



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE,
WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND, WILL BE HELD IN
WELLS TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026, 7PM**

Haylee Wilkins
Town Clerk

27th August 2026

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

Committee Members:
Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis, J Edmonds,
K Kinshaw, T Kolizeras, D Orrett (Chair),
S Powell, G Robbins

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.

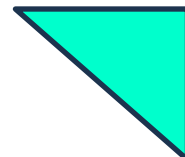
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct as adopted 12th May 2022.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

4 MINUTES FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JUNE 2026

To be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.



5 ACTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JUNE 2026 Open actions not on the agenda are listed below:

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.

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 SASP PRESENTATION

To receive presentation from SASP for School Streets Project for St Cuthbert's C of E Junior and Infant Schools

8 REPORT FROM OUTSIDE SPACES MANAGER

To receive written report of action within the period (attached).

9 TRAFFIC UPDATES & CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED TRAFFIC SCHEME

To receive verbal updates from Town Clerk (attached).

10 POLICE AND CRIME UPDATES

To receive update from the officers of the council and receive any supporting update from Avon and Somerset Constabulary (attached).

11 RECREATION GROUND TRUST (WRGT)

Update from working group.

12 OPERATIONAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

To receive report from the Outside Spaces Manager (attached).

13 TREE POLICY & GREEN CORRIDORS

To receive draft policy and associated procurement documents from Outside Spaces Manager (attached).

14 ROUNDABOUT REDESIGN

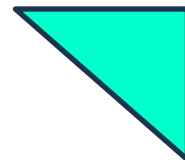
To receive proposed roundabout redesign proposal from Outside Spaces Manager for agreement for funding request to Somerset Council (attached).

15 KNAPP HILL PROJECT UPDATE

To receive verbal update from the Town Clerk.

16 LESUIRE AND PLAY STRATEGY

To receive a verbal update on the associated timeline and actions from the Town Clerk.



17 MARKETS UPDATE & CONSULTATION

To receive a verbal update from the Outside Spaces Manager and agree the attached proposed trader consultation, proposed by the Town Clerk (attached).

18 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

To receive the draft resilience plan and seek recommendation to Full City Council (attached).

19 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

To receive a report from the Town Clerk (attached).

20 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

21 ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5th November 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC STATEMENT

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence it will be proposed by the Chair 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. In that instance the following statement is relevant:

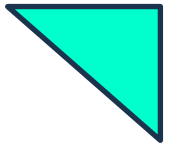
Exclusion of Press and Public

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.

Financial/business affairs (individuals) - This report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of an individual and is therefore exempt by virtue of Paragraph 2 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.



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 4TH JUNE 2026 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

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

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

26/62/OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
G Robbins

26/63/OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared

**26/64/OS MINUTES FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
30th APRIL 2026**
The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**26/65/OS ACTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30TH
APRIL 2026**
Open actions not on the agenda are listed below:

Date Raised	Description of Action
30.04.2026	Confirm 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 "red circles" marked on trees in the recreation ground.

Cllr D Denis requested information regarding W.I. planting at the Portway Annexe which was delayed due to the weather.
M Johnson confirmed that the plants are ready.

Cllr D Denis asked about the Bandstand and was informed that work had been delayed due to staffing issues.

Cllr D Denis was pleased to see the decision regarding the removal of the CCTV camera on Market Street had been reconsidered due to the high proportion of incidents in the area.

Cllr D Orrett asked if the play strategy would be referenced.
The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the framework would be presented to next Full Council Meeting.

26/66/OS MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
David Thompson spoke of his concerns which cover the Palace lawn, the dirty benches along the moat, the planters across Wells and Wells Bus Station.
The Town Clerk reported that Moat Walk has recently been tidied by Wells City Council as a gesture of goodwill to Somerset Council. The agreement has now been established with the Church Commissioners for the benches and the grass, but the benches remain



an issue due to pigeon defecation. With regard to Cathedral green, it has now been cut. Weeding is only done on a best endeavours basis. Conversations are taking place with Somerset partners regarding the bus station planters to see how the space can be managed more productively.

Elizabeth O Sullivan

Spoke of her concern about safety, regarding crossing the road at Ash lane junction with the A39. Each headmaster of the schools has written a letter of support. Following the article in Wells Voice, support from the public is increasing and statistics are being collected.

Liz Pedley

Reported that she and L O Sullivan had conducted traffic counts. Pedestrians and local people had been asked how they feel about crossing at this location. There are high traffic counts during school run times and there are many schoolchildren being driven across the junction rather than enjoying a safe walk to school. Children are not learning about active travel and are missing out on important life skills or learning independence. The Accessible Wells groups assessed the junction and rate it as medium to high likelihood of a high impact accident. The bus stops appear to be in odd places and block visibility. There are very multiple signs at this location as well as a "No right turn" which many drivers ignore. It would be great to have the speed measured and the group would be grateful of access to a SID. Tessa Munt MP has been contacted and the suggestion was to talk to Wells City Council.

Cllr T Butt Philip supports the addressing of issues at this location, but admitted that the current campaign for 20mph zones will not cover this particular area. Cllr T Butt Philip offered support in gathering the information needed and will meet with Elizabeth and Liz.

The Town Clerk spoke of the 20mph zones and confirmed that the junction is listed in the areas of concern and asked for the data collected to be shared with her. There is not a SID at Wells City Council at the moment but this is being worked on. There is a newly formed Speed-Watch group.

26/67/OS

REPORT FROM OUTSIDE SPACES MANAGER

M Johnson presented his report, summarising that the Outside spaces team are in the middle of the cutting season with multiple parks and allotments having being cut, along with hedges. Much of the planting has taken place. M Johnson acknowledged the dates for removal of winter plants had gone a little awry this year. Torr Hill woods planting has taken place with much public interaction. Composting area has been created at Black Dog gardens.

Some items of play equipment and benches have been painted. A very busy month what with May fair etc.

The team have supported Mendip Hospital Cemetery. The Outside spaces team also support Market provision including the new Sunday market. The table tennis table will be installed at the start of July.

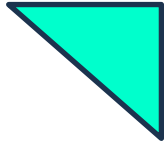
Cllr T Butt Philip asked for information regarding grass cutting schedules.

M Johnson responded that there will be a document which explains the different areas and rationale for the cutting styles in those areas.

A discussion took place about grass areas being raked and the potential for new machinery for specific tasks and sustainability.

Cllr T Kolizeras asked about Tinknells roundabout sponsorship.

The Town Clerk responded that Charlie Bigham's sponsor the roundabout but that sponsorship is passed to Somerset with a portion passing back to WCC to maintain. Conversations are taking place about the planting and it is acknowledged that it's not working well at that location and improvements are planned. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had not had feedback from Charlie Bighams.



M Johnson confirmed that when sponsorship changed, the idea was to plant wild flowers, which doesn't look good alongside the formal planting.
Cllr T Butt Philip suggested that WCC discuss sponsorship with Somerset.

Cllr S Powell asked for further information about the benches along moat walk and the process for resolving the problems.
The Town Clerk confirmed there is an agreement between Savills and Somerset Council which includes upkeep and replacement if required. If Somerset find that difficult, WCC could potentially take the work on if we were recompensed. Upkeep does not cover washing.
Cllr S Powell asked if it could be a consideration to remove the worst benches due to the frequency of being fouled on.

Cllr S Powell asked for information regarding the ice cream vendor at the Market.
M Johnson responded that Olly's Lollys are happy to attend when the bicycle vendor is not able to trade.

Cllr D Denis asked about overhanging trees on Whiting Way. The Town Clerk will report this as it's a Somerset function.

Cllr D Denis asked if perennials could be planted to prevent periods of untidiness when plants get to the end of the season.
M Johnson acknowledged that this would be possible but that plants removed in the winter are retained where possible to save wastefulness.

Cllr S Powell asked about the tree guards on Cathedral green as are now too small
M Johnson acknowledged he had also been informed of this by MTL.

A brief discussion took place about the positive feedback that has been received from members of the public with the new summer planting.

Cllr T Kolizeras made an observation about the pace of work allocated to Somerset workers who are contracted to repair very many damaged pavements.

A discussion took place about delivery traffic damaging pavements and gullies and the weight of vehicles coming down the High street. Cllr T Butt Philip suggested it would be a good idea to have benches, planters mapped so that it could be determined where they could be placed to perhaps prevent damage to pavements.

26/68/OS TRAFFIC UPDATES

The Town Clerk reported that the redesigned 20mph scheme has been sent off to Somerset and there will be a 6 to 8 week design timeline which should be ready for the September Outside Spaces agenda.

The application to the Avon and Somerset Police innovation fund for obtaining Speed Indicator devices (SID) was unsuccessful, but the costings for a SID will be taken to Finance committee. Devices that can monitor traffic numbers will be researched.
Cllr T Butt Philip asked if consultation with Somerset Highways colleagues would be helpful so that when Phase 2 takes place to the 20mph zone that the equipment purchased would be useful.

26/69/OS POLICE AND CRIME UPDATES

The Town Clerk presented the report. 91 Incidents in March and 80 incidents in April. All information including breakdowns of crime and trends are available on the Avon and Somerset Police website as well as the breakdown of types of crime. Offences are down slightly in May. Sgt S Lancey attended Full Council in May.
A brief discussion took place about shoplifting crime in Wells.



Cllr K Kinshaw spoke about the campaign to reduce violence against women and the lack of street lighting in certain areas. Gate lane was referred to and there were deemed to be other areas in Wells where there are dark areas.

The Town Clerk reminded that street lighting is a Somerset provision and that reviews of streetlighting do take place and that she would enquire as to when a review is due again. The Town Clerk also suggested that a walk around with the Outside Spaces manager would be useful and make recommendations.

Cllr D Denis reminded the meeting that Dark skies are important for nocturnal animals. The ideal scenario having street lights that are motion centred as in France.

Cllr T Butt Philip mentioned that there is a programme of works taking place with streetlighting.

26/70/OS RECREATION GROUND TRUST (WRGT)

The Town Clerk reported that at the meeting on 3rd June 2026 the Trust approved a grant process for the upkeep an ongoing maintenance. There is a headline plan and key themes and visions were approved and there will be a meeting in September to progress change at the recreation ground.

A discussion took place regarding the Working Group Members. Cllr K Kinshaw has volunteered to be added into the working group. As Cllr S Eden is no longer on the Outside Spaces Committee, K Kinshaw will replace her.

Cllr T Kolizeras expressed a wish to join the working group. Cllr S Powell stepped down as she has been on the working group for some years.

The four members in the working group, made up of 2 members from the Estates Committee and 2 members of Outside Committee are Cllrs: T Butt Philip, H Siggs, K Kinshaw, T Kolizeras

26/71/OS PUBLICATION OF POLLINATORS INFORMATION

Cllr D Denis expressed her pleasure at the work that had taken place on the pollinators publication.

The Outside Spaces Manager reported that the entrances to the city would have native pollinating planting.

26/72/OS PROPOSAL TO CREATE A MANAGED FORAGING AREA AT TORR HILL WOODS

A discussion took place to consider the three options below:

Option 1 - Do nothing

Option 2 - Plant the saplings directly on arrival in November

Option 3 - Recommended option: pot on, overwinter and plant out in spring as a managed foraging area

Cllr D Orrett asked a member to make a proposal

Cllr T Kolizeras proposed that Wells City Council create a managed Foraging area at Torr Hill Woods

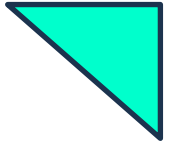
Cllr K Kinshaw seconded the Proposal

Cllrs voted unanimously for the Proposal

The Town Clerk suggested that the Outside Spaces officer have the responsibility delegated to him, to make the decisions regarding optimum planting times in line with the climate.

26/73/OS FORWARD PLAN

Topic	Month
Operational Land Classification	September 2026
Christmas Light Update	September 2026
Leisure & Play Strategy	September 2026
Knapp Hill Project Update	September 2026
Dog Fouling Policy and Publication	September 2026
Police and crime updates	Every Month
Traffic updates	Every Month
Recreation Ground Trust (WRGT)	Every Month



26/74/OS ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr D Denis asked about the map board removal outside the Town Hall and made the suggestion of a map similar to the type used in Castle Cary. The Outside spaces Officer confirmed that the removed board is being kept in storage should it be required. A brief discussion took place about current map provision with suggestions about the improvement of the information on maps.

Town Clerk reported that due to inconsistency with signage on public toilets, the information is in the process of being made clearer both at each location and on websites. The toilets are also planned to be opened during Summer period between 8am and 8pm. Inconsistencies in this information were highlighted by Cllr T Butt Philip

26/75/OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 3rd September 2026, 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 Agenda item 8



Author	Open Spaces Manager
Date of Committee:	3 rd September 2026
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Officer Update to Committee:

This report provides the Open Spaces officer update for August 2026.

Operational opportunities delivered or realised this month:

- The drought and sustained high temperatures have resulted in little to no grass cutting during August. This has allowed the team to redirect time into non-cutting work, including hedge maintenance and wider asset maintenance.
- Substantial progress has been made on the bandstand renovation. Extensive sanding is now largely complete and the structure is ready to move into the painting stage. Remedial repairs have been identified where some older timber repairs have deteriorated. Good-quality timber comparable with the existing structure has been sourced for these works rather than interior-grade pine. Barrier baskets have been sourced at the direction of the Town Clerk to add colour to the bandstand, and the lighting has been tested ready to be reinstated in full working order.
- Watering of the Wells in Bloom displays has continued on a controlled and targeted basis, balancing the need to maintain the displays with responsible water use during the drought.
- A review of finger posts has been completed throughout the city as “added value” and identified amendments, replacements or rectifications is due shortly.

Operational risks identified and/or resolved this month:

- Prolonged dry conditions and high temperatures continue to place grass, planted areas and trees under stress. Grass cutting has therefore remained paused or greatly reduced where cutting would be unnecessary or potentially damaging.
- Significant splitting has been identified in timber within the Recreation Ground play castle. A recent safety report notes that timber play installations have a finite service life and the castle is now showing clear signs of age. The wooden play equipment in the Recreation Ground requires urgent review alongside the Town Clerk's wider play strategy, so that any necessary repair, replacement or investment can be planned before condition deteriorates further.
- Tree stability has also been affected by the dry conditions. Significant tree works have been required in the Recreation Ground and on Cathedral Green, including responding to one tree that came down in high winds where the dry rooting conditions had reduced its stability.

Project updates this month:

- Bandstand renovation is on programme to move from preparation and repairs into painting, with full completion targeted for the second week of September.

- Bandstand barrier baskets and lighting will be reinstated as part of the final phase, returning the structure to full service with an improved appearance.
- Hedge and general asset maintenance have been progressed while mowing demand has been low, making productive use of staff time during the drought.
- Tree works in the Recreation Ground and on Cathedral Green have been prioritised to address condition and safety issues arising during the prolonged dry weather.
- The condition of the Recreation Ground timber play equipment should be treated as a priority item within the developing play strategy.

Any other points of note:

Grass cutting will resume as conditions require and where doing so is appropriate. In the meantime, the reduced mowing requirement is continuing to provide an opportunity to progress maintenance work that is more difficult to undertake during periods of peak grass growth.

Market maintenance and vehicle maintenance ahead of autumn, winter has also been completed.



