Report any accident/incident to via the accident/incident process.

Interviewing in offices

There is a potential for violent crime against staff at all time, not least when interviewing or meeting member of the public in offices. The following general advice on top of that of home visits should be considered;

- Interview with more than one individual to eliminate lone working
- When using an interview room, ensure that you are seated closest to the exit if possible, if not consider your escape route or nearest safe zone, this could be as small as a toilet facility. Although consider how you will notify others of the situation.
- Remove any loose objects or items which could be used as a weapon.

Walking

Anyone who is on foot should develop a sensible level of awareness to danger that is relevant to the circumstances. The use of a few sensible precautions should minimise risks:

- Avoid short cuts through dimly light or enclosed areas
- After dark keep away from bushes, doorways and alleyways
- Tell your manager or colleagues your designation and expected time of return
- Walk facing oncoming traffic, this avoids a vehicle coasting quietly upon you from behind
- Walk confidently and purposefully, avoid sending out signals of fear and vulnerability
- Avoid use of headphones as it impedes your awareness of your surroundings
- Wear sensible footwear, do not wear footwear which may impede your actions if alarmed
- If you think you are being followed cross the street. If they continue to follow, move to the nearest place with people and call the Police using your mobile phone.
- Keep your distance if asking for directions

Cautionary Contacts Register (CCR)

The Council has implemented a Cautionary Contacts Register (CCR); this is an internal safety tool used by the Council to identify individuals who may pose a threat to staff or require specific handling during interactions. Those listed on the register will be reviewed and if applicable details removed in line with best practice (up to three years after an accident) or when evidence shows the risk no longer exists.

Specific handling during interactions can be based on internal determination or Avon and Somerset Constabulary advice, this should be strictly adhered to as much as reasonably practicable to do so. The Council does not expect or endorse any individual to challenge or confront those identified within the CCR.

Individuals on and off the CCR should be treated fairly, if the individual request is within the normal parameters of customer service interaction i.e. provision of Council information, this should be provided freely given, right for service should not be refused unless the behaviour of the individual at the time of interaction is determined to be unsafe or the CCR lists the individual as BANNED from site.

Only the Town Clerk has the right to BAN anyone from Council Premises; accident/incident forms should be submitted in the normal manner to help inform this decision.

Violence and Aggression

Work related violence has serious consequences for employees of the Council. The Council have a duty of care to ensure that procedures are in place for the response support that victims may suffer not only physically but psychologically, such as anxiety and stress.

Violence is defined as actual threatened physical assault, psychological abuse, verbal, swearing and gestures and threats.

The Council will;

- Carry out a risk assessment of potential conflict, which staff could be affected and determine control measures to help mitigate the risk
- Ensure the premises are kept secure
- Train employees who may be exposed to violence or challenging behaviour
- Support any employees involved in any incident and any lawful actions they may wish to take i.e. pursue criminal charges against the individual(s)
- Provide details on access to counselling post-incident
- Keep records of the incidents of violence and aggression to review control measures and update accordingly to continually improve employee safety

Employees will:

- Ensure they are aware of processes and procedures implemented and adhere to them
- Report the incident via the Council's accident/incident process
- Utilise any training and common sense to de-escalate the situation
- Support fellow colleagues if deemed safe to do so
- Act in a calm and professional manner

Machinery maintenance

A Council, has a legal duty of care to ensure that all machinery used by employees, contractors, and others affected by its operations is safe, suitable, and properly

managed. This duty includes taking all reasonably practicable steps to prevent injury, ill health, or harm arising from the use of work equipment.

- Employees must not try to maintain or fix any equipment they are not trained or competent to do so.
- Employees working on equipment must follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation, maintenance, and servicing. Under no circumstances should work be carried out on equipment while it is live, unless this is demonstrably unavoidable and appropriate control measures have been implemented in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations. A risk assessment for these works must be completed prior to commencement and stored on the shared file.
- Employees must report any and all defects to machinery to their manager immediately and cease usage.

Noise and Vibration

The Council will identify risks of exposure to noise and vibration and identify control measures to reduce risk to staff. Excessive prolonged noise can result in permanent hearing damage or tinnitus. Exposure to vibration from hand held tool or vibrating machinery can cause permanent injury to blood vessels, nerves and joints.

The Council in line with the above;

- Maintain equipment, servicing regularly
- Provide necessary PPE
- Monitor employees via managers, supervisors and other members of staff
- Control exposure by implementing control measures as assessed

Employees must;

- Report any illness or concerns regarding the use of equipment immediately
- Use any and all controls outlined in the risk assessment
- Wear any provision of PPE correctly in line with manufacturers instruction
- Consider if lower settings will provide better performance and/or reduce vibration
- Report faults with equipment immediately and cease use of any defective equipment
- Take regular breaks and adhere to job rotation schedules or maximum usage times
- Participate in any scheduled health surveillance screenings as appropriate.
- Place out appropriate signage if levels of noise will reach 85dB or above

Manual handling

A Council, has a legal duty of care to protect employees and others from harm arising from manual handling activities. This includes any lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or moving of loads that could cause injury. The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and ensure safe working practices.

- Employees must undergo mandatory training

- Employees must not attempt to lift or carry any load deemed to require lifting tools or equipment.
- Employees must read and adhere to the risk assessment for manual handling.
- Employees must report any issues or concerns relating to training, activities or lifting aids, immediately to avoid injury
- Employees must inform their manager of any medical condition which may prevent/reduce their ability to conduct a task as soon as practicable to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Any disclosure will be kept confidential and where possible reasonable adjustments will be implemented.

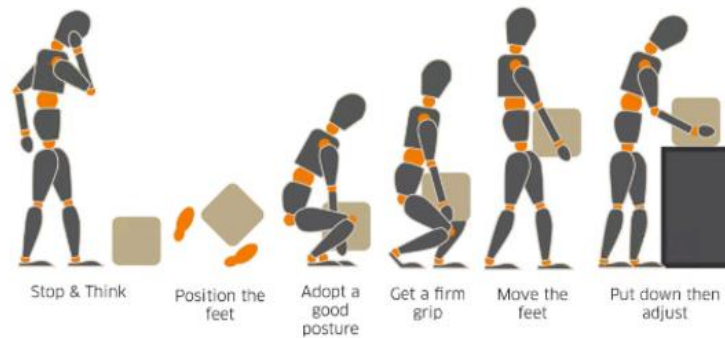
Principles of good handling

Safe lifting techniques

- Lifting should only be attempted if the approximate weight of the item is known.
- Plan your lift, this means know where it is going and that there is a clear path to your destination
- Keep it close, the load should be kept close to your waist with the heaviest side nearest your body.
- Adopt a stable position, feet should be shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Bend your knees, not your back! Doing this puts the load through your legs not your spine
- Avoid twisting, turn with your feet not with your back
- Keep your head up, looking forward whilst lifting
- Move smoothly, do not do fast movements, jerking of the head
- Don't lift more than you can manage, ask for help

Safe pushing and pulling techniques

- Push rather than pull, when feasible always push rather than pull an item
- Keep your back straight and use your body weight to help you push
- Plan your route, maintain a clear visual path for you and the item
- Limit your travel distance
- Avoid uneven surfaces or slopes where possible that increase strain
- ALWAYS use lifting aids where possible, like trolleys, sack/pallet trucks.
- Don't lift more than you can manage, ask for help



Other considerations

- Does the lift require PPE?
 - Appropriate footwear should be worn to avoid injury.
 - Are gloves required to avoid injury?
 - Are you undergoing treatment for muscular skeletal issues? A doctors note providing exemptions to duties should be provided to the Council.
- Do you require assistance, is this lift designed for two or more persons, if so ask for help, never attempt a lift unaided if meant for more than one person.

New and expectant mothers

A Council will look to protect the health, safety, and welfare of expectant mothers, new mothers, and those who are breastfeeding. This includes taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that workplace conditions, tasks, and exposures do not pose risks to the mother or the unborn/young child. The Council understands that additional measures are required beyond the general health and safety practices in place for all employees.

- Employees are requested to notify the Council at their earliest opportunity to allow the Council to mitigate risks and instigate controls where appropriate to do so.
- Employees must inform the Town Clerk of their pregnancy no later than the 15th week before your due date as legally required.
- The Council will conduct a specific risk assessment identifying any duties which may be required to be altered to accommodate pregnancy, should this be necessary, this should be discussed with the direct line manager.
- Employees must conduct DSE self-assessments to ensure their ergonomic position during pregnancy is considered throughout their term, this will also be reviewed within trimester risk assessment updates.
- Employees must inform the Town Clerk of any changes which may affect the risk assessment including any medical conditions, incidents etc. Medical conditions which require the use of additional equipment or apparatus such as needles will need to be handled with care and disposed of in the receptacle provided by health care professionals.

Medicines and associated equipment i.e. needles

- Secure storage of medical equipment can be obtained upon request of the Town Clerk.
- Employees must notify the Town Clerk of the need to store medicines, refrigerated medicines will need special consideration and the most suited method 'lockbox' or dedicated provision will be reviewed and provision put in place accordingly.

Outdoor and Peripatetic Working

The Council will as far as is reasonable practicable ensure that employees who work outdoors or away from their normal base are not put in any additional risk to their health and safety.

Staff working outdoor or away from base are responsible for ensuring that:

- Employees working on a third party site, must report to the responsible person to ensure familiarisation with safety precautions relating to that site. If no third party representative is available i.e. working on open ground the Council's procedures will be followed at all times ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff.
- Employees must report any problems to their manager as soon as possible. If any changes to the condition of the site during the works, which were to increase the risk, staff should stop immediately unless doing so creates a larger risk. Any change should be reported to their manager or supervisor for dynamic risk assessment.
- Employees must ensure that any dynamic risk assessment generated is noted to allow for consideration and update within the pre-planned risk assessments.
- Managers must ensure the dynamic risk assessment changes are incorporated within the pre-planned risk assessment as appropriate, to continually improve safety awareness.
- Employees must regularly review risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Employees must wear any and all personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with the relevant risk assessment and manufacturers guidelines.
- Employees must report any damaged or missing PPE and cease work, as applicable, until replacements can be provided.
- Employees must use any and all machinery in line with manufactures instructors, refer to Machinery section in this handbook.
- Employees must report any accidents and incidents via the accident/incident process.

Smoking

A Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to promote a healthy, safe, and smoke-free working environment, while ensuring that the rights and dignity of employees who smoke are respected. The Council aims to reduce exposure to

second-hand smoke, support healthier lifestyle choices, and maintain a workplace that protects the wellbeing of all staff, service users, and visitors. Measures will be implemented in a fair and proportionate way that does not discriminate against individuals who choose to smoke.

- No smoking or vaping is permitted within company vehicles.
- Smoking is not permitted on Council property unless a designated smoking area has been identified and signposted.

Training for health and safety

The Council will provide necessary training relating to the relevant roles to ensure staff can safely manage and operate within their roles of responsibilities.

- Staff will receive the necessary induction training within their staff induction, this will include any job specific roles and responsibilities they may have.
- Refresher training will be held regularly to ensure staff remain aware of their duty of care to themselves and others, many of this training will be provided by toolbox talks or via online portals.

Employees must;

- Participate in induction training activities they have been required to attend or carry out, including online training
- Work according to the contents of any training they receive
- Ask for clarification of any points they do not fully understand
- Not operate hazardous plant or equipment, use hazardous chemicals or carry out any hazardous activity unless they have appropriately trained and instructed and are competent to do so
- contact their manager if they have any concerns regarding training provision or requirements for refresher training.

The Council have an induction sheet for all new employees which will be completed by the Manager and returned to the Town Clerk to be held on file. All induction training will cover all aspects of emergency procedures, identification of job specification risk assessments, prohibited areas, PPE and use of equipment.

Stress at Work

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as ‘ the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand place on them’. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Stress at work can occur for a variety of reasons, including excessive workload, unreasonable demand or expectations. Through one-to-one meetings with individuals, annual appraisals and regular ‘check-ins’ from managers to staff, the Council drives to

provide open communication, supportive management helping to facilitate for a pleasant working environment.

Employees who experience unreasonable stress which they think may be caused by work should raise their concerns with their manager or the Town Council's grievance procedure. Staff have access to the Council's 24/7 CareAssist helpline for confidential counselling caused by work or external factors.

Should an employee raise a concern the Council where reasonably practicable carry out actions to help mitigate and/or reduce the risks, including the referral to occupational health if considered necessary and reassess. If the risks remain unsuitable by the employee concerned, efforts will be made to make reasonable adjustment which may consider redeployment if appropriate.

Violence towards staff

The Council is committed to provide a workplace where all employees feel safe, respected and protected from any form of violence, aggression or threatening behaviour. The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent incidents, support affected employees and ensure that robust procedures are in place to manage risks.

- Employees will be trained to recognise warning signs, report incidents without fear of reprisal, and support one another in maintaining a respectful and secure working environment.
- Employees can refer any concerns to the Town Clerk or their staffing representative.
- Employees must complete an incident/accident form to inform management of any act of violence either verbal or physical to ensure investigation and mitigating action can be conducted/implemented.
- Employees must manage the interaction in a calm and professional manner utilising training to ensure the safety of themselves and others where reasonably practicable.
- Employees should remain alert at all times
- Be aware of pets, they can be used to intimidate, maintain your distance
- If a situation arises stay calm and do not return aggression as this may aggravate the situation.
- Trust your instincts and act accordingly, make excuses to leave should you feel concerned or threatened

Diffusing the situation

In the event of violent or aggressive behaviour there are several steps that you can try to diffuse the situation, such as;

- Act in control; even if you feel anxious or scared when confronted by an aggressor, try to give the impression that you are confident and in control of the situation. Anxiety is an

entirely reasonable reaction to violent or aggressive behaviour, but if an aggressor notices it then it may increase their level of aggression.

