

Yeovil Town Council



Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Yeovil Town Council

Yeovil Town Council

Tuesday 3rd September 2024

7:30pm

Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk.



Amanda Card, Chief Executive / Town Clerk
28th August 2024

This information is also available on our website: www.yeovil.gov.uk

Members of Yeovil Town Council are summoned to attend:

Andy Kendall – Mayor of Yeovil Town

Tony Lock – Deputy Mayor of Yeovil Town

Barry Boyton

Evie Potts-Jones

Jade Cabell

Wes Read

Tareth Casey

Ashley Richards

Kayleigh Fieldsend

Jeny Snell

Karl Gill

Andy Soughton

Emma-Jayne Hopkins

Roy Spinner

Kaysar Hussain

Rob Stickland

Jamie Lock

Helen Stonier

Vacancy

Ruth White

Jane Lowery

Adrian Wilkes

Graham Oakes

Dave Woan

Public Comments at meetings

Members of the public may attend the meeting either physically or via zoom.

If you would like to join the meeting via zoom, please e-mail ytic@yeovil.gov.uk by 9:00am on Tuesday 3rd September 2024. Instructions will be sent to you to view the meeting.

Equality Act 2010

The general public sector equality duty places an obligation on a wide range of public bodies (including town and parish councils) in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

Recording of Council Meetings

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 allows both the public and press to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media).

Any member of the public wishing to record or film proceedings must let the Chairman of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive. Please refer to our Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at Council meetings at www.yeovil.gov.uk. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during the time allocated for Public Comment who do not wish to be recorded or filmed, need to inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording or filming to cease doing so while they speak.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Members are invited to join the Mayor's Chaplain in the Council Chamber for "Reflections".

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

Due to the confidential nature of the business of items 11/208, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, a motion to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of this item will be considered by the Councillors. *Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3*

11/198 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Council to receive apologies for absence and consider the reasons given. *LGA 1972 s85(1)*

11/199 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

11/200 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous Town Council Meeting held on 7th May 2024, 14th May 2024 and 16th July 2024.

11/201 MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

To note the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's recent and forthcoming engagements as attached at pages 6 to 8.

11/202 CORRESPONDENCE

To consider any correspondence received.

11/203 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEETINGS

To note the meetings of each Committee, any resolutions and recommendations contained therein to be ratified.

Planning Committee – 15th April 2024 / 15th May 2024 / 17th Jun 2024
Presented by Cllrs Evie Potts-Jones / G Oakes / J Snell

11/204 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members who represent the Town Council on outside bodies should take this opportunity to report on any matters of interest.

- A request for a representative from Yeovil Town Council has been received by Birchfield Community Association. The Association generally meet 3 times a year at Birchfield Community Centre. The next meeting is on Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 8pm.

11/205 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE – STANDING ORDER 4 (d) (xiv)

Members to consider the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding the Emergency Procedure – Standing Order 4 (d) (xiv) as attached at page 9.

11/206 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

Members to consider the report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding Devolution as attached at pages 10 to 29.

11/207 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee will consider passing a resolution to exclude the press and public from the *next item* in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

11/208 NOVATION OF CONTRACT (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)

Members to consider the confidential report of the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding novation of contracts relating to devolution as attached at page 30.

List of Engagements attended/to be attended by the Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock 16 July 2024 to 5 November 2024.

<u>July Engagements</u>	
16/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Cooksons Court Nursing Home for their BBQ Garden Party
18/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall met with the Regional Judges for Yeovil in Bloom
20/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Coker Rope & Sail Trust's Book Launch Party – The Unique Heritage of Coker Canvas
22/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended The Digital Exclusion Project at Spark IT
25/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Community and Civic Event for the Mayor of Shaftesbury, Cllr Alexander Chase
26/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Somerset Music's Sing Together Concert
29/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall, met with the National Judges for Yeovil in Bloom
29/07/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Yeovil Recreation Centre Tennis Court opening event
<u>August Engagements</u>	
02/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Roma Holocaust Memorial Service at Sherborne Abbey
03/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Chestnut Lodge's Summer Fete
03/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended The Warehouse Theatre in Ilminster to watch Hayley Renee perform

