

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 2 MARCH 2026 AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Lloyd (Chair),
Councillors J Cole, A Govier, M McGuffie, M Lithgow, S Mercer, S Pringle-Kosikowski, J Thorne, G Western, G Williams and K Wheatley

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow – CEO/Town Clerk
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services & Finance Officer
Sergeant Jon O’Connor, Wellington Community Policing Team (for minute 468)
1 member of the press
8 members of the public

463. WELCOME BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed Councillor G Western to his first Full Council meeting.

464. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE REASONS GIVE

Apologies were received from Councillors C Booth, C Govier-Wiggins and C Penk.

465. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Council S Mercer noted that he is a member of the Protect Wellington organisation.

466. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026.

467. QUESTION AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Three members of the public spoke about the Planning Application 43/24/0009 & 43/24/0010/LB (Item 7a). They noted that despite the amendments made to the previous application in relation to splitting traffic, increased congestion will still be a massive issue for the residents of Courtland Road as it is a heavily used route by staff and students of Beech Grove and Court Fields School as well as people heading to Wellington Park. They noted that access to the site will be dangerous and would result in damage to the hedgerow. Street lighting is poor. They also noted that this development will have major implications of enjoyment of the Wellington Park with the noise and dust that will happen as a result of the two-year building process. The same would apply to the residents of Court Drive. They are not opposed to the area being developed but the current plan of 28 homes is far too much and a more moderate development in touch with the local area would be more appropriate.

One member of the public request a start to the process of introducing resident permit parking in the town due to the influx of people that live outside of Wellington parking in spaces during the day which puts pressure on residents to find parking spaces. Councillor J Lloyd confirmed that Council Officers will investigate how to start this process.

468. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

Sgt O’Connor presented his report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting and was duly noted.

469. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following planning applications were considered:

(a) Case reference: 43/24/0009 & 43/24/0010/LB

Proposal: Erection of 19 No. dwellings, demolition of buildings with alterations (with partial demolition) and conversion of Grade II listed building into 9 No. dwellings at The Court, Courtland Road, Wellington (resubmission of 43/23/0017LB)

After much discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to object to the development on the same grounds as the previous application with additional concerns raised regarding the lack of affordable housing and the importance of completing the conversion of Grade II listed building. Councillors welcomed the amendments to the application that split traffic access however they noted that this is too small a measure to properly address the congestion that would arise because of this development.

(b) Case reference: 43/26/0003

Proposal: Erection of 4 No. houses (and retention of existing dwelling) with associated access and landscaping works at 10 Farthings Pitts, Foxdown Hill, Wellington

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the application with the caveat that access and egress for the works should be from the A38 relief road.

470. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor provided an update on her activities which was noted.

471. SOMERSET COUNCIL / LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor A Govier noted that Somerset Council will set its precept budget later this week with an expected proposal for an increase in Council Tax by 4.99%. Somerset Council has noted the success of services provided at the Wellington Community Hospital and is looking to replicate this across other community hospitals in Somerset. He also noted that a successful Cradle to Career meeting took place recently, with over 80 participants representing different organisations and it was noted at this meeting that Wellington was the most advanced of the cradle to career schemes across Somerset with a specific acknowledgement of the involvement of the local council.

Councillor J Lloyd noted there will be a LCN Highways Working Group meeting on the 3 March and she will produce a report to be given next month.

472. TO RECEIVE THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The report from the Chief Executive was noted.

The Chief Executive stated that the new CCTV cameras for Town Centre have been installed.

The Chief Executive noted that there have been 26 requests for application packs for the recent Open Spaces vacancy. This reflects the good work and high reputation of the Open Spaces team and Council in general demonstrating that Wellington Town Council is a good place to come to work.

473. POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2026 were noted.

474. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 were noted.

After much discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve adoption of the recommended Road/Traffic Management Changes process to be reviewed annually.

Councillors noted that ambitious thinking is required to make the roads within Wellington safer. It was confirmed that Council Officers would produce a report on the options for looking at wider traffic management issues in the town

475. UPDATE ON SUPPORT BEING OFFERED TO KDC/ONE SWALLOWFIELD EMPLOYEES

An update was provided by Councillor J Lloyd which was noted.