- Adopt a calm approach:
 - talk calmly and respectfully and keep your tone of voice low.
 - If you have been asked to assist with a violent customer that you don't know introduce yourself and ask what you can do to help.
 - Maintain a non-judgemental attitude and focus your attention on the aggressor at all times
 - Let the aggressor talk without interruption, and acknowledge how they are feeling. Remember your aim is to calm the situation, not make sense of their complaint or issue
- Use body language;
 - such as maintaining neutral eye contact with the aggressor without staring. Break eye contact every so often.
 - Keep your face relaxed but don't smile, they may take this as mockery or making light of the situation
 - Keep body language open and try to avoid crossing your arms or gesture anything that could be perceived as a weapon, avoid pointing at the aggressor.
 - If possible stand with the exit to the rear of you if not possible ensure you have sight of the exit/safe space at all times.
- Work towards a solution: wait for the aggressor to calm down. Explain the consequences of their aggressive behaviour respectfully but firmly. The Council operates CCTV and they may be in a location that is being recorded. Suggest ways in which the situation could be resolved without conflict, and try to give the aggressor more than one solution so that they have some control over the situation

Visitors

In the interest of safety and security the Council will take the necessary measures to protect staff and visitors from any accidents or incidents that may occur during visiting;

Employees hosting visitors must ensure that;

- They are authorised to enter the premises or are accompanied.
- They adhere to the applicable health and safety instructions and rules during their visit
- Adequate information is passed to ensure their safety including emergency information
- Any protective clothing required is worn
- Any accident/incidents involving visitors are reported through the accident reporting process.
- Employees aware of people on the premises who may be unauthorised should report these to their manager for action.
- Employees have a duty of care to ensure themselves and others are protected from harm as much as reasonably practicable therefore in the event of a fire alarm sounding or a terrorism alert taking place visitors should be escorted or

signposted (only if Fire Warden duties prevent their own immediate evacuation) to the nearest exit by their host. In the event of an emergency, efforts should be made to ensure that visitors remain at the evacuation assembly point, this is to avoid unnecessary risk posed to staff and the fire bridge searching for such individual if known to be on site.

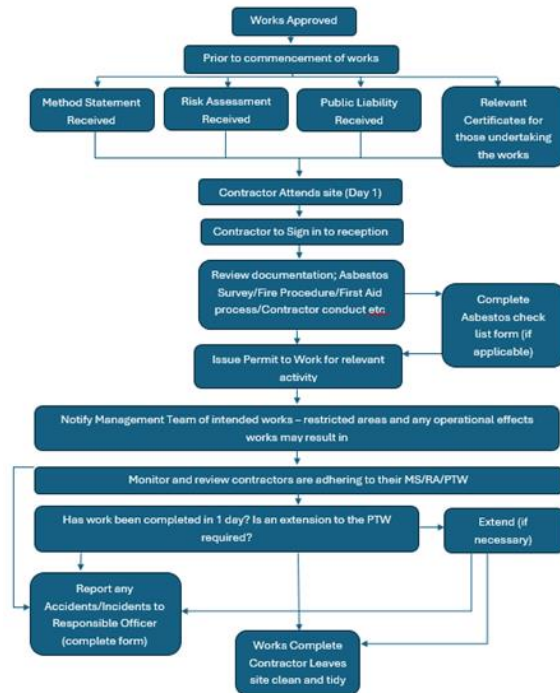
Work equipment

The Council will provide training in all equipment provided relating to specific job roles and their requirement to undertake tasks.

- Employees must ensure they visually inspect equipment prior to use.
- Employees must report any faulty or damaged equipment immediately and taken out of use until repaired.
- Employees must not try to utilise any equipment they have not be trained in or are competent in its use.
- Employees must use any equipment as per the manufacturer's instructions, such as but not limited to; weight limits, number of users, duration of use etc.
- Employees must that signage is in situ as appropriate when utilising work equipment.
- Employees must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.

Permit to Work and Safe Systems of Work

The Council have implemented a permit to work and safe systems of work processes to help ensure the safe management of contractors and to ensure we meet our duty of care to our staff. Below details the actions that should be taken as part of the permit to work process;



Permits to work must be completed for the following activities,

Height

Working from height relates to any place where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury if safety precautions are not used.

- Employees have a duty of care to themselves and others to ensure that they carry out their duties in a safe and planned manner and utilise the appropriate equipment.
- Only trained and competent employees are permitted to use equipment such as scaffolding, ladders or mobile platforms will be permitted
- Employees must be trained in height safety procedures and wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE), such as harnesses, hard hat when required.
- Employees must consider weather conditions, surface stability, and the potential for falling objects. No work at height should be undertaken unless the risks have been fully assessed and adequate control measures are in place.

Principles of safe access

Falls when working at height remain the most common kind of workplace fatality, accounting for around a quarter of all worker deaths and 8% of all non-fatal injuries every year, with many involving a fall off a ladder. It's essential that people use the right type of ladder for a task and know how to use it safely.

Leaning ladders

When using a leaning ladder to carry out a task:

- only carry light materials and tools, read the manufacturer's labels on the ladder and assess the risks
- don't overreach, make sure your belt buckle (or navel) stays within the stiles
- make sure the ladder is long enough or high enough for the task
- don't overload the ladder; consider your weight and the equipment or materials you are carrying before working at height
- check the pictogram or label on the ladder for any advisory information
- make sure the ladder angle is at 75° – you should use the 1-in-4 rule (i.e. one unit out for every four units up – see Figure 1)
- always grip the ladder and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending – don't slide down the stiles;
- don't try to move or extend the ladder while standing on the rungs;
- don't work off the top three rungs, and try to make sure that the ladder extends at least 1 m (three rungs) above where you are working;
- don't stand ladders on movable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, excavator buckets, vans or mobile elevating work platforms;
- avoid holding items when climbing (consider using a tool belt);
- don't work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line, unless it has been made dead or it is protected with insulation. Use a non-conductive ladder (eg fibreglass or timber) for any electrical work;

Leaning ladder



Figure 1

Ladder showing the correct 1 in 4 angle



Figure 2

Correct – user maintaining three points of contact



Figure 3

Incorrect – overreaching and not maintaining three points of contact

- where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (e.g. to hold a nail while starting to knock it in, start a screw etc), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or mitigate the consequences if one happened;
- secure the ladder (e.g. by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point (i.e. do not rest it against weak upper surfaces such as glazing or plastic gutters – see Figure 4);



Figure 4

Correct – use of a stand-off device to ensure a strong resting point. Do not rest a ladder against weak upper surfaces such as glazing or plastic gutters. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- consider using an effective stability device (a device which, if used correctly, prevents the ladder from slipping).

Telescopic Ladders



Figure 5

Check all sections are locked before using the ladder



Figure 6

Take care when closing telescopic ladders not to trap fingers

Source: www.hse.gov.uk - <https://ladderassociation.org.uk/la455/>

Stepladders

When using a stepladder to carry out a task:

- Check all four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level
- Only carry light materials and tools
- Don't overreach
- Don't stand and work on the top three steps (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold
- Ensure any locking devices are engaged
- Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on. However, there are occasions when a risk assessment may show it is safer to work side on, eg in a retail stock room when you can't engage the stepladder locks to work face on because of space restraints in narrow aisles, but you can fully lock it to work side on;
- Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (eg bricks or concrete)
- Where side loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over eg by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment;

- Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder.
- When deciding whether it is safe to carry out a particular task on a stepladder where you cannot maintain a handhold (eg to put a box on a shelf, hang wallpaper, or install a smoke detector on a ceiling), the decision needs to be justified, taking into account
 - the height of the task;
 - whether a handhold is still available to steady yourself before and after the task;
 - whether it is light work
 - whether it avoids side loading
 - whether it avoids overreaching;
 - whether the stepladder can be tied (eg when side-on working).

Combination and multi-purpose ladders

- Combination and multi-purpose ladders can be used as stepladders, a variation of stepladders or leaning ladders. Combination ladders are sometimes referred to as 'A' frame ladders.
- These types of ladders can be used in a variety of different configurations. You should:
 - check to ensure that any locking mechanism is properly engaged before use;
 - always recheck the locking mechanism if the setup of the ladder is changed;
 - on three-part combination ladders, never extend the top section (the section extending above the A frame) beyond the limit marked on the ladder and specified in the user manual.

Confined spaces

A confined space is any place that is substantially enclosed (though not always entirely) and where there is a reasonable foreseeable specified risk of injury.

- Employees must follow procedures put in place to help ensure restricted areas are not accessed without knowledge of others. Confined spaces should only be assessed by competent staff with the prior knowledge of their manager or another designated individual determined as a 'buddy'.
- Employees must not remain in confined spaces for significant lengths of time and should ensure they report back to their manager or 'buddy' at the conclusion of their visit.
- Employees must familiarise themselves of spaces which are considered confined.
- Employees must not access a confined space whilst lone working.

Electricity

The Council has a duty of care to secure and health and safety of employees who use, operate or maintain electrical equipment. The Council has trained staff in Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) to enable the safe testing of equipment at regular intervals. The Council insures all properties under its direct management have valid Fixed Wire Tests every five years as required statutorily.

- Employees must visually check electrical equipment for damage prior to use
- Employees must report any defects to their line manager/supervisor and place signage advising others to not use
- Employees must not use known defective equipment
- Employees must use equipment issued to them by the Council, unless express permission is granted items not PAT tested (unless new) or over 110Volts should not be utilised.
- Employees must not carry out any repairs to electrical equipment if not qualified to do so.
- Employees must switch off any electrical equipment at the mains, if being left unattended.
- Employees must not leave electrical cables trailing where tripping hazards are created, or could cause mechanical damage.
- Employees must ensure that the permit to work process is followed with contractors helping to ensure isolation of supplies as necessary.
- Employees must switch of any equipment prior to cleaning

Hazards and checks

Employee need to understand the risks of electricity and what harm could come to them or others if not properly managed.

Contact with live parts causing shock and/or burns, mains voltage is 230 volts which can kill. Faults can easily cause fires, statutory checks are conducted to minimise the risk but employees should not dismiss the risk due to these being in place.

Around 95% of all faults or damage can be found during visual checks and this involves checking;

- For damage to the cable covering, such as cuts and abrasions, apart from light scuffing (although this should be monitored) or nonstandard repairs, such as cables wrapped with electrical tape.
- Where the plug meets the socket should be checked for exposed wires (no longer fitting in the outer cable covering).
- Damage to the plug itself, cracked or scorch marks/discolouration present.
- Damaged to sockets or switches
- Equipment being mis-used in wet or dusty work places or where screws or integral safety parts are missing (such as screws holding casings)
- Safe use of extension cables (no daisy chaining) or two extensions into one plug.

Gas Installations and Appliances:

The Council will, as reasonably practicable, ensure all works carried out on gas fittings and appliances are carried out in accordance with legislation and best practice. All contractors appointed to work for the Council must be on the Gas Safety Register the governing body approved by the Health and Safety Executive.

No person shall interfere with any gas appliance or gas fitting or pipe work unless qualified and competent to do so.

Gas Leak Procedure

If you smell gas or suspect a gas emergency you **MUST** follow the following steps;

DO NOT

- Operate any electrical switches (on or off)
- Smoke or use a naked flame
- Turn the gas back on until the leak has been repaired

DO

- Extinguish all naked flames
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the area
- Check you gas appliances and turn them off
- Turn the gas supply off at the meter – *information on each meter location is held in the relevant Facilities Handbook and in the Business Continuity Handbook.*
- Telephone the National Grid Emergency Service
- Evacuate the building
- Report to the Fire Assembly Point

In case of Fire

- **IMMEDIATELY** activate the fire alarm, evacuating premises
- **TELEPHONE** the fire brigade (not all systems are monitored)
- **ISOLATE** the gas supply at the main meter if safe to do so only
- **TELEPHONE** the National Grid Emergency Service **0800 111 999**

Hot Works

Any temporary operation or maintenance task that generates flames, sparks, heat or a source of ignition capable of starting a fire or causing an explosion. This includes but is not limited to welding, cutting, grinding, soldering, thermal spraying applying roofing materials such as bitumen using gas torches.

- Only employees trained and competent to carry out works are permitted to do so.
- Employees must visually check equipment for damage prior to use
- Employees must ensure a minimum area of 10 meters is clear of combustible material prior to beginning work. If 'free from' is unachievable, fire resistance blankets, or thermal barriers should be applied.
- Employees must report any defects to their line manager/supervisor
- Employees must not use known defective equipment
- Employees must use equipment issued to them by the Council, unless express permission is granted, items not PAT tested (unless new) or over 110Volts should not be utilised.
- Employees must not carry out any repairs to equipment or machinery if not competent to do so.
- Employees must not leave equipment unsupervised at any time whilst in operation

Contractors

Employees must challenge and report unsafe behaviour of any individual conducting works on behalf of the Council at any owned asset of the Council.

- Contractors are required to complete the relevant Permit to Work and provide a risk assessment and method statement to enable them to carry out works on the premises.
- Employees have a duty of care to ensure contractors fulfil this requirement.
 - Failure to comply with the sites rules and regulations by the contractor can result in the request to leave the premises.
 - Failure of employees to comply with this may result in disciplinary action.

Young workers

Whilst precautions taken to protect the health and safety of staff as a whole will in most cases also protect young persons, there are occasions when different or additional measures will be necessary due to their lack of experience, knowledge or absence of awareness of potential risk.

A 'young' person is defined as one who is below the age of 18.

The Council will;

- Carry out risk assessment to cover activities of young persons
- Implement the actions determined by the risk assessment process
- Inform the young persons of any risk associated with their work and the control measure taken to protect them
- Employees below the age of 18 years will be appointed to a relevant supervisor

Employees will;

- adhere to the relevant risk assessment
- ensure the young person(s) are aware of safeguarding procedures

- provide additional appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training as determined by the risk assessment

Communication with third parties such as schools and parents may be required subject to the arrangements of the young person(s) attendance. The young person will be under the duty of care of the Council and classified as a member of staff for the duration of their work experience or placement. Those under general employment will be managed by their supervisor with all the enhanced checks as per a work placement.

Waste Management

The Council is required under Waste Management 2011 and Digital Waste Transfer 2026 regulations to log all waste with DEFRA'S waste data services. The Council will ensure that all waste is captured via this mechanism by appointing a competent contractor.

Waste as required will be at a minimum split between the below categories;

- Dry (mixed)
- General
- Glass
- Plastic
- Food
- Gardening
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)
- Hazardous

Employer's Transport:

It is an integral part of some roles within the Council to operate vehicles. Driving has inherent risks associated with it which drivers should be made aware of. The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees who utilise Council vehicles, these include commercial sit on mowers, market vehicles and Council owned or hired vehicles.

Employees are required to ensure that vehicles are maintained in accordance to manufacturers recommended service intervals and are in a safe and roadworthy and legal condition

Drivers must regularly check vehicles before use, checks must include, but not limited to;

- oil, coolant, brake fluid
- power steering fluid level
- screen washer fluid level
- wiper condition and operation
- windscreen condition and cleanliness

- tyre pressure, tread depth and general condition
- all lights working
- seatbelts operational
- bodywork
- first aid kit
- extinguisher(s)

In line with the employee handbook;

- Only authorised personnel may drive or operate vehicles.
- Unauthorised passengers or loads must not be carried.
- Vehicles must not be used for unofficial purposes, unless permission has been granted by the manager.
- Loading limits must be respected.
- Employees are required to be physically fit to operate a vehicle, this includes but is not limited to, lack of illness, alcohol or medical conditions, which prohibit the safe operation of vehicles.
- Employees must have regular eye checks and be using corrective apparatus when operating a vehicle.
- Employees must ensure their driving position, headrest, seat and mirrors are positioned to the maximum comfort at each use of the vehicle(s).
- Employees are required to inform their manager of any change in their driving license provision or status.
- Employees must have a valid driving license for business use, or be included in the Council's insurance policy, this does not supersede the need
- Employees must provide their license number when asked to do so to allow the necessary DVLA checks to be conducted.
- Any and all incidents/accidents must be reported via the Council's accident/incident forms and reported to the manager at time of incident or when reasonably practicable, assuming this is less than 24 hours after the incident.
- Electronic devices are not permitted to be used during the operation of a vehicle.
- Managers will ensure first aid, firefighting provision in Council vehicles is up to date and replace accordingly.
- Employees utilising their own vehicle(s) for business use must ensure they have the necessary insurance.
- Employees must ensure that rest breaks are planned if vehicle usage is over two hours.
- Employees must take all safety precautions when taking vehicles on board ferries, trains or other vehicle carrying craft, including parking and leaving their vehicle on a vehicle deck and travelling in a designated area while the craft is underway.

Vehicle breakdowns

Breaking down can be stressful and hazardous. Following the below basic safety advice can assist you in this matter;

On the motorway;

If at all possible leave the motorway at the nearest exit or pull into a service station, if this is not possible the hard shoulder should be used accordingly;

- Use the hard shoulder to decelerate before stopping as far to the left as possible, preferably near an emergency telephone
- Turn on hazard lights along with side lights if dark or visibility is poor. DO NOT display a red warning triangle (it is unsafe to do so)
- Exit the vehicle via the passenger's side (including driver) and place yourself on the verge away from the vehicle.
- Take note of marker posts and contact emergency services, if an emergency phone is unavailable or it poses additional risk to reach, utilise a mobile phone.
- If you feel at risk by any other individual, re-enter the vehicle via the passenger side, lock all doors and call emergency services to report behaviour. If the individual(s) leave site, exit to the verge as soon as you feel able to.
- DO NOT attempt to repair the vehicle.
- Await breakdown services or emergency services
- Once the vehicle has been repaired, return to the motorway using the hard shoulder to slowly accelerate to merge with traffic.

If you are unable to reach the hard shoulder, switch on your hazard warning lights and only leave your vehicle when you can get safely clear of the carriageway.

You must never use the hard shoulder for anything else other than an emergency.

Off the motorway

If the vehicle breaks down on an ordinary road or carriageway, you should;

- Leave your car in as safe a place as possible, ideally off the road away from traffic.
- Switch off the engine
- Switch on the hazard lights along with sidelights if dark or the visibility is poor
- Display the red triangle, if one is provided, on the same side of the road at least 45 meters behind
- Find the nearest phone or use a mobile phone for assistance
- Wait for assistance in a safe place away from your vehicle, keeping clear of the road and traffic
- Do not stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic as you may obscure the lights
- Do not stand directly in front of the vehicle as this puts you at risk of impact

Tyre Safety

Tyres provide safe grip to the road and affect steering, braking and acceleration of the vehicle. Faulty tyres work less efficiently and don't last as long, failure to have the regulation depth on tyres could mean points on your license. For reference and guidance only (DLVA should be reviewed for any changes), UK law states, it is illegal if;

- car tyres have less than the minimum of 1.6mm across the central three quarters of the tyre.
- tyres with any lumps, bulges, tears or exposed inner cords
- a mix of types of tyres

- incorrect fitment, wrong size or rating
- unsafe pressure, severe over inflation or under inflation that compromises control

Driver fatigue

Research shows that physical fatigue and tiredness in driver is a significant cause of accidents, particularly on motorways.

Drivers should recognise the signs of fatigue, which are:

- increased yawning
- not remembering the last few minutes
- jerking your head or body from the brink of falling asleep
- losing concentration
- car veering off the road

If drivers feel sleepy they should get off the road into a safe parking area to take a break. In order to keep awake until reaching a suitable parking area, drivers should turn on the radio, open the window or increase cold air ventilation.

To avoid fatigue, try the following:

- plan your journey to include 15 minute breaks every 2 hours
- drink coffee or high caffeine drink
- don't start a trip if you are already tired
- ensure you have had sufficient sleep if starting early
- if with another colleague, switch drivers to help ensure both your safety (only do so if your colleague is also able to drive and is registered to do so through the Council's process)

Driver Eyesight

Drivers should be able to read number plates at a legal distance of 20 meters, using any corrective appliances such as glasses or contact lenses. The general recommendation is to have an eye test at least every two years. Having an eye test will usually identify the majority of common eyesight conditions and also give clues about other less common diseases.

If there is any problem with an employee's vision, because of either injury or disease or following an eyesight test the employee must notify the line manager immediately.

Driving in Adverse weather

Due to the unpredictability of UK weather drivers must adapt their driving in line with adverse weather and determine if it is safe to embark on a journey. Alternative forms of travel may be more suitable depending on the weather conditions. Driving in adverse weather should take into account visibility, ability to stop when roads are icy or wet and load being carried.

How to alter driving for adverse weather

- Keep well back from the vehicle in front because stopping distances at least double.
- Use dipped headlights if spray or rain makes it difficult to see.

- Ease off the accelerator if steering becomes unresponsive due to water preventing tire grip.
- Do not attempt to cross flooded roads if the water is too deep.
- Drive slowly in first gear through floods while keeping engine speed high by slipping the clutch to avoid stalling.
- Test brakes after driving in floods
- Carry warm clothing, warm drinks, and emergency food when driving in icy or snowy weather.
- Plan alternative routes avoiding bridges, high elevations and heavily wooded areas if travelling in windy weather
- Keep a firm grip on steering wheels to maintain control during sudden gusts if wind
- Keep speed low in windy, wet, snowy conditions to give more time to react and minimises wind force.

Poor Visibility

When visibility is seriously reduced you should drive at a safe distance with dipped headlights on. You may also use front and rear fog lights (in addition to the headlights) but you must switch them off when visibility improves.

Personal Security

Lone driving can be stressful and concerning for some therefore below is some guidance regarding driving alone should this occur whilst in Council transport.

- Remain alert to your surroundings, particularly when approaching or leaving unfamiliar locations.
- Keep vehicle doors locked when appropriate and keep windows closed when travelling through areas where you feel vulnerable.
- Park in well lit, populated areas where possible, preferably close to the destination.
- Avoid unnecessary stops in isolated areas.
- Do not give lifts to people you do not know as part of work related travel unless this is specifically authorised by your manager and you feel comfortable doing so. Express any concerns to your manager or Town Clerk.
- Do not disclose personal information, your home address, future movements or details of colleagues to unknown individuals.
- Keep work equipment, bags and valuables out of sight when the vehicle is unattended.
- If using a navigation device, programme the route before driving and do not interact with it while the vehicle is moving.

Refuelling vehicles

Employees should take reasonable precautions when refuelling a work vehicle to reduce the risk of injury, fire, theft and personal security incidents.

- Park the vehicle safely at the designated fuel pump and switch off the engine before refuelling.
- Apply the handbrake and follow the instructions displayed at the fuel station.
- Do not smoke, use naked flames or create other potential sources of ignition while refuelling.
- Select the correct fuel for the vehicle. If you are unsure, check the vehicle handbook or contact the appropriate person before refuelling.
- Remain with the vehicle while it is being refuelled and do not leave the fuel nozzle unattended.
- Avoid using a mobile phone or other distracting device while handling fuel.

Safe Speed

One of the most significant risk for drivers and road users is inappropriate speed. This includes both exceeding the speed limits and driving within the limits but in unsuitable conditions.

When driving you should observe the following guidance:

- Ensure you know the national speed limits for the roads and vehicle you are driving
- Plan journeys allowing for poor weather, traffic delays
- Obey posted speed limit signs at all times
- Reduce speeds for poor weather

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM)

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, commonly known as CDM, set out the legal requirements for managing health, safety and welfare on construction projects. CDM applies to a wide range of construction activities and should be considered when the Council undertakes construction, excavation, alteration, repair, maintenance or demolition work.

The Council will, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- any work which falls within the scope of CDM is appropriately planned, managed and monitored and that the relevant duties under the Regulations are identified and fulfilled.
- relevant briefings and information is provided to employees prior to works
- conduct a risk assessment
- review method statements and safe systems of work provided by relevant contractors/competent person(s)
- consideration of traffic management (if appropriate), access, navigation of existing and temporary structures is reviewed and planned accordingly
- appoint competent persons and/or contractor(s), where required, to deliver appropriate CDM duty holders to undertake the relevant roles and

responsibilities. This may include a Client, Principal Designer and Principal Contractor depending on the nature of the project.

Employees and contractors involved in CDM work must:

- Follow the relevant risk assessments, method statements and safe systems of work
- Follow instructions provided by the person responsible for managing the work
- Cooperate with other employees, contractors and duty holders working on the project
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions or changes to the work environment to their manager or relevant duty holder immediately
- Not undertake work for which they have not been appropriately trained, instructed or authorised to do.
- Use the PPE and other safety equipment provided.
- Where excavation work is involved, particular attention must be given to the risk of burial or entrapment caused by collapsing ground. Appropriate measures must be implemented to prevent excavation collapse and to protect employees and others from falling into excavations
- following the arrangements put in place for CDM projects and for reporting any concerns regarding health, safety or welfare to their manager immediately

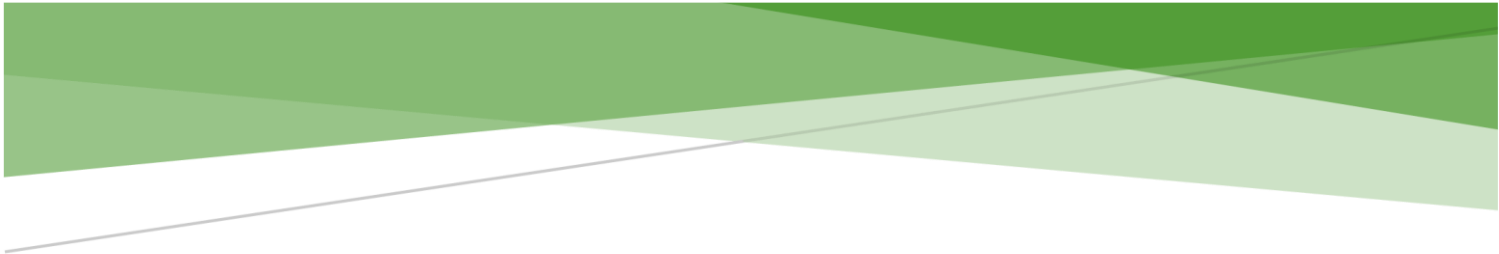
Rules Covering Gross Misconduct:

An employee will be liable to summary dismissal if they are found to have acted in any of the following ways;

- A serious or wilful breach of Safety rules
- Unauthorised removal or interference with any guard or protective device
- Unauthorised operation of any item of plant or equipment
- Unauthorised removal of any item of first aid equipment
- Wilful damage to, misuse of or interferences with any item provided in the interests of Health and Safety or welfare at work.
- Unauthorised removal or defacing of any label sign or warning device
- Horseplay or practical jokes which could cause accidents
- Making false statements or in any way deliberately interfering with evidence following an accident or dangerous occurrence
- Misuse of any item of equipment, utensil, fitting/fixture, vehicle or electrical equipment
- Deliberately disobeying an authorised instruction of a senior officer

For more information please contact the Estates Manager

Please review all our policies via www.wells.gov.uk



ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

September 2026

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Version History

Date	Changes	Distributed to
August 2026	Created	Staffing and Personnel Committee

1. Introduction

This Policy is to outline Wells City Council's policy and procedure in case of adverse weather conditions across our estate.