05/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Read with Yeovil's 2 nd Birthday Celebrations
08/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended The Mayor of Lyme Regis, Cllr David Ruffle's Civic Day
14/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended Augusta Westlands Retirement Association's Annual Show
17/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall celebrated Peggys 104 th Birthday at Cooksons Court
18/08/2024	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock, attended The Mayor of Wareham, Cllr Marian Cotton's Civic Service
18/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall, attended Yeovil Allotment Association's Produce Show and Prize Giving Event
21/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall, attended The Alive Poets Society's Poetry Recital Performance
28/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall, attended Compton View Residential Home to judge their Beach Party and Hat Competition
30/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall, recorded with Steve Calis for his Radio Show
30/08/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall attended the Re-opening of 'Who'd A Thought It'
31/08/2024	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Tony Lock attended the Wyndham Society's Scarecrow Competition
<u>September Engagements</u>	
07/09/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend Cooksons Court Nursing Home to celebrate Dulcie's 101 st Birthday
11/09/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend The Mayor of Bridport, Cllr Anne Rickard's Civic Day

12/09/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the Mayor and Mayoress of Chickerell, Cllr John and Mrs Gillian Dean's Civic Day
20/09/24	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend Yeovil Town Community Sports Trust's Charity Event and will welcome walkers back at Huish Park
28/09/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the High Sheriff's Reception
28/09/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend The Mayor of Wellington, Cllr Janet Lloyd's reception ahead of Wellington Carnival
<u>October Engagements</u>	
06/10/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend Somerset Young Farmers Harvest Thanksgiving Service and Supper
08/10/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will host his Clergy Tea
18/10/2024	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will visit Herblay with the Twinning Association

11/205 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE – STANDING ORDER 4 (d) (xiv)

At the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee meeting held on 29th May 2024, following discussions, it was agreed that the Independents for the purpose of this Standing Order would be classified as a group assuming the same affiliation, and that the Independents would be considered as an Opposition Group. As such it would be for the Independents to select a representative. It was resolved that the Independents for the purpose of Standing Order 4 (d) (xiv) are to be classified as a group assuming the same affiliation, and that the Independents are to be considered as an Opposition Group; and that the representative from the Opposition Group – Independents be appointed at the next meeting of Town Council.

At this time, Cllr A Wilkes had been nominated to be the representative.

Note: in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation – the Chairman of the Committee concerned (or, in his/her absence, the Vice Chairman) and the Mayor (or in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor) will also be consulted);

Recommendation

Town Council is **RECOMMENDED**:

- (1) to note the report; and
- (2) to agree that Cllr A Wilkes be appointed as the representative of the Independents Group

*(Amanda Card, Chief Executive / Town Clerk -
amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk)*

11/206 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

1.0 Background

In November 2023, Somerset Council declared a financial emergency. A letter was received from the Leader of Somerset Council regarding devolution of assets. Later that month a presentation was received from the Service Director – Cultural Services. In December 2023, Yeovil Town Council discussed and agreed which assets and services they wished to register an interest in.

At its meeting on 30th January 2024, the Town Council agreed in principle to take over Yeovil Country Park, Yeovil Recreation Centre, Westlands Entertainment Venue, Octagon Theatre and the South Somerset Heritage Collection, and as such approved Yeovil Town Council's budget and precept for 2024/25 which included the aforementioned services.

2.0 “Devolution Day”

Very late into the night of 31st July 2024, Yeovil Town Council officially signed six legal agreements:

- Transfer Agreement (of services and facilities)
- Managed Service Agreement (South Somerset Heritage Collection)
- Licence to Occupy – Westlands Entertainment Venue
- Licence to Occupy – Part of Lufton Depot
- Licence to Occupy – Yeovil Country Park
- Licence to Occupy – Yeovil Recreation Centre

The documents were signed by Cllr Andy Kendall (Mayor of Yeovil) and Cllr Andy Soughton (Leader of the Council), with Amanda Card (Chief Executive / Town Clerk) affixing the official seal of Yeovil Town Council to each document.

These ensured that Yeovil Town Council had the power to run the services at Yeovil Country Park, Yeovil Recreation Centre, Westlands Entertainment Venue and South Somerset Heritage Collection from 1st August 2024; as well as the right to occupy the land to run the services.

The freehold of Yeovil Country Park and Yeovil Recreation Centre, the leasehold for part of Lufton Depot and the sublease for Westlands Entertainment Venue will follow. Councillors are reminded of Local Government Act 1972 s123(2) which provides that disposal of land for less than best consideration that exceeds the value of £2 million requires permission from the Secretary of State. The prescriptive method of valuation and any necessity to seek permission will delay the transfers of freehold, leasehold and sublease. Council will be kept informed of progress.

From 1st August 2024, Yeovil Town Council became responsible for the provision of services and a number of staff to provide these services. Yeovil Town Council are now responsible for an additional 32 permanent members of staff, 116 casual members of staff and 90 volunteers. Staff were TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) transferred from Somerset Council to Yeovil Town Council.

The work does not stop here. There is still a huge amount of work that needs to be carried out to ensure that Yeovil Town Council have the appropriate processes, procedures and contracts in place.

3.0 Back Office Function

This next section will update on the numerous back-office functions which require the appropriate processes and procedures.

3.1 Finance

3.1.1 Accounting Structure

The current accounting structure is no longer fit for purpose due to the additional services that the Council are now providing. The Deputy Responsible Finance Officer has formulated an accounting structure that aligns with the agreed Committee Structure (as shown beneath).



This has involved reviewing nominal codes (which highlight the various types of expenditure) and developing a much more sophisticated structure that will undoubtedly provide more meaningful financial management information to budget holders and Councillors. The new nominal codes are now six digits long (rather than four digits) and follow a logic. This will mean retrospectively transferring financial transactions that have taken place prior to this amended structure.

One thing that has become apparent, is that Sage is no longer suitable for the complexity and size of Yeovil Town Council. As Yeovil Town Council grows, it is likely that a new annual accounting regime will be required in future years. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is completed by Local Councils where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeds £25,000 but does not exceed £6.5million. It is likely that at some point in the future that gross expenditure will be greater than £6.5million. It is recommended that Yeovil Town Council investigate in the future, a financial system that will be more appropriate. A report will be submitted to the Finance and Policy Executive in due course.

3.1.2 Sage

Sage Accounting and Sage Payroll have been upgraded to deal with the increase in users and the increase in employees. The Deputy Town Clerk (SF) and the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer enabled this upgrade.

3.1.3 Processing invoices for payment

Clearly the number of invoices for payment will increase. No indication can be given at this stage at what that likely increase will be. An assessment of any resourcing gaps will be carried out at a point when we believe that we have reached a status quo.

We will be increasing the number of payment runs that we make, to ensure that invoices are paid within the appropriate time frames.

In terms of authorisation of payments, we will be producing a robust procedure so that there is segregation of duty in that the same person, does not sign the invoice as correct, process the invoice and arrange payment of the invoice. This will be more practical now, since we have a number of employees within the Finance Team.

3.1.4 Raising invoices for services

Again, the number of invoices that need to be raised for services provided will increase. No indication can be given at this stage at what that likely increase will be. An assessment of any resourcing gaps will be carried out at a point when we believe that we have reached a status quo. We will also be producing a debt management policy to ensure that invoice payments are received on time and a procedure be put in place when they are not. This policy will also assign the responsibilities of relevant officers within the process.

3.1.5 Cash collection

Loomis (Cash Management services provider) will be contracted for cash collection, cash delivery and cash processing services. This ensures not only the safety of staff and premises, but also safeguards cash on the premises and in transit. Cash collection is currently operated under a Somerset Council contract, and we will be recharged for this service, but the Deputy Town Clerk (SF) and the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer are in active discussions with Natwest and Loomis direct.