476. STANDING ORDERS:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve amendment to Standing Order 18 to ensure alignment with Financial Regulations.

477. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Councillor G Western to the Environment Committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:30.

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset Council:

Councillor Andrew Govier

Councillor Ross Henley

Mayor

.....

Date.....



Title	Chief Executive's Report
Meeting	Full Council
Date of meeting	13 April 2026
Action Required	For noting
Report Author and email address	Dave Farrow townclerk@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk

1. Introduction

This report will update councillors on matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Matters for Report

- The new CCTV cameras became operational on the 15 March. The CCTV Manager has invited any councillors who wish to, to visit the CCTV Monitoring Centre in Bridgwater to see the cameras and the centre in action. If any councillors are interested, please let me know and I will make arrangements for a visit. The CCTV Manager has also offered to attend a future meeting to discuss CCTV provision in the town with councillors
- The Metro Board met on the 20 March and received updates from Network Rail. The outline Design Contract has been signed with Octavius and Atkins. This will develop a single preferred option for the station design and produces the drawings, reports, and technical evidence needed to progress the project into detailed design. Construction has started on the access road and Network Rail has held positive discussions with the Department for Transport about determining the detailed costs and the government's agreed funding support.
- On a related matter I met with Simon Fox, Major Projects Officer (Planning) Somerset Council and representatives of Bloor Homes to discuss the Longforth 2 development linked to the railway station. It is hoped that the link road will be completed by September with show homes being in place by October and the first phase of houses completed by the end of the year/early next year. We also discussed potential arrangements for the management of open spaces on the development. Bloor will be producing plans of the open spaces for us to

consider and when received I will present a proposal to Policy and Finance Committee for taking this forward. We also discussed the development of the Station 'Square' and the rebuilding of the Wellington Monument Pyramidion as that is linked to the completion of the link road.

- Scaffolding will be going up in the outside of our offices on the 17th April to complete the painting of the woodwork and repair of the bay window roofs. We will also be taking the opportunity to reinstall the flagpole on the front of the building.
- I was invited to visit the school site at Corams Lane to see the work being undertaken in preparation for it opening as an Educational Therapeutic Centre. The planned date for opening is the 12 June. If any councillors would like to visit the site in advance of it opening please let me know and I will liaise with Somerset Council officers to make arrangements.
- We have been successful in bidding for the contract for the management of open spaces on the Longforth Farm development. The income generated will go towards offsetting the cost of employing an additional open spaces operative.
- I met with Councillors Lithgow, Govier-Wiggins and Thorne on the 27 March to complete my annual appraisal. The objectives for the coming year relate to
 - (i) The development of a Corporate Plan that sets a clear, ambitious, and achievable strategic direction for the Council, ensuring it reflects the Council's Vision, and organisational capacity,
 - (ii) Providing strategic leadership in shaping the town's long-term infrastructure by ensuring the Council plays an influential, proactive role in the planning system,
 - (iii) Positioning the Council to take on additional services that enhance the town's environment, wellbeing, and community offer,
 - (iv) Embedding a robust performance management framework that demonstrates the impact of the Council's work, with a particular focus on community outcomes and value for money,
 - (v) Increase the Council's financial resilience by securing external funding and generating new income streams to support projects and reduce pressure on the Precept.
 - (vi) Leading organisational and community preparations for the 2027 Council elections promoting the role of councillors and encouraging a diverse range of residents to stand for election and preparing for a new council
 - (vii) Leading the development and implementation of a structured programme of work to prepare Wellington Town Council for the Community Governance Review (CGR) to be undertaken by Somerset Council after the 2027 Unitary Council elections

3. Risk Management

Unfortunately, on 10th March, a staff member fell victim to phishing e-mail which prompted them to enter their password into a fraudulent site. Doing so enabled a third part to access their mailbox to send a similar e-mail to several addresses from their address book. Officers we made aware almost immediately by calls from the recipients of the messages. Fortunately, our IT consultant was in the building when the breach came to light and was able to take immediate action to secure the system.

As a result of this breach the following actions have been taken:

- Multi Factor Authentication has been implemented as well as a blanket update of all staff Microsoft passwords (this will be applied to Councillor's accounts in due course).
- All staff have been issued guidance in relation to what action to take, and more importantly what not to do, if they receive any suspicious e-mails including messages asking for attachments to be reviewed that they were not expecting.
- The GDPR policy has been flagged as being out of date - an updated version will be presented to P&F for adoption. Once approved, all staff will be required to refresh GDPR awareness training.

Because the access was external to the Council, a data breach had to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office. To date, a response is awaited.

4. Communications and Social Media

In the period from 24 February to 31 March Wellington Town Council's Facebook posts received 288.3k views from 44.2k unique viewers. Our content received 2.8k interactions, including comments, reactions, and shares. In this period, we gained a net 103 follows, bringing our total to 4,301.

Our top five posts in this period were:

1. Flags removed at the Basins – 220 reactions, 8,961 reach
2. Wellington Park wins RHS Pride in Parks Award – 201 reactions, 7,168 reach.
3. New bridge installed in the Green Corridor – 178 reactions, 10,512 reach.
4. Daffodils in town centre – 129 reactions, 9,533 reach.
5. Playing field footpath to be resurfaced – 123 reactions, 7,674 reach.

The next newsletter is due to go out on Friday 17th April and we currently have 289 total subscribers. Due to the Easter Bank Holiday pushing the full council meeting back, this newsletter is coming out a full six weeks after the March one, meaning there will be a huge amount of information presented.

5. April Meetings/Events

Date	Time	Event	Location	Who Involved
10 April	10.00am	Promotion of Wellington Working Group	Chamber	Group members
10 April	1.30pm	Visit to Nynehead Court	Nynehead Court	Mayor
13 April	6.00pm	Full Council	URC Hall	All
14 April	6.30pm	LCN Highways Working Group	Virtual	Cllr J Lloyd
15 April	11.00am	Whacky Wednesday	Wellington Park	All invited

15 April	6.00pm	Economic Development Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
20 April	6.00pm	Policy and Finance Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
21 April	6.00pm	Basins Allotments Advisory Group	Chamber	Members
22 April	6.30pm	Environment Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
24 April	2.45pm	Opening of Odette Hallows Hall	Court Fields School	All invited
27 April	6.00pm	LCN Meeting	The Beambridge Inn/hybrid	LCN reps

6. SLT Annual Leave/Out of Office

7-10 April CEO/Town Clerk

22 – 27 April Facilities Manager

7. Links to Council Vision and Place Plan

Vision

- An inclusive, safe and secure town where everybody is supportive of each other and offers particular care for the more vulnerable members of our community
- A town with a diverse, thriving, and resilient local economy
- A town with vibrant cultural, sporting, and social communities
- Proud and protective of our heritage, green spaces, and biodiversity
- Committed to becoming a net carbon neutral town
- A destination of choice for people to live and work and for businesses to be located.
- Connected with the Blackdown Hills National Landscape and surrounding communities

Wellington Place Plan

- Inclusive Access and Connected Communities
- Pride in Place: Culture, Heritage & Belonging
- A Healthy, Sustainable & Green Town
- Youth, Learning & Lifelong Support
- Housing, Inclusion & Community Safety
- Enterprise, Skills & Local Economies

8. Financial Implications

None

9. Risks

None

10. Considerations

The Council is asked to note the report.

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT UNITED REFORM CHURCH HALL ON MONDAY 9 MARCH 2026 AT 6.00 PM

Present: Councillor M Lithgow (Chair)
Councillors C Booth, J Cole, A Govier, S Pringle-Kosikowski, J Thorne and K Wheatley

In attendance: Dave Farrow – Town Clerk/Chief Executive
Alice Kendall – Democratic Services & Finance Manager
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services & Finance Officer
One member of the press

478 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors J Lloyd & C Penk.

479 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors A Govier and J Lloyd have a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council’s IT consultant, being former customers of the company.

Councillor Thorne has a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council’s IT consultant, being a friend of the company owner. Also, in relation to any payments to Tindle Newspapers as an employee of the company.

480 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

481 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2026.