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

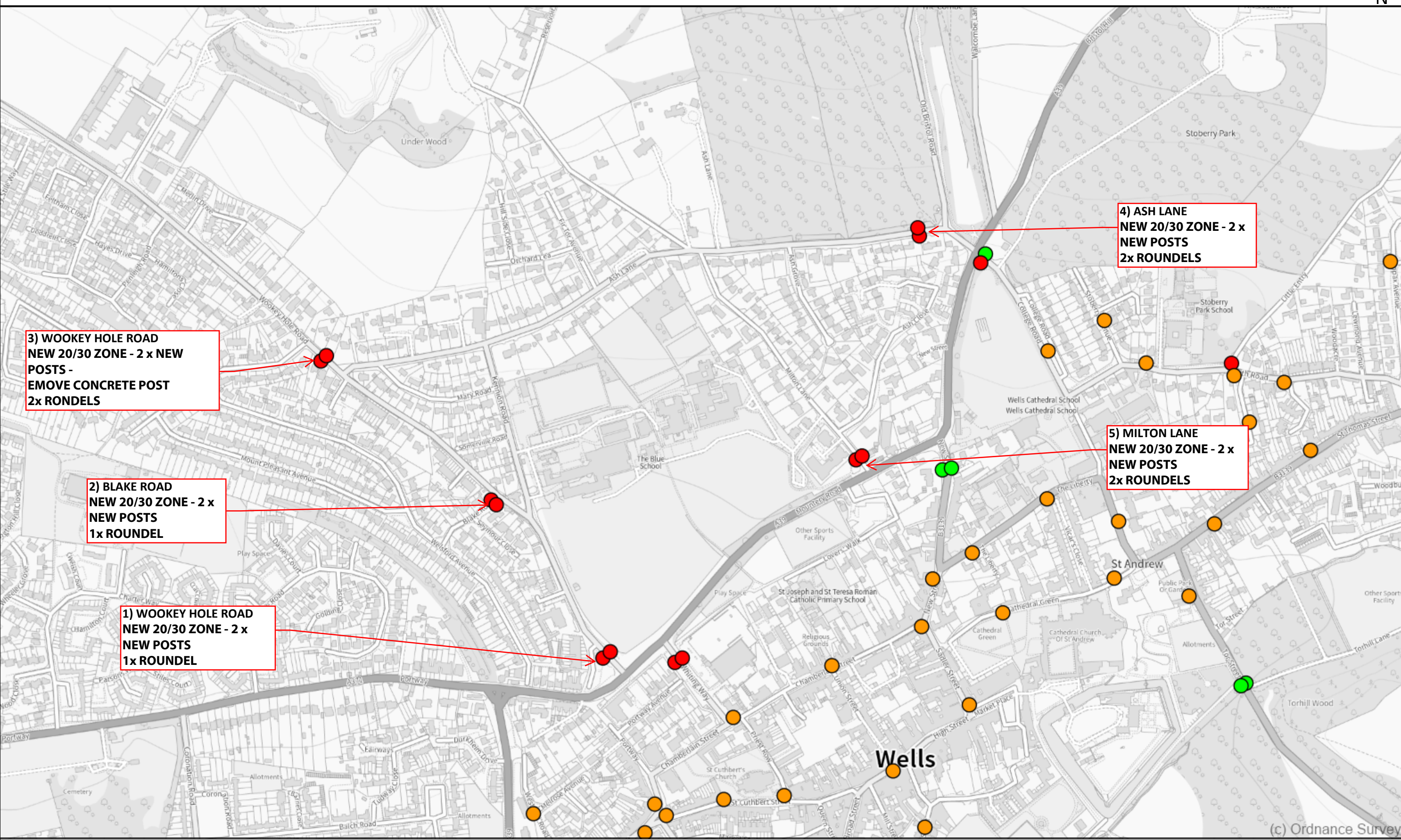
Recommendations

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



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1) Wookey Hole Road

Install 2x 76mm posts with 5x 76mm extensions on each.

Attach 2x new '20mph Zone' signs & 2x new '30-20mph Zone Ends' signs back-to-back.

Bottom of signs to be 2.4m above ground level.

New 20mph roundel.



2) Wookey Hole Road

Install 2x 76mm posts with 5x 76mm extensions on each.

Attach 2x new '20mph Zone' signs & 2x new '30-20mph Zone Ends' signs back-to-back.

Bottom of signs to be 2.4m above ground level.

New 20mph & 30mph roundels.



3) Ash Lane

Install 2x 76mm posts with 5x 76mm extensions on each.

Attach 2x new '20mph Zone' signs & 2x new '30-20mph Zone Ends' signs back-to-back.

Bottom of signs to be 2.4m above ground level.

New 20mph & 30mph roundels.



4) Milton Lane

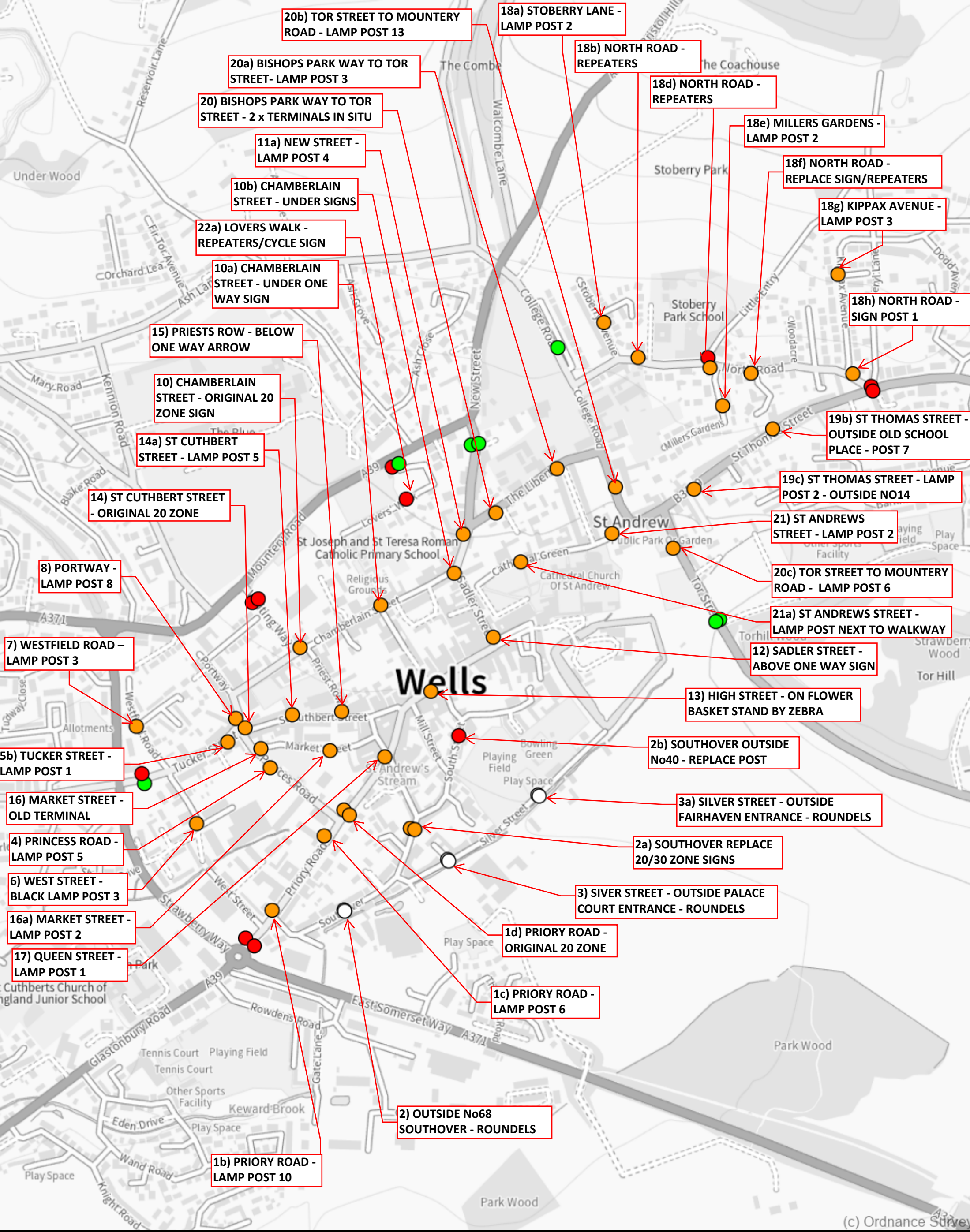
Install 2x 76mm posts with 5x 76mm extensions on each.

Attach 2x new '20mph Zone; signs & 2x new '30-20mph Zone Ends' signs back-to-back.

Bottom of signs to be 2.4m above ground level.

New 20mph & 30mph roundels.

Cut back hedge





1) PRIORY ROAD - NEW TERMINALS

Supply & install 1 post with 4 extensions = 3m
 Supply 1 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal
 Supply 1 x 30mph, 600mm Terminal
 Attach 2 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground
 Mark up 1 x new 20mph roundel



1a) PRIORY ROAD - NEW TERMINALS

Supply & install 1 post with 4 extensions = 3m
 Supply 1 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal
 Supply 1 x 30mph, 600mm Terminal
 Attach 2 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground



1b) PRIORY ROAD - OPPOSITE SOUTHOVER JUNCTION - LAMP POST 10  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



1c) PRIORY ROAD - LAMP POST 6  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



1d) PRIORY ROAD – ORIGINAL 20/30 ZONE      

Remove & dispose of 4 x 30/20mph Terminal zone signs

Supply 4 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters

Put up 4 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters

Remark 20 roundel & add new 20 roundel



2) SOUTHOVER  

2 x new roundels outside no 68



2a) SOUTHOVER – OUTSIDE FOSTER COURT (20) (20) (20) (20)

Original Terminal 20/30 zone signs

Remove & dispose of 4 x 30/20mph Terminal zone signs

Supply 4 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters

Put up 4 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters



2b) SOUTHOVER (20) (20)

Take down parking plate & put to one side for re-use

Remove post & dispose

In its place, supply & install 1 x 76mm post with 3 extensions = 2.750mm

Re-attach the parking plate to the top of the new post

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters below the parking plate



3) SILVER STREET  

2 x new roundels outside Palace Court entrance



3a) SILVER STREET  

2 x new roundels outside Fairhaven Entrance



4) PRINCESS ROAD - LAMP POST 5

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



5) TUCKER STREET - NEW TERMINAL POST & LAMP POST 7

On Lamp post 7 - Supply & install 2 x 600mm 20mph/30mph, back-to-back terminals at 2.4m above ground level

Supply & install 1 post with 4 extensions = 3m - opposite Lamp post 7

On new post supply & install 2 x 600mm 20mph/30mph, back-to-back terminals at 2.4m above ground level

Mark up 1 x new 20mph roundel



5a) TUCKER STREET - LAMP POST 1  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



6) WEST STREET - OPPOSITE ETHEL STREET - BLACK LAMP POST 3  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



7) WESTFIELD ROAD – OPPOSITE MELROSE AVENUE - LAMP POST 3  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



8) PORTWAY - LAMP POST 8  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



9 & 9a) WHITING WAY – TERMINALS

Supply & install 2 posts with 4 extensions each = 2 x 3m
 Supply 2 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal & 2 x 30mph, 600mm Terminals
 Attach 4 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground level
 Mark up 1 x new 20mph roundel



10) CHAMBERLAIN STREET – ORIGINAL TERMINAL 20/30 ZONE SIGNS

Remove & dispose of 2 x 30/20mph Terminal zone signs
 Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters to the top of post



10a) CHAMBERLAIN STREET - UNDER ONE WAY SIGN 

Supply & install 1 x 300mm 20mph repeater sign below the One-Way sign



10b) CHAMBERLAIN STREET - ABOVE SIGN  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters above signs

11a)



11a) NEW STREET - LAMP POST 4  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



11) NEW STREET – 2 x TERMINAL POSTS IN PLACE      

Remove & dispose of 4 x 20/30mph Terminal zone signs

Supply 4 x 20mph/30mph, 600mm Terminals

Put up 4 x 20mph/30mph, 600mm Terminals to the top of posts

Remark 20 & 30 roundels



12) SADLER STREET - ABOVE ONE WAY SIGN 20

Supply & install 1 x 300mm 20mph repeater above ONE WAY sign



13) HIGH STREET - ON FLOWER BASKET STAND BY ZEBRA 20

Supply & install 1 x 300mm 20mph repeater on flower basket to the left of carriageway



14) ST CUTHBERT STREET – Original Terminal 20/30 zone sign 

Remove & dispose of 1 x 20mph Terminal zone sign

Supply 1 x 20mph, 300mm repeater

Put up 1 x 20mph, 300mm repeater



14a) ST CUTHBERT STREET - LAMP POST 5 

Supply & install 1 x 300mm 20mph repeater at 2.4m above ground level



15) PRIESTS ROW - BELOW ONE WAY ARROW 20

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters below ONE WAY arrow



16) MARKET STREET - OLD TERMINAL 20 20

Original Terminal 20/30 zone signs
 Remove & dispose of 2 x 30/20mph Terminal zone signs
 Supply 2 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters
 Put up 2 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters



16a) MARKET STREET - LAMP POST 2  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



17) QUEEN STREET - LAMP POST 1 

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters above ONE WAY arrow – Do not obscure ONE WAY arrow



18) COLLEGE ROAD - TERMINAL



Remove and dispose of yellow bend warning/school sign

Supply 2 x 20mph/30mph, 600mm Terminals

Put up 2 x 20mph/30mph, 600mm Terminals to the top of post

Mark up new 20 & 30 roundels



18a) STOBERRY LANE - LAMP POST 2



Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



18b) NORTH ROAD – REPEATERS  

Supply & install 1 x post with 3 extensions = 1 x 2.750m

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



18c) LITTLE ENTRY - NEW TERMINAL 30/20  

Supply & install 1 post with 4 extensions = 1 x 3m

Supply 1 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal & 1 x 30mph, 600mm Terminal

Attach 2 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground level



18d) NORTH ROAD – REPEATERS  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters to the top of post



18e) MILLERS GARDENS - LAMP POST 2  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



18f) NORTH ROAD - REPLACE BEND WARNING/SCHOOL SIGN   

Remove & dispose of bend warning sign 15mph/School sign

Supply & install new yellow backed school warning sign to the top of outer post

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters below the new school sign



18g) KIPPAX AVENUE - LAMP POST 3  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



18h) NORTH ROAD - SIGN POST 1  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



19 & 19a) BATH ROAD - TERMINALS – NEW POSTS      

Supply & install 2 posts with 4 extensions each = 2 x 3m

Supply 2 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal & 2 x 30mph, 600mm Terminals

Attach 4 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground

Mark up 2 x new 20mph/30mph roundels



19b) ST THOMAS STREET - OUTSIDE OLD SCHOOL PLACE - POST 7 20 20

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



19c) ST THOMAS STREET - LAMP POST 2 - OUTSIDE NO14 20 20

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



20) BISHOPS PARK WAY TO TOR STREET - 2 x TERMINALS IN SITU     

Remove and dispose 2 x 30mph terminals & 2 x NSL terminals
 Supply 2 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal & 2 x NSL 600mm Terminals
 Attach 4 x Terminals to the top of existing posts
 Mark up 1 x new 20mph roundel



20a) BISHOPS PARK WAY TO TOR STREET- LAMP POST 3  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



20b) TOR STREET TO MOUNTERY ROAD - LAMP POST 13  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



20c) TOR STREET TO MOUNTERY ROAD - LAMP POST 6  

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



20d) TOR STREET TO MOUNTERY ROAD - OLD TERMINAL 20 20

- Remove & dispose of 2 x 30/20mph Terminal zone signs
- Move roundabout sign to the top of the post
- Supply 2 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters
- Put up 2 x 20mph, 300mm repeaters
- Remark 20 roundel & change a 30 roundel to a 20 roundel



21) ST ANDREWS STREET - LAMP POST 2 20 20

- Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



21a) ST ANDREWS STREET - LAMP POST NEXT TO WALKWAY 20 20

Supply & install 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters at 2.4m above ground level



22) MILTON LANE ONTO LOVERS WALK – NEW TERMINALS 20 20 30 30 20

Supply & install 1 post with 4 extensions = 1 x 3m

Utilise lamp post no1

Supply 2 x 20mph, 600mm Terminal & 2 x 30mph, 600mm Terminals

Attach 4 x Terminals at 2.4m above ground

Mark up 1 x new 20mph roundel



22a) LOVERS WALK – REPEATERS   

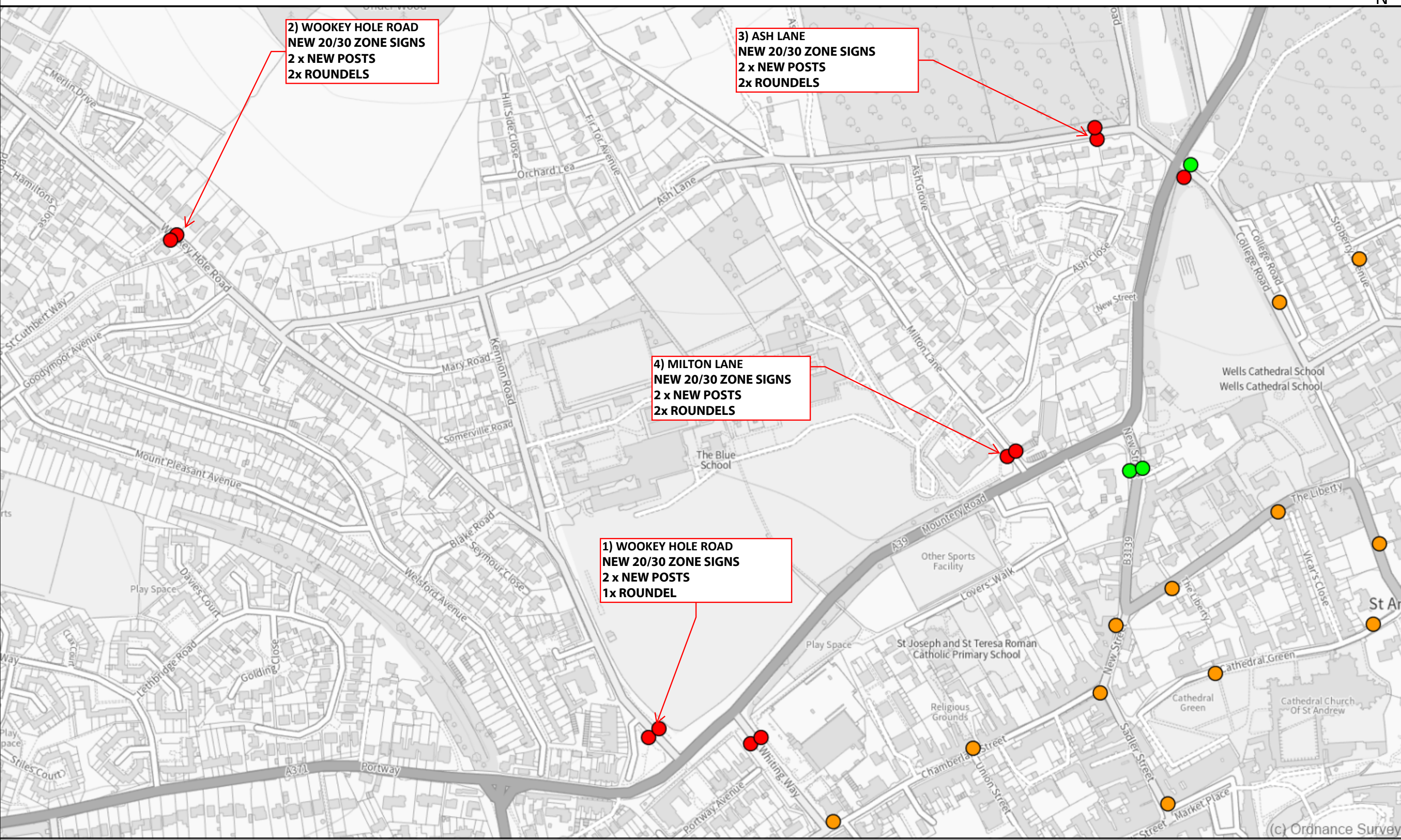
Remove and dispose of cycle sign

Remove and dispose of rusted post

Supply & install 1 x new 76mm post with 4 extensions = 1 x 3m

Attach new 600mm cycle sign to the top of post

Supply & attach 2 x 300mm 20mph, back-to-back repeaters beneath cycle sign



2) WOOKEY HOLE ROAD
NEW 20/30 ZONE SIGNS
2 x NEW POSTS
2x ROUNDELS

3) ASH LANE
NEW 20/30 ZONE SIGNS
2 x NEW POSTS
2x ROUNDELS

4) MILTON LANE
NEW 20/30 ZONE SIGNS
2 x NEW POSTS
2x ROUNDELS

1) WOOKEY HOLE ROAD
NEW 20/30 ZONE SIGNS
2 x NEW POSTS
1x ROUND

Consultation on Proposed Accessible Parking and Traffic Schemes within Wells to be released October 2026

Wells City Council has been working with Accessible Wells and Somerset Council to deliver a proposed scheme of highways, parking and traffic arrangements within the city, based on reported and known issues.

This consultation relates specifically to proposed amendments in the following areas:

Yellow Lining Amendments or Additions:

1. Ash Lane/Ash Grove (To apply lines to the entrance way of Ash Grove to assist safe traverse from the junction)
2. North Road (For Private household to apply a traffic mirror adjacent to property to support safe traverse from driveway)
3. Apply cycling dismount sign at Portway traffic lights to Wookey Hole Road to join Strawberry line.

Disabled Bay/Loading Bay Amendments:

4. High Street (Retain bays in current locations, applying additional signage to enforce bay requirements from 8am to 8pm) from the current 8am to 6pm
5. Cathedral Green/St Andrews Street (Amend disabled parking bays, to create two ranks, opposed to individually marked bays, applying required signage and lining, increasing the available volume of bays for this provision)
6. Sadler Street (Amend the loading bay enforcement to 8am to 8pm, and reline the bay, increasing overall provision)
7. Tucker Street (Amend yellow lines to encompass dropped kerb, and reduce the size of the limited wait bay)
8. Queen Street (Reduce the bay size of limited wait and extend hours of operation to 8am to 8pm. Adding disabled parking bay – Overall bay size for both elements to increase by 1.5m)

Speed Restrictions

To all of the following locations, it is proposed to extend existing, or apply a 20mph speed restriction, with associated road markings and signage throughout (please see supporting examples for signage and marking locations).

9. Priory Road
10. Southover

11. Silver Street
12. Princes Road
13. Tucker Street
14. West Street
15. Westfield Road
16. Portway
17. Whiting Way
18. Chamberlain Street
19. New Street
20. Sadler Street
21. St Cuthbert Street
22. Priest Row
23. Market Street
24. Queen Street
25. College Road
26. Stoberry Lane
27. North Road
28. Little Entry
29. Millers Gardens
30. Kippax Avenue
31. Bath Road
32. St Thomas Street
33. Bishops Parkway/Tor Street
34. Tor Street/Mountery Way
35. St Andrews Street
36. Milton Lane/Lovers Walk
37. Lethbridge Road – Apply 20mph restrictions to match the surrounding area
38. Kennion Road – Apply 20mph restrictions
39. Milton Lane – Apply 20mph restrictions
40. Ash lane – Apply 20mph restrictions
41. Wookey Hole Road – Apply 20mph restrictions
42. Goodymoor Avenue – Apply 20mph restrictions
43. Welsford Avenue – Apply 20mph restrictions
44. Mount Pleasant Avenue – Apply 20mph restrictions
45. Blake Road – Apply 20mph restrictions

Traffic Light Amendments

Implementation of audible function for those with impairment at the following locations:

46. Glastonbury Road nr. Wand Road
47. Liberty/Vicars Close (this may already have intermittent audio)
48. St. Andrew's Street/Liberty towards St. Thomas Street

This consultation focuses specifically on the proposed parking changes outlined above and in the accompanying documents. While we welcome broader feedback,

only comments directly related to these proposals will inform any immediate amendments. Other issues will be recorded for future consideration where appropriate.

We encourage all residents and stakeholders to review the information provided and share their views.

Question 1

Do you Support the proposed scheme of change as highlighted in the earlier descriptions:

Yellow Lining Amendments or Additions:

Area 1: Y/N/NA

Area 2: Y/N/NA

Area 3: Y/N/NA

Disabled Bay/Loading Bay Amendments:

Area 4: Y/N/NA

Area 5: Y/N/NA

Area 6: Y/N/NA

Area 7: Y/N/NA

Area 8: Y/N/NA

Speed Restrictions

Area 9: Y/N/NA

Area 10: Y/N/NA

Area 11: Y/N/NA

Area 12: Y/N/NA

Area 13: Y/N/NA

Area 14: Y/N/NA

Area 15: Y/N/NA

Area 16: Y/N/NA

Area 17: Y/N/NA

Area 18: Y/N/NA

Area 19: Y/N/NA

Area 20: Y/N/NA

Area 21: Y/N/NA

Area 22: Y/N/NA

Area 23: Y/N/NA

Area 24: Y/N/NA

Area 25: Y/N/NA

Area 26: Y/N/NA

Area 27: Y/N/NA

Area 28: Y/N/NA

Area 29: Y/N/NA

Area 30: Y/N/NA

Area 31: Y/N/NA

Area 32: Y/N/NA

Area 33: Y/N/NA

Area 34: Y/N/NA

Area 35: Y/N/NA

Area 36: Y/N/NA

Area 37: Y/N/NA

Area 38: Y/N/NA

Area 39: Y/N/NA

Area 40: Y/N/NA

Area 41: Y/N/NA

Area 42: Y/N/NA

Area 43: Y/N/NA

Area 44: Y/N/NA

Area 45: Y/N/NA

Traffic Light Amendments

Area 46: Y/N/NA

Area 47: Y/N/NA

Area 48 Y/N/NA

Question 2

If you wish to raise additional highways, traffic or parking-related concerns within Wells, please note these will be recorded but may be considered separately from this proposal.



What will happen next?

All responses will be reviewed. Comments directly related to the proposal will inform any revisions.

Wider or unrelated issues may be logged for future consideration but will not affect the current decision.



Agenda Item 10

Wells City Council

Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Police & Crime Update
For consideration at	Outside Spaces
Date of consideration	03.09.2026

Resources Available

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/avon-somerset-constabulary/wells-city> Offers insight into the issues being monitored and explored by the Police service. Details of incidents, local theses, based on postcode are noted as are the police priorities.

Wells Incidents:

Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25
76	66	64	72	94	82	81	78	118	55	80	108
Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26	Jun 26	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sept 26	Oct 26	Nov 26
101	98	68	91	80	59	99					

Policing Priorities:

The Town Clerk has raised concerns associated with anti-social behaviour and night time driving in certain locations of the city, for which it is expected that there will be a targeted campaign in due course.

Additionally a request of engagement has been made for cyclists riding the wrong way up the high street at speed and other ASB behaviour of a youth group. Again, targeted engagement will be arranged.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The Wells Neighbourhood Police Team will be working closely with the city's night-time economy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Local establishments will be encouraged to actively participate in this initiative, fostering a safer environment for all.

The neighbourhood team have also been visiting the local hairdresser and nail bars issuing advice and information about VAWG. They have also promoted the Walk and Talk initiative that can be

applied for our web pages by following this link - <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/walk-and-talk/>

You can also [report feeling unsafe in public spaces](#) via the StreetSafe app, completely anonymously. Whether it's due to environmental reasons, such as poor street-lighting or anti-social behaviour or harassment, reports to the app are shared with your local police force and local authorities for action.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting continues to be one of our 2026 priorities and is having a negative impact on businesses, staff, and public confidence within Wells city centre and remains a priority for local policing. Wells High Street has been identified as a particular hotspot due to the concentration of retail premises and footfall, making it more vulnerable to repeat offending. Persistent shoplifting affects livelihoods, creates fear and frustration for staff, and can contribute to wider antisocial behaviour if not addressed.

In response, the Wells Neighbourhood Policing Team is maintaining a focused and consistent approach to deter offences, identify offenders, and support retailers. This priority reflects ongoing concerns raised by local businesses and the community and ensures that resources, patrol activity, and partnership working are directed to areas where they are most needed.

What we are doing

Regular high-visibility patrols by the Wells Neighbourhood Policing Team and Special Constables. Wells High Street identified as a priority location under the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, with additional officers deployed.

Ongoing engagement with local businesses to improve information sharing and joint problem-solving.

In 2025 we have worked with the local businesses to help reduce shoplifting around the City this has included multi agency meetings, high visibility targeted patrols by the neighbourhood teams, and the arrest and charging of individuals for shoplifting offences. We plan to build on this success in 2026.

Next Community Meeting dates:

Please note that there have been significantly more beat surgeries applied since our last meeting, details for which can be seen on the Policing website, under events. [Wells City | Police.uk](#)

Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Note the content of the report.
2. Actively support the use and distribution of <https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/avon-somerset-constabulary/wells-city>, to aid local understanding of the police services within Wells and officers engagement with the City Council.



WELLS CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 12



Author	Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Manager
Subject	Approval of the Grounds Maintenance Asset Classification and Indicative Service Standards
Date of Committee:	To be confirmed
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Background & Context

Members are asked to approve the Grounds Maintenance Asset Classification and Indicative Service Standards at Appendix A. The framework translates the Council's strategic Grounds Maintenance Strategy into a clear set of land-management outcomes without turning the Committee paper into a site-by-site works instruction.

The Open Spaces service manages more than 300 assets and small sites. Those assets differ in use, visibility, ecological potential, heritage sensitivity, access requirements and the level of maintenance needed. A single city-wide cutting frequency would therefore be inefficient and would conflict with the Council's commitment to use the right treatment in the right place.

The framework uses a mapped asset register and four grass-management classes: weekly, fortnightly, monthly and meadow. Each class defines the land that belongs within it, the intended condition and the broad treatment. This gives Members an adoptable structure without creating a site-by-site schedule. Frequencies remain indicative and may vary for growth, weather, ground conditions, safety, events or wildlife constraints.

What the framework establishes

1. A consistent classification for land-based grounds-maintenance assets, with an outcome and purpose recorded for each managed area.
2. Four strategic grass classes: G1 weekly, G2 fortnightly, G3 monthly and G4 meadow management.
3. A clear designation rule: G1 covers all Council-maintained parks, Cathedral Green and St Cuthbert's Church grounds; G3 covers the Council-managed cemetery; G4 covers Tor Hill Woods and other outlying wild assets; and G2 is the default for all remaining maintained grass.
4. The ability to zone one site into different classes so that paths, sightlines, play areas, memorial areas and ecological margins receive appropriate treatment.
5. No use of herbicides, in accordance with the Council's existing no-herbicide approach.
6. An annual strategic report based on coverage, condition, outcomes, exceptions and resources rather than day-to-day route sheets.

Strategic and operational responsibility

The Committee's role is to approve the framework, service outcomes, environmental principles, resources and reporting requirements. The Open Spaces Manager will assign and review individual asset classes, plan routes, select equipment and cutting techniques, set exact timings, manage staff and contractors, and make temporary adjustments. A material departure from the adopted framework, a significant permanent reduction in service, or a change requiring additional budget will return to the Committee or Full Council as required by delegated authority.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

The proposal supports Priority 1 through a clear, auditable framework and proportionate resource use; Priority 2 through biodiversity-led asset stewardship and no-herbicide management; Priority 3 through consistent and resilient service planning; and Priority 4 through safe, accessible and clearly explained public spaces.

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	X
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	X
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	

Financial Implications

Approval of the framework does not, by itself, authorise expenditure beyond approved budgets or guarantee that every nominal visit will be resourced regardless of conditions. Initial implementation will require officer time to validate ownership, boundaries, areas and service classes and to maintain the mapped asset register.

The framework should improve value and financial control by:

- matching labour and machinery inputs to the purpose and condition of each asset;
- reducing unnecessary cutting where growth has stopped or ecological management is intended;
- supporting efficient routing, equipment selection and seasonal work planning;
- identifying where a requested strategic change would require additional resources before a commitment is made; and
- providing evidence for future budget setting, procurement and invest-to-save proposals.

Any material service enhancement, permanent reduction, capital requirement or additional staffing need that cannot be managed within approved budgets and delegated authority will be reported separately.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The environmental implications are positive. A fortnightly default and monthly cemetery management reduce input compared with universal weekly mowing, while meadow areas allow flowering and seed setting. Defined paths retain access and show management intent. Mowing may be deferred during drought or saturation to avoid damage; meadow arisings will be removed where practical to reduce fertility and diversify the sward.

Legal Implications

The framework supports the Council's duty of care and safe management of land, the strengthened public-authority biodiversity duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and the protection of wild birds and active nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Safety-critical work may be undertaken at any time following appropriate checks and controls. The schedule does not transfer statutory highway or planning functions from Somerset Council and does not create a contractual entitlement to a particular cutting date or number of visits.

Community Implications

The framework implements the Council's existing strategic direction. Clear public information will explain that a longer sward or meadow is a deliberate management class rather than an unmaintained area. Material changes to the use or character of a significant public space will be communicated or consulted upon where appropriate; routine allocation, timing and adjustment of work will remain operational matters.

Risks & Opportunities

Option	Opportunities	Risks and implications
1. Approve the framework as presented (recommended)	Creates a clear and auditable link between the strategy, the asset register and annual delivery. It enables transparent scrutiny while preserving operational flexibility.	Requires phased mapping, classification and data maintenance. Expectations must continue to be managed through the approved budget and annual service plan.
2. Approve with strategic amendments	Allows Members to change outcomes, priorities, reporting requirements or the balance between amenity and biodiversity before approval.	Site-specific or method-specific amendments could blur accountability, reduce operational efficiency and require further cost or safety assessment.
3. Do nothing - retain the present position	Avoids the immediate work of implementing a formal classification and reporting framework.	Leaves the service open to inconsistent expectations, weakens public explanation of fortnightly, monthly and meadow-managed areas, and makes budget and performance scrutiny less reliable.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Approve the Grounds Maintenance Asset Classification and Indicative Service Standards at Appendix A as the operational implementation framework for the Council's strategic Grounds Maintenance Strategy.
2. Endorse G1 weekly, G2 fortnightly, G3 monthly and G4 meadow as the Council's strategic grass-management classes, with all Council-maintained parks, Cathedral Green and St Cuthbert's Church grounds designated G1; the Council-managed cemetery designated G3; Tor Hill Woods and other outlying wild or semi-natural assets designated G4; and all remaining maintained grass assets designated G2 by default.
3. Confirm that these frequencies are indicative outcome-based planning standards, not fixed-date or contractual service guarantees, and that safety, weather, growth, site use, ground conditions and wildlife constraints may require variation.
4. Authorise the Open Spaces Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk, to assign and review individual asset classes, maintain the mapped register and determine routes, methods, equipment, timings and temporary variations within the adopted strategy, approved budget and delegated authority.
5. Require any material departure from the framework, significant permanent change in service level or proposal requiring additional budget to be referred to the appropriate Committee or Full Council.
6. Receive a concise annual grounds-maintenance performance summary and review the classification framework alongside the Grounds Maintenance Strategy, or earlier if a significant service change requires it.

Nomination of decision: _____

Seconder of decision: _____

Appendices:

7. Appendix A: Grounds Maintenance Asset Classification and Indicative Service Standards (Version 1.2, for approval).

Appendix A

Grounds Maintenance Asset Classification and Indicative Service Standards

Version 1.2 - for approval

1. Purpose and status

This framework explains how Wells City Council will classify and manage land-based grounds-maintenance assets. It sits beneath the strategic Grounds Maintenance Strategy and gives Members and the public a clear description of the intended outcome and indicative level of care for each class.

It is not a route sheet, work instruction, contract specification or guarantee that an individual asset will be visited on a particular date. The live asset register and working schedules are controlled operational documents maintained by the Open Spaces Manager.

2. Asset register and classification controls

Each maintained area will, so far as reasonably practicable, record:

8. a unique asset or site identifier, mapped boundary and measured or estimated area;
9. ownership or management responsibility and any relevant access limitation;
10. asset type and assigned service class, including sub-zones where one site requires different treatments;
11. the purpose and intended condition of the asset;
12. site constraints such as memorials, play, events, visibility, slopes, water, ecology, heritage or neighbouring property;
13. the date and reason for a material classification change; and
14. the responsible manager and date of review.

Classification will be evidence-led and proportionate. The whole asset will normally receive one baseline class. A separate sub-zone may be mapped where a distinct function requires different treatment - for example, a short access route, entrance or safety sightline within a meadow asset. Sub-zoning will not be used to obscure or dilute the adopted baseline designation.

The classification hierarchy is applied in a consistent order: first apply the named G1 weekly designations; then apply G3 monthly to the Council-managed cemetery; next identify G4 meadow land by its wild, semi-natural or outlying character; all remaining maintained grass is G2 fortnightly. This makes the default clear and ensures that any exception can be explained and recorded.

3. How indicative frequencies are to be read

Weekly, fortnightly and monthly describe the normal service rhythm during active growth; meadow management describes a seasonal ecological treatment rather than a conventional amenity-mowing cycle. These are transparent service levels, not fixed-date promises. The primary standard is the intended condition and function of the asset.

15. Growth response: work may be brought forward during rapid growth or deferred when growth is slow or dormant.
16. Ground protection: mowing may be postponed on saturated, drought-stressed, unsafe or otherwise vulnerable ground to avoid lasting damage.
17. Safety and access: paths, sightlines, entrances, play interfaces and memorial access may be treated more frequently than the surrounding grass class.
18. Events and use: work may be re-sequenced before or after an event, funeral, sporting use or other operational requirement.

19. Wildlife and biosecurity: active nests, protected species, flowering and seed-setting objectives, invasive species and plant-health controls may alter timing or method.

20. A deferred nominal visit is not automatically a service failure where the required asset condition is being maintained or cutting would cause harm.

This framework does not set calendar dates, routes or work instructions; those remain operational. Strategic scrutiny is against the adopted class outcome and any material or recurring exception.

4. Strategic grass-management classes

Class	Intended outcome and effect	Treatment standard	Indicative service level
G1 High-use / presentation	A short, even and clearly maintained sward for intensively used, prominent or presentation-sensitive areas. Prioritises access, usability, visibility and a consistently tidy appearance.	Frequent amenity cut. Edges and obstacles are maintained in keeping with the main area. Arisings are normally finely dispersed, but may be collected where volume, presentation or safe use requires it.	Weekly during active growth
G2 Standard amenity	A visibly managed and accessible grass surface with a moderate sward. Balances public use and appearance with proportionate resource use and some additional habitat structure.	Regular amenity cut at a longer interval than G1. Defined boundaries, access routes and sightlines remain clear. Local high-use features may operate as G1 sub-zones.	Fortnightly during active growth
G3 Monthly / memorial amenity	A longer but controlled sward for the cemetery and comparable low-intensity memorial landscapes. Access to paths, graves and memorials remains safe and the area looks intentionally managed.	Monthly amenity cut during active growth. Paths, entrances, key memorial access and safety sightlines may receive additional attention where necessary.	Monthly during active growth
G4 Meadow / conservation	A deliberately long, flowering and seed-setting sward managed primarily for biodiversity, landscape interest and habitat connectivity, while retaining necessary access and visibility.	Up to two planned management cuts. The principal cut follows flowering and seed set; a second cut is timed to the needs of the sward. Arisings are removed where practical. Paths, margins and sightlines may be maintained separately.	Meadow basis: one or two principal seasonal cuts, plus defined access or safety cuts

5. Generalised designation criteria and examples

These examples show how assets are assigned. They provide a consistent decision structure, not an exhaustive site list or works calendar.

G1 Weekly - used for all Council-maintained parks and prominent civic, heritage or intensively used lawns requiring a consistently short sward. Named examples are all parks, Cathedral Green and St Cuthbert's Church grounds.

G2 Fortnightly - the default for maintained grass not designated G1, G3 or G4. Examples include ordinary amenity greens, Council verges, smaller open spaces, boundary strips and incidental grass around Council assets.

G3 Monthly - used for the Council-managed cemetery and any comparable memorial ground formally designated for a controlled longer sward with clear paths and safe access to graves and memorials. The cemetery is the adopted example; St Cuthbert's Church grounds remain G1.

G4 Meadow - used for outlying, wild or semi-natural land where biodiversity and habitat are primary, with maintained paths, entrances, margins and sightlines. Examples are the grass, rides and open margins at Tor Hill Woods and other outlying wild assets.

Borderline areas - assets not meeting the G1, G3 or G4 tests remain G2. Permanent exceptions or class changes are recorded with reasons and governed by this framework.

Machinery, cutting height, routes and staffing are operational choices. Methods must achieve the class outcome without avoidable damage or obstruction.

6. Other vegetated grounds-maintenance classes			
Class	Intended outcome	Treatment standard	Indicative cycle
H1 Formal or safety-related hedge	A defined, safe and tidy hedge where form, access, visibility or presentation is important.	Normally one or two programmed trims a year, with proportionate reactive work for immediate safety or access. Routine work is programmed outside the main nesting period wherever practicable; active nests are protected at any time.	1-2 planned cycles, plus safety response
H2 Ecological or boundary hedge	A structurally varied hedge that retains habitat, blossom, fruit and shelter while remaining safe and within an acceptable boundary.	Annual or rotational winter management according to species, setting and condition. Sections may be left longer where this supports habitat and does not create an access, neighbour or safety issue.	Annual assessment; intervention yearly or on a longer rotation
P1 Civic bed or container	A high-presentation planted feature at a prominent public location.	Regular active-season attention to plant health, litter, presentation and watering need, with seasonal planting or renewal through the approved annual programme.	Generally weekly attention in the active season; planned changeovers
P2 Perennial or shrub bed	A resilient, layered planting area that remains legible and cared for while providing longer flowering, shelter and winter structure.	Condition-led weeding, edging, pruning and seasonal cutback using manual, mechanical and cultural methods. Work respects species needs and habitat value.	Generally monthly active-season attention; 1-2 seasonal cycles

6. Other vegetated grounds-maintenance classes			
Class	Intended outcome	Treatment standard	Indicative cycle
N1 Naturalised, bulb or woodland-edge area	A deliberately less intensive planted or naturally vegetated area with visible boundaries and seasonal ecological value.	Intervention follows flowering, seed set and habitat need. Cut paths or edge bands may be used to retain access and communicate intentional management.	Usually 1-2 principal interventions a year

7. Service-wide management principles

Right treatment, right place. Classification reflects use, risk, visibility, heritage, ecology and available resources rather than applying one visual standard everywhere.

No herbicide use. Glyphosate and other herbicides will not be used for grounds maintenance; manual, mechanical and cultural methods are used.

Defined edges and access. Fortnightly, monthly and meadow-managed areas retain appropriate paths, perimeter bands, entrances and sightlines so that management intent is visible and public use remains safe.

Seasonal working. Routine hedge and major vegetation work is concentrated outside the main nesting period and within appropriate winter work programmes, subject to safety and lawful checks.

Asset protection. Operations must avoid preventable damage to soils, tree roots, bark, memorials, play equipment, benches, signs, kerbs, utilities and neighbouring property.

No automatic catch-up cutting. After drought, flooding, events or access restrictions, the manager will assess condition and restore the required outcome in the least damaging and most efficient way.

Public clarity. Where a monthly or meadow designation may reasonably be misunderstood, signs, mapping or public information will explain the purpose.

8. Governance boundary

Strategic decisions	Operational decisions
Approve the strategy, classification definitions, intended outcomes, environmental commitments, budgets, performance measures and review cycle.	Assign classes and sub-zones to individual assets; maintain maps and data; determine routes, work dates, staff, contractors, machinery, cut height and detailed methods.
Scrutinise overall condition, delivery trends, resource use, material exceptions, complaints and whether the framework is achieving the approved outcomes.	Respond to weather, growth, events, funerals, safety, access, ground condition, wildlife and equipment availability; record material or recurring exceptions.
Decide material permanent departures, significant public-space changes and proposals that require additional resources or fall outside delegated authority.	Make temporary or minor classification adjustments within the approved framework and budget; bring material changes back through the proper governance route.

This boundary preserves Member oversight while officers manage weather, growth, events and risk. Changes to named designations or the default rule are strategic; timing remains operational.

9. Annual assurance and reporting

The annual report will provide enough evidence for strategic scrutiny without reproducing the daily work programme. The first reporting cycle will establish the baseline and data quality.

Theme	Strategic assurance measure	Reporting
Asset knowledge	Number and proportion of known grounds assets mapped and classified; areas by grass class; priority data gaps.	Annual
Delivery and condition	Performance against intended class outcomes; planned work completed by class; significant or recurring exceptions and recovery action.	Annual
Environment	Area under fortnightly, monthly or meadow management; no-herbicide delivery; habitat or pollinator improvements; material wildlife constraints.	Annual
Public experience	Complaint, compliment and service-request trends; recurring location or communication issues; significant public engagement.	Annual
Resources and resilience	Budget position, seasonal pressures, equipment or staffing constraints, added-value work and proposals requiring strategic decision.	Annual
Change control	Material class changes, permanent service changes and departures from the framework, with reasons and authority.	Annual

10. Scope and related regimes

This framework covers routine land and vegetation maintenance. Trees are governed by the Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy; play equipment by the Council's inspection regime; allotment plots by tenancy rules; and buildings, structures and other hard assets by the relevant asset-management and safety procedures. Grass, hedges and planting around those assets may still be classified under this framework.



WELLS CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 13



Author	Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Manager
Subject	Adoption of the Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy
Date of Committee:	3 September 2026
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Background & Context

Members are asked to consider the Wells City Council Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy at Appendix A for adoption. The policy brings the Council's approach to tree safety, biodiversity, heritage, climate resilience, landscape management and public accountability into one formal framework.

Trees are long-lived public assets and habitats whose benefits and management needs extend across several generations. The policy therefore focuses on the complete lifecycle: site selection, planting, establishment, maturity, ageing, veteranisation, decline, death, decay and renewal. It applies to trees, groups, hedgerow trees, small woodlands, orchards and tree hulks on land owned, occupied or managed by Wells City Council.

What the policy establishes

- Retention first. Trees will be retained and managed where this is reasonable and proportionate; felling is a last resort where unacceptable risk or another binding requirement cannot be managed in a less harmful way.
- Proportionate risk management. Inspection and intervention will reflect site use, tree condition, likelihood and consequence, with clear records of significant decisions and completed actions.
- Protection of irreplaceable trees. Ancient and veteran trees will receive the highest level of protection, supported by specialist-led management, target management, phased retrenchment where justified, deadwood retention and successor planning.
- Whole-life planting. All new and replacement planting will use native species matched to the site and future climate, with funded establishment care and deliberate inclusion of suitable rare natives such as native black poplar, wild service tree and common juniper.
- Habitat continuity. Standing, attached and fallen deadwood will be retained where safe, and roots, soils, fungi, cavities and associated wildlife will be treated as parts of the tree ecosystem.
- Resilience and biosecurity. Species and genetic diversity, plant-health controls, ash dieback management, soil health and adaptive monitoring will reduce avoidable vulnerability.
- Clear public accountability. Significant decisions will be evidence-led, recorded and communicatable, with annual committee reporting and practical public explanations.

Governance and implementation

The Open Spaces Manager will own the policy operationally, maintain the management system, programme work, retain records and commission competent specialist advice. The Town Clerk will retain overall organisational oversight, while the Committee will receive performance information and consider significant policy or resource decisions in accordance with delegated authority.

The first implementation phase will:

- confirm ownership and management responsibilities and establish a reliable mapped baseline;
- classify sites into proportionate risk zones and formalise inspection arrangements;
- create a register of ancient, veteran, notable, early-veteran and future-veteran trees;
- formalise planting, aftercare and survival records with named responsibility and funded care;
- embed standard controls for pruning, wildlife checks, biosecurity, protected-tree consent and completion records;
- build a native canopy-renewal programme informed by age class, site capacity and ecological continuity; and
- report progress annually through a concise public and committee summary.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

The proposal supports Priority 1 through evidence-led governance and planned resource control; Priority 2 through climate resilience, accessibility and whole-life asset stewardship; Priority 3 through long-term canopy and service continuity; Priority 4 through public wellbeing and engagement; and Priority 6 through protection of veteran trees and the city's natural heritage.

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	X
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	X
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	X

Financial Implications

Adoption of the policy does not, by itself, authorise expenditure beyond approved budgets. Implementation will be phased through the Council's existing tree-management budget, annual service plan and normal budget-setting process.

Resource requirements may include:

- baseline mapping, data improvement and proportionate tree inspections;
- competent arboricultural, ecological, engineering or legal advice for complex cases;
- programmed safety and conservation work, including veteran-tree management;
- native planting, replacement and funded establishment care to independence; and
- biosecurity, ash dieback response, emergency work and post-event inspections.

Projects or actions that cannot be accommodated within an approved budget or delegated authority will be reported separately. Planned inspections, early formative care, retention of safely manageable trees and properly funded aftercare are intended to reduce avoidable emergency costs, premature felling and repeated planting failure. External grants, sponsorship or volunteer support may add value but will not replace the Council's core asset-management obligations.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The overall implications are positive. The policy protects existing canopy and long-lived trees, improves age continuity, retains deadwood habitat, supports native species diversity, strengthens planting establishment and promotes soils and rooting conditions that improve resilience to drought, heat, intense rainfall, pests and disease. Climate suitability will be considered alongside ecological integrity when selecting native species and provenance.

Legal Implications

The policy supports the Council's duty of care and strengthened public-authority biodiversity duty. It also provides an operational framework for compliance with protected-species law, plant-health controls, felling controls, Tree Preservation Orders, conservation-area procedures and relevant professional standards. It does not transfer to Wells City Council the statutory planning or highway functions of Somerset Council. Required consents, notifications and specialist or legal advice will continue to be obtained on a case-by-case basis.

Community Implications

The policy is based on the Council's previous tree-policy work and current national and local guidance. It provides for clear communication before significant work, prompt investigation of credible reports, responsible community recording and planting, and improved public understanding of tree lifecycles, veteran features, deadwood and the time required to replace mature canopy. Specialist, ecological, planning, highways or legal consultation will be sought where the circumstances require it.

Risks & Opportunities

Option	Opportunities	Risks and implications
1. Adopt the policy as presented (recommended)	Creates one clear, evidence-led framework; supports consistent decisions, legal compliance, lifecycle management, annual assurance and long-term investment.	Requires phased officer time, record improvement, specialist input and sustained budget discipline. These are manageable through the annual service plan and budget process.
2. Adopt the policy with amendments	Allows the Committee to refine local wording or emphasis before adoption.	Substantive changes may weaken internal consistency or require further technical review. Extensive amendment may delay implementation and public clarity.
3. Do nothing - do not adopt the policy	Avoids the immediate work of implementing a new formal framework.	Leaves the Council without a single adopted lifecycle policy, clear annual assurance or consistent successor-planning framework; increases the likelihood of reactive decisions, avoidable planting failure and gaps between tree generations.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Endorse to Full City Council to adopt the Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy.
2. Endorse the implementation priorities set out in the policy, to be phased through the annual service plan and approved budget.
3. Receive a concise annual tree-management summary and undertake a full review of the policy within five years, or earlier where a significant change or incident requires it.