3.1.6 Card payments

Card payments at each of the income generating sites are accepted via card machines. It is quite a technical process. Yeovil Town Council are working with a merchant acquirer (a financial institution who are licenced to accept credit or debit card payments). The merchant IDs' (MIDs) legal ownership are in the process of being transferred from Somerset Council to Yeovil Town Council, so Barclaycard Payments services will be retained. There is a lengthy process that need to be followed and Barclaycard Payments could not guarantee that this would be in place by 1st August 2024 and we are using our contingency plan, in that Somerset Council will continue to take payments on behalf of Yeovil Town Council and monies will be transferred to Yeovil Town Council.

3.1.7 Payroll

The Deputy Responsible Finance Officer uploaded the payment details for the staff that have TUPE transferred from Somerset Council into the Payroll system. The payroll system will calculate employee and employer pension contributions, employee and employer NI and employee PAYE. There is also a requirement to maintain that correct information is transferred to the LGPS.

In September, we will see the introduction of payment of casual employees who are paid a month in arrears. A process is being developed to ensure that casuals are paid correctly. This will involve the submission of an approved timesheet by around 7th of each month, to ensure payment on the next pay run. For casual staff an additional 12.10% of hours worked (known as pay rolled up) will be paid which covers holiday payments, in line with legislation.

3.1.8 Banking Facilities

The Deputy Town Clerk (SF) has worked with Natwest to add additional Councillors to and remove previous Councillors from the bank mandate. We are also in a position where we have built resilience in that reliance is not just on one Officer to make payments through the Autopay system.

3.2 HR

The HR function will be run in house. There will inevitably be a higher turnover of staff due to the additional number of permanent staff and casual staff, therefore there will be a higher volume of leavers, new starters and recruitment.

3.2.1 HR Records

Files will be retained for all staff transferring to Yeovil Town Council as well as existing staff. Records will be kept for annual leave entitlements, sick leave, annual appraisals and any other information that needs to be monitored.

The information provided by Somerset Council did not provide all employees contact details. The Assistant Town Clerk produced a HR form which collated all this information as well as next of kin details. This has been circulated to all employees, most have now been returned and they will also be filed on staff files.

3.2.2 Leave

Staff transferring from Somerset Council leave years do not start from 1st April, they start from the day they joined the organisation (or South Somerset District Council). So, for example if they joined on 28th June, the leave year starts on 28th June and finishes on 27th June.

3.2.3 Recruitment Policy

A Recruitment Policy will be developed, so that the process is clear for any officer who is recruiting, and that a consistent approach is taken by all.

3.2.4 Employee Handbook

We will also be putting together an Employee Handbook which will provide existing, transferred and new staff with information, rules, policies and procedures concerning their employment at Yeovil Town Council.

3.2.5 Complicated HR Issues

The more complicated HR issues will be dealt with externally. A report will be submitted and considered at a later date by Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and a procurement exercise will be carried out to establish to whom these services will be contracted.

3.2.6 Staffing within Directorate of Culture, Events and Promotions

The Director of Culture, Events and Promotions has reviewed staffing and vacancies as transferred from Somerset Council. A Marketing Officer (permanent at Westlands Entertainment Venue), a Marketing Officer (temporary to cover maternity leave at Westlands Entertainment Venue) and a Chef (at Westlands Entertainment Venue). These are all vacancies that were carried over from Somerset Council, but play vital roles in providing the services.

3.2.7 Staffing within Directorate of Leisure and Environment

The Director of Leisure and Environment has reviewed staffing and vacancies as transferred from Somerset Council. She has progressed the recruitment of a new Biodiversity Ranger position that replaces the vacant Countryside Ranger position, to ensure that the smaller Yeovil Town Council team has the necessary skills and qualifications to manage Yeovil Country Park.

The café structures have been reviewed in consultation with the Café Manager who will make changes to future recruitment to ensure cafes remain viable business units.

Teams have managed business as usual throughout the busiest months of the year with very few hitches.

3.3 Insurance

We are very fortunate that the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer has knowledge, expertise and experience in this field. She has been liaising with the insurer to ensure that the Council are adequately insured and any further requirements have been added to the insurance schedule.

We will be carrying out an insurance procurement exercise in January 2025, for the new financial year and beyond.