482 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

(a) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 2 MARCH 2026

RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation.

At this juncture, Councillor A Govier joined the meeting.

(b) TO NOTE AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE OVER £250 FOR 1 FEBRUARY - 2 MARCH 2026

RESOLVED to approve the expenditure.

(c) TO NOTE AND APPROVE CUMULATIVE SUPPLIER EXPENDITURE OVER £500 FOR 1 FEBRUARY - 2 MARCH 2026

RESOLVED to approve the expenditure.

Councillors noted that the new method of reporting expenditure works well.

(d) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME RECEIVED 1 FEBRUARY - 2 MARCH 2026

RESOLVED to approve income.

(e) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AGAINST THE BUDGET FOR THE 2025-26 YEAR AS AT 2 MARCH 2026

RESOLVED to note and approve the budget report.

(f) TO NOTE RESERVE BALANCES AS AT 2 MARCH 2026

The reserve balances were noted.

483 ASSET REGISTER AND REVIEW OF INSURANCE

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the 2025-26 Asset Register.

The Pre-renewal Review document was noted.

484 GRANT PERMISSION

It was **RESOLVED** to approve allowing Olly Edmondston-Low to apply for National Lottery grants in Wellington Town Council's name for the purpose of the Pump Track Project. Council Officers must have oversight of the application and will review before submission.

485 NORTH STREET TOILET UPDATE

The findings of the site visit regarding extending the toilets to include additional changing room facilities to open into the Playing Field was noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve refurbishment of the North Street Toilets in line with the original proposal however Council Officers will investigate if the works can be carried out in 2026-27 financial year and report on that to the April Full Council meeting.

486 NORTH PROPOSED LETTER TO SOMERSET COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft letter which will be sent to Somerset Council Planning Department, the Somerset Council Chief Executive Officer and both the Somerset Council Leader and Deputy Leader. It was also **AGREED** that the letter will be publicised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 18:35pm

Signed

Date

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
AT UNITED REFORM CHURCH ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillor C Govier-Wiggins (Chair)
Councillors J Cole, A Govier, M McGuffie, J Lloyd, M Lithgow.

In attendance: Dave Farrow – CEO/Town Clerk
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services & Finance Officer
Laura Batcha – Community Development Officer
Peter Joint – Community Connect Champion
Rob Odhams – Community Project Coordinator
Michelle Brookes – Somerset Council LCN Officer
Nick Harvey – In the Mix
One member of the press

487 CHAIR TO WELCOME MEMBERS
The Chair welcomed members to the committee.

488 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN
Apologies were received from Councillor C Penk.

489 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
None declared.

490 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
No members of the public in attendance.

491 MINUTES
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held 19 January 2026.

492 COMMUNITY CONNECT CHAMPION UPDATE
A verbal update was provided by the Community Connect Champion which was noted.

It was confirmed that the draft Funding Agreements for the Best Start in Family Life and Community Connect roles were with the Chief executive for consideration.

493 TOGETHER IN TONE
The report detailing the progress and findings made during the engagement phase of the Together in Tone project was noted.

Councillor J Lloyd noted that Samford Arundel and Wellington Without parishes have yet to be contacted. The Community Development Officer said that she will investigate this and contact Stawley Parish Council.

Councillor A Govier asked whether a Winter concert similar to the summer concerts hosted by the Friends of Wellington Park could be delivered as part of the project. The Community Development Officer confirmed that the requirement was to deliver this project before September 2026 but said that interest for a winter event can be assessed.

Councillors **AGREED** that the project direction should be toward smaller events as opposed to one big event.

494 IN THE MIX YOUTH DELIVERY

An update was provided by Nick Harvey and was noted.

Councillor A Govier noted the positive impact of the provision and that he is supportive of the second session being an outreach session.

It was confirmed that attendance data is being collated and sent to the council to determine trends and impact.

At this juncture, it was **AGREED** to bring forward item 17.

495 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT HOLIDAY PROVISION

It was **RESOLVED** to approve additional funding of £5850.00 to support youth activity provision during half-term holiday periods.

It was **AGREED** that funding should be allocated from the Youth Development budget.

