



Weymouth Town Council Bench Policy

September 2023

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Introduction:

Weymouth Town Council (“the Council”) manage a large number of benches across the different wards, these fall into three categories highways, parks and seafront.

The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances and trends. The policy will be reviewed at least every four years and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

The process for each type of bench is different and these are detailed further in this policy.

Objectives of the Policy:

The Council will consider requests from residents and members of the public for highway benches to be removed/relocated. The Council will also consider requests from community groups who wish to take over responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of any bench (the ownership will remain with the Council.)

The Council will consider requests for new benches on highways to serve public need.

The Council will also consider requests for sponsored benches in our open spaces, parks, highways, and promenades as well as requests for benches without sponsorship within Weymouth Town Council owned areas. The authorised officer will consider requests for benches without sponsorship bearing in mind the needs of the area and the available budget, if there isn't any budget available at the time of request then the applicant can opt to purchase a bench or go onto the waiting list. If a particular site isn't suitable for the installation of a bench the authorised officer will offer another suitable location. All benches purchased by the Council without sponsorship can be offered for sponsorship later as the Council deems appropriate.

The Council supports the needs and principles of allowing the memorialisation of benches in our open spaces, parks, and promenade. The Council is mindful that public facilities are accessed and enjoyed by a wide range of people.

Authorised officers can also purchase and install benches from the available allocated budget as deemed necessary (business as usual) to accommodate the needs of the council.

Highway Benches

In 2023 Dorset Council transferred responsibility for all their highway benches to the Council, this has resulted in the need for a policy to provide guidance on the responsibility of the Council in maintaining the benches and to review any requests for removal/relocation or new benches on the highway.

The Council will review the condition of the benches on an annual basis, and The Council will carry out essential repairs and maintenance unless the bench is no longer in a safe condition. This will result in the council removing the bench, with no obligation to replace it with a new one, however in most circumstances we will endeavour to replace.

The procedure to request to either remove/relocate or request a new bench will be;

- An application is made (via a completed form) to Weymouth Town Council for either a removal/relocation or installation of new bench.
- Any request for removal, relocation or installation of a bench is subject to approval by the Services Committee, following a 21-day period of notification to the residents/public of such a request.
- The Council will consult with the appropriate ward members to get their views.
- A Report will be presented to the Services Committee for consideration.
- For any granted new bench request the Council will inform Dorset Council and can either request a quote for installing new footings or seek quotations from qualified contactors.

Memorialised Benches

With a number of existing memorialised benches throughout the Council's remit, it has become necessary for the Council to put in place this policy as a guideline for new applicants to understand locations available for memorialised benches.

This policy is intended to provide a guideline for applications for memorialised benches within the Council's boundary. It is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

This policy will be made available to the public and all applicants for memorialised benches will be issued with a copy.

There is no legislative requirement for the provision of public memorialised benches, although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity as well as a place to sit and reflect on those loved ones who have been lost.

All applications for memorialised benches should be completed on an official application form in the format attached as Appendix 1. They must be signed by the applicant, giving extended family details where possible, as an additional means of contacting the sponsor or their family, should this be necessary at a future date. It is important to note that the lifespan of a sponsorship of a bench is 10 years or the lifetime of the bench, whichever is soonest.

Requests will be accommodated where possible, but it may be necessary to offer alternative locations, if space is not available at the preferred site. Alternatively, if a request is for a specific area and there are no available spaces the request will be added to a waiting list where first come first serve basis will be in place. We are unable to indicate how long a person will be on the waiting list as each area will have a varying number of applications and this will affect the waiting time. Applicants to be advised of the costs for the installation process.

Once installed, basic maintenance of the bench will become the responsibility of the Council, i.e., painting as required and minor repairs.

Whilst the Council will endeavour to maintain and repair wherever possible to prolong the life of each bench if, in the view of the Council's maintenance officer, repairs are not viable and a bench is no longer safe for use, then the applicant (and, if unavailable, other family members detailed on the application form) will be contacted and asked whether they would like to fund a replacement bench. Any replacement benches will be subject to the same terms as if applying for a new bench.

Whilst the Council will use reasonable endeavours to contact the applicant in the first instance and thereafter alternative contacts provided on the application form, if this is not possible, after two unsuccessful attempts then the Council, in its absolute discretion, may remove and dispose of the bench as it sees fit.

The Council cannot guarantee the long-term safety or security of benches and is not responsible to replace any bench that is damaged and vandalised or deteriorated with age. In the unlikely event that a memorialised bench is stolen, the Council shall not be responsible for providing a replacement.

Additional mementoes such as flowers and wreaths, shall be permitted if they do not obstruct the use of the bench. The Council will remove and dispose of these items if they are placed in such a manner as to obstruct the bench, where they have become weathered/wilted and unappealing.

The Council will work with local groups and residents where appropriate to restore benches. However, the Council will need to agree and sign off any work to ensure Health and Safety standards are met.