Adverse weather such as snow and ice affects the way in which our employees, the public and contractors access our buildings and land. Additional measures are required to ensure we manage our assets accordingly and safely; this may involve the discussion to close any building from use/prohibit access to land to ensure their safety.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of employees, elected Members when attending work and meeting during adverse weather conditions and outline the procedures should adverse weather occur.

This policy is to;

- Help ensure employees, visitors, elected Members and contractors remain safe during adverse weather
- That, in as far as reasonably practicable, work and services will continue to be delivered
- That any decisions requiring consideration will continue to be made as necessary, with appropriate action taken where required.

3. Weather alerts – what they mean

The Met Office defines extreme weather utilising the categories Red and Amber, triggering alerts;

Red Weather Warning

A Red Warning issued by the Met Office indicates that dangerous weather is expected and that there is a very likely risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel and/or energy supplies and potentially widespread damage to property and infrastructure.

A Red Warning will require the Responsible Officer, or nominated Duty Officer in their absence, to undertake an immediate review of the potential impact on Council employees, buildings, land, services, contractors, visitors and members of the public. This may include the suspension or postponement of non-essential activities, closure

or restriction of access to buildings or land, cancellation or postponement of events, changes to employee arrangements and implementation of business continuity arrangements.

The Council's response will be based on the specific weather hazard, the Met Office advice, local conditions and the risks identified through the relevant risk assessment. A Red Warning will not automatically require closure of every Council facility, but any decision to remain open must take account of the identified risks and the ability to maintain safe access and operation.

Amber Weather Warning

An Amber Weather Warning issued by the Met Office indicates that adverse weather is likely to result in more significant impacts and that there is an increased risk to people, property, travel and essential services.

On receipt of an Amber Warning, the Responsible Officer, or nominated Duty Officer in their absence, will undertake an immediate review of the potential risks to Council employees, visitors, contractors, members of the public, buildings, land and services. Appropriate control measures will be implemented and may include postponing or restricting non-essential activities, changing working arrangements, increasing inspections or preventative measures, restricting access to affected areas, reviewing outdoor events and contractor activities, and implementing business continuity arrangements. Where conditions create an unacceptable or serious and imminent risk to health and safety, activities will be suspended and/or affected buildings or areas may be closed until it is considered safe to resume.

Yellow Weather Warning

A Yellow Weather Warning issued by the Met Office indicates that adverse weather has the potential to cause some disruption and impacts on people, property, travel or Council services.

On receipt of a Yellow Warning, the Responsible Officer, or nominated Duty Officer in their absence, will review the forecast and potential local impacts and ensure that appropriate preparations are made. This may include reviewing risk assessments, employees arrangements, gritting or other preventative measures, contractor activities, outdoor events, travel arrangements, building access and business continuity arrangements. Managers should ensure that employees are aware of the forecast conditions and any additional precautions required.

For ease of reference;

UK weather alert levels



PA graphic. Source: UK Health Security Agency

These procedures can be activated even if there is no Met Office warning provided, the Responsible Officer will determine if the actual conditions warrant any and all changes to operational practice to fulfil the Council's duty of care to its staff. The Responsible Officer will assess;

- likelihood
- severity
- people exposed
- duration of exposure
- existing controls
- additional controls
- whether the activity can be avoided
- whether conditions are deteriorating
- trigger for suspension
- trigger for reopening

4. Legislation

Wells City Council owes a duty of care to our employees, visitors and the public, anyone else who can access our buildings and/or land. This duty extends to persons

who access the site illegally, where the statutory conditions are met and where it is reasonable to expect the occupier to offer protection.

The following legislation covers these issues:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- The Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

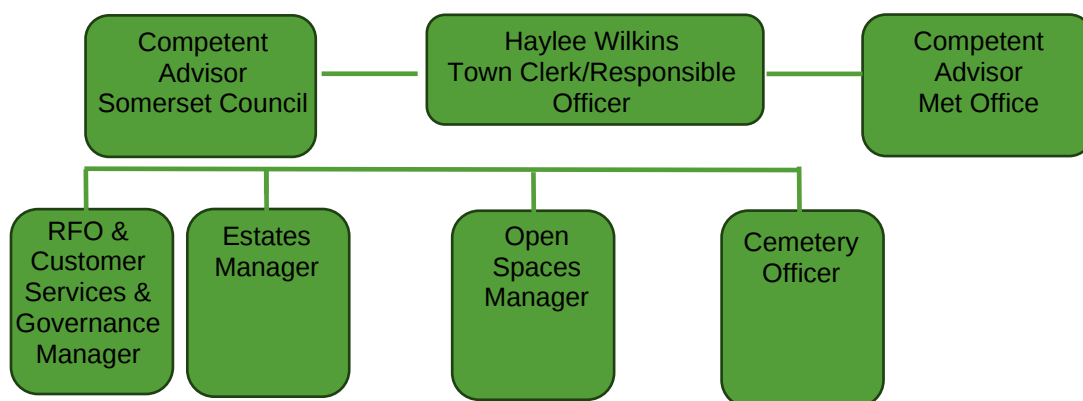
The legislation requires employees to take care of themselves and others and to co-operate within the Council's safety arrangements.

5. Responsibilities

The Council has a responsibility to assess and record the risks of its property and activities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended.

To understand and manage the risk during severe weather, the Council has risk assessed the land and buildings under its control and has identified in advance when poor weather is imminent the necessary locations identified as high risk requiring remedial measures to help mitigate said risk.

The Responsible Officer will annually review the risk assessment or sooner should changes occur, and will work with those identified on the chart below to produce a gritting plan accordingly, considering the available information.



6. Declaring an extreme weather event

The Responsible Officer will notify the above nominated individuals of any adverse weather alerts and ask teams to consider business continuity arrangements in their respective areas. In the absence of the Responsible Officer the nominated Duty Officer will cascade information to Officers and Managers as appropriate.

All employees must be contactable via the Business Continuity Group messenger service, mobile or landline, if an employee has concerns relating to their location and potential to be unreachable for some time then they must inform their manager of the issue and ascertain potential actions to ensure the Council can contact them in case of emergency.

Material Considerations	Red/Amber Alerts	Yellow	Green
Remote working Employees upon being informed of the likelihood of severe weather should ensure that they have the ability to work remotely the following day if the weather prevents them from attending the office.	All portable devices should be taken home at the end of each working day to allow remote log on in case of severe weather. Those with portable devices should work from home wherever possible	Vulnerable employees should take portable devices home at the end of each working day to allow remote log on in case of severe weather. Those with portable devices should consider working from home should this be agreed with their manager	Employees should always be mindful to the potential development of adverse weather
Outdoor working Employees upon being informed of the likelihood of severe weather should ensure they are available for communications	Managers will make reasonable adjustments to scheduling, cancelling non-essential works	Managers will inform employees if it is considered safe to continue with planned works, suspension of services or reasonable adjustments be made in the scheduling to allow for adverse weather conditions	Employees should attend to their normal duties
Events and Markets Employees upon being informed of the likelihood of severe weather should ensure they are available for communications and updates from their manager if	Ref; WCC Terms and Conditions Appendix 2: Market Supervisors will monitor the weather reports supplied by the Met Office of potential adverse weather conditions and along with the Open Spaces Officer & Responsible Officer,	Managers will notify staff of adjustments made for their welfare Committee meetings cancellations should be considered based on time, locations and agenda.	Employees should attend to their normal duties

involved in an upcoming Event or Market	decide on the best course of action. The Market Supervisor will notify, via email, traders of a market cancellation or partial closure no later than 4pm on the day prior to the market. Managers will inform employees if it is considered safe to continue with planned works, suspension of services or reasonable adjustments be made regarding any event Wind gauges are available for utilisation for actual readings within the event/market area and the decision may be made on the morning of the event/market Committee meetings should be cancelled, unless the Council adopts a suitable remote meeting policy		
Absences Employees upon being informed of the likelihood of severe weather should assess their own ability to attend and ascertain if they will be required to take leave	Employees will need to notify managers of the requirement to take leave, should the impacts of adverse weather alert mean they are unable attend due to their own inability to access, carer responsibilities including schools closures etc, this can be in the form of paid	Employees will need to notify managers of the requirement to take leave, should the impacts of adverse weather alert mean they are unable attend due to their own inability to access, carer responsibilities including schools closures etc, this can be in the form of paid	Employees should follow the standard procedures in notifying their manager of any such absence

	annual leave or unpaid leave.	annual leave or unpaid leave.	
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7. Weather specific controls

Extreme Heat

In the incidences of unusually hot weather, where temperatures exceed regional thresholds for more than three consecutive days. The risk will be determined by the Responsible Officer from the information and advice contained within the Met Office website together with any severe weather warnings.

The Responsible Officer;

- will notify the Open Spaces Manager, Estates Manager, Estates Supervisor, Responsible Finance Officer, Cemetery Officer and Welcome Hub Manager if any adverse weather alerts
- ask teams to consider business continuity arrangements in their respective areas.
- Make reasonable adjustments to uniform requirements, where safe to do so
- Provide employees adequate time to remove PPE items between tasks where necessary to prevent heat stress

In the absence of the Responsible Officer the nominated Duty Officer will cascade information to Officers and Managers as appropriate.

Employees upon being informed of the likelihood of extreme heat:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others
- will be expected to take reasonable steps to protect their wellbeing during periods of extreme heat, including staying hydrated, taking additional rest breaks where required and approved, and reporting any symptoms of heat-related illness immediately to their line manager.
- comply with reasonable instructions and Council safety arrangements
- report hazards, incidents and near misses
- use equipment and PPE as instructed.
- inform their manager promptly if they cannot safely undertake required work
- avoid unnecessary exposure to severe weather
- ensure that any Council equipment required for authorised remote working is available where this has been agreed.
- will adjust their dress code appropriately to maintain comfort and safety. (This does not permit alterations to required PPE; however, PPE should only be worn for the duration of the specific task requiring it).
- who are pregnant, work outdoors or conduct market erection of dismantling duties have an increased risk of heat stress, dehydration and fatigue and

therefore the manager will conduct dynamic risk assessments in line with the Responsible person(s) instruction to ensure employees wellbeing whilst performing their duties, this may result in more time given to set task, additional breaks or change of working location as deemed appropriate.

All portable devices should be taken home at the end of each working day to allow remote log on in case of continued extreme heat, where appropriate to do so.

Wind

Strong winds can create risks from falling branches, loose materials, damaged structures, flying debris, temporary structures and loss of balance.

Where strong winds are forecast or experienced, the Council must consider:

- trees and branches
- roof coverings and building fabric
- temporary structures
- market stalls, gazebos, marquees and signage
- outdoor furniture and equipment
- scaffolding and hoardings
- unsecured materials
- gates and fencing
- construction or maintenance activities
- work at height
- ladders and access equipment
- mobile elevated work platforms
- vehicle stability
- lifting operations
- outdoor events.

Outdoor work should be postponed or suspended where the conditions make it unsafe.

Particular caution must be exercised with work at height. HSE advises that work at height must be properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent persons, with appropriate equipment and precautions.

Roof work should not be undertaken in poor weather such as strong or gusty winds, rain, ice or frost where conditions make the work unsafe. HSE notes that winds above approximately 23 mph can affect a person's balance, but this should not be treated as a universal safe working limit because the actual task, equipment and location must be assessed.

Outdoor events must have appropriate weather related contingency arrangements, including arrangements for evacuation, securing or removing temporary structures and cancellation where necessary.

Rain, Flooding, Thunderstorms and Lightning

Heavy rain can increase the risk of slips, flooding, reduced visibility, electrical hazards, water ingress and damage to buildings or infrastructure.

Where significant rain is forecast, managers should consider:

- inspection of drainage systems
- gullies and surface water routes
- known flood-prone areas
- roof leaks and water ingress
- wet floors and entrances
- pedestrian routes
- electrical equipment
- underground or confined areas
- vehicle movements
- outdoor work
- excavation or ground works
- events and public gatherings; and
- access for emergency services.

As one of the HSE identifies wet floors and contaminated surfaces as significant causes of slips and trips and recommends preventing water entering buildings, using suitable entrance matting and removing water promptly.

Where flooding occurs or is reasonably foreseeable:

- affected areas should be restricted where necessary;
- electrical equipment should not be used where it presents a risk;
- employees should not enter floodwater unless specifically trained, equipped and authorised to do so;
- alternative access routes should be established where reasonably practicable;
- contractors should be instructed to stop affected activities where required; and
- the Responsible Officer should consider closure and business continuity arrangements.
- During thunderstorms, outdoor work and events should be suspended where lightning presents a significant risk. Staff should move to a safe enclosed location where practicable and follow relevant emergency arrangements.

Cold, Frost, Snow and Ice

Cold weather can create risks from hypothermia, reduced dexterity, fatigue, cold stress, slips and falls and reduced ability to safely operate machinery or vehicles.

For indoor workplaces, the Council will seek to maintain a reasonable working temperature. HSE guidance states that the temperature should normally be at least 16°C, or 13°C where much of the work involves rigorous physical effort, subject to the circumstances of the workplace and practical limitations.