Councillor J Cole noted that ideas for outreach programmes should be tested first before being brought to the Community Committee.

496 KINGS ARMS COMMUNITY HUB STRATEGY

After much discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Kings Arms Community Hub Strategy & Delivery Plan 2026–2029 to include the following amendment:

- Par 5.1 - 'governance reporting to committee' will be changed to 'reporting via the chief executive to committee'.

Councillors noted this will be reviewed annually, with any significant changes reported back to the Community Committee.

At this juncture, it was **AGREED** to bring forward item 13.

497 KINGS ARMS COMMUNITY HUB ROOM HIRE PLAN

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the use of the Hub for commercial hire and private social events where appropriate, subject to availability and operational arrangements.

The following resolutions were made on the casting vote of the Chair of the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed room hire eligibility and subsidy framework for a trial period of two months.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the subsidy eligibility matrix for a trial period of two months.

It was **AGREED** to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive/Town Clerk to review and approve subsidy requests against the agreed criteria for a trial period of two months.

498 BEST START IN LIFE STRATEGY

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Best Start in Life Strategy as the framework guiding Wellington Town Council's involvement in the Best Start in Life programme.

Councillors noted that the Strategy will be reviewed annually, with updates reported back to the Community Committee.

499 CRADLE TO CAREER STRATEGY

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Cradle to Career Strategy as the framework guiding Cradle to Career partnership activity within Wellington.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed allocation of £14,300 from the Cradle to Career budget to support delivery of Year 1 programme activity.

Councillors noted that programme delivery will be reviewed annually through the Community Committee.

Councillors noted that they are keen for initiatives and project to begin and be tested as soon as possible. Councillor J Lloyd noted that it has been some time since an update on the initiative to turn Wellington into a Reading Town. The Community Development Officer outlined the work that had been taking place and agreed to provide a more detailed update at the next meeting.

500 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

It was **AGREED** that the proposed strategy should be revised to ensure it is more forward thinking and includes specific details on which groups are targeted by this strategy. An update will be provided at the next meeting with the revised timescales of completion.

501 WELLINGTON CARES

Rob Odams provided an update on the emerging proposal from Somerset Council that responsibility for supporting and coordinating micro-providers may transfer from county-level management to community-based organisations, including those receiving Accelerated Reform Fund (ARF) funding.

It was acknowledged that this represents a change in scope from the original Wellington Cares ARF pilot, which was designed to explore local need around unpaid carers, micro-providers and volunteers rather than formally govern or manage the micro-provider network. Councillors noted that this is an opportunity for the council to create a model that works specifically for Wellington.

It was **AGREED** in principle that Wellington Town Council continue to explore the potential role of coordinating micro-provider support locally through the Wellington Cares pilot, subject to:

- further clarification from Somerset Council regarding governance arrangements, responsibilities and support available to community organisations
- confirmation that Wellington Town Council would not assume responsibility for regulatory functions such as DBS verification, insurance checks or formal governance of micro-providers
- completion and review of the proposed Readiness Checklist, Service Level Agreement and Joint Strategy
- a further report being brought back to the Community Committee before any formal commitment is made

502 WACKY WEDNESDAYS

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the Town Council take over the governance of the Wacky Wednesdays programme and provide coordination and management support.

It was confirmed that the existing programme bank account will be closed and any remaining funds transferred to Wellington Town Council.

503 BRIGHT BEGINNINGS BABY/TODDLER GROUP

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the adoption of the Bright Beginnings Parent, Baby and Toddler Group under the Wellington Town Council volunteer framework with a view to them operating at Kings Arms Community Hub.

It was confirmed that room hire costs for the group will be covered by an appropriate Council budget.

There being no further business the meeting closed at: 20:15.

Sign.....

Date.....

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2026 AT 6:30 PM

Present: Councillor J Lloyd (Vice-Chair)
Councillors M Lithgow, M McGuffie, S Pringle-Kosikowsky, G Western and G Williams.

In attendance: Dave Farrow – Town Clerk/CEO
Darren Hill – Open Spaces Manager
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services and Finance Officer
Councillor J Thorne
Steven Saunders – Footpath Volunteer Coordinator
Charles Biscoe – Grand Western Greenway
One member of the press
Four members of the public

504. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor C Booth.

505. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

506. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026.

507. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One member of the public spoke about The National Emergency Briefing film which is due for release on 7 April 2026. Transition Town Wellington would like to co-ordinate a good date and time with WTC to show this film in late May with as many Councillors in attendance. Council Officers will investigate the most appropriate date and liaise with the member of public about this.

One member of the public spoke about the need for more inclusive play equipment in Play Areas and the need for a pedestrian crossing by the Catholic Church on Mantle Street.

The Open Spaces Manager responded that the Council is investigating more inclusive equipment in play areas such as wheelchair accessible swings, widening the path to the Rec Play Area to allow for greater wheelchair access and a map of all accessible and inclusive play equipment in Wellington. Council Officers will raise the request for an additional pedestrian crossing with Highways Somerset.

508. GRAND WESTERN GREENWAY

Charles Biscoe provided an update on the Grand Western Greenway active travel project from Wellington Train Station to Taunton Train Station. He is confident that planning permission would be granted to the start of the active travel route in both Wellington and Taunton. He noted the discouraging news

that Somerset Active Travel funding is going towards urban travel routes as opposed to rural routes and therefore the only access to funding for the Grand Western Greenway project is through Section 106.

509. TRINITY FARM NATURE RESERVE

Gabriel Connor-Stretch, CEO Greenshank Environmental was not in attendance so this item was not discussed.

510. FOOTPATH UPDATE

Steve Saunders confirmed that they are still in the transition period between winter and spring. He confirmed that the group managed to clear one tree that had fallen onto a path.

511. OPEN SPACES MANAGER REPORT

The Open Spaces Manager provided a verbal update of his report which was noted.

Councillor M McGuffie noted that the gate into Fox's Field was not secure and would allow fly tipping. The Open Spaces Manager will investigate options for a new gate into Fox's Field.

Councillor J Thorne expressed concern at the Welcome to Wellington sign located at Coles Farm by Chelston Roundabout. He has requested that the Coles sponsorship sign is removed or the Welcome to Wellington sign is moved to a council owned plot. Councillor M Lithgow agreed. Council Officers will review the options and feed them back to a future committee for resolution.

512. BASINS ADVISORY BOARD

The minutes of the meetings held on 23rd February and 11th March 2025 were noted.

At this juncture, Councillor S Pringle-Kosikowski left the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** not to approve the proposed The Basins Allotments Rules and Guidance 2026 due to the recommendation that bonfires should be allowed. Furthermore, section 10 is titled 'Dogs, Livestock and Bees' but makes no mention of bees. The Basins Advisory Board will need to review The Basins Allotments Rules Rule and Guidance and resubmit to a future Environment Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- i. Accessible plot raised beds rent charges as detailed below:
 - Raised beds: A, B, C, E & M = £15.00 per annum
 - Raised bed: D = £20.00 per annum
 - Raised beds: F, G, H = £17.50 per annum
 - Raised beds: I, J, K, L = £10.00 per annum.
- ii. Accessible Plot Tenancy Agreement

iii. Accessible Plot Rules

513. WELLINGTON MONUMENT PLANTER

It was **RESOLVED** to approve improvements to the entrance to Wellington by re-homing the Wellington Monument Planter and some area of landscaping on the roundabout at the entrance to Longforth Farm.

514. LIDL HEDGEROW

It was **AGREED** to make a formal complaint to Somerset Council regarding the missing hedgerows at Lidl, Taunton Road and Nynehead Road. The main basis of the complaint shall be in relation to a breach of planning application conditions.

515. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR DOG FOULING

Councillors noted the difficulty of policing dog fouling and how this protection order will be useless unless properly enforced. Councillors agreed that this was not an appropriate response to the problem of dog fouling.

It was **AGREED** to raise no comment.

516. INCLUSIVE PLAY POLICY

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Inclusive Play Policy as a starting point to be further developed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:00pm

Sign.....

Date.....