Nomination of decision: _____

Seconder of decision: _____

Appendices:

1. Appendix A: Wells City Council Tree Management and Whole-Life Tree Stewardship Policy.

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 Item 13 (b)



Author	Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Manager
Subject	Green Corridors and Urban Wildlife Nesting Opportunities
Date of Committee:	3 September 2026
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Background & Context

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee support for the development of a partnership-based project to strengthen green corridors across Wells and to explore suitable opportunities for wildlife nesting provision within the city, including for appropriate bird species where this can be achieved lawfully, proportionately and with proper ecological oversight.

The proposal is not for any form of species release or reintroduction. Rather, it is intended to support the natural use of Wells by wildlife already present within the wider Mendip and Somerset landscape through habitat connectivity, sympathetic land management and the careful assessment of potential nesting opportunities.

This proposal should be viewed within the context of the Council's wider environmental framework. The Grounds Maintenance Strategy and Pollinator Action Framework establish the land management principles that will help create the conditions required for this work, including improved habitat connectivity, more diverse grassland management, strengthened hedgerow and shrub value, reduced intervention where appropriate, and a more joined-up ecological approach across council-managed land. Together, those documents provide the strategic foundation upon which this project can be developed

Background

Wells is well placed to take a joined-up approach to habitat connectivity and urban biodiversity enhancement. Through the Grounds Maintenance Strategy and Pollinator Action Framework, the Council has already begun to develop a more strategic approach to the management of its land, balancing presentation, accessibility and safety with biodiversity value, habitat resilience and long-term stewardship.

The Grounds Maintenance Strategy is particularly relevant in that it supports a more considered approach to mowing regimes, meadow management, hedge and shrub maintenance, tree retention and seasonal timing of operations. In practical terms, this creates the structure and connectivity that wildlife requires in order to move through the urban environment and between the city and the surrounding countryside.

The Pollinator Action Framework is equally relevant, as it seeks to improve habitat value across the city through more pollinator-friendly planting, increased seasonal nectar provision, improved habitat connectivity and more wildlife-aware maintenance practices. Whilst aimed principally at pollinators, the wider benefit of that framework is to strengthen the ecological function of open spaces and to support a healthier and more resilient food web overall.

Taken together, these two documents begin to establish the environmental conditions upon which a future green corridors and wildlife nesting initiative can sensibly be based. This report therefore represents a logical next step: moving from strategic land management principles into a more place-based project that links habitat management, partnership working, education and the assessment of suitable nesting opportunities within Wells.

There is already a strong local basis for partnership working. Wells benefits from a number of organisations and institutions with an existing interest in environmental stewardship, education and the management of land and buildings within the city. This creates an opportunity for the Council to take a collaborative approach which is both practical and proportionate.

Proposal

The proposed initiative would be based on two linked strands of work.

The first strand would be the strengthening of green corridors across Wells. This would involve identifying and, where appropriate, enhancing links between existing open spaces, school grounds, churchyards, tree cover, hedgerows, gardens, rough grassland and lower-mown areas so that wildlife can move more effectively through the city and between the built area and the surrounding countryside.

This strand would directly build upon the principles already set out within the Grounds Maintenance Strategy and Pollinator Action Framework. Measures such as differentiated mowing, meadow creation or expansion, the retention and strengthening of hedgerows, improved shrub and tree connectivity, and pollinator-friendly

planting will collectively help establish the physical and ecological network required to support a wider range of species within the city.

The second strand would be the assessment of potential nesting opportunities at suitable sites across the city. This would not involve immediate installation. Instead, officers would work with partners to identify whether there are any locations where nesting boxes, ledges or similar features may be appropriate, taking account of ecological suitability, operational practicality, heritage sensitivity, safety and future maintenance requirements.

Potential locations for review may include:

- suitable high-level buildings within the city, subject to owner agreement and specialist advice;
- appropriate school or public buildings overlooking open habitat or green corridors;
- quieter treed settings where owl or other wildlife nesting provision may be appropriate; and
- lower-disturbance fringe locations where habitat conditions may support species associated with the urban edge.

The project should remain flexible and evidence-led. The intention at this stage is not to predetermine either the species or the sites, but to establish whether there is a realistic and deliverable Wells-based programme that can be developed in phases and in partnership with key stakeholders.

The proposal also provides an opportunity to build an education and engagement strand alongside any habitat work. Officers could explore support from specialist organisations, local partners and environmental groups to assist with school visits, talks, interpretation and practical engagement around habitat creation, species awareness and stewardship.

It is also worth noting that wildlife nesting provision has already been delivered successfully elsewhere within the city in a sensitive and considered manner. This provides a useful local example of how such measures can be approached positively and organically where appropriate, without the need to place any individual site under undue expectation at this stage.

Strategic Relevance

This proposal is directly relevant to the Council's emerging environmental agenda and provides a practical means of building upon work already underway.

The Grounds Maintenance Strategy establishes the operational land management approach required to support stronger ecological value across council-managed land. In doing so, it provides the physical basis upon which improved connectivity can be achieved.

The Pollinator Action Framework supports habitat enhancement through planting, seasonal diversity, more nature-aware management and improved connectivity between sites. In practical terms, it helps create the ecological richness required for a more resilient urban landscape.

This proposal draws those strands together and seeks to apply them in a coordinated way across the city, moving from strategic intent toward practical delivery. It therefore provides a visible and place-based mechanism through which the Council's wider environmental ambitions may begin to be realised.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

The proposal supports Priority 2 through habitat connectivity, nature recovery and long-term stewardship; Priority 4 through partnership working, environmental education and community wellbeing; and Priority 6 through sensitive environmental stewardship of civic and heritage places.

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	X

Financial Implications

At this stage, the proposal is limited to early partnership discussions and an initial feasibility exercise. This would primarily involve officer time and any modest external advice required to determine whether a viable project can be brought forward. Any future capital or revenue implications would be reported back to Committee before implementation.

There are no significant immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report beyond officer time and any minor feasibility costs.

Should a future delivery phase be proposed, a further report would be brought to Committee setting out costs, funding options and any opportunities for external support, grant funding or partnership contribution.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The proposal would support the Council's environmental objectives by improving habitat connectivity, strengthening the ecological function of urban green spaces and encouraging a more joined-up approach to nature recovery within Wells.

Legal Implications

Any work of this nature would need to be guided by appropriate ecological advice. Where future proposals relate to protected nesting birds, works would need to comply fully with wildlife legislation and be planned accordingly. The recommendations in this report are therefore limited to partnership discussions and feasibility work at this stage.

Any potential nesting provision associated with historic or prominent buildings would need to be discussed fully with the relevant owner and assessed against access, maintenance, safety and heritage requirements. Not all sites will be appropriate, and in many cases habitat and corridor improvements may represent the most suitable contribution.

Any future project involving nesting infrastructure or works near active nesting sites would need to comply fully with wildlife legislation and any relevant property, planning or heritage requirements.

The recommendations in this report do not authorise installation works at this stage, only the development of a feasibility-based proposal.

Community Implications

It would create opportunities for partnership working with established local organisations and institutions, including Wells Environment Network, Wells Cathedral, The Bishop's Palace and local schools.

It would support public engagement and education, particularly where schools are involved in habitat mapping, site stewardship and environmental learning, and where specialist wildlife organisations can add value through talks, visits and interpretation.

A key strength of this proposal is the opportunity to develop it in partnership with organisations already active within Wells.

Wells Environment Network offers a useful route for coordination, local engagement and wider community participation.

Wells Cathedral and The Bishop's Palace represent important institutions within the city with strong educational and environmental relevance, and their participation would help strengthen the collaborative and city-wide nature of the project.

Local schools would be valuable partners not only in terms of potential sites and green linkages, but also in supporting educational engagement, stewardship and awareness amongst younger residents.

Specialist wildlife organisations and charities may also be able to assist with advice, talks, visits or educational support, helping to ensure that any project is grounded in good practice and is supported by suitable external expertise.

Risks & Opportunities

Risks Identified	Opportunities Identified
Inappropriate species or locations could be pursued without sufficient ecological evidence or long-term maintenance planning.	An evidence-led feasibility study can identify practical habitat links and suitable nesting opportunities before any installation is authorised.
Protected-species law, heritage constraints, access and building-owner requirements may rule out some sites.	Early involvement of specialist wildlife organisations, Wells Cathedral, The Bishop's Palace and property owners can build lawful and locally appropriate proposals.
Initial work requires officer time and may require modest specialist advice; later phases could create capital and maintenance costs.	Partnership contributions, grants and phased delivery may reduce the Council's direct cost and spread responsibility.
Premature publicity or installation could create unrealistic expectations about species, sites and timescales.	A measured education and engagement programme can support schools, volunteers and public understanding of habitat stewardship.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Endorse, in principle, the development of a Wells Green Corridors and Urban Wildlife Nesting Initiative.
2. Authorise the Open Spaces Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk, to open discussions with Wells Environment Network, Wells Cathedral, The Bishop's Palace, local schools and relevant specialist wildlife organisations regarding partnership working, education and feasibility.
3. Authorise an initial feasibility exercise to identify opportunities to strengthen green corridors; assess potential locations for nesting infrastructure; consider ecological, legal, heritage, safety, operational and maintenance requirements; and identify any resource implications.
4. Receive a further report setting out a phased delivery proposal, costs, funding options and required approvals before any installation or capital commitment is authorised.

Nomination of decision: _____

Seconder of decision: _____

Appendices:

None.



WELLS CITY COUNCIL Item 13 c



Author	Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Manager
Subject	Proposed Volunteer Survey and Registration of Veteran Trees on Wells City Council Land
Date of Committee:	3 September 2026
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Background & Context

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with information on a proposal from a local volunteer group to survey trees on Wells City Council land and identify trees which they consider to be veteran trees, with a view to recording them on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory.

This report does not make a formal officer recommendation. It is intended to set out the purpose of the Ancient Tree Inventory, the potential benefits and risks of supporting the proposal, and the distinction between the Council's existing tree management policy and a public national tree register. Councillors are asked to consider whether they wish the Council to support the proposal as a Council-backed initiative, support it with conditions, or allow volunteers to proceed independently without formal Council endorsement.

2. Background

Wells City Council's Tree Policy recognises the importance of veteran, ancient and notable trees. The Council's policy approach is primarily a land and asset management tool. It assists the Council in considering trees across their whole life cycle, including establishment, maturity, decline, habitat value, public safety, succession planting and long-term stewardship.

The proposal now being considered is different in nature. The Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory is a national public register which records ancient, veteran and notable trees. It is publicly searchable and is used to help identify, celebrate and protect important trees. The Woodland Trust describes the Ancient Tree Inventory as "mapping the oldest and most important trees in the UK" and invites people to add ancient or old trees to the map. The register currently includes more than 190,000 trees, with the Woodland Trust stating that there are thousands more still to add.

The question for the Council is therefore not simply whether veteran trees are important — the Council's policy already recognises that they are — but whether the Council wishes to actively support a volunteer-led exercise that places Council-owned trees onto a national public register.

3. What is a Veteran Tree?

Government standing advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission explains that ancient and veteran trees may be individual trees or groups of trees found in areas such as wood pasture, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks and other locations. It describes ancient and veteran trees as irreplaceable habitats.

A veteran tree does not necessarily have to be extremely old. A tree may be classed as veteran because it has significant features associated with ageing, decay or habitat value, such as hollowing, branch death, decay features, fungi, cavities, deadwood, or other characteristics which support biodiversity, cultural value or heritage value. Government guidance notes that all ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient.

This is an important distinction because a volunteer survey may identify trees which are valuable because of their condition, habitat features or cultural presence, even where the tree may not be exceptionally old.

4. What is the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory?

The Ancient Tree Inventory is a public recording system operated by the Woodland Trust. Its purpose is to identify and map ancient, veteran and notable trees across the UK. Members of the public can submit records, including location, species, girth, access details, photographs and notes on features such as hollowing, fungi, beetle holes and wildlife use. The Woodland Trust's recording guidance asks contributors to gather information such as location, species, girth and photographs, and encourages additional detail on features such as hollowing, fungi and wildlife.

The Inventory is therefore best understood as a public evidence and awareness tool. It helps build a national picture of important trees, raises public awareness, supports conservation efforts and can assist with future decision-making. However, it is not itself a statutory designation.

5. Does Registration Give a Tree Legal Protection?

Registration on the Ancient Tree Inventory does not, by itself, give a tree direct legal protection.

The Woodland Trust is clear that the UK's ancient trees have "no automatic right of protection" and that the majority of important trees remain unprotected.

This means that a tree does not become legally protected simply because it is recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory. Registration is not the same as:

1. a Tree Preservation Order;
2. Conservation Area tree protection;
3. a planning condition;
4. a Site of Special Scientific Interest designation;
5. a statutory heritage designation;
6. or any other formal legal restriction.

The principal legal protections for trees remain separate from the Ancient Tree Inventory. For example, a Tree Preservation Order is made by a local planning authority and can make it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a protected tree without consent. Somerset Council's own guidance states that Tree Preservation Orders are used to protect trees significant to their local surroundings and that confirmed orders remain in force permanently.

Trees in Conservation Areas are also subject to separate controls. Somerset Council states that the six-week notice period for works to trees in Conservation Areas allows the Council to assess whether a tree is worthy of Tree Preservation Order status.

6. Can Registration Affect Planning Decisions?

Although the Ancient Tree Inventory does not create legal protection, it can be relevant in planning.

Natural England and Forestry Commission standing advice states that its guidance on ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees is a material planning consideration for local planning authorities. It also states that local planning authorities can use inventories, including the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory, to help decide whether a development proposal will affect ancient or veteran trees.

The same guidance makes clear that only a small proportion of ancient or veteran trees are recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory, and that the guidance applies to ancient and veteran trees whether they are recorded on an inventory or not.

The effect of registration is therefore evidential rather than directly protective. A registered tree may be easier for planning officers, developers, consultants, residents and consultees to identify at an early stage. If a registered tree is genuinely ancient or veteran, it may then attract significant weight in planning assessment because ancient and veteran trees are treated as irreplaceable habitats.

Government guidance on irreplaceable habitats confirms that ancient and veteran trees are included within the category of irreplaceable habitat. It states that planning permission for development resulting in the loss of irreplaceable habitat should only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and that the normal 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement does not apply to the loss of irreplaceable habitat in the usual way because it would be impossible to achieve. Instead, impacts must be minimised and a compensation strategy agreed with the planning authority.

In practical terms, registration may not stop development, but it can make it more likely that a tree is identified, assessed, discussed and given appropriate weight within the planning process.

7. Difference Between Council Tree Policy and Public Registration

The Council's Tree Policy is primarily an internal management and stewardship framework. It assists the Council in managing trees responsibly over their life cycle, balancing habitat value, public amenity, public safety, climate resilience and replacement planting.

The Ancient Tree Inventory is different. It is a public national register. Once a tree is recorded, its presence becomes externally visible and may be used by members of the public, developers, campaign groups, planning consultants, the Woodland Trust, ecological consultants and planning officers.

This does not make registration inappropriate. However, Councillors should be aware that supporting the scheme may have wider implications than simply gathering useful tree data. Council-backed registration could be seen as the Council formally endorsing the status of the trees recorded, unless the process is carefully managed.

Conclusion

The proposed volunteer survey has the potential to support the Council's existing Tree Policy, improve understanding of important trees on Council land, involve the community in environmental stewardship, and contribute to a national record of ancient, veteran and notable trees.

However, Councillors should be aware that the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory is a public national register. Although registration does not grant direct legal protection, it can be used as evidence in planning and environmental decision-making. Council-backed participation may therefore carry implications for public expectations, planning sensitivity, future tree works and the Council's reputation.

The central decision for Councillors is whether the Council wishes to actively support the survey and registration of trees on Council land, and if so, what governance arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the process is accurate, transparent and aligned with the Council's own tree management responsibilities.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

The proposal supports Priority 1 through a transparent governance and evidence framework; Priority 2 through whole-life tree stewardship, biodiversity and climate resilience; Priority 4 through structured volunteer and community engagement; and Priority 6 through recognition of the heritage and civic value of veteran trees.

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	X

Financial Implications

There may be limited direct financial cost if the work is volunteer-led. However, officer time may be required to liaise with volunteers, review submitted information, manage records, respond to queries and incorporate relevant findings into Council tree management processes.