For outdoor work, managers will consider:

- air temperature
- wind chill
- duration of exposure
- physical workload
- wetness
- clothing and PPE
- access to warm-up facilities
- availability of hot drinks
- frequency of rest breaks
- manual dexterity
- use of machinery
- driving conditions
- individual susceptibility

Control measures may include:

- postponing non-essential outdoor work;
- undertaking work during warmer parts of the day;
- reducing exposure time;
- increasing rest breaks;
- providing suitable weather-resistant and thermal clothing;
- providing suitable gloves and footwear;
- providing warm rest facilities;
- providing hot drinks where appropriate;
- rotating tasks;
- providing mechanical assistance where appropriate; and
- suspending work where risks cannot be adequately controlled.
- HSE recommends mobile warming facilities, hot drinks and more frequent rest breaks for outdoor workers exposed to cold conditions.

Snow and ice risks will be managed in accordance with the Gritting Plan and relevant risk assessments.

Fog and low visibility

Fog and low visibility can create significant risks to employees, contractors and members of the public, particularly when driving for work, working adjacent to highways, operating or working near plant and machinery, undertaking outdoor activities, or holding outdoor events.

Managers and responsible persons must consider prevailing and forecast visibility conditions as part of the relevant risk assessments and dynamic risk assessments.

Where necessary, reasonable adjustments should be made to working arrangements to reduce exposure to risk. These may include:

- postponing or rescheduling activities
- reducing or restricting vehicle movements
- providing or improving suitable lighting
- increasing separation between pedestrians, vehicles and plant restricting access to affected areas
- increasing supervision or monitoring
- postponing outdoor events or activities
- suspending work where visibility is insufficient to carry out the activity safely

Employees and contractors must remain vigilant to changing visibility conditions and report any concerns to their line manager or responsible person. No employee or contractor should be required to continue an activity where visibility conditions make it unsafe to do so.

8. Gritting Procedure

Severe risk of ice or snow will be determined by the Responsible Officer from the information and advice obtained via the Met Office website and Somerset Council notifications, together with any severe weather warnings. The Responsible Officer should utilise the information provided from these competent advisors to inform their own risk assessment.

- The Responsible Officer, Managers and Officers have identified a suitable designated pedestrian route through the employees car park (see Severe Weather map).
- Caretaking/Customer services/Open Spaces employees should ensure that the designated pedestrian route is gritted in advance of any adverse weather that is believed likely to result in high risk road conditions. The Responsible Officer should ensure that the process of gritting is maintained throughout the period of such risk where possible.
- Gritting should ideally take place prior to the formation of ice or in any case before 0700hrs and can be carried out the previous evening if necessary.

Although these procedure will reduce the risk it will not eliminate them and therefore this policy recognises that;

- ice can reform
- snow can compact
- rain can wash salt away

- shaded areas may remain icy
- surfaces can remain slippery
- some areas may be inaccessible
- gritting cannot guarantee safe passage

Employees, contractors, visitors and other persons using Council premises should remain vigilant to prevailing weather conditions and exercise reasonable judgement when making decisions about their own safety and the safety of others. Where conditions are considered unsafe, they should take appropriate action, including reporting the hazard to the relevant manager or responsible person and, where necessary, ceasing or avoiding the activity.

9. Employees attendance in extreme weather

There are likely to be occasions when, due to adverse weather conditions, some employees will have difficulty in getting to the office. In preparation for this, each team should draw up an emergency rota in advance to identify those who can provide essential cover. To reduce the risk of injury, every effort should be made to follow the Hierarchy of Risk Control:

- If a physical presence is necessary, then this should be limited to as low a number as possible. (bearing in mind lone working risks)
- Employees should attempt to attend the offices only if it is safe for them to do so and/or they have been identified to attend on the emergency rota.
- If unable to attend, then they should inform their line manager as soon as possible who will endeavour to make alternative arrangements. These arrangements might include a re-arrangement of the rota or provision of advice by verbal means only.
- Any member of employees who has been identified by the rota to attend the office and is then unable to do so should speak with their line manager as soon as possible and explain why they are unable to attend.
- Those officers who are already set up and used to working remotely can do so relatively simply but whether they do so during periods of difficulty is at the discretion of their Manager. It may be relevant in some key essential services that employees capable of making it into the office should do so regardless of whether they are remote workers or not.
- Employees should be prepared to work remotely during adverse weather and wherever possible ensure that they have work that can be undertaken remotely. If remote working is not possible and an employee cannot attend the office then they will be expected to take leave or TOIL, make other arrangements with their line manager in order to make up lost time within a defined timescale.

- Employees attending site should ensure they wear appropriate clothing and footwear and exercise the utmost caution when driving or walking in snowy or icy conditions

10. Contractors and External Organisations

Contractors must provide suitable risk assessments and safe systems of work for activities affected by adverse weather.

The Council may require contractors to:

- suspend work
- amend working methods
- secure equipment and materials
- restrict access
- provide additional control measures
- leave a site temporarily

Contractors undertaking work at height, lifting operations, electrical work, excavation, tree work or other high-risk activities must have specific weather-related controls.

Event organisers and hirers of Council facilities must comply with the Council's conditions of hire and event safety arrangements and must respond to adverse weather in accordance with their event risk assessment and agreed contingency arrangements.

11. Communication and Warning Cascade

The Responsible Officer or Duty Officer will determine the appropriate level of communication. Communications should, where appropriate, include:

- the weather hazard
- expected timing
- affected locations
- changes to working arrangements
- closure or access arrangements;
- gritting arrangements
- event cancellations
- contractor instructions
- travel advice
- emergency contact arrangements
- arrangements for further updates

The Council will, utilise systems put in place for the communication to all staff of a business continuity event. Should the Council's decision result in the closure of assets,

all hirers and external organisations will be contacted and advised at the earliest opportunity.

12. Responsibilities

The Responsible Officer and employees will;

- Monitor likely incidents of severe weather and act in accordance with this guidance note.
- Liaise with the officer that has responsibility for business continuity during extreme weather conditions to ensure there is no duplication of effort or confusion on action taken.
- Open Spaces/Caretakers and Venue assistants will grit areas in line with the gritting plan and in accordance with this guidance note.
- Senior Officers will be responsible for risk assessing the gritting process and ensuring that it is carried out in a safe manner

Managers will:

- Ensure that employees are aware of the need to maintain their contact details
- Develop a cascade system of contact to ensure all employees are contacted as soon as possible.
- Organise rota for employees able to attend the offices in adverse conditions ensuring adequate cover for key front line service delivery.

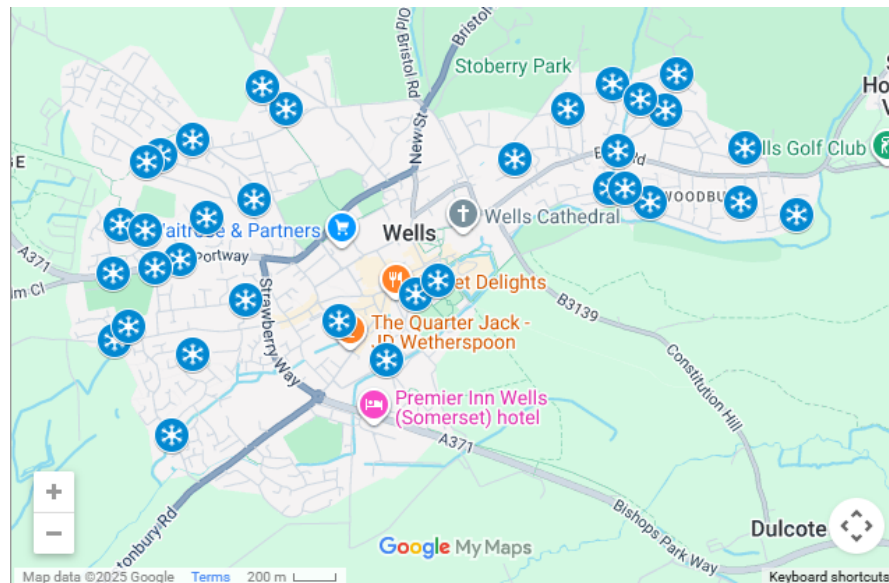
If an accident does occur the accident/incident process must be followed.

Employees will:

- Ensure contact details are up to date and relevant.
- Inform line manager as soon as possible if unable to attend the offices when rota identifies attendance is necessary.
- Exercise the utmost caution if attending site and wear appropriate clothing and footwear

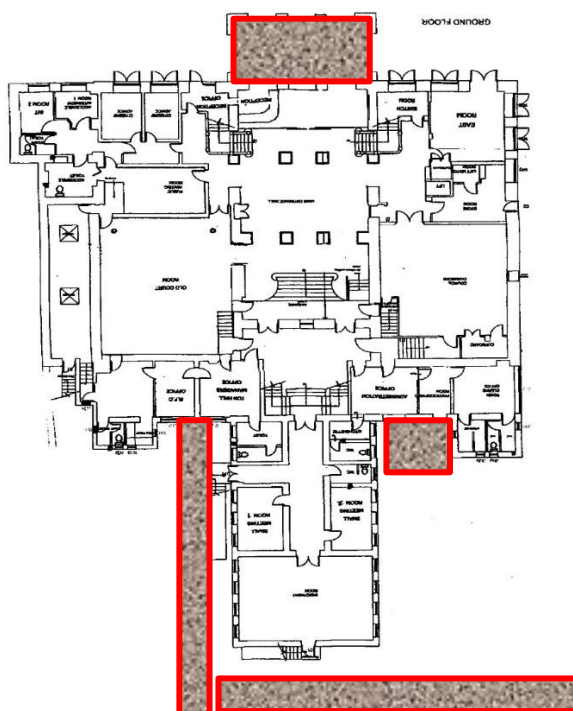
13. Grit Bins

Grit Bins are located in the following locations, equipment for the dissemination of grit is located within Council buildings.



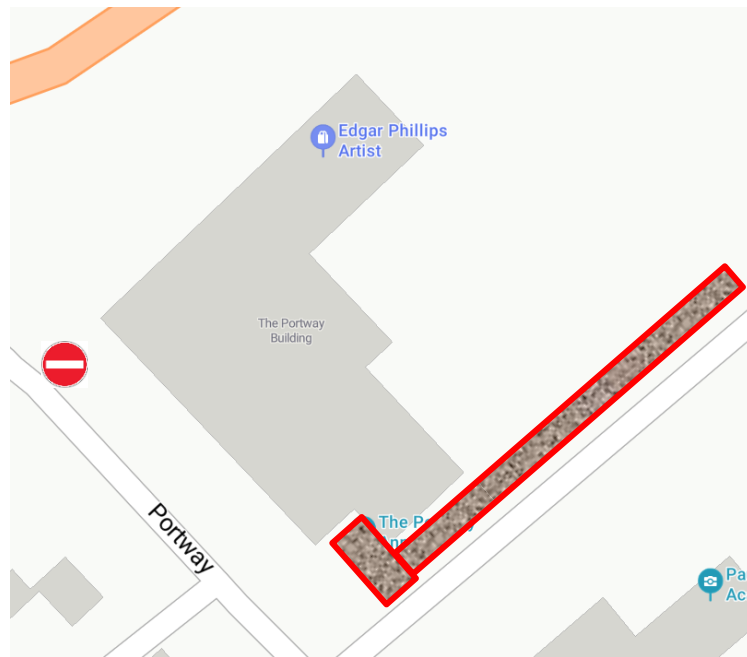
14. Grit Maps

The areas of the Town Hall that are subject to gritting are highlighted below;



The areas of the Portway Annexe that are subject to gritting are highlighted below, the gate at the side of the property will be closed to maintain safe access to the site. The

gritting cover both front pedestrian routes into the building, maintaining disabled access.





WELLS CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 14.5



Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Community Resilience Plan
Date of Committee:	3 rd September 2026
Committee:	Outside Spaces Committee

1. Background & Context

Wells City Council (WCC) may have an important role in both the response to, and recovery from, an emergency. It is possible that the Council may be able to act faster than some responding agencies and the local knowledge possessed by the Council may prove invaluable. By completing a Community Resilience Emergency Plan, the Council is putting in place arrangements to mobilise resources that exist in our community to support residents, businesses, visitors and outside agencies in the event of an emergency. During a major, wide area incident, it could be some time before responding agencies are able to offer assistance and by planning in advance, WCC could provide key assistance coordinating local response activities.

2. Purpose of the Plan

2.1 Aims

The aim of the Community Plan is to increase short term Community Resilience in response to an Emergency occurring in the local area Definition of Community Resilience: 'Communities and individuals harnessing local resource and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that compliments the response of the emergency services'

2.2 Objectives

- To enable the Community to respond effectively to an Emergency that occurs in the local area.
- To identify resources and key contacts within the Community that can assist the emergency services and Local Authority in the response to an Emergency.
- To identify hazards and possible mitigation measures within the community.
- To identify vulnerable people within the community

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

WCC and other involved local bodies are committed to delivering this plan for the benefit of residents in Wells. However, it should be noted that this support will be delivered by local volunteers. Those volunteers delivering the support will endeavour, subject to their skills and availabilities, take all reasonable measures to achieve the plan objectives.

The role of WCC is initially to use reasonable actions to ensure that the Emergency Services have been alerted to a potential incident and to establish contact with the Somerset Emergency Planning Team. Once the Emergency Services have been contacted, provide information to those bodies to help them establish the nature and scale of the emergency. The Community Emergency Group will help the Emergency Services to identify impacted and vulnerable individuals. After the event - to liaise with residents, Emergency Services and any other involved participants to learn from the experience and determine what worked and what can be improved on.

To maintain and update the plan based on latest requirements, lessons learnt, changes of contacts etc and good practice.