Title	OS Finance
Meeting	Full Council
Date of meeting	13 th March 2026
Action Required	Information to note & Decision
Report Author and email address	Alice Kendall alice@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper sets out financial information and rationale for the increase in OS staffing by 1 FTE.

2. Background

- 2.1. Due to the resignation of a team member of the Open Spaces team, a recruitment process was initiated in late February 2026.
- 2.2. As part of the process, the work schedule used to inform the FTE requirements as part of the Devolution processed was also reviewed and updated.
- 2.3. The outcome of this review, having adjusted for cover for leave and sickness, was a requirement of 1 FTE Chargehand, and 3.53 FTE Operatives.
- 2.4. The largest change being the contract for summer watering of hanging baskets etc. The Council's current contractor no longer being suitable, and replacement being difficult to source. Therefore, this was added to the schedule of work to be carried out internally.
- 2.5. Having discussed the matter internally, it was agreed by Officers that by rounding the Operative FTE from 3 in 2025/26, to 4 in 2026/27, it would provide additional resource to support activities that would generate income to the Council (i.e. grounds maintenance contracts). It would also give additional time to support inter-departmental works which have been carried out over the

past 12 months where possible but are not part of the core work of the OS team.

2.6. This increase does bring with it additional financial implications, including the need for an additional vehicle to accommodate the requirements to carry out the watering in the summer months.

3. Links to Council Vision and Place Plan

3.1. Vision

- An inclusive, safe and secure town where everybody is supportive of each other and offers particular care for the more vulnerable members of our community
 - *Adequate staffing ensures open spaces are well-maintained, safe, accessible, and usable — particularly important for vulnerable groups who rely on public spaces for wellbeing and connection.*
- A town with a diverse, thriving, and resilient local economy
 - *The additional FTE provides capacity to take on more external grounds-maintenance contracts, generating income for the Council and supporting local economic resilience.*
- Proud and protective of our heritage, green spaces, and biodiversity
 - *By increasing staffing levels and bringing key functions (like summer watering) in-house, the Council strengthens its ability to maintain and enhance local green spaces. This supports biodiversity, protects heritage landscapes, and ensures a higher, more reliable standard of care.*

3.2. Wellington Place Plan

- Inclusive Access and Connected Communities
 - *Well-maintained open spaces enable residents of all ages and abilities to access public areas safely and enjoyably.*
- Pride in Place: Culture, Heritage & Belonging
 - *Enhancing the Open Spaces team means the town continues to look cared-for and welcoming — strengthening local identity, civic pride, and the town's sense of belonging.*
- A Healthy, Sustainable & Green Town

- *Summer watering, routine maintenance, internal capacity to deliver environmental improvements, and reliable staffing all support sustainability and climate-conscious management of green spaces.*
- Enterprise, Skills & Local Economies
 - *The increased FTE supports income-generating work and provides hands-on learning opportunities, particularly with an apprentice in place.*

4. Financial Implications

4.1. Staffing

4.1.1. The staffing budget for 26/27 (£272,323) was set on the following schedule:

- 1x FTE Manager
- 1x FTE Chargehand/Team-Leader
- 3x FTE Operatives
- 1x FTE Apprentice (full year)

4.1.2. The 26/27 figure was based on the pay scales of those members of staff already in post as well as an inflationary increase of 4.1% (inflation figure at the time of setting the budget).

4.1.3. The schedule is updated as follows:

- 1x FTE Manager
- 1x FTE Chargehand/Team-Leader
- 4x FTE Operatives (two of which on starter salary scales)
- 1x FTE Apprentice (50% of year as schemes will run from September)

4.1.4. These changes give an updated total amount of £291,131, a likely overspend of £18,808.

4.1.5. This overspend assumes an inflationary increase of 4.1%, however, although the annual pay award is yet to be confirmed, it is predicted that the percentage increase will be lower due to the current rate of inflation.

