



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
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Yeovil
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Mayor: Cllr A Kendall
Chief Executive / Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Monday 6th January 2025 at 7:00pm in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA21 1PQ and by video-conference using Zoom meeting software.

Committee Members Present (in person): Cllrs R Spinner (Chair); T Casey; A Kendall; J Lock; T Lock; J Lowery; A Richards; and A Wilkes.

Also Present (in person): D Potten (co-opted, non-voting)

In Attendance (in person): A Card (Chief Executive/Town Clerk); and L Ryder (Assistant Town Clerk);

In Attendance (virtual): C Daters (Woodland Creation Officer, Climate and Place, Somerset Council)

There was one member of the public present.

Public Comment.

The member of the public requested that a site visit be carried out by the Chair to Milford Dip allotment.

7:02pm – Meeting Commenced.

11/220 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Cabell (work commitments); E Hopkins (work commitments); and A Soughton (personal reasons).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/221 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

11/222 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th November 2024.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on 9th September 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/223 FEEDBACK FROM YEOVIL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Spinner explained that there had not been a meeting of the Yeovil Allotment Association since the last meeting of this Committee, but that he was looking forward to attending next time.

11/224 FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Co-opted Non-Voting member explained that he had recently e-mailed the office regarding some items specific to Goar Knapp and he was awaiting a written response.

RESOLVED: that the matter be noted.

11/225 URBAN TREE CHALLENGE PLANTING OPPORTUNITY

The Committee considered the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment regarding the collaboration with Somerset Council to plant 85 large 'standard' trees at Milford Park, Lower Milford Park and Yew Tree Park using funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund administered by the Forestry Commission.

The Woodland Creation Officer from Somerset Council explained the scheme and the benefit to Yeovil Town Council. The trees would be between 10-14cm round and be between 1.6 and 1.8 metres tall. They would be supported by 2 wooden stakes and protected by a metal cage funded by the Urban Tree Challenge Fund. There would also be funding of £151 per tree per year for 3 years to fund the establishment including watering and inspections.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk confirmed that the Open Spaces team would carry out the establishment works.

One Councillor enquired whether there was scope to amend the planting locations on the sites as he was concerned about potential damage that could be created if planting took place adjacent to the car park at Yew Tree Park. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Woodland Creation Officer had designed the scheme and secured the funding and was the authority on trees, but that discussions would be held between the Woodland Creation Officer at Somerset Council and Director of Leisure and Environment to mitigate as far as possible any potential risks.

One Councillor asked about the certainty of the establishment payments from Somerset Council to Yeovil Town Council. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk reassured the Committee that there would be a robust agreement in place.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to agree to the tree planting schemes for Milford Park, Lower Milford Park and Yew Tree Park; and (3) to instruct the Director of Leisure and Environment to confirm with Somerset Council the Town Council's agreement to undertake the establishment works as set out in the report.

7:32pm – The Woodland Creation Officer left the meeting and did not return.

11/226 DEVOLUTION TRANCHE 2 UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment.

Tranche 2 transfer would include open spaces, play area and Yeovil In Bloom via a Licence to Occupy in the first instance. It had been established that the services would have to be built from scratch which would include recruitment, procurement of vehicles and equipment and the provision of depot facilities. Many of these costs had been built into the budget.

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk highlighted that there was a necessity to recruit the Operations Manager (who will oversee the Open Spaces, play parks and Yeovil in Bloom) before April 2025, to assist in setting up the services. This will be discussed further with the Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to note that tranche 2 will require use of the agreed devolution budget to establish services; and (3) that a further report be brought to the March meeting of this Committee which will provide greater detail.

11/227 FLEET MANAGEMENT – VEHICLE REPLACEMENT REQUEST

The Committee considered the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment regarding the Town Council's blue VW Caddy.

One Councillor stated that the replacement vehicle should be an electric vehicle rather than a hybrid vehicle. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk stated that an options appraisal would be carried out and the most suitable option would be selected.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) that both the disposal of the existing van and procurement of the new vehicle be delegated to the Director of Leisure and Environment in consultation with the Chair of this Committee.

11/228 UPDATE FROM YEOVIL RECREATION CENTRE

The Committee considered the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment regarding the 'good news stories' at Yeovil Recreation Centre.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/229 MONKSDALE HEDGE

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (SF).

Some questions were raised and the Chief Executive/Town Clerk provided the answers to these questions.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/230 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT MONTH 9 2024/25

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the budget monitoring report for month 9. She highlighted the difficulties in predicting expenditure and income for 8 months of activity based on the current 5 months of activity for the services that have devolved from Somerset

Council. Since the services are new, the Council does not have the historical data of actuals and trends throughout the year.

RESOLVED: to note the predicted expenditure and income for this Committee.

11/231 BUDGET SETTING 2025/26

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the budget setting report. She highlighted that the salary costs and casual employee costs had been revised based on pay awards, changes to National Insurance Employers' contributions and changes to the National Living Wage due to come into effect from April 2025.

She highlighted the difficulties in setting the budget for 2025/26 as detailed above in agenda item 11/230 – Budget Monitoring Report Month 9 2024/25.

RESOLVED: to recommend to the Finance & Policy Executive the draft budget for 2025/26.

The meeting closed at 7:54pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: