



Community • Environment • Heritage

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- 22/065

Committee:-	Council
Date:-	14 th December 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Town clerk
Report Title:-	Climate Change Decision Making Structures
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Council's approval for changes to its committee structure

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to determine which option in 3.4 it wishes to implement.

3. Information

3.1. The Council set up a Climate Change Working Group in early 2021 to advise it on climate change policy, on the implementation of interventions to improve environmental outcomes and communicate sustainability practices. The Council also approved a motion declaring a climate emergency in June 2021 and this has been embedded in the corporate plan since it was drawn up a year ago. The Council also appointed a Climate Change Champion part of whose role is to chair the working group.

3.2. The working group has 5 members; it meets on a monthly basis and has met virtually until very recently. In the nature of working groups, it has been without formal support from the clerk, so has relied entirely on members' efforts to progress its work. There are no terms of reference in existence.

3.3. At the last meeting of Council, it was decided that the current structures were not sustainable and should be reviewed.

3.4. There are several principal options for the Council

- a) Abolish the working group, allocate its role as the promoter of sustainable outcomes to another committee (probably F&G Ctte) and ensure a member of that committee has the role of climate change champion. Climate change implications should also be detailed in every Council committee report as a section heading (currently this is treated as part of the “policy implications” section on every report).
- b) Convert the working group into a standing committee responsible to full Council. Terms of reference would need to be drawn up. The resulting “environment committee” could also incorporate other Council activities in its remit – for example, allotments, cycling and walking measures and any emerging or new responsibilities for environmental improvements. Including allotments would necessitate the abolition of the allotments working group
- c) Formalise the role of the working group with an agreed terms of reference, a wider membership (say 7 or 9 members), a slot in the calendar of meetings and formal support from the clerk. The working group could report to F&G Ctte rather than full Council if so desired, which has the merit of meeting more often to consider its recommendations.

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1. None to date.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

5.1. There may be some additional costs to options (b) and (c) in terms of room bookings, and some resource implications for the clerk’s time.

5.2. Option (b) means that responsibility for two existing small budgets (allotments and climate change) totalling £7000 would be passed to any new committee.

6. Policy Implications

The corporate plan says

Sustainability

1. The Council has approved motions declaring a climate emergency. It has established a climate change working group, which is exploring ways of encouraging and supporting sustainable habits and opportunities for local people. It is currently prioritising widening the scope and opportunities for recycling and supporting more tree planting.
2. The Council will continue to expect high sustainable standards, improved energy and water use and insulation standards when responding to planning application consultations; it will oppose applications which unsustainably reduce or do not replace natural habitat or damage water courses, or which do not seek to optimise the use of public transport, walking and cycling as means of travel.
3. The Council will, within its own remit, strive to protect, restore and enhance our local biodiversity and the natural world that surrounds us and of which we are all a part and will strive to take the most sustainable approach to the design and delivery of its own services.
4. The Council will support the development of walking and cycling infrastructure and the growth of public transport.
5. It will operate a paperless office, including eliminating the use of single use plastic items.

Background Papers

Council minutes May-July 2021