There may be future indirect costs if the survey identifies trees requiring specialist arboricultural advice, management plans, root protection measures, fencing, signage, succession planting or further ecological assessment.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

The proposal would support the Council's existing tree policy and wider stewardship objectives. Identifying veteran and potential future veteran trees would help inform decisions around maintenance, deadwood retention, mowing regimes, root protection, succession planting and habitat connectivity.

It would support biodiversity and climate resilience. Veteran trees can provide significant habitat value, particularly through cavities, decay features, fungi, standing deadwood and associated invertebrate, bird and bat interest.

It may also strengthen the Council's public position on long-term environmental stewardship by visibly supporting the identification and appreciation of important trees.

Legal Implications

Registration on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory does not create legal protection. However, ancient and veteran trees are recognised in national planning guidance as irreplaceable habitats, and the Ancient Tree Inventory may be used by planning authorities as an evidence source when considering development proposals.

Where a tree is considered important to local amenity, formal legal protection would normally be considered through Tree Preservation Order processes or Conservation Area controls rather than through the Ancient Tree Inventory itself. Somerset Council's guidance confirms that TPOs can protect significant trees and that unauthorised works to protected trees can constitute an offence.

The Council should therefore treat registration as an evidence and awareness tool, not as a substitute for formal tree protection or professional arboricultural advice.

Community Implications

The proposal would provide a constructive role for volunteers. A structured survey could be a positive example of community involvement in the management and understanding of Council land.

It could support better planning awareness. Where Council-owned veteran trees are close to development sites, public rights of way, highways, boundaries or other pressures, registration may help ensure that their value is recognised at an earlier stage.

It may strengthen the Council's public position on long-term environmental stewardship.

If the Council supports the proposal, volunteer participation should operate under a clear protocol covering access, safety, insurance, data handling, officer review and public communications.

Risks & Opportunities

Risks Identified	Opportunities Identified
The first risk is accuracy. Veteran tree identification can involve judgement. If trees are incorrectly classified or poorly recorded, the Council may find itself publicly associated with records that are later challenged.	First, it would improve local knowledge of important trees on Council land. The Council would gain a clearer picture of which trees may have veteran characteristics and where they are located.
The second risk is public expectation. Once a tree is publicly registered, some members of the public may believe it can never be pruned, managed or removed. This could create misunderstanding where safety works, phased retrenchment pruning, decay management, access management or other arboricultural works are necessary.	Second, it would support the Council's existing tree policy and wider stewardship objectives. Identifying veteran and potential future veteran trees would help inform decisions around maintenance, deadwood retention, mowing regimes, root protection, succession planting and habitat connectivity.
The third risk is planning sensitivity. Registration could be used in future planning representations or objections. This may be beneficial where it protects important habitat, but it may also add complexity to Council projects, neighbouring developments, infrastructure proposals or land management decisions.	Third, it would support biodiversity and climate resilience. Veteran trees can provide significant habitat value, particularly through cavities, decay features, fungi, standing deadwood and associated invertebrate, bird and bat interest.
The fourth risk is operational pressure. Public registration may increase interest in specific trees, potentially leading to increased footfall, soil compaction, requests for interpretation, complaints about perceived neglect, or calls for additional fencing, signage or specialist inspections.	Fourth, it would provide a constructive role for volunteers. A structured survey could be a positive example of community involvement in the management and understanding of Council land.
The fifth risk is reputational. If the Council supports the scheme but does not establish a clear process, it may be criticised either for failing to protect registered trees or for allowing volunteers to classify trees without adequate professional oversight.	Fifth, it could support better planning awareness. Where Council-owned veteran trees are close to development sites, public rights of way, highways, boundaries or other pressures, registration may help ensure that their value is recognised at an earlier stage.
The sixth risk is confusion between ecological value and safety condition. A tree may be highly valuable as a veteran tree because it is hollowing, decaying or shedding limbs. Those same features may also require careful risk management in public spaces. Volunteer records should not be treated as arboricultural safety inspections.	Sixth, it may strengthen the Council's public position on long-term environmental stewardship. The Council would be visibly supporting the identification and appreciation of important trees rather than only reacting when trees become a management issue.

Options considered

11. Options for Councillors

Councillors may wish to consider the following options.

Option 1: Support the proposal as a Council-backed initiative

Under this option, the Council would formally support the volunteer survey and registration of veteran trees on Council land. The Council would work with the volunteer group and allow suitable records to be submitted to the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory.

Advantages include strong community engagement, improved tree knowledge, alignment with the Council's Tree Policy, and a positive public stewardship message.

Disadvantages include greater Council responsibility for the quality of records, increased public expectation, and the potential for future planning or land management implications.

Option 2: Support the proposal with conditions and officer oversight

Under this option, the Council would support the principle of the survey but require a defined process before any Council-backed submissions are made. This could include agreed methodology, risk assessment, officer review, use of the term "candidate veteran tree" where appropriate, and retention of records within the Council's own tree database.

Advantages include most of the benefits of community involvement while reducing risks around accuracy, reputational exposure and public misunderstanding.

Disadvantages include some officer time and the need to manage expectations from the volunteer group.

Option 3: Permit volunteers to survey independently, but without Council endorsement

Under this option, the Council would not obstruct lawful public recording but would make clear that any records submitted are volunteer records and not formal Council assessments.

Advantages include minimal officer resource and reduced direct Council responsibility.

Disadvantages include less control over accuracy, weaker integration with the Council's tree policy, and the possibility that public records are still created without the Council having had sight of them first.

Option 4: Do not support registration of Council-owned trees at this stage

Under this option, the Council would decline to support the proposed registration exercise at present, potentially pending further advice from an arboricultural consultant, Somerset Council's tree officers, or the Woodland Trust.

Advantages include avoiding immediate governance and reputational risks.

Disadvantages include losing an opportunity for community engagement, local ecological recording and better identification of important trees.

Recommendations

No preferred officer option is proposed. Committee is asked to:

1. Determine whether the Council should support the volunteer survey as a Council-backed initiative; support it subject to an agreed protocol and officer oversight; allow volunteers to proceed independently without formal Council endorsement; or decline support at this stage pending further advice.
2. If the chosen option involves Council support, authorise the Open Spaces Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk, to agree a protocol covering methodology, use of the term 'candidate veteran tree', access, risk assessment, insurance, non-intrusive recording, officer review, data retention and public communications before any Council-backed submission is made.
3. Confirm that volunteer records are ecological or heritage observations rather than arboricultural safety inspections, statutory designations or guarantees that a tree will never require appropriate management.

Nomination of decision: _____

Seconder of decision: _____

Appendices:

None.



WELLS CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 14



Author	Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Manager
Subject	A39/A371 Roundabout, Wells - Removal of Existing Shrub Planting and In-Principle Approval of a Low-Height Native Planting Scheme
Date of Committee:	To be confirmed
Committee:	Open Spaces Committee

Background & Context

Members are asked to consider an in-principle proposal to remove the existing substantial shrub planting from the roundabout at the junction of the A39 and A371 in Wells and replace it with a low-height, predominantly evergreen native planting scheme designed around highway visibility, lower long-term maintenance and year-round visual interest.

The roundabout is owned by Somerset Council, which has advised that funding is available to complete the work. This is not yet treated as a binding financial commitment. The paper therefore asks the Committee to agree the scheme in principle only. No City Council expenditure, contract, order or physical work will be authorised until Somerset Council has confirmed in writing that it will meet the full agreed project cost.

The present scheme contains large, structured shrubs which have outgrown the space, obscure views across and around the junction, and no longer provide an attractive or proportionate landscape treatment. Repeated pruning would retain a large root system and vigorous woody framework, while continuing to require frequent intervention within a live highway environment.

Because the shrubs and root balls are substantial, removal is expected to require a specialist landscape contractor using a compact excavator or mini-digger. Safe access for plant, loading and waste removal means that the current working assumption is a temporary road closure or other formal traffic restriction. The removal contract will require the appointed contractor to prepare, submit and implement the traffic-management plan, diversion signing and closure arrangements, obtaining the necessary approval from Somerset Council as highway authority.

Recommended concept

Remove the existing shrubs, root systems and unsuitable planting material rather than attempting another cycle of hard pruning.

Regrade and prepare a clean, free-draining, low-fertility planting bed after utility searches and assessment of the existing soil.

Create a highway-approved clear perimeter or maintenance collar and retain unobstructed sightline corridors.

Plant a low native matrix with no trees or substantial shrubs, using evergreen or persistent structure and a succession of spring, summer and autumn colour.

Include a two-year establishment and replacement obligation within the installation contract, followed by a small number of planned maintenance visits each year.

Continue the Council's no-herbicide approach, using dense planting, clean soil preparation and manual or mechanical weed control.

Highway and visibility controls

Highway safety is the controlling design requirement. National roundabout guidance advises that planting should be avoided within central islands of 10 metres or less where it would prevent the required circulatory visibility. Before a final design is commissioned, the island diameter, visibility requirements, kerb condition, underground services and access arrangements must therefore be confirmed with Somerset Council as owner and highway authority. If the island is unsuitable for planting, the fallback should be a simple close-turfed or hard-landscape treatment agreed with Somerset Council.

Governance and implementation

The Committee is being asked to approve the strategic outcome only: removal of the overgrown shrub scheme and, in principle, replacement with a low, native, colourful and maintainable design. This decision does not approve expenditure, appoint a contractor or authorise works. Detailed planting quantities, final species selection and like-for-like native substitutions where plants are unavailable are operational matters for officers and competent advisers. The soil specification, highway-approved maximum height, contractor's traffic-

management method, procurement route and works programme will be managed operationally only after Somerset Council has confirmed the funding and delivery arrangements in writing.

Links to Council Corporate Priorities

The proposal supports Priority 1 through clear external-funding and governance controls; Priority 2 through improved visibility, accessibility, climate-aware planting and asset stewardship; Priority 3 through a lower-maintenance and more resilient service model; Priority 5 through improvement of a prominent gateway to the heritage city; and Priority 6 through responsible management of the civic environment.

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	X
4 – Community Services, Inclusivity & Wellbeing	
5 – Economic Growth and Tourism in a heritage context	X
6 – Heritage, History and Civic responsibility	X

Financial Implications

Somerset Council owns the roundabout and has advised that it has funding available to complete the work. The Committee is not being asked to allocate a City Council capital budget or approve expenditure. Approval of this paper would support the proposal in principle and allow officers to develop the scope and obtain the information needed to confirm the complete project cost, provided that this creates no unapproved financial liability for Wells City Council.

Before any contract, order or works are authorised, Somerset Council must confirm in writing that it will meet the full agreed project cost and the delivery, payment, VAT, contingency and variation arrangements must be clear. At the date of this report, Somerset Council publishes a road-closure application fee of £1,647 and advises an approximate three-month period from application to a granted order. The fee and lead time must be reconfirmed before submission. The Somerset-funded project cost should separately identify:

- survey, design, highway liaison, utility searches and licence or application fees;
- contractor-designed traffic management, diversion signing and the road closure or restriction, including applications and approvals;
- contractor mobilisation, mini-digger, root removal, loading, waste transfer and lawful disposal;
- soil removal or improvement, drainage, regrading and any kerb or edge repairs;
- plants, bulbs, stabilised mineral or other approved surface treatment, supply and installation;
- a two-year establishment, watering, weeding and replacement service; and
- a proportionate contingency for hidden roots, services, poor soil and traffic-management changes.

Without full-cost confirmation, or if Wells City Council could incur any liability, the matter must return to the Committee before commitment.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

Removal will cause a temporary loss of vegetation and habitat, but the long-term implications can be positive if the replacement uses appropriate native species, provides a longer flowering season, avoids herbicides, reduces repeated machinery access and is designed for drought tolerance. Soil should not be over-enriched, as low fertility will help suppress vigorous weed growth and retain compact plant form.

Legal Implications

Ownership by Somerset Council is confirmed. No procurement commitment or work should begin until Somerset Council has confirmed in writing that it will meet the full agreed project cost and the parties have agreed the delivery and payment arrangements. The removal specification will place responsibility on the appointed contractor for the appropriate highway licence or consent, location and traffic-management plans, plant and utility enquiry information, insurance, risk assessments, waste-transfer arrangements and temporary traffic restriction, with evidence of approval supplied before mobilisation. Shrub removal must also comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: routine removal should be programmed outside the main nesting period and preceded by a competent check, with any active nest protected.

Community Implications

Continued liaison will be required with Somerset Council as owner, highway authority and proposed funder. The appointed contractor will be responsible for the traffic-management plan and for coordinating the approved closure, diversion and notices through the normal highway process. The City Council should explain to residents and businesses that the works are a safety-led landscape improvement with replacement planting.

Risks & Opportunities

Option	Opportunities	Risks and implications
1. Remove and replace with a low native matrix (recommended)	Restores visibility, removes the woody regrowth problem, creates seasonal colour and biodiversity value, and substantially reduces routine work after establishment.	Requires written confirmation that Somerset Council will meet the full agreed cost, together with highway approval, traffic management, competent ground preparation and funded establishment care.
2. Remove and replace with close-mown grass or simple hard landscape	Provides the clearest and most predictable sightlines and a simpler installation.	Grass requires regular mowing within the highway; hard landscape provides little biodiversity or seasonal colour and may still require weed and cleansing visits.
3. Retain, prune and partially renovate the existing shrubs	Lower immediate capital cost and less initial disruption than full removal.	Does not remove the established root and regrowth problem, retains recurring visibility concerns and is likely to require repeated traffic management for future pruning.
4. Do nothing	Avoids immediate expenditure and disruption.	Leaves an unattractive and increasingly difficult planting scheme in place and does not address visibility, public appearance or long-term maintenance risk.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Note that Somerset Council owns the A39/A371 roundabout and has advised that it has funding available to complete the work.
2. Approve in principle the removal of the existing substantial shrub planting from the A39/A371 roundabout in Wells and its replacement with a low-height native planting scheme.
3. Endorse the design objectives of improved visibility, no trees or substantial shrubs, a highway-approved clear perimeter, year-round structure, a broad spread of seasonal colour, no herbicide use and lower long-term maintenance.
4. Confirm that this is an agreement to the principle of the scheme only and does not authorise expenditure, contract award, an order for work or physical commencement.
5. Require formal written confirmation from Somerset Council that it will meet the full agreed project cost, including surveys, applications, traffic management, removal and disposal, groundworks, planting, establishment care, VAT, contingency and approved variations, before Wells City Council enters any commitment or work begins.
6. Authorise the Open Spaces Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk, to continue liaison with Somerset Council, confirm the highway and delivery requirements and obtain competitive quotations or cost information, provided this creates no unapproved financial liability for Wells City Council.
7. Require the removal quotation and specification to make the appointed contractor responsible for preparing, securing approval of and implementing the traffic-management plan and closure arrangements, together with utility searches, nesting-bird checks, root and waste removal and lawful disposal.
8. Approve the replacement planting only in principle and delegate the final detailed species mix, quantities, layout, soil and drainage preparation, approved height envelope, procurement and works programme to officers and competent advisers. Appropriate low-growing native substitutions may be made where a referenced species is unavailable, provided visibility, seasonal colour, resilience and maintenance objectives are maintained.
9. Require the matter to return to the Committee before any commitment if Somerset Council does not cover the complete agreed cost or the proposed arrangement would create a financial liability for Wells City Council.

Nomination of decision: _____

Seconder of decision: _____

Appendices:

Appendix A: Indicative Roundabout Renewal Concept and Planting Palette (for highway and quotation development).

Appendix A

Indicative Roundabout Renewal Concept and Planting Palette

Concept for highway and quotation development - not a construction drawing

1. Design objectives

Visibility first. All geometry, planting heights and maintenance access are subordinate to the visibility requirements confirmed by Somerset Council.

Low, not empty. The design uses ground-hugging and low-growing species rather than repeating a shrub scheme or leaving the island visually barren.

