



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
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Yeovil
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BA20 1PQ

Mayor: Cllr T Lock
Chief Executive/ Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
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Minutes of the hybrid Extraordinary meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software; and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.

Present (in person): Cllrs A Soughton (in the Chair); K Gill; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; W Read; A Richards; J Snell; R Spinner; R Stickland; H Stonier (from 7:02pm) and D Woan.

In Attendance (in person): Cllr R White; A Card (Chief Executive / Town Clerk); and J Pang (Deputy Responsible Finance Officer).

In Attendance (virtual): Cllr A Kendall.

There were no members of the press public present.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7:00pm – the meeting commenced.

11/401 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Casey (unwell).

**Legislation requires that Councillors need to be physically present at the meeting to be shown as present. If a Councillor is unable to attend in person but can attend virtually, then apologies for absence should be given.*

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/402 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11/403 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members considered the exclusion of the press and public.

Cllr A Richards objected to the proposed exclusion of the press and public for items 11/405 and 11/406 and requested clarification as to why those items should be considered in confidential session. The Chair advised that whilst aspects of the matters under consideration related to public records, the reports also required consideration of detailed

correspondence, professional judgments, governance processes, complaints handling and matters relating to identifiable officers.

Following the Chair's explanation, Cllr A Richards maintained his objection and requested a named vote on the proposed exclusion.

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of agenda item 11/404 - 11/406 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3

**1 For: (A Soughton; K Gill; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; W Read; J Snell; R Spinner; R Stickland; H Stonier and D Woan); Against: (Cllr A Richards).*

A discussion took place regarding a potential prejudicial interest in the subsequent agenda items.

The Chair advised that, having considered the circumstances relating to the following items, it was his view that Cllr A Richards had a prejudicial interest and invited him to declare that interest. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk explained the basis for that view. Cllr A Richards disputed that a prejudicial interest existed. The relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders were explained, including the provisions relating to the withdrawal of councillors from consideration of matters in which they have an interest and the availability of dispensations where applicable. Following that discussion, Cllr A Richards withdrew from the meeting without declaring an interest.

Cllr A Richards was afforded an opportunity to make representations before withdrawing from the meeting. He declined to make further representations on the matters before the Committee but made a brief statement explaining his reasons for withdrawal before leaving the meeting.

7:13pm – Cllr A Richards left the meeting and did not return.

11/404 URGENT DECISION – INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINT

The Committee received a report regarding an urgent decision taken to commission an independent investigation into a complaint made against the Council. Members were advised that the appointment had been made following consultation in accordance with the Council's urgent decision procedures (Standing Order 4(d)(xiv) and that the investigator had been identified following external advice from South West Councils.

Members were advised that the investigation was underway and was independent of the matters contained within the subsequent reports. It was confirmed that the outcome of the investigation would be reported separately upon completion.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

**11/405 SUMMARY OF POSITIONS REGARDING COUNCILLOR ACCESS,
FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING
(CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Committee considered the report outlining the differing positions of the Councillor and the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding councillor access to information, financial governance matters and associated correspondence.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk summarised the governance arrangements that had been followed in relation to the matters raised and referred members to previous Council and Committee decisions, internal audit recommendations, published reports and established financial procedures. Members were satisfied that the issues raised had already been subject to Council decision-making processes, committee oversight and audit review.

During discussion, members acknowledged the importance of councillor scrutiny and access to information. Members noted that the Council provided regular financial information, payment reports, committee reports, audit reports and supporting documentation as part of its governance framework. Members expressed the view that the matters raised had been adequately considered through established governance and audit processes.

8:00pm – Cllr T Lock left the meeting.

8:01pm – Cllr T Lock returned to the meeting.

Members further considered the distinction between legitimate member scrutiny and requests which may extend into functions ordinarily exercised by internal or external auditors. Concern was expressed regarding the officer time and resources devoted to extensive correspondence and follow-up enquiries.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report and the differing positions presented; (2) that the Executive is satisfied that existing governance and audit processes have adequately considered the issues raised; (3) to determine that no referral to Full Council is required; and (4) to defer consideration of any future framework for responding to similar requests until consideration of the proposed Councillor–Officer Relations Protocol.

**11/406 ACCESS TO COUNCIL RECORDS REQUEST – CONSIDERATION OF
NEXT STEPS (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Committee considered a report regarding a request for access to Council records and the practical arrangements required to facilitate such access.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk advised that the Council remained willing to facilitate access to relevant records but required sufficient information to identify the records sought and to make practical arrangements for inspection. Members were advised that records were held across multiple systems and locations and that broad requests could have significant implications for officer resources.

Members discussed the principles of reasonableness, proportionality and the effective use of public resources. It was noted that whilst councillors were entitled to information

reasonably required to fulfil their duties, access rights needed to be balanced against the practical implications of retrieving, reviewing and supervising access to large volumes of documentation.

8:21pm – Cllr W Read left the meeting.

8:23pm – Cllr W Read returned to the meeting.

Members also noted that access to information remained subject to legal restrictions, confidentiality requirements and data protection obligations where applicable.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the request and associated correspondence; (2) to note the resource implications associated with the request as currently framed; and (3) to continue the current approach whereby officers seek sufficient specificity to identify records before inspection arrangements are made, subject to the future arrangements for councillor access requests through the proposed Councillor–Officer Relations Protocol.

A motion was proposed and seconded expressing confidence in the Chief Executive / Town Clerk and Council officers.

Members recorded their appreciation of the professionalism of officers and the work undertaken in supporting the Council and serving the residents of Yeovil.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Committee records its confidence in the Chief Executive / Town Clerk and Council officers and acknowledges their professionalism, commitment and service to the Council and the community.

The meeting closed at 8:41pm.

Signed: (Chair) Date