

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

2023-28

INTRODUCTION

Kettering Town Council is still quite new; it was created in April 2021 and had its first elections to 20 seats in May 2021. It was vested with the existing allotment sites, the Market Charter, market stalls, and the Mayoral insignia, robes and plate, inherited from the former Kettering Borough Council. In April 2022 it took on management of the town's general markets. In all other respects, it has to find its way in the world and this plan aims to help it do that, and to explain to local people what it is setting out to do.

This second plan sets out the next twelve months' work programme, within a five year envelope of wider objectives. It describes what the Town Council is for, and how it intends to go about its work. The plan is refreshed every year and the Council's budget and activities will be a function of the Council's objectives, both short term and long term.

This plan sits within the context of local government reorganisation within Northamptonshire, unrelenting budget pressures on statutory service providers, a cost of living crisis, the after-effects of a world-wide pandemic and the challenges of climate change.

ROLE AND PURPOSE

The Council exists:-

- To understand what local people want and aspire to and give voice to that
- To provide services not already delivered by statutory bodies, where there is an unmet need
- To represent its area to other service providers
- To provide leadership to its community
- To provide civic pride and presence

OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

The Council will adhere to the following objectives and standards in how it works as an organisation and together with others.

Economy

1. The Council will support growth and the continuing economic welfare of the town, provided this growth is as sustainable as it can be.
2. The Council will support the town centre – through encouraging and delivering facilities, through putting on events and markets, and will help to make the town centre safe, attractive, interesting and varied, with local businesses thriving alongside national retailers and service providers.

Health and Community

3. The Council will support measures to improve physical and mental health wellbeing, particularly in the light of the impacts of covid 19, through its own services and in partnership with others.
4. The Council will support measures to improve public safety, road safety, and the safety of the night time economy in Kettering.
5. The Council has signed the Armed Forces Covenant and will apply it wherever possible; it will support veterans and mark the work of the country's armed forces, for example on Remembrance Day.

Sustainability

6. The Council has approved motions declaring a climate emergency. It is exploring ways of encouraging and supporting sustainable habits and opportunities for local people.
7. 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.
8. 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

9. The Council will support the development of walking and cycling infrastructure and the growth of public transport.

Organisational Effectiveness

10. The Council will function as efficiently and effectively as it can, as a steward of the public money with which it is entrusted.

11. The Council will set out to explain what it is seeking to do, and why, and will listen to what local people have to say to it about their needs and aspirations.

12. The Council and its members will show respect to each other, to partner organisations and will help and support local people within its means to do so. It will be a constructive partner.

13. It will operate a paperless office, including eliminating the use of single use plastic items.

UNDERSTANDING LOCAL NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

The Council has a regular programme of “Town Meetings”, which give elected members the opportunity to hear direct from local people, businesses and community groups about their concerns, about opportunities to work together and wider aspirations about the future of the town’s facilities and communities. Town Meetings enable the Council to build up a network of inter-connected groups and individuals that can make their own linkages as well as feed into the Town Council’s plans.

Key partners will be invited to Town Council meetings to inform and discuss key issues – for example, the local police command will attend the Town Council every quarter to share information and concerns.

The Council’s website provides access to minutes and agendas, and essential documents, to information about councillors and is being developed to widen its coverage of events, local services and advice.

Members are the Council’s eyes and ears and what they see and hear will be used to inform what the Council does in future. Members will need to balance aspirations against resources and the Council recognises it cannot do everything it might wish to do. It will therefore look to harness the energy of local people and other organisations to help achieve its goals. Its grant making programmes are a way of supporting the local community and voluntary sector and making a positive impact on people’s lives.

The Council will develop means of gathering intelligence and information about social and economic trends and pressures, in conjunction with NNC, the police and others. The police, for example, will provide regular crime updates and statistics for Kettering Town to the Council.