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This Resilience Plan has been developed to support the Emergency response to Community wide major incidents rather than individual household issues. A Community wide event can be characterised as:

- An event that affects typically multiple households, be it associated with people, their properties, access to them or the services they use.
- Requiring the engagement of multiple Emergency Services such as Police, Fire, Utilities or Somerset Emergency response.
- Beyond the capacity of any one household to resolve.
- Caused by an event from outside the property, such as flood water entering from outside the property. It does not include:
- Individual households, unless there are some extenuating circumstances, such as the people impacted are classed as vulnerable; the cause is by circumstances out in the wider Community environment.
- Health matters, unless required by Somerset Council or the Emergency Services.
- General short-term operational failures to access utilities or services such as typical power outage

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

Please specify which of the councils' corporate priorities are supported within this decision.

Priority	Tick as Appropriate
1 – Financial Sustainability and Good Governance	X
2 – Climate Change, Accessibility & Asset Stewardship	X
3 – Securing the Future of Council Services	
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	X
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	

Financial Implications

There are no financial implication associated with this paper. Any communications would be completed within current resourcing.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency. All reports should include climate implications alongside financial, legal, and community impacts to support informed decision-making and minimise adverse effects.



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Legal Implications

Any legal implications would be considered between Wells City Council and Somerset Council as part of any deployment following community impact.

Ultimately, having a plan of this nature evidences the council's commitment and deliverables, to reduce the risk of inappropriate or in managed impact associated with response.

Community Implications

The adoption and delivery of this plan will aid the community it is level of preparedness in responding to emergency.

Recommendations

Outside Spaces Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the attached draft plan and endorse to Full City Council for adoption

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Community Prepared Plan & Associated Appendices



Simple Plans Safer Places ☒

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

Community Name:	Wells (City)
Plan Owner:	Wells City Council
Address:	Wells City Council, Town Hall, Market Place, Wells, Somerset BA5 2RB
Local Community Network:	Mendip and Rural
Data Protection:	• Personal data must only be held by authorised partner agencies. • Volunteers must not store or share personal information. • Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Welfare Lead immediately.

1. Background

Wells City Council (WCC) may have an important role in both the response to, and recovery from, an emergency. It is possible that WCC may be able to act faster than some responding agencies and the local knowledge possessed by WCC may prove invaluable.

By completing a Community Resilience Emergency Plan, WCC is putting in place arrangements to mobilise resources that exist in our community to support residents, businesses, visitors and outside agencies in the event of an emergency. During a major, wide area incident, it could be some time before responding agencies are able to offer assistance and by planning in advance, WCC could provide key assistance coordinating local response activities.



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2. Plan Aim

The aim of the Community Plan is to increase short term Community Resilience in response to an Emergency occurring in the local area Definition of Community Resilience: 'Communities and individuals harnessing local resource and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that compliments the response of the emergency services'

3. Local Risk Assessment:

Risk	Impact on Community	Preparation
Major Traffic Incident	• Disrupted traffic in and out of the city. Slow moving traffic on smaller B roads. • Residents unable to travel to or from work/school. • Possible damage to buildings/bridges. • Potential loss of life.	• Identify hotels/locations where stranded motorists can be accommodated. • Identify local cafés/supermarkets for refreshments should stranded motorists need it. • Identify alternative routes through the city. • Update social media platforms.
Floods (Keward Brook can cause flooding throughout City Centre, specifically Silver Street, Southover and A371. Tor Hill Woods can cause flooding of Tor Street, B3139, Tor Hill Lane, Bekynton Avenue Flood Basin at Godwin Close, Knight Road	• Potential homelessness. • Road closures. • Blocked access to City Centre • Possible damage to property (residential and business)	• List of appropriate voluntary / community organisations able to assist vulnerable residents. • Identify premises for rest centre and inform Somerset Emergency Planning Team. • Encourage residents to improve home and business flood defences. • Distribution of flood warnings
High Winds	• Structural damage to buildings and residential property. • Roads closures due to debris. • Potential homelessness. • Potential temporary evacuation of residents.	• Identify premises for rest centre and inform Somerset Emergency Planning Team • List of appropriate voluntary / community organisations able to assist vulnerable residents. • Prepare list of local building contractor.



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Chemical Spill / Explosion / Fire	• Potential structural damage to buildings and residential property. • Atmospheric pollution.	• Identify premises as forward control for use by the Emergency Services. • Contact Environment Agency. • Prepare list of local building contractors.
Gas Pipeline Explosion – Oil line	• Potential loss of life. • Possible homelessness. • Potential structural damage to buildings and residential property. • Loss of infrastructure.	• Identify premises as forward control for use by the Emergency Services. • Identify premises for rest centre and inform Somerset Emergency Planning Team • Prepare list of local building contractors.
Air Pollution	• Breathing problems	• Identify vulnerable residents. • Comms messages on local Social Media platforms. • Follow Public Health advice to keep residents indoors, close windows.
Subsidence	• Potential structural damage to buildings and residential property. • Possible homelessness	• Identify premises as forward control for use by the Emergency Services. • Identify local B&Bs. • Prepare list of local building contractors. • Contact structural engineers.
Severe snowfall and icy conditions.	• Housebound vulnerable residents unable to obtain supplies. • Gridlock traffic in and out of the city. • Residents unable to go to work / school. • Possible damage to buildings / bridges.	• Identify housing occupied by vulnerable residents. Contact Somerset Council for list of vulnerable residents. • Prepare list of voluntary agencies and community groups who may deliver essential supplies to vulnerable residents. • Check gritting routes with Somerset Council on Somerset webpage. • Update social media platforms. • Identify food/drink and overnight provision is needed for stranded motorists.



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Prolonged excessive heat weather conditions	• Housebound or vulnerable residents unable to cope with heat. • Disruption to business, events and services	• Identify households with very young or elderly residents whose systems cannot cope with extreme heat, via WCN databases. • List of voluntary agencies to support vulnerable residents. • List of suppliers for electrical fans • Actively communicate health messages
Animal Disease, e.g. foot and mouth	• Closure of some footpaths	• Identify local footpaths • Maintain contact with Somerset Council representatives.
Pandemic	• Disruption to amenities, impact on local business. • Vulnerable residents unable to gain access to supplies and medication • Transport provision to health facilities • Closure of services to support essential need.	• Revert to online meetings to reduce interaction. • Work with Somerset to identify housing occupied by vulnerable residents. • Prepare list of voluntary agencies and community groups who may deliver essential supplies to vulnerable residents.
Fire	• Potential temporary evacuation of residents. • Smoke inhalation • Large number of historic and graded buildings • Compact City Centre	• List of premises suitable for supplementing Somerset rest centres and evacuation plans. • Support and actively encourage good fire safety through regular comms with traders and businesses.
Water Supply Failure	• Potential temporary evacuation of residents. • Potential loss of life. • Disruption to amenities, impact on local business • Housebound vulnerable residents unable to obtain supplies. • Health hazard from untreated water	• List of premises suitable for supplementing Somerset rest centres and evacuation plans. • Distribute local water supplies to assist utility companies • Support and actively encourage comms with residents and business for preparedness
National Power Outage	• Potential temporary evacuation of residents. • Potential loss of life. • Loss of infrastructure.	• Identify buildings with back-up generators to use as hub / safe place /charging station.



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	• Disruption to amenities, impact on local business • Housebound vulnerable residents unable to obtain supplies.	• Identify vulnerable people who use lifesaving medical equipment. • Identify water and food suppliers. • Identify alternative methods of communication.
Crowd Safety / Event (Carnival, Markets, Events, Fair, Civic or Memorial Events)	• Large Crowds • Crush or Fall Injury • Damage to reputation and businesses	• Ensure well organised and managed events, supported through Event Management Plans and Risk Assessments confirmed by event organisers • Ensure events properly marshalled and stewarded • Ensure events lead officer assigned to event and confirmed by land owner

4. Activation Triggers:

This plan can be activated by the following means and action taken as indicated

Source	Action to be taken
A telephone call from any of the Emergency Services or Somerset Emergency Planning Team to Wells City Council Town Clerk / Emergency Community Co-ordinator / Deputy Emergency Community Co Ordinator.	• Take a detailed note of the nature of the emergency and any request for immediate assistance. • Make a note of the organisation, name, address, and telephone number of the caller. • Activate the "WhatsApp Group for Emergency Coordinators" if appropriate. • Emergency Community Co-ordinator to set up a command post at most appropriately location rest centre from the identified list • Inform Emergency Services and Somerset Emergency Planning Officers of the location and contact numbers of the agreed Command Post. • Take appropriate action as requested by the Emergency Services and or Somerset Council
A telephone call from a member of the public direct to Wells City Council but no communication possible with Emergency Services or Emergency Planning Team.	• Take a detailed note of the nature of the emergency and any request for immediate assistance. Include exact location, type of incident, any hazards, access issues and any casualties. • Make a note of the name, address, and direct telephone number of the caller.



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	• Convey this information to the Emergency Community Co-ordinator who will activate the “WhatsApp Group or telephone tree for Emergency Coordinators” if appropriate. • Emergency Community Co-ordinator to set up a command post at the most appropriately location rest centre from the identified list. • Emergency Community Co-ordinator to take all appropriate action until communication can be made with the Emergency Services who will thereafter take control of the incident. This to include, if necessary, the calling of a Community Emergency Meeting • Take appropriate action as requested by the Emergency Services and Somerset Emergency Planning Officer.
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5. Communications

The Communications Strategy ensures clear and consistent information is shared with residents, businesses, volunteers and partner agencies during emergencies, using primary channels such as the Wells City Council website, Facebook, Instagram (when active), BBC Somerset and any partner emails, with backup options including amateur radio, door-to-door checks and printed notices. All messaging is controlled by the Communications Lead, who approves updates, coordinates with Somerset Council, maintains an information log and issues regular communications.

Pre-prepared message templates are in place, and outline what is happening, what people need to do, where to go and when the next update will be provided.

Information flows from verified sources including the Coordinator, Somerset Council, emergency services, rest centres and the Volunteer Coordinator, with all communications logged and backup channels used if digital systems fail.

Rumour control involves monitoring social media, correcting misinformation quickly and directing the public to official channels. Coordination with partner agencies (such as Civil Contingencies, Police, Fire & Rescue, Wessex Water, National Grid, schools and care providers) which ensures consistent messaging.

All communications will be accessible, using plain English, visual formats, printed versions for non-digital residents and consideration for hearing or visual impairments. After an incident, a summary update, recovery information and thanks to volunteers and partners should be issued.



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6. Community emergency groups roles and responsibilities:

Co-Ordinator (Town Clerk)	Leads local response, liaises with Somerset Council and approves actions.
Deputy Coordinator (Nominated Senior Officer)	Supports and covers the coordinator – Can step in as the Main Coordinator with agreement.
Loggist (Customer Services)	Maintains the incident log using METHANE process
Communications lead (Comms Officer)	Manages all public and community messaging.
Volunteer Coordinator (Customer Services)	Deploys volunteers, ensures safety briefing, tracks welfare
Welfare Lead (Customer Services)	Oversees vulnerable residents, safeguarding, and welfare checks.

APPENDIX A: First Steps Action Card for Initial Responding Officer & METHANE

Step 1: If there is any risk to life call 999

Check for fire, gas leaks/ smells, flooding, downed power lines or structure damage. Ensure untrained workers/ volunteers Do Not enter unsafe areas.

Activate the plan:

1. Confirm the 'trigger' (flooding, weather, power outage, evacuation, etc.)
2. Gather all initial information using METHANE chart below.
3. Ensure all appropriate emergency services are contacted.
4. Notify the Co-ordinator (Town Clerk or Nominated Deputy)
5. Town Clerk to notify Somerset Civil Contingencies Unit (if appropriate)
6. Co-ordinator to start incident log
7. Co-ordinator to assemble emergency management team
8. Co-ordinator to activate communications with the public via Comms Officer to manage corporate messages.
9. Co-ordinator to evaluate and liaise with partner organisations to check on vulnerable residents.
10. Co-ordinator to decide on rest centre activation if required.



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METHANE

M	MAJOR INCIDENT	Has a major incident been declared? (Yes/No – If 'No', then complete ETHANE message)	<i>Include the date and time of any declaration.</i>
E	EXACT LOCATION	What is the exact location or geographical area of the incident?	<i>Be as precise as possible, using a system that will be understood by all responders.</i>
T	TYPE OF INCIDENT	What kind of incident is it?	<i>For example, flooding, fire, utility failure or disease outbreak.</i>
H	HAZARDS	What hazards or potential hazards can be identified?	<i>Consider the likelihood of a hazard and the potential severity of any impact.</i>
A	ACCESS	What are the best routes for access and egress?	<i>Include information on inaccessible routes and rendezvous points (RVPs). Remember that services need to be able to leave the scene as well as access it.</i>
N	NUMBER OF CASUALTIES	How many casualties are there, and what condition are they in?	<i>Use an agreed classification system such as P1; P2; P3 and dead.</i>
E	EMERGENCY SERVICES	Which, and how many, emergency responder assets and personnel are required or are already on-scene?	<i>Consider whether the assets of wider emergency responders, such as local authorities or the voluntary sector, may be required.</i>

The M/ETHANE model is an established reporting framework which provides a common structure for emergency responders to share incident information.

It is recommended that this format is used for all incidents and be updated as the incident develops. For incidents falling below the major incident threshold M/ETHANE becomes an 'ETHANE' message. The visual advises what should be collected for each element.



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APPENDIX B: VOLUNTEER ACTION CARD

Volunteer Action Card

This card is a quick hand out to anyone acting as a volunteer on the emergency presented.

Remember!

- **Be safe and aware of your surroundings - where there's risk to life call 999**
- **Follow actions below - don't do anything that may put yourself or others at risk**

Volunteer Safety & Engagement Rules

- Never put yourself in danger. (Do not enter floodwater, do not enter damaged buildings)
- Do not move injured people.
- Do not attempt rescues.
- Always work in pairs.
- Wear PPE.
- Log all actions.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Do not offer communications on behalf of the incident.
- Do not make direct decisions associated with the incident.