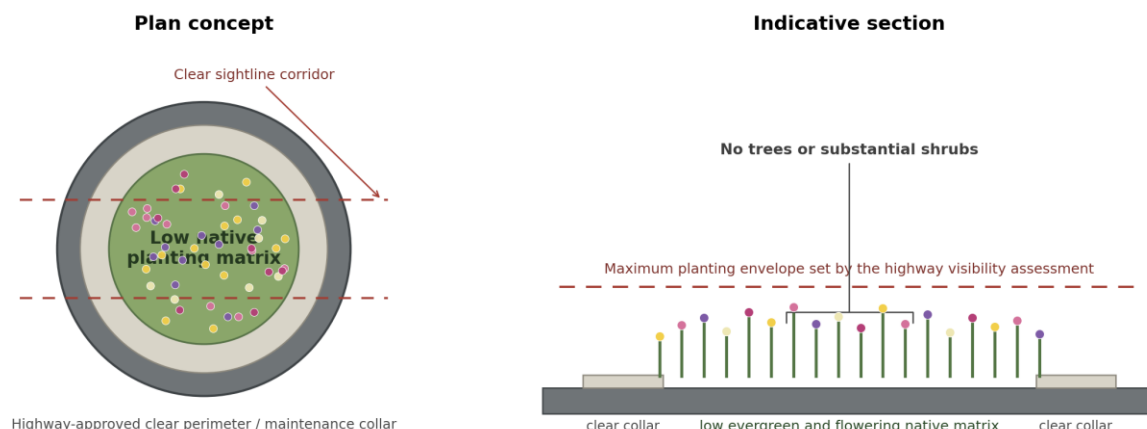
Colour across the year. Spring bulbs and cowslips lead into yellow rock-rose, pink thrift, purple thyme, yellow-orange bird's-foot trefoil and magenta crane's-bill, supported by evergreen foliage and fine grasses.

Native and resilient. Species are native to Great Britain and selected for sun, exposure, free drainage and relatively low fertility; final provenance and soil suitability must be checked.

Safe to maintain. The scheme minimises frequent cutting and pruning inside the highway, uses a clear maintenance collar and avoids plants that need regular shaping.

Designed to establish. Dense planting, weed-free preparation, initial watering and replacement obligations are treated as part of the capital project rather than left to chance.

A39/A371 Roundabout, Wells - low-height native planting concept



Concept only - not to scale. Final diameter, collar width, soil profile and planting height require Somerset Council highway approval.

2. Indicative native planting palette

The following plants are references for the type, height and spread of colour intended; they are not a fixed procurement schedule. Final selection must respond to the soil survey, visibility envelope, seasonal availability, biosecurity and the requirement for UK native species of suitable provenance. Officers may approve alternative low-growing native species where a referenced plant is unavailable, provided the agreed visibility, colour, resilience and maintenance outcomes are retained. Named ornamental cultivars should not replace the native-species intent without an agreed reason.

Common name	Botanical name	Function	Main interest
Sheep's fescue	Festuca ovina	Fine, persistent grass structure and movement; creates a calm matrix between flowers.	Green through much of the year

Common name	Botanical name	Function	Main interest
Thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Low evergreen clumps with pink or white flowerheads; exposed-site tolerance.	Spring to summer
Common rock-rose	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Low spreading evergreen structure with clear yellow flowers; suitable for sunny, free-draining soil.	Late spring to summer
Wild thyme	<i>Thymus serpyllum</i> or appropriate native thyme	Very low evergreen aromatic mat with purple flowers; supports pollinating insects.	Summer
Bird's-foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Low yellow and orange pea flowers; strong pollinator value and a long flowering period.	Summer to early autumn
Bloody crane's-bill	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Compact magenta flowers with useful autumn foliage colour.	Summer and autumn foliage
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	Early native yellow flowers, used in small drifts rather than as a uniform carpet.	Spring
Wild daffodil	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>	Recognisable early yellow colour; bulbs concentrated away from the visibility collar.	Late winter to spring

3. Indicative maintenance model

The scheme should be described as lower maintenance after establishment, not maintenance-free. The contractor's tender should price the establishment period separately so the Council can see the continuing resource requirement.

Stage	Expected management
Installation and first year	Weed-free preparation; dense planting; watering during dry periods; approximately 6-8 planned inspection and hand-weeding visits; edge and collar care; replacement of failures.
Second year	Approximately 4-6 visits focused on weeds, establishment watering, edge definition, selective cutback and replacement of plants that have not established.
Established scheme	Approximately three planned visits each year: late-winter cutback and inspection, early-summer weed and edge visit, and late-summer or autumn selective tidy, plus any necessary highway-safety response.
All stages	No herbicide use; no routine shrub shaping; retain the agreed height envelope and clear collar; use appropriate traffic management for every visit.

4. Project controls and risk reduction

Risk	Required control
Visibility or unsuitable island size	Measure the island and obtain written highway agreement before final design. If planting is not acceptable, use the agreed turf or hard-landscape fallback.
Traffic and public safety	Make the appointed removal contractor responsible for a competent traffic-management plan, the approved temporary restriction or closure, diversion signing, off-peak programming where practicable, and evidence of approvals before mobilisation.
Underground services and kerbs	Obtain service plans and plant-enquiry returns; use appropriate detection and excavation controls; include kerb and edge repairs in the quotation where required.

Risk	Required control
Nesting birds or protected wildlife	Programme routine clearance outside the main nesting period, undertake a competent pre-start check and delay affected work where an active nest is present.
Planting failure or weeds	Use appropriate low-fertility soil, dense planting, mulch or approved mineral surface, two-year aftercare and a contractual replacement obligation.
Funding or cost escalation	Obtain written confirmation that Somerset Council will meet the complete agreed cost, including contingency, VAT and approved variations. Return to Committee before any commitment if Wells City Council could incur a financial liability.

5. Proposed delivery sequence

- Record the Committee's in-principle decision and agree the proposed delivery and procurement route with Somerset Council as owner and proposed funder.
- Confirm the roundabout dimensions, visibility requirements and highway consent route, then prepare the performance specification and required utility, soil, drainage, ecology and kerb information without creating an unapproved City Council liability.
- Obtain itemised quotations or cost information, requiring the removal contractor to include the traffic-management plan and closure approvals and separately identifying removal, groundworks, planting and two-year establishment.
- Obtain formal written confirmation that Somerset Council will meet the complete agreed project cost and agree the payment, VAT, contingency and variation arrangements before any appointment, order or work.
- The appointed contractor secures and implements the temporary restriction or closure; the approved programme and diversion are then communicated.
- Remove the shrub planting and roots, regrade and prepare the soil, install the approved scheme at a season suitable for establishment, and monitor and replace failures through the funded aftercare period.

6. Key technical references

Somerset Council: Apply to close a road or right of way for works; and Apply for a licence to do minor works on or near the road (section 171).

Standards for Highways: CD 116 Geometric design of roundabouts; GD 304 Designing health and safety into maintenance.

Royal Horticultural Society plant profiles for *Lotus corniculatus*, *Armeria maritima*, *Helianthemum nummularium* and native thyme species.



Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Markets Update and Consultation
Date of Committee:	3 rd September 2026
Committee:	Outside Spaces Committee

1. Background & Context

The markets provision currently sits solely under the Estates Committee, which continues to be relevant for the physical infrastructure of the space, however, the operational provision, effectiveness of provisions etc, will now be reported to Outside Spaces as a standing item to ensure that any emerging issues are known to Council.

2. Trader Engagement

Following reports to several Councillors, the consultation seen in Appendix A, has been drafted for Committees consideration.

It should be noted that there have been some concerns, and difficult messages to be portrayed to some traders of late, resulting in some bad feeling across the market. This has subsided following implementation of the below noted process and procedure, but given that the City Council has not directly consulted with traders in this way since taking over the market, and that, more than one year one, now would seem the opportune time to seek details from them.

3. Process & Procedure

Significant work has been undertaken within the last few months to ensure that due process is in place and working well.

Trader Terms and Conditions

All traders for weekly markets have now signed up and returned trader terms and conditions sheets, which allow the City Council to consistently apply process in managing the markets. These terms and conditions were previously signed off by Council.

Annual Leave

The application of leave is now being proactively managed to ensure the continue vibrancy of our markets. There is a fine balance between markets looking full and supporting traders directly with any personal needs/additional holiday requests.

We have agreed that moving forward, any traders with permanent status will be offered additional leave over that of the noted 4 weeks policy position, if, payment for the pitch is made in advance to cover the leave period. This ensures that there is no financial loss, secures the position of the trader as a continued permanent trader, and offers opportunity for casual traders to trade within the space periodically.



Escalations or Concerns

One trader, who was supported by the Councils set up team to put up and take down their gazebo, has been asked to provide a new stall due to broken infrastructure. Without this being provided, the Council can not continue to support the provision and this has been communicated to the trader.

A further trader has been moved to a new pitch location following concern raised from a local business. This has been in place now for several months and is working well.

Pavement licenses continue to be a challenge, particularly with one business. Information associated with all pavement licenses has been requested from Somerset Council, to allow the Town Clerk to manage and/or report concerns to Somerset Council as required.

There have been a number of near misses, trips and falls associated with the uneven surface of the Market Place, which continues to heighten the need to address the surface of the space.

4. Monthly Market Trail Update

June, July and August markets have gone exceptionally well and attendance from the public is growing with each market, showing growth in engagement. The change of provision from that of our weekly markets has been very well received.

Feedback was provided regarding the volume of seating available to allow food to be consumed, rest in a cool spot and potentially increase dwelling time within the market as a whole. Temporarily, this has been secured through the Crown seating provision, we are in the process of scoping options for our own provision and the suitability for all market and event functions.

5. Comms and Engagement

Further work is required across all markets to improve the marketing of the provisions and regular communications of what we are offering, when and from whom. This is included within the forthcoming work plan for the newly created Communications and Marketing Officer position and is expected to be in place from Mid-September.

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. Any financial implications will be managed as part of any direct projects and reported to Finance Committee as required.

Climate, Sustainability Implications

Climate implications are being managed directly within each project, specifically where the consumption of foods and goods within the space are being considered.

Legal Implications

There are no perceived legal implications as a result of this report.

Community Implications

There are no perceived direct community implications as a result of this report.

Recommendations

Outside Spaces Committee is asked to:

1. Note the update provided for the operational market service
2. Approve the draft consultation for release to traders within the next 4 weeks, with key themes to be provided at the next meeting of Outside Spaces Committee.

Appendices:

- Draft Consultation Document



Market Trader Consultation - Draft

Consultation from the Chair of the Outside Spaces Committee

Dear Trader,

As Chair of the Outside Spaces Committee, I would like to invite your feedback on your experience of trading at our weekly and monthly markets.

The purpose of this consultation is to better understand any operational, infrastructure or management issues that may be affecting your experience. We are committed to ensuring that our markets are well managed, welcoming and successful for traders, customers and staff alike.

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions as openly and honestly as possible. All feedback will be considered carefully and used to help identify areas for improvement.

About You

1. Which market(s) do you regularly attend?
 - Weekly Market
 - Monthly Market
 - Both
2. How long have you been trading with us?

Your Overall Experience

3. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience of trading at our markets?
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
4. What do you feel works particularly well at our markets?
5. What aspects of the markets do you think could be improved? We are particularly interested in anything that works well in other locations, markets or events that you operate your business from.



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Operations

6. Have you experienced any operational issues? For example: access, loading/unloading, parking, opening times, waste management or other practical matters.
7. Are there any changes you believe would improve the day-to-day running of the markets that you haven't provided in response to question 5?

Infrastructure

The City council has invested significantly within the infrastructure of the markets within its first year. We are keen to continue this support in practical terms to ensure the continued look and feel, and overall longevity of the service.

8. Are there any issues relating to the facilities or infrastructure provided?

Examples might include:

- Electricity
- Water
- Toilets
- Signage
- Lighting
- Surface conditions
- Shelter
- Storage
- Internet or mobile signal

Please provide details.

Communication

We know that communication is key. So we are keen to seek your views in this area.

9. How would you rate communication with the markets team and traders?
10. Is there anything we could do to improve communication or engagement with traders?



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Staff Conduct

We are keen to ensure that all interactions between staff, volunteers and traders are professional, respectful and constructive.

11. Have you experienced examples of particularly helpful, supportive or professional conduct from staff/volunteers that you would like to recognise?

12. Have you experienced or witnessed any interactions with members of staff, volunteers representing the Council, that you felt were inappropriate, discourteous, confrontational or unprofessional?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing. Please note that this information will be treated sensitively and will help us understand any issues and consider whether improvements or further action are appropriate.

Please note if you have already made a complaint to the Town Clerk in line with the Trader Terms and Conditions, with regards to this information?

Looking Ahead

14. What one change would have the greatest positive impact on your experience as a trader?

15. Do you have any additional comments, suggestions or concerns that you would like the Outside Spaces Committee to consider?



Market Visitor & Consumer Consultation – Draft

Consultation from the Chair of the Outside Spaces Committee

Dear Visitor,

The Outside Spaces Committee would like to hear your views about our weekly and monthly markets.

Whether you are a local resident, regular market customer, occasional visitor or tourist, your experience is important to us.

The purpose of this consultation is to understand what people value about the markets, what could be improved, and how we can continue to develop markets that are welcoming, vibrant and enjoyable for residents, visitors, traders and the wider community.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your views.

About You

1. Which best describes you?

- Local resident/business within the City of Wells
- Resident from the surrounding area
- Visitor/tourist staying locally
- Day visitor/tourist
- Other

2. Which of our markets have you visited?

- Weekly Market – Wednesday
- Weekly Market - Saturday
- Monthly Sunday Market
- All
- Not sure

3. How often do you visit our markets?

- Weekly or more often
- A few times each month
- Approximately once a month
- Several times a year
- This is my first visit



Your Experience

4. Overall, how would you rate your experience of our markets?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

5. What do you particularly enjoy or value about the markets?

For example, you may wish to comment on the traders, range of products, atmosphere, location, convenience or overall experience.

6. What, if anything, do you think could be improved?

We would particularly welcome suggestions based on positive experiences you may have had at other markets, events or destinations.

Market Offer

7. How would you rate the range and variety of traders, products and services available?

Wednesday

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Not Applicable

Saturday

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor



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- Not Applicable

Sunday

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Not Applicable

8. Are there any particular types of trader, product, food, service or activity that you would like to see more of at the markets?

9. How important is the market to your decision to visit the city centre?

- Very important – it is one of the main reasons I visit
- Important – it adds to my reason for visiting
- Somewhat important
- Not particularly important
- Not at all important

10. When visiting the market, do you also tend to visit other businesses, attractions or hospitality venues in the city centre?

- Yes, regularly
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- No

If you wish, please tell us what else you typically visit or do.

Location, Facilities & Accessibility

11. How would you rate the market in the following areas?

- Location
- Layout
- Cleanliness
- Accessibility



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- Signage
- Appearance
- Atmosphere
- Ease of moving around the market

For each, please rate:

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Not applicable

12. Have you experienced any accessibility issues when visiting the market?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please tell us what could be improved.

13. Are there any facilities or practical improvements that would make your visit more enjoyable or encourage you to stay longer?

Welcome, Atmosphere & Conduct

We want our markets to provide a welcoming, friendly and professional experience for everyone.

14. How would you describe the overall atmosphere of the market?

15. Have you had a particularly positive experience with a trader, member of market staff or volunteer that you would like to recognise?

16. Have you witnessed or experienced anything while visiting the market that made you feel uncomfortable or that you felt was inappropriate or unprofessional?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing.

Looking Ahead

17. What would encourage you to visit the market more frequently?



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18. What one change or addition would have the greatest positive impact on your experience of the market?

19. Would you recommend visiting our markets to friends, family or visitors?

- Definitely
- Probably
- Not sure
- Probably not
- Definitely not

20. Do you have any other comments, ideas or suggestions that you would like the Outside Spaces Committee to consider?

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Your feedback will help the Outside Spaces Committee understand what residents and visitors value about our markets and identify opportunities to improve and develop them for the future.

Market Staff & Market Officer Consultation – Draft

Consultation from the Chair of the Outside Spaces Committee

Dear Colleague,



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As part of the Outside Spaces Committee's review of our weekly and monthly markets, we would like to hear directly from the people involved in their day-to-day operation.

This consultation is intended for Market Officers and all staff involved in the operation, set-up and pack-down of the markets.

Your practical experience provides an important perspective on what works well, where difficulties arise and where changes to infrastructure, resources, procedures or working arrangements could improve the service.

We would encourage you to provide open and constructive feedback. The purpose of the consultation is to understand the operation of the markets from the perspective of those delivering them and to identify practical opportunities for improvement.

About Your Role

1. What is your role in relation to the markets?

- Market Officer
- Set-up / pack-down staff
- Other operational staff
- Other

2. Which markets are you normally involved with?

- Weekly Market
- Monthly Market
- Both

3. Overall, how effectively do you feel the markets currently operate?

- Very effectively
- Effectively
- Neither effectively nor ineffectively
- Ineffectively
- Very ineffectively

Please explain your answer if you wish.

5. What aspects of the current market operation work particularly well?

6. What aspects of the current operation cause the greatest difficulties or inefficiencies?

Set-Up & Pack-Down



7. How effectively do the current arrangements for setting up and packing down the markets work?

Please consider matters such as:

- Access
- Timing
- Vehicle movements
- Equipment
- Staffing levels
- Allocation of responsibilities
- Coordination with traders
- Storage
- Waste
- Public access
- Health and safety

8. Are there particular stages of set-up or pack-down that regularly cause problems, delays or unnecessary work?

If yes, please provide details and any suggestions for improvement.