3.4 IT

We are working with Focus Group (IT contractor) to implement the new IT provision. This is very complex due to the multiple sites.

There is a complex and technical project plan in place which is being worked on between Focus Group and Somerset Council. Good progress is being made on this plan. The IT at Town House is in the midst of being transferred to the cloud. A new circuit will be installed which will be able to manage the traffic flow.

There are a number of ancillary elements of IT that are being novated to Yeovil Town Council. These include Artifax (an event/conferencing management tool), Spektrix (Box Office and ticketing software) and Rotacloud (rota software).

3.5 Telephones

As previously mentioned, the phone system will run through the Teams application. Once Town House goes live with this element of Teams – there will be a transition period and then there will no longer be a necessity for land lines. The Deputy Town Clerk will be working with Focus Group for a solution that best fits the needs of the Town Council.

3.6 Mobile Phones

The Assistant Town Clerk has been working with our providers to secure good deals for staff with work mobile phones. The staff who TUPE transferred were able to retain their work mobile phones.

3.7 Tills

Tills are at Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil Country Park and Yeovil Rec. The contracts for the maintenance and support on these tills are contracted through Dataweigh.

3.8 Property and Facilities Management

The Deputy Town Clerk (HF) has worked tirelessly on the following elements of property and facilities management. A pragmatic approach has been adopted.

Information about the new properties was sought from Somerset Council which would be useful going forward. This included:

- Floorplans and elevations
- Asbestos survey reports
- Legionella Risk assessments
- Electrical survey reports

3.8.1 Contracts

In most cases 'umbrella' contracts covering the existing Town Council properties and the newly acquired properties from Somerset Council have been sought. Contracts relating to health, safety and security, have been given priority when investigating and negotiating new contracts. Whilst the Town Council has always sought best value when awarding new contracts, it has also sought to use local companies when at all possible. The following contracts have been either agreed or are nearly at the point of signing: Fire and Security; Keyholding; Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning; Shutters; Water Hygiene; Electrical work; waste collection; public toilet cleaning; sanitary, nappy and sharps bins; wallgate units; and Westlands temporary fire escape staircase.

3.8.2 Fire & security

The fire and safety elements of the newly acquired properties had all been transferred to a Taunton based firm, but the Town Council had been using PG Fire & Security, a Yeovil based company for its existing buildings. PG Fire & Security were keen to extend their contract with YTC and provided competitive rates and offered a more personal service. A contract has been signed with PG Fire & Security to start from the end of August, which covers numerous aspects of the properties including: fire and intruder

alarms, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, panic buttons, access control, and CCTV.

3.8.3 Keyholding

T.R.U. Event and Security, a Yeovil security company has recently expanded their business to include a keyholding service. They have been enthusiastic to take over the Town Council's existing and new properties, and will be starting their contract alongside PG F&S so that they will be called first when alarms are activated. This has involved significant negotiation with the various sites, organising the keys, fobs, access information, etc.

3.8.4 Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning

Elliotts Environmental Services is a Yeovil company that has serviced and maintained the Town Council's existing properties, and previously Westlands, the Jon O'Donnell building and Ninesprings Café. In fact, even though they had installed a lot of the equipment at the various sites, Somerset Council had starting using other contractors to maintain and repair the equipment. A contract has been drawn up and signed to encompass as many elements of the buildings that Elliotts can cover in all the existing and new properties. They will be maintaining and servicing twice a year the following: air conditioning units, air handling units, heat recovery units, air condensing units, central heating boilers, water heaters, air source heat pumps, etc.

3.8.5 Shutters

For many years the Town Council has used an Exeter-based shutter company, HVP Shutters, to service and repair the roller shutters at Milford Hall and Petters Way toilets as no local company could provide such a reliable service. When visiting the Somerset Council properties, it became apparent there were significant issues with the shutters at both Westlands and Yeovil Recreation Centre. The Town Council is working with Somerset Council to resolve the issues before a new contract can be finalised with HVP Shutters.

3.8.6 Water Hygiene

The Town Council has used Pure Drop based in Wimborne to monitor and test the water supply for the existing buildings for several years. Somerset Council had been using another company to carry out risk assessments and sampling, but they did not provide a costing for the work and they did provide training to site staff to carry out weekly and monthly testing. Pure Drop is keen to extend their contract to the new buildings, and have therefore been contracted to carry out updated Legionella risk assessments. Once an action plan is in place, they will continue with the sampling work, but will train site staff at all sites to do weekly and monthly testing, including temperature testing. They will also train a member of staff to service and maintain the thermostatic mixing valves (which are numerous) on an annual basis to meet legal requirements. Until all this is in place, Somerset Council have agreed to continue with the site checks.

3.8.7 Electrical work

PAT testing was overdue at all the Somerset Council sites at the transfer date, and they have arranged to have it carried out, and to pay for it, during September. More general electrical work, including electrical surveys has yet to be fully considered, but all the new sites were up to date in terms of meeting legislation. In the meantime, small electrical repairs are being referred to CH Fry.

3.8.8 Waste Collection

Recycling and general waste was carried out by Veolia at the three new sites. The nature of the businesses means the collections are quite complex and frequent. The Somerset Council contract with Veolia was a national contract, but the new contract, now signed by the Town Council, is a local contract and should hopefully be a more personal service. The representative has been very helpful in negotiating the contract for the different needs of the sites, and the costs significantly lower. The waste collections from the Town House are also to be added to the new contract so that all Town Council properties are covered by one contract.

3.8.9 Public Toilets Cleaning

Glen Cleaning has cleaned the public toilets on behalf of Yeovil Town Council and other Councils in the area for many years. The standard of cleaning is variable, and the contracts had become messy over time. The Town Council already managed Petters Way Toilets and Peter Street toilets, and with the transfer of properties, the Council is now responsible for public toilets at Ninesprings café and Yeovil Recreation Centre. It is a good opportunity to bring all four sets of toilets under one contract. Other companies were approached and showed an interest in the contract, but for various reasons, did not pursue the work. Glen Cleaning are keen to retain the contract and negotiations are still underway to improve the service and make the charging of consumables transparent.

3.8.10 Sanitary, nappy & sharps bins

The Town Council already had two contracts with different suppliers, and Somerset Council also had various suppliers, and the situation was messy, inefficient and costly. Again, the opportunity has been taken to pull all the site requirements into one contract with South West Hygiene, who have been very helpful and flexible to the needs of the different operations. A remaining contract at the Town House will expire in February 2025, when this too, will be included in the same contract.

3.8.11 Wallgate units

Wallgate units have been installed in all the public toilets that the Town Council is now responsible for, and provide, soap, water and air to clean and dry hands. Unfortunately, it appears that only Wallgate engineers can maintain and repair the units which of course means that a premium is charged. The Town Council has had a 3-year contract with Wallgate which is up for renewal, but it appears that Somerset Council do not have a contract. A new contract to include all the units is being negotiated and considered for value for money.

3.8.12 Westlands Temporary Escape Staircase

It has come to light that the fire escape from the first floor at Westlands is provided by a temporary structure, which by its temporary nature, needs

to be checked by a qualified person on a weekly basis, and as such, incurs significant costs. Solutions to this situation have been investigated and will be the subject of a future report to the relevant committee.

3.8.13 Other Contracts

There are also numerous contracts to be dealt with for specific aspects of the properties, such as: automatic doors, partition doors, lifts, fire duct cleaning, hearing loops, water coolers, and many others that will come to light in the coming months. There are also the contracts for maintaining and servicing the equipment such as: ovens, freezers, dishwashers, coffee machines, etc. Most of these are yet to be addressed.

3.8.14 Urgent and Reactive Repairs

The nature of the properties and operations transferred naturally give rise to numerous day to day issues of equipment breaking down and general repairs needing to be carried out. Urgent repairs out of hours can also occur with operations taking place into the evening and weekends, and unwelcome vandalism. Somerset Council advised that they call on CG Fry to carry out such urgent and non-urgent reactive repairs. Very positive discussions have been held with CG Fry, and they have given assurance that they have people in the area at all times to provide assistance out of hours, and also to assist with reactive repairs. They cover most trades, and have provided a list of costs for urgent out of hours work, and other reactive repairs. An interim process of referring jobs to facilities management at the Town House has been set up to be authorised and passed to an appropriate company to deal with. To date, several jobs have been referred to CG Fry, and they have responded positively. The Town Council has used CHG Plumbing (based in Bridport) for numerous plumbing problems in the public toilets, Milford Hall and the Town House. Therefore, the Town Council has arranged with them to continue to use them on an ad hoc basis for the new properties as and when plumbing issues arise.

3.8.15 Utilities

Work is well underway for the Town Council to take over the contracts for the electric, gas and water meters at the properties transferred from Somerset Council. There are 14 meters in all (7 electric, 1 gas and 6 water). An officer at Somerset Council has been working hard to provide all the information to the relevant suppliers for the 'change of tenancy' submissions, all of which have now been accepted, and the Town Council is now waiting for confirmation that all the processes are completed. Once this is confirmed, Utility Aid (the Town Council's broker for not-for-profit organisations) is poised to add them to our existing account and obtain the best prices on our behalf. They have also been asked to provide the best green prices to provide a comparison.

A proportion of the gas and water supplies at Westlands, and the electricity, gas and water at South Somerset Heritage (at Lufton) will have to be recharged from Somerset Council as the meters at these sites cover the whole of the sites and not just the properties transferred.

3.8.16 Future Scheduling and Monitoring

Once all the above contracts and processes have been put in place, attention will need to be given to the on-going scheduling of the maintenance and servicing of the various aspects of all the properties to ensure the contracts are being carried out as expected, and the costs are in accordance with the agreements.

3.8.17 Future Projects

Finally, the Town Council will need to give consideration to future projects, for example, the refurbishment of buildings, the installation of solar panels and other green initiatives, and the development of sites, all of which will need to be programmed over future years. A separate report to the relevant committee will consider this further.

3.9 Fleet

As the Town Council will not operate vehicles over 3.5 tonnes we do not need to register for an Operator Licence (O Licence), however we will be adopting a range of policies and procedures to ensure we are following

best practise. The Council fleet now includes seven road taxed vehicles plus other trailers and towed woodchippers.

3.9.1 Daily User Checks

All drivers will complete daily user checks e.g. vehicle walkarounds, before driving vehicles, these forms will be sent weekly to the fleet administrator. Any defects that need attention will be reported & escalated this way.

3.9.2 Driver assessments

Somerset Council will continue to provide driver assessments for our twelve fleet drivers, every other year.

3.9.3 Licence checks

The fleet administrator will complete DVLA driving license checks every three months.

3.9.4 Fleet and driver policies

A new Fleet Policy will be written to cover all the operating policies and procedures. A driver awareness session will be arranged to ensure full understanding and compliance.

3.9.5 Vehicle MOTs, servicing, and maintenance

Loxstons and SW Autotech will be used for vehicle repairs and maintenance. Loxstons have a mobile team that can provide support to our sites. A range of other suppliers including tyres, hydraulics, sharpening and recovery have been set up for use on the system.

3.9.6 Fleet and Health & Safety administration

New administrative capacity has been created via an existing customer service role at Yeovil Recreation Centre to provide the range of administrative support for the new fleet and health and safety responsibilities.

3.10 Health and Safety

3.10.1 Accident & incident monitoring & management

A new accident / incident and near miss report form has been designed and circulated to staff. Managers will receive all completed report forms and these will be collated and reported to the management team on a quarterly basis. This allows clear oversight of all occurrences and ensures investigations are completed and interventions made where any concerns / patterns arise.

3.10.2 Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS) monitoring

A new system to protect staff using vibrating machinery has been enabled. Across three locations (Yeovil Country Park, Yeovil Recreation Centre and the Goar Knapp allotment site) we have 61 items of vibrating machinery that need annual testing to ensure they run within reasonable accepted ranges. Each year individual machines will be given a rating that confirms the vibration of that machine. Team members are required to record each time they use the item of machinery and for how long, allowing an accurate record of exposure to be maintained and health of our workers monitored & protected.