Action	Complete (Y/N)

APPENDIX C: VOLUNTEER ACTION LOG

Volunteer Action Log

Remember! Keep a record of your actions and report back any important information to your coordinators One card should be issued per person and retained by the event coordinator.

Name:	
Information, decisions and actions	Date/Time



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APPENDIX D: HEALTH AND SAFETY AIDE MEMOIR

Before undertaking any activity all those involved with activation of this plan must be briefed on arrangements and their own responsibilities with regard to health and safety. This tick list is designed to allow you a quick debrief and ensure that those being deployed, can do so safely.

When offering the briefing, consider setting up a station for each of the above, to allow volunteers to “kit up” quickly and efficiently.

1. Only activity that can be conducted safely and without the help of the emergency services should be undertaken. NEVER put yourself at risk.
2. Advise of the incident and relay METHAN information only. Do not offer opinion or hearsay. Fact only.
3. All deployment should be reminded that no communication should be provided. All messaging must be managed centrally in order to manage the narrative and ensure correct and safe information is provided.
4. Do volunteers and staff have the required Personal Protective Equipment such as reflective clothing, gloves and safety boots
5. Do volunteers and staff have the appropriate aids such as a torch or whistle as well as personal items such as phone, keys, money, snacks and water
6. Do volunteers and staff have transport arrangements and vehicle suitability
7. Are all parties operating safe practice such as working in groups or pairs
8. Advise on communications arrangements including frequency and method or reporting back.
9. Do volunteers and staff have use of tools and equipment including any previous training/experience required
10. Have all parties received the action card and guidance for activity conducted



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APPENDIX E: CONTACT INFORMATION

Community Emergency Group		
Name	Role	24hr Contact
Haylee Wilkins	Town Clerk, Wells City Council	01749 673091
Denise Denis	Mayor of Wells City Council	01749 673091
Somerset Council	Director, Somerset Council	0345 123 2224
Local Volunteers and Community Organisations		
Name	Contact	
Wells Community Network	01749 467079	
St Johns Ambulance	01749 676359	
Elim Connect Centre	01749 677097	
CB/Amateur Radio Operators	wellscountyamateurradioclub.wordpress.com	
4X4 Drivers	Information@4x4specialist.co.uk	
Wells Rotary Club	www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/contact	
Round Table	0121 456 4567	
Lions	0345 833 6736	
Somerset Council and neighbouring community contacts		
Name	Contact	
St Cuthbert Out Parish Council	07496 198032/07925 711984	
St Cuthberts Church	Churchwarden/Parish Administrator: Antonia Gwynn	
	Churchwarden: Phil Kitcher	
	01749 676906	
Wells Cathedral	Nerys Watts 01749 674483	
Bishops Palace	Merryn Kidd 01749 988111	
Wookey Parish Council	01749 670938/wookey.pc@tiscali.co.uk	
Wookey Church Hall	01749 678632/charmiancowper@gmail.com	
Henton Hall	07789874402/vanessa@vlancaster.co.uk	
Other useful contacts		
Name	Contact	Location
Wells Health Centre	01749 672137	Wells Health Centre, Priory Health Park Glastonbury Road
City Practice	01749 836650	City Practice, Priory Health Park Glastonbury Road



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Boots	01749 675508	Priory Health Park, Glastonbury Road
Boots	01749 673138	High Street, Wells
Wells Health Centre	01749 672137	Wells Health Centre, Priory Health Park Glastonbury Road

APPENDIX F: SHELTER INFORMATION

Name	Town Hall	Map reference	///balloons.horses.swims
Purpose	Emergency Rest Centre, or Office Buildings		
Address	Town Hall, Market Place, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2RB		
Details		Contact details of key holder	
Town hall buildings, multiple rooms, with variety of accommodation sizes, total capacity of building 350 people.		Wells City Council 01749 673091 (out of normal working hours, message will provide emergency contact number)	
Wheelchair access		✓	
Accessible toilets		✓	
Quiet spaces		✓	
Hearing loops (if available)		✓	
Safeguarding Lead on duty		✓	
Key-holder contact		✓	
Maximum capacity		700	

Name	Portway Annexe	Map reference	///uncle.gobblers.spirits
Purpose	Emergency Rest Centre, or Office Buildings		
Address	Portway Annexe, Portway, Wells, Somerset BA5 2QF		
Details		Contact details of key holder	
Town hall buildings, multiple rooms, with variety of accommodation sizes, total capacity of building 200 people.		Wells City Council 01749 673091 (out of normal working hours, message will provide emergency contact number)	
Wheelchair access		✓	
Accessible toilets		✓	
Quiet spaces		✓	
Hearing loops (if available)		✓	
Safeguarding Lead on duty		✓	
Key-holder contact		✓	
Maximum capacity		300	

Name	Wells Blue School/Sports Hall	Map reference	///winter.summit.ridge
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Purpose	Emergency Rest Centre		
Address	Wells Blue School, Kennion Road, Wells, Somerset BA5 2NR		
Details		Contact details of key holder	
Large senior school and adjoining sports centre with sports hall		01749 678799	
Wheelchair access		✓	
Accessible toilets		✓	
Quiet spaces		✓	
Hearing loops (if available)		✓	
Safeguarding Lead on duty		✓	
Key-holder contact		✓	
Maximum capacity		500	

Name	St Cuthberts Church	Map reference	///crumble.monument.costumed
Purpose	Emergency Rest Centre		
Address	St Cuthberts Church, St Cuthbert Street, Wells Somerset		
Details		Contact details of key holder	
Medium size church.			
Wheelchair access		✓	
Accessible toilets		✓	
Quiet spaces		✓	
Hearing loops (if available)		No	
Safeguarding Lead on duty		✓	
Key-holder contact		✓	
Maximum capacity		300	

Name	Wells Cathedral	Map reference	///gambles.safe.afterglow
Purpose	Emergency Rest Centre		
Address	Wells Cathedral, St Andrews Street, Wells Somerset		
Details		Contact details of key holder	
Large Cathedral, with adjoining rooms and provision. On site café provision.			
Wheelchair access		✓	
Accessible toilets		✓	
Quiet spaces		✓	
Hearing loops (if available)		✓	
Safeguarding Lead on duty		✓	
Key-holder contact		✓	
Maximum capacity		1200	



WELLS CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 9



Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	20mph zone consideration and traffic amendments
Date of Committee:	03.09.2026
Committee:	Outside Spaces Committee

Background & Context

Following report to council in April 2026, further design works were created to support the wider identified needs for the scheme.

This has seen the addition of 20mph provision being applied to Wookey Hole Road, Ash Lane and Kennion Road as well as Milton Lane, providing a buffer to the school network traffic and pedestrian risk to children, as well as resolving a long-standing issue of different provision within the Blake Road, Welsford Avenue area, which sees a greater speed limit within a residential estate, which is not in keeping with the rest of the City.

It should be considered that this propose is effectively one phase of potential works and that there is a likely need to address other areas on a case by case based as part of a later phase of works.

Within this report, Appendix A - D, offer the proposed 20mph scheme from Somerset Council.

Appendix E offers details of the proposed bay changes and parking notices throughout the city to increase overall the volume of disabled provision, and manage loading bay requirements.

Appendix F offers a draft consultation scheme for public consultation to be completed for 4 weeks, through October/November 2026. Results for which will be presented to Full City Council as part of the final consideration and sign off of the scheme on 26th November 2026. With this timescale in mind, works can then look to be implemented over the winter period.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

Please specify which of the councils' corporate priorities are supported within this decision.

Priority	Tick as Appropriate
1 – Financial Sustainability and Good Governance	
2 – Climate Change, Accessibility & Asset Stewardship	X
3 – Securing the Future of Council Services	
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	X
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	

Financial Implications

A traffic amendment budget was identified in 2025-26 for which these works are expected to sit within. There is no expectation of expenditure outside of this budget. The budget has been allocated of £25k under budget reference 4881.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The climate implications come in two areas within this report.

The first, allowing safe foot traffic, particularly surrounding school provisions, which will, by its essence allow for the possibility of reduction of vehicles and safer travel on foot.

Equally, the reduction of overall speed is considered to reduce emissions overall and the amendments to parking bays and provisions are also considered to mildly attribute to lesser co2 emissions.

Legal Implications

The legal implications associated with this project as considered to be managed within the parking order and provision arranges and formal TRO notices between Wells City Council and Somerset Council as required.

There is no additional legal risk identified for consideration.

Community Implications

There are community and visitor associated implications due to the nature of the project and the provision of parking and movement throughout the city. However, as described, full community consultation will be completed in line with Appendix D and there is the opportunity to further adjust the scheme as required based on this response.

The scheme has been designed by Somerset Council engineers, with their knowledge of traffic flows, rates, parking provisions and associated other demographic information.

Risks & Opportunities

Risks Identified	Opportunities Identified
Community concern associated with the scheme or consultation approach	Safer travel within the city boundaries
Challenge associated with other areas not currently applied to the scheme.	Reduced risk specifically around school provisions
	Reduced emissions overall through slower or reduced traffic

Recommendations

Outside Spaces Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the content of attached report of wider proposed traffic related amendments for the 20mph scheme, as amended and propose endorsement to Full City Council.
2. Note the suggested disabled bay and loading bay adjustments.
3. Agree the proposed scheme in principle, subject to community consultation and engagement.
4. Agree the draft consultation scheme for release.
5. Delegate to the Town Clerk to deliver and respond as required to the consultation, and return with findings and any further required amendments.

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Repeater design NW Zone (3a & 2nd plan) – Wookey Hole Road, Ash Lane and Milton Lane
- Appendix B: Design Statement – Wookey Hole Road, Ash Lane and Milton Lane
- Appendix C: Repeater design - City Centre (unchanged)
- Appendix D: Design Statement – City Centre (unchanged)
- Appendix E: Additional repeater design statement
- Appendix F: Consultation draft



Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Devolution Update
Date of Committee:	3 rd September 2026
Committee:	Outside Spaces Committee

Background & Context

Committee will be aware that during 2025, there was lengthily discussion associated with the assets to be devolved and the legal transfer of those land assets through Land Registry and associated legal agreement with Somerset Council.

We entered into management agreement until such time that the assets could be formally transferred which was in part delayed due to the legal capacity of Somerset Council.

Following engagement in July 2026 with Somerset Legal, it became clear that the previous position of council, on the advice of officers, to not devolve any water course or hard standing, was not able to be achieved, as the title deed in some instances contained these features and could not be disaggregated.

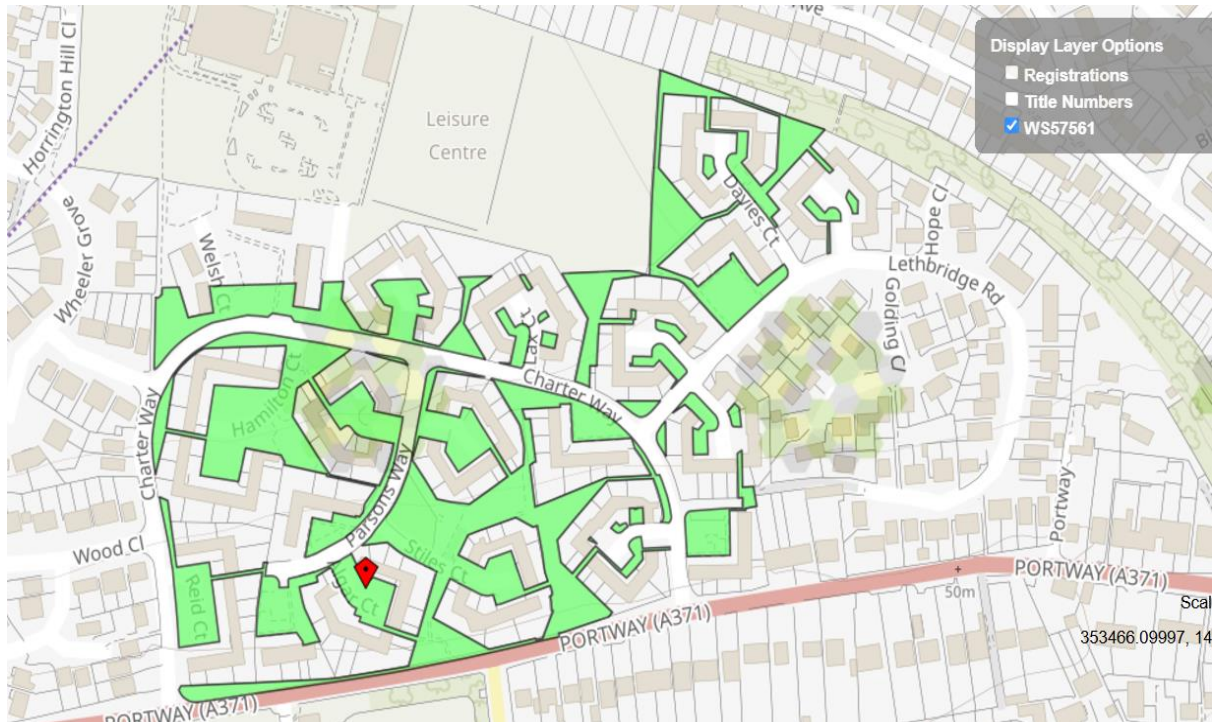
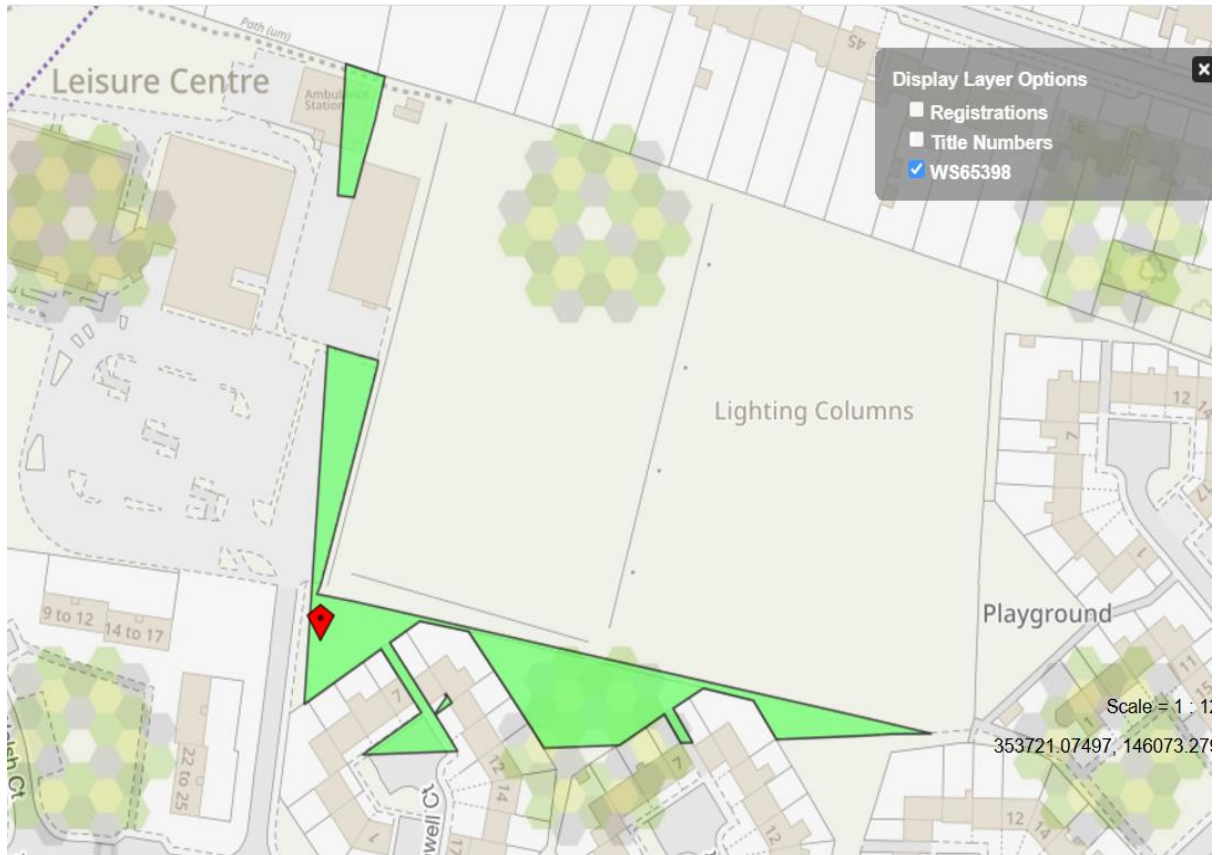
As a result, the Town Clerk has worked with Somerset legal to highlight these area and look to make a decision for each land parcel, based on risk and implication to the City Council. This report looks to provide committee with that break down and determine next steps to allow the completion of the Devolution process.

There are a significant volume of land parcels included within the discussion, most of which are agreed. This paper looks to address only those where there is a noted concern. These are:

Charter Way – Provision around the Rugby provision and leisure centre.

The first plan depicts areas that were included within the original Devolution package, and Somerset Decision, but have, since the application for planning consent, now been removed temporarily. This is being challenged as it formed part of the original decision and the Town Clerk is awaiting legal response.

The second plan depicts the wider Charter Way estate and areas included as one land registry layer.

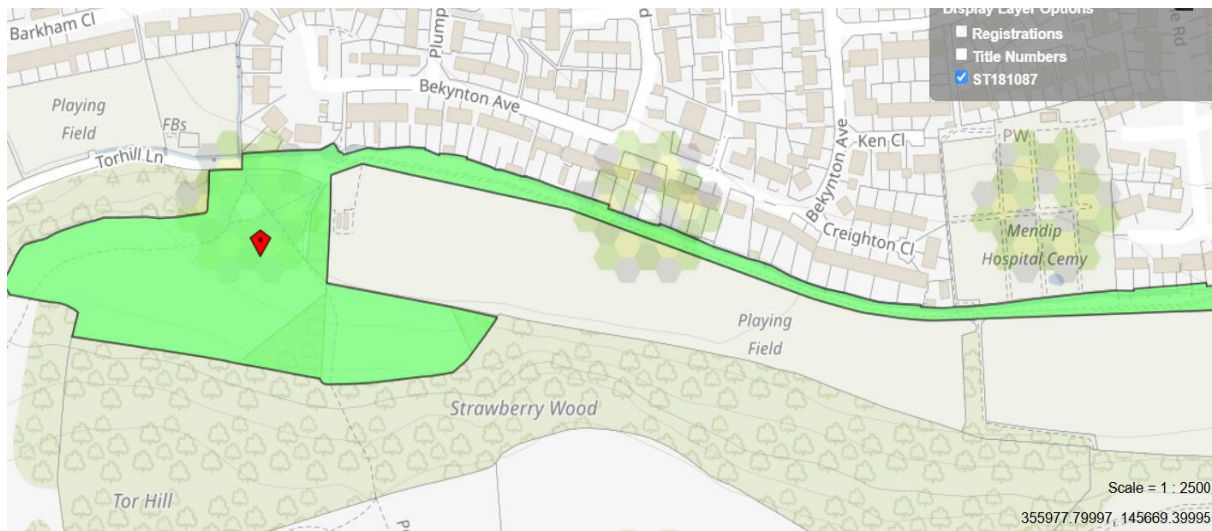




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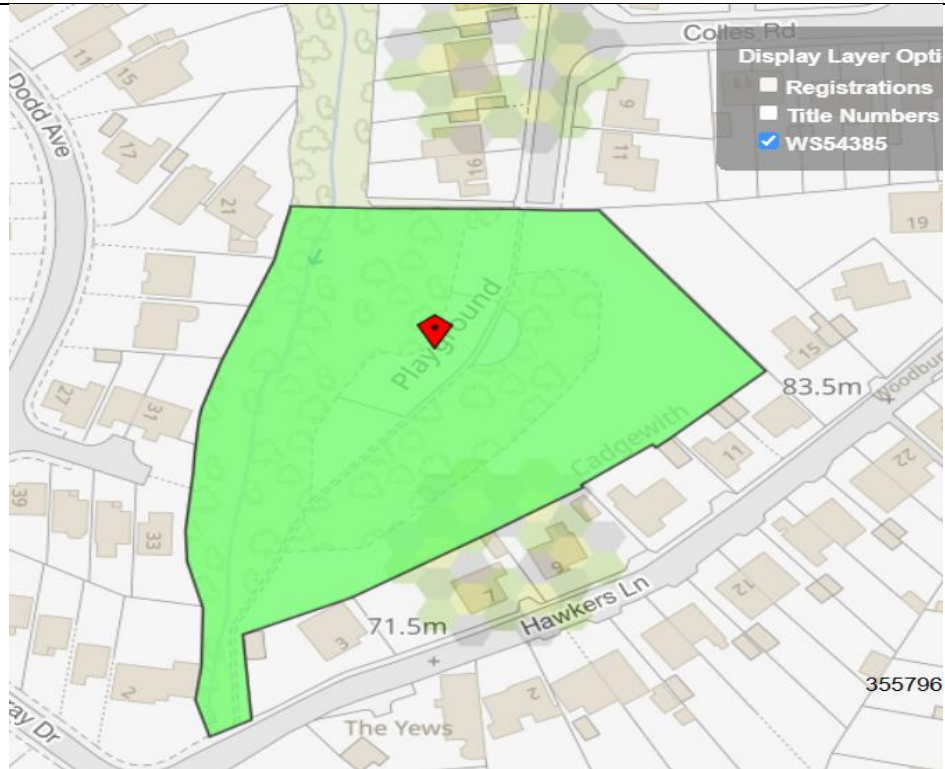
Tor Hill lane – Water way and Pathway through play provision. It is recommended to accept the pathway through the play provision. The water way provision, could be accepted, noting that in doing so the council should consider the riparian rights of the space, encroachment and flooding concerns with any requirement of support from Somerset Council being limited to 2 years.



Hawkers Lane play area, Land adj to 22 Drake Road – The play area and wider open space itself is accepted, however to the left of the space, there is wooded provision, which then runs through the valley and further up past Drake Road. It is proposed that the area of land to the North of road, which could be considered a separate land parcel, be split, and retained by Somerset Council. With the land provision adj to 22 Drake Road, running back into the gully also being retained by Somerset Council. This is due to the encroachment of surrounding properties, tree liabilities and the depth of gully provision which could not be safely accommodated within the City Councils team and would therefore likely incur annual additional cost.



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Keward/Jocelyn Drive – For WCC to take this area as is, noting the water course but with 2 year support being applied. The reason for which is to assist the in delivery of Strawberry Line development and the watercourse if not considered to be fast flowing or at risk of flooding, and holds no significant infrastructure or riparian rights concerns.



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Sealy Crescent & Churchill Road – This area was not previously identified in full, however, the part references offered to WCC are part of a larger parcel of land which can not be easily disaggregated. There are some concerns associated with the use of this space for parking provision by residents, which would see likely infrastructure costs in the future should the City Council take responsibility. It is recommended for this to be retained by Somerset Council as highways provisions.



Churchill Close/Churchill Road East – The parcel of land is made up of some which was considered devolved and some which is used as parking. Similar to that of Sealy Crescent above. It is recommended for these areas to be retained by Somerset Council.



Millers Gardens, Durkheim Drive and Woodbury Avenue – These parcels contain mostly parking or pathway provision and it is recommended not to transfer these titles, but to hold a management agreement with Somerset Council for the maintenance of grass land only.



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Links to Council Corporate Priorities

Please specify which of the councils' corporate priorities are supported within this decision.

Priority	Tick as Appropriate
1 – Financial Sustainability and Good Governance	X
2 – Climate Change, Accessibility & Asset Stewardship	X
3 – Securing the Future of Council Services	
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	X
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	



Financial Implications

There are no financial implication associated with this paper. Any requirements would be completed within current resourcing.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

There are no direct implications in this area.

Legal Implications

The legal implications are written within the main body of this report, as they are the driver for the need for committee engagement and decision.

Community Implications

Whilst there are community implications associated with devolution as a whole, there are no direct implications associated with this paper, as it deals with already agreed engagement and consultation which informed the original council decision.

Recommendations

Outside Spaces Committee is asked to:

1. Note the proposed site amendments
2. Note the implications specifically to water ways
3. Note the offer of 2 year support for waterways from Somerset Council.
4. Recommend to Full City Council for the approval of the noted position as outlined

Appendices:

None



- The Connect Centre is now known as the Elim Church Wells

Connect Community Trust responds to rising homelessness

Here is a report about the Connect Community Trust which took over most of the work supporting the homes from the Connect Centre, now renamed the Elim Church Wells earlier this year

Homelessness in Somerset continues to rise, with the latest government figures recording 80 people sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2025 – one of the highest totals in the Southwest outside the region's major urban centres.

For Connect Community Trust (CCT), which took over most of the work supporting the homes from the Connect Centre in Wells earlier this year, these figures reflect what staff are seeing every day: more people are finding themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness, more people are facing increasingly complex challenges, and local services are under increasing pressure to meet the growing demand.

CCT is a charity supporting people experiencing homelessness through Dairy House, Housing First and a range of community support services.

Pete Naylor, CEO of Connect Community Trust, said: *"It's encouraging to hear the Government talking about ending rough sleeping. It's a big ambition, but ending*

homelessness isn't about one organisation or one initiative. It takes long-term commitment, strong partnerships and consistent support for the people who need it most."

CCT says homelessness is rarely just about not having a roof over your head. Many people have experienced trauma, poor mental health, addiction, relationship breakdown or a mix of these. By the time they come to CCT, they've often lost trust in people and services.

Supporting someone out of homelessness takes time. CCT says: *"There's rarely a quick fix. What makes the difference is building trust, being consistent and sticking alongside people for as long as it takes. That's how people begin to rebuild their lives."*

Alongside supporting people in crisis, CCT believes preventing homelessness is just as important. Early advice, practical support and working with people before problems become crises can often stop someone from losing their home in the first place. CCT also offers support to those moving out of homelessness and into their own accommodation, helping make the transition as seamless and sustainable as possible.

CCT says its partnership with Somerset Council is fundamental to the support it provides across the county. They have been supporting Dairy House for over 12 years, and the charity values the council's commitment to tackling homelessness and the positive working relationship that has developed over the years.

"We genuinely value our partnership with Somerset Council. We achieve far more when charities, councils and other organisations work together. Nobody can solve homelessness on their own, but together we can make a real difference."

CCT operates Dairy House, a unique direct-access hostel based on a working farm that provides emergency accommodation and wrap-around support for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

Alongside this, the charity delivers Housing First, supporting people with long histories of homelessness to move into and sustain their own homes. The focus is not simply on housing someone, but helping them build a life they can maintain.

With homelessness continuing to rise, CCT continues to strengthen its work in prevention, outreach, Housing First and crisis support.

Pete added: *"Somerset has a real opportunity to show what's possible when organisations work together. We know the challenges aren't going away overnight, but with the right support, the right partnerships and a long-term commitment, we can help people rebuild their lives. We're ready to play our part."*