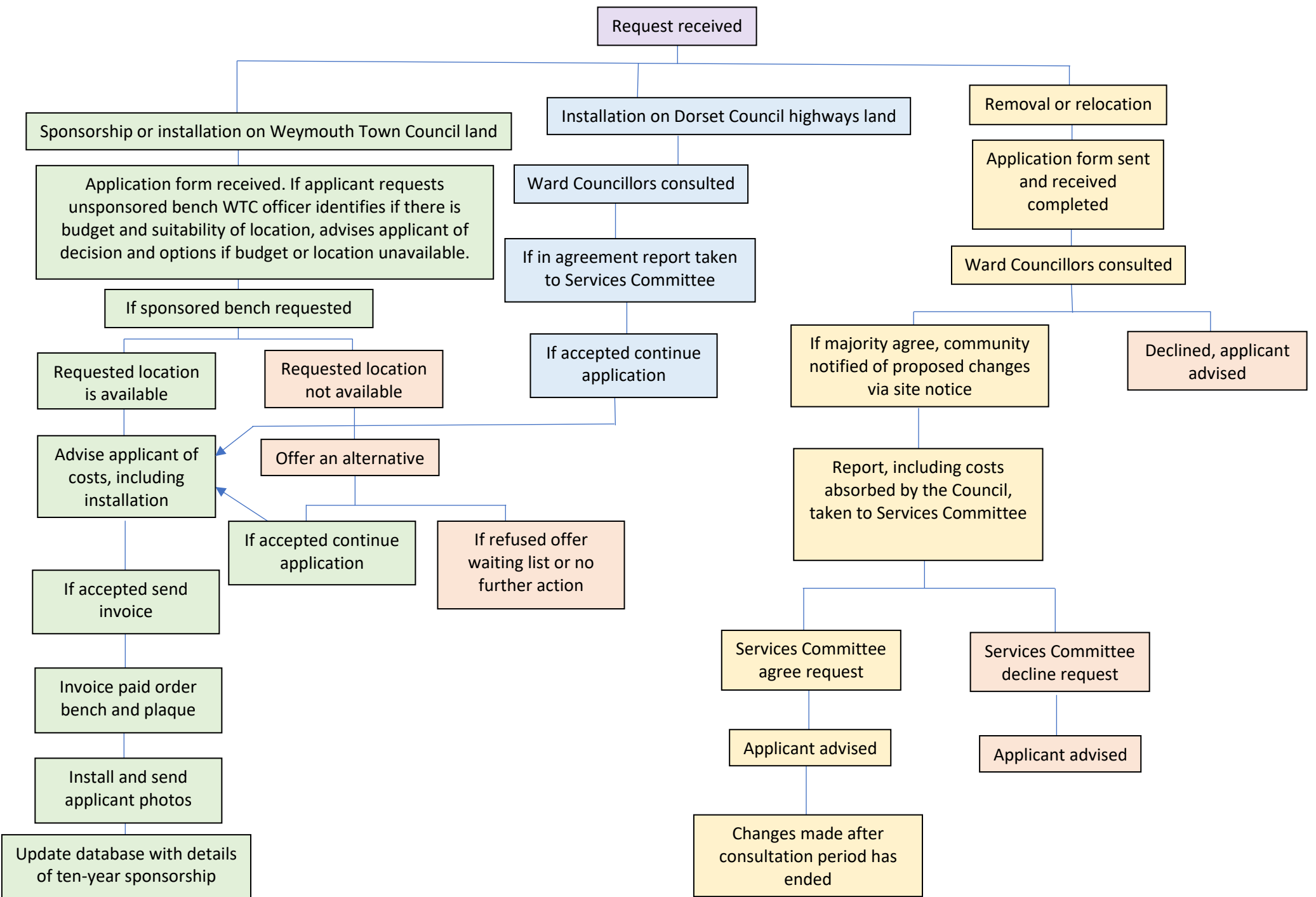
Plaques:

The plaques are provided by the Council, on behalf of the sponsor. Sponsors are required to submit their wording in advance, as the costs of plaque is dependent on the wording and will require approval that appropriate wording is being used. Plaques cannot be altered once ordered; alterations will require purchase of a new plaque.

If an applicant wants to sponsor an existing suitable unsponsored bench, then a request to attach a plaque can be made, the initial cost of this will be £250 plus an additional annual fee of £200 for a minimum of ten years, this £2000 fee can be paid together with the initial fee if desired. At the end of the ten years the sponsor will need to submit a new application for the bench to extend the term for another ten years if applicable.

Costings:

All sponsorship of new benches will cost a minimum of £1,800.00 but this is dependent on inflation, materials and installation, the sponsor will be advised of the costs on receipt of their application.



Appendix 1

APPLICATION FORM

This form covers sponsoring, removal, relocation or installation of a bench.

Responsibilities & Indemnities:

- The Council is responsible for the basic maintenance of the bench.
- The sponsor indemnifies the Council against liabilities, costs, expenses, damage and losses suffered or incurred by the donor arising out of or in connection with the provision of a sponsored bench.

Name of sponsor/applicant *:				
Contact number of sponsor/applicant *:				
Address of sponsor/applicant *:				
Email Address of sponsor/applicant *:				
Signature of sponsor/applicant*:				
Request type, tick applicable*:	Removal	Relocation	Installation	Sponsorship
Reason for requesting removal, relocation or installation, n/a if requesting sponsorship*:				
Name of alternative contact *:				
Contact details of alternative contact *:				
Preferred location *:				
2nd Preferred location*:				
Wording for plaque, if requesting sponsorship:				
Date of application *:				
Signed on behalf of Weymouth Town Council:				
Officers name:				

PLEASE NOTE: All information marked with a * needs to be completed otherwise request will be returned.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

Weymouth Town Council is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected by adhering to the principles of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Should we ask you to provide certain personal information by which you can be identified for the purpose of a contract with us, signing up to our mailing list, newsletter, or use of our website, then you can be assured that it will only be used for the purpose it was collected.

It will never be used by any third party for any other form of processing or marketing purposes.

Weymouth Town Council does not pass on any of its data to third parties other than those specified to undertake the contract entered.

Weymouth Town Council may change this policy from time to time by updating this statement. Statement can be found at: - <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/?s=data+protection>