3.10.3 Health monitoring

Aardvark Health have been contracted to provide annual health monitoring for all staff using vibrating & noisy tools, this is currently 8 team members. Annual testing ensures our team's health and hearing is not being impacted by over exposure to vibrating tools. Aardvark will also be able to provide occupational health support should any cases need escalating.

3.10.4 Health & Safety policy

In the coming weeks, a new Health and Safety policy will be drafted to cover the new broader operations of the Town Council. It is recommended that once completed a consultant is brought in to inspect and provide challenge to the policy and practices.

3.10.5 Waste

On going waste handling arrangements have been agreed with Somerset Council. Yeovil Town Council do not have a waste handling licence at this time and therefore cannot move any waste.

3.10.6 First Aid

A first aid training company has been appointed to provide refresher and qualification courses for the 25 first aiders across the Council.

3.10.7 Lone worker system

To ensure lone workers (Yeovil Country Park and Yeovil Recreation Centre) have a satisfactory support system we have worked with the Town Centre Radio Network and Town Centre Crime Reduction team to secure a range of handsets and channels that provide the necessary reporting and escalation procedures to lone workers. This approach also future proofs the system in readiness for services transferred as part of tranche 2.

3.11 CCTV

Councillors will be aware that the CCTV system in Yeovil and other towns in Somerset was under threat with SC's financial emergency. Numerous meetings and discussions have been held to agree a service level agreement between the participating town councils and SC, as well as negotiations in respect of a fair financial contribution to the scheme by the Town Council. A separate report to the relevant committee will look provide more detail.

4.0 Committees



Old Committee	New Committee
Finance, Resources and Policy Committee	Finance and Policy Executive Committee
Promotions and Activities	Culture, Events and Promotions Committee
Grounds and General Maintenance Committee	Leisure and Environment Committee
Buildings and Civic Matters Committee	Infrastructure (Property and Assets) Committee
Planning Committee	Planning Committee

It is suggested that from the November Committee meetings, that the old committees are disbanded, with the new committees taking their place.

The Scheme of Delegation will need to be revised. This document highlights which powers and duties are delegated to each Committee and to the Chief Executive / Town Clerk.

5.0 Policies and Procedures

All the Council's policies and procedures can be found at <https://www.yeovil.gov.uk/strategic-documents>. These are categorised into Council Constitution, Procedures and Governance; Data Protection; and Employment.

All of these documents will need to be revised.

6.0 Resource Capacity

The team at Town House has worked exceptionally hard to ensure that the original service provision of Yeovil Town Council have been delivered whilst taking on the additional services. We must recognise the staff commitment and additional work that they have taken on, with many staff working on days they do not ordinarily work, additional hours and the cancellation of leave (this has been at the discretion of the individual), and

the reluctance for staff to take leave through the summer. However, this is not sustainable.

Town House will require further staffing resources, particularly administration support to assist with answering the phone, providing reception services, organising and administering the various schedules for maintenance of property etc.

A report will be submitted to the Staffing Committee who will direct to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, to ensure adequate resources.

7.0 Tranche 2

At its meeting held on 14th May 2024, Yeovil Town Council agreed to take on the full responsibility of all Open Spaces, all Play Areas and Yeovil in Bloom from Autumn 2024. We are still awaiting a timetable from Somerset Council about when this is likely to happen.

8.0 Conclusion

An exceptional amount of work has been carried out to get the Council in this position within 7 months. There still remains a lot of background work that needs to be carried out.

“Devolution Day” was a very successful day, with staff and services transitioning to Yeovil Town Council smoothly. There were no major issues and only a few minor issues which were speedily resolved.

The staff who have transferred appear to be happy working for Yeovil Town Council, but it is important for Yeovil Town Council to maintain this.

9.0 Recommendation

Town Council is **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1)to note the report;
- (2)that from the November Committee meetings, that the old committees are disbanded, with the new committees taking their place; and
- (3)to thank all the staff for their ongoing hard work and commitment.

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