4.2. OS Overheads Budget Cost Centre

4.2.1. It is important to review the likely overall position for the OS Overheads budget.

4.2.2. Appendix 1 details a forecast of income and expenditure across the entire Cost Centre for 26/27.

4.2.3. The forecasted Net Position is an underspend in the region of £19,000.

4.3. Additional Vehicle Requirements

- 4.3.1. The Open Spaces Manager has identified that due to the increase in personnel and associated work, an additional flat bed/tipper vehicle is required at an estimated cost of £16,000.
- 4.3.2. This can be funded from the Vehicle Replacement Reserve which has a balance in 26/27 of £30,500.
- 4.3.3. The vehicle replacement schedule will be reviewed at budget setting to re-assess the required balances for this reserve over the next three years.

5. Risks

5.1. Financial

Risk: Budget pressures, requiring mitigation elsewhere in the OS Overheads Cost Centre or wider Council budget.

Mitigation: Some budget lines have known underspends; income not budgeted for likely to be credited; regular budget monitoring; use updated inflation figures; adjust non-essential spending if required.

5.2. Operational

Risk: Despite increased FTE, service levels may be challenged if actual demand exceeds projections.

Mitigation: Review productivity and workload mid-season; adjust scheduling or temporary labour if needed.

5.3. Reputational

Risk: If watering or grounds maintenance service levels fall below expectations, particularly during visible periods (e.g., summer floral displays), public perception may be negatively affected.

Mitigation: Communicate changes clearly, monitor public-facing areas closely, and respond quickly to issues.

6. Considerations

- 6.1. To note and approve a likely overspend of the OS Staffing Budget (having noted the overall forecasted position as detailed)
- 6.2. To approve a spend of up to £16,000 from the Vehicle Replacement Reserve, to be delegated to the Open Spaces Manager.

7. Background Papers

Appendix 1 – OS Overheads 26/27 Forecast

Appendix 1 – OS Overheads Budget Forecast

Code	Title	26-27 Receipts Budget	26-27 Receipts YE	Receipts Variance	26-27 Payments Budget	26-27 Payments YE	Payments Variance	Net Position
174	TC Planting			£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
175	Park Planting & Security			£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
213	Bin Emptying			£0.00	£34,000.00	£26,300.00	£7,700.00	£7,700.00
214	Bulbs			£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
215	Clothing & PPE			£0.00	£2,500.00	£2,500.00	£0.00	£0.00
216	Fuel & Consumables			£0.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
217	Green Waste			£0.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£0.00	£0.00
218	In Bloom & Green Flag			£0.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£0.00	£0.00
219	Inspections			£0.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£0.00	£0.00
220	Insurance			£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
221	IT			£0.00	£2,500.00	£2,500.00	£0.00	£0.00
222	Locking Park			£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
223	Mower Leases			£0.00	£6,050.00	£6,050.00	£0.00	£0.00
224	OS Responsive Maintenance			£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
225	PA Responsive Maintenance			£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
226	Park Water Bill			£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
227	Phone Contracts			£0.00	£1,400.00	£1,680.00	(£280.00)	(£280.00)
229	Plants			£0.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
230	Servicing			£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
231	Software			£0.00	£4,000.00	£4,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
232	Sundries			£0.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
233	Tool Hire			£0.00	£750.00	£750.00	£0.00	£0.00
234	Tractor Flailing			£0.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
235	Training			£0.00	£2,500.00	£2,500.00	£0.00	£0.00
236	Tree Inspections			£0.00	£6,500.00	£3,500.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
237	Tree Works			£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
238	Vehicle Sundries			£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
239	Watering			£0.00	£15,000.00	£2,000.00	£13,000.00	£13,000.00

250	Leases Income		£9,475.00	£9,475.00		£0.00	£0.00	£9,475.00
	Other Income		£5,000.00	£5,000.00		£0.00	£0.00	£5,000.00
	Tools			£0.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Staffing			£0.00	£272,323.00	£291,131.00	(£18,808.00)	(£18,808.00)
Total		£0.00	£14,475.00	£14,475.00	£413,523.00	£408,911.00	£4,612.00	£19,087.00

Notes:

Line 213: Underspend forecasted due to review and update of schedule of outsourced collections. Budget allowed for an increase in price per lift but Somerset Council have not implemented one for 26/27.

Line 227: 1x additional phone contract required for additional operative.

Line 239: Watering contract coded here but will no longer be used. £2,000 forecasted spend protects an amount for increased water bill (previous payment to contractor included water).