9. Do you feel you have the appropriate equipment, resources and information to carry out your role effectively and safely?

- Yes
- Mostly
- No

If not, what additional equipment, resources or information would help?

Infrastructure

The City Council has invested in the market infrastructure during its first year. We want to understand how well that infrastructure works from an operational perspective and where further practical investment may be beneficial.

10. Are there any infrastructure issues that affect the efficient or safe operation of the markets?

For example:

- Electricity



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- Water
- Lighting
- Surfaces
- Barriers
- Signage
- Storage
- Waste facilities
- Market equipment
- Vehicle access
- Communications equipment

Please provide details.

11. Are there any infrastructure improvements or investments that you believe should be prioritised?

Please explain why.

Roles, Procedures & Responsibilities

12. Are roles and responsibilities during market operation, set-up and pack-down sufficiently clear?

- Yes
- Mostly
- No

If not, where is greater clarity required?

13. Are the current procedures and working arrangements practical and appropriate for operating the markets?

- Yes
- Mostly
- No

Please identify any procedures that you believe should be reviewed or improved.

14. Are there recurring issues that you currently have to resolve informally or work around because the existing procedure does not adequately address them?

If yes, please provide examples.



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Communication

15. How effective is communication between those involved in operating the markets?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

16. How effective is communication between market staff and traders?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

17. What could improve communication before, during or after market days?

Working Relationships & Conduct

Successful markets depend upon constructive and professional working relationships between staff, volunteers, traders, businesses and members of the public.

We would like to understand both what works well and where working relationships may be improved.

18. What works particularly well in the relationship between market staff and traders?

19. Are there recurring areas of disagreement, misunderstanding or tension between market staff and traders?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe the nature of these issues and any changes that you believe could help prevent or resolve them.

20. Have you experienced or witnessed particularly positive, helpful or professional conduct from colleagues, traders or volunteers that you would like to recognise?



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21. Have you experienced or witnessed behaviour from a colleague, trader, volunteer or member of the public that you felt was inappropriate, discourteous, confrontational or unprofessional?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide as much factual detail as you feel comfortable sharing. Where possible, it would be helpful to include:

- The approximate date and time
- Where the incident occurred
- What occurred
- Who was involved, if known
- Whether anyone else witnessed the interaction
- Whether any action was taken or the matter was resolved at the time

Any information provided will be treated sensitively and will assist the Committee in understanding the circumstances surrounding concerns and whether improvements or further action may be appropriate.

22. If you have described an incident or concern above, have you previously reported it through the appropriate management or Council process?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

If yes, you may provide further details if you wish. You do not need to repeat information already provided formally.

Safety & Wellbeing

23. Are there any aspects of operating, setting up or packing down the markets that you consider could present an avoidable health, safety or wellbeing concern?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide details.

24. Do you feel adequately supported when dealing with difficult situations involving traders or members of the public?



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- Yes
- Mostly
- No
- Not applicable to my role

If not, what additional support, guidance or training would be useful?

Looking Ahead

25. If you could make one practical change to improve the operation of the markets, what would it be?

26. Are there practices from other markets, events or Council services that you believe we could learn from or introduce?

27. Is there anything that currently works well that you feel it is particularly important we retain?

28. Do you have any additional comments, suggestions or concerns that you would like the Outside Spaces Committee to consider?

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to this consultation.

Your experience and practical knowledge are important to understanding how the markets operate in practice. Your feedback will help the Outside Spaces Committee recognise what is working well, understand areas of difficulty and consider practical improvements to support the future operation of the service.



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Author	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Community Preparedness Plan
Date of Committee:	3 rd September 2026
Committee:	Outside Spaces Committee

1. Background & Context

Wells City Council may have an important role in both the response to, and recovery from, an emergency. It is possible that the Parish Council may be able to act faster than some responding agencies and the local knowledge possessed by the Parish Council may prove invaluable. By completing a Community Resilience Emergency Plan, the Parish 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, the Parish Council 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

The Parish Council and other involved local bodies are committed to delivering this plan for the benefit of residents in the Parish. 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 the Parish Council 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 Joint Cheshire 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.



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To maintain and update the plan based on latest requirements, lessons learnt, changes of contacts etc and good practice.

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 Cheshire East 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 Cheshire East 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 may have an important role in both the response to, and recovery from, an emergency. It is possible that the Parish Council may be able to act faster than some responding agencies and the local knowledge possessed by the Parish Council may prove invaluable.

By completing a Community Resilience Emergency Plan, the Parish 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, the Parish Council 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 Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team • List of appropriate voluntary / community organisations able to assist vulnerable residents.



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		• Prepare list of local building contractor.
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 Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team • Prepare list of local building contractors.
Air Pollution	• Breathing problems	• Identify vulnerable residents. • Coms 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&B. • Prepare list of local building contractors. • Contact structural engineer.
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.



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		Identify food/drink and overnight provision is needed for stranded motorists.
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



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National Power Outage	• Potential temporary evacuation of residents. • Potential loss of life. • Loss of infrastructure. • Disruption to amenities, impact on local business • Housebound vulnerable residents unable to obtain supplies.	• Identify buildings with back-up generators to use as hub / safe place /charging station. • 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 or to the 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 Disley 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	• Take a detailed note of the nature of the emergency and any request for immediate



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but no communication possible with Emergency Services or Emergency Planning Team.	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. • 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.



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After an incident, a summary update, recovery information and thanks to volunteers and partners should be issued.

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



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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.

METHANE

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 below visual advises what should be collected for each element.



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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>



This card is a quick hand out to anyone acting as a volunteer on the emergency presented.

- **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**

- 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.

[illegible]



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.

[illegible]



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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	xxxxxxx	
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		✓	



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Maximum capacity	✓ 300
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Name	Wells Blue School/Sports Hall	Map reference	///winter.summit.ridge
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, At Andrews Street, Wells Somerset		



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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



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:

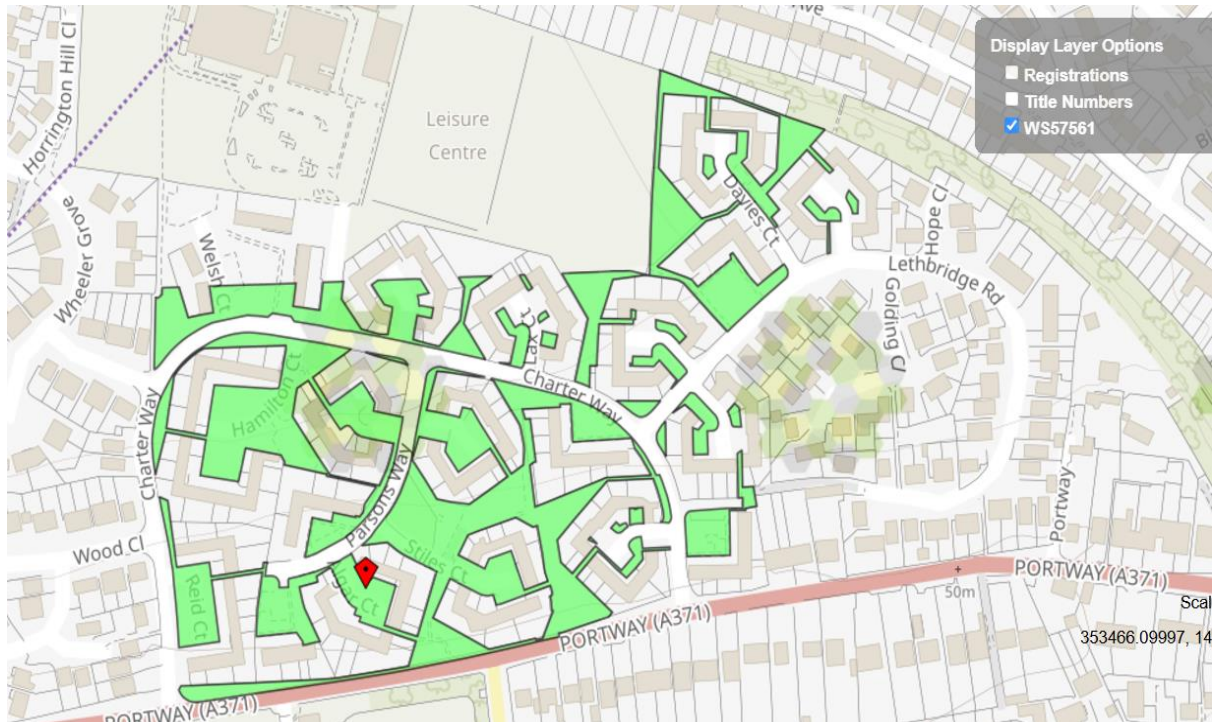
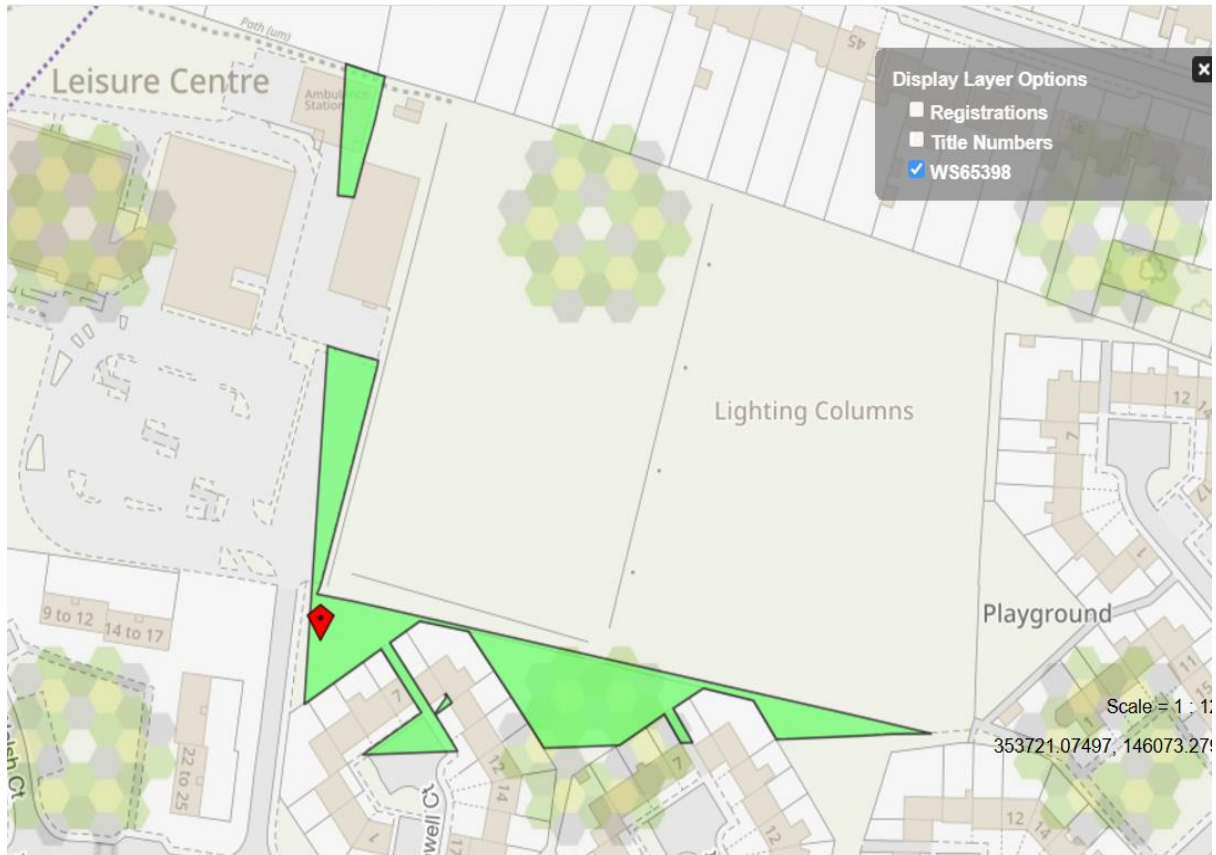
Charter Way – Provision around the Rugby provision and leisure centre.

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.

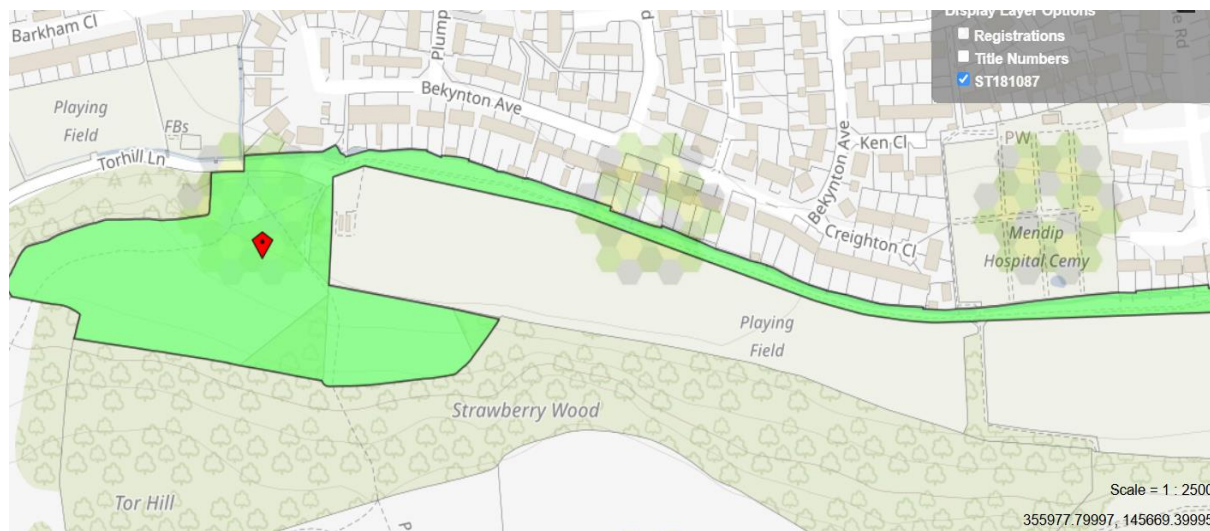


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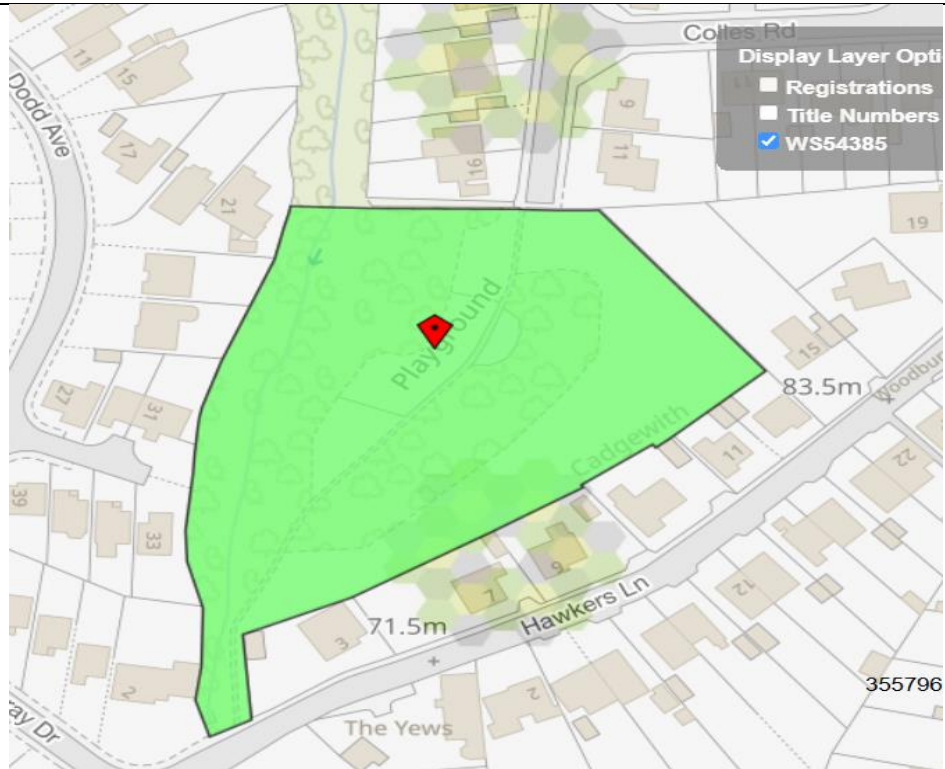
Tor Hill lane – Water way and Pathway through play provision. It is recommended to accept the pathway through the play provision. The water way provision, could be accepted, noting that in doing so the council should consider the riparian rights of the space, encroachment and flooding concerns with any 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.



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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