THE COUNCIL AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

The Council's principal objectives as a service provider are:-

- Ensuring that the services it provides are appropriate and well managed and as sustainable as possible
- To identify things which are not provided but for which there is a need, and how
- To work in partnership with statutory bodies, in particular North Northamptonshire Council, to ensure local needs and aspirations can be met – through delegation of functions, through funding agreements or by topping up existing arrangements.
- To work with other town and parish councils – and other partners - where necessary, to provide services.

The Council is currently responsible for a number of services with which it was vested upon its creation and a small number it has begun to develop in the meantime. The Council will continue to have an open mind about what other services it can provide; the planned areas of work are set out in the Action Plan section towards the end of this corporate plan.

Current services and responsibilities include:-

- The operation of the three weekly **markets** on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Council has sought to engage with market traders to understand how best the markets can be managed and developed. It has also been building a programme of specialist markets, encompassing in 2022
 - Food and drink festivals
 - Vegan markets
 - Kettfest
 - Street Food Saturdays over the summer
 - Christmas markets in November and December
- Ownership of five **allotment** sites throughout Kettering, with over 500 allotment plots in total. The Council will engage with the allotment societies which manage them, review the condition of the sites, and explore how it can support the creation of new allotment plots to meet rising demand. During 2022, the Council worked with Western Power to improve gates, paths and fencing at Northfield Avenue allotments, repaired a footbridge at South End allotments, agreed a new 15 year lease with South End Allotments Society and secured agreement from NNC to transfer two parcels of land into its ownership to increase the facilities available at South End allotment site. Some clearance of an abandoned site within the Scott Rd allotment site has taken place and NNC are being pressed to complete the clearance task they committed to undertake in 2021 so that new plots

can be created here. Other priorities for action in 2023 are being considered by councillors, through the Allotments Working Group, which works closely with the two local allotments societies.

- The Council, on its creation, became the responsible body for the **South West Kettering Neighbourhood Plan** which has been in development for some time. The Council has created a committee of three members, with two co-opted members representing the residents of the area, to ensure continuity in developing the plan. The Council had agreed to adopt the plan prior to its submission and to support the process of explaining it to local people and encouraging them to vote in the referendum that will follow in early 2023.
- Management of **speed devices** for road safety purposes. The Council has taken ownership and responsibility for the two speed devices acquired by the former Kettering BC, and deploy them on Stamford Rd and Rockingham Rd; a third device is planned for installation on Pytchley Rd. All three will be solar powered. The devices warn motorists who are travelling over the speed limit. The Council will keep under review the need for further devices.
- The Kettering **Charities** for the Poor were managed by the former Kettering Borough Council. This group of charities provides a variety of services including annual grants to pay for winter fuel costs for single elderly people on low incomes, support to apprentices and students with unusual extra costs incurred during their studies and a single flat which fulfils the objectives of the William Martin charity to provide accommodation for elderly persons in need. The Council took on the management of these charities in 2021 and is improving how they are promoted and managed. Outstanding rent was recovered from NNC for the property at The Lawns which has improved the charity's prospects of increasing its reach. At a time of high fuel costs, the fuel grants charity is an important extra help for vulnerable older people in our community.
- **Providing community facilities.** In 2022, the Council agreed to fund bleed kits and defibrillators in various locations in town, and is considering how it can improve recycling facilities, increase the number of electricity points throughout the town centre, to support events and markets, and provide a digital town council notice board.
- **Events** – following on from the government sponsored Welcome Back Fund, which supported events in the town centre in 2021/22, the Council provided £47,000 in its budget for events during 2022/23. This has been spent on a variety of events in the town centre and elsewhere in town, such as on specialist markets, Christmas events and a Christmas grotto, entertainment for children, jubilee themed performances, bands in the park at Rockingham Rd park and a skateboard tuition day. For 2023, the Council's events programme will increase significantly again, as it brings back the popular Kettering by The Sea and it takes on the whole of the Christmas lights programme in 2023 as NNC withdraws from this aspect of its events programme.

- **A Grants programme** During 2022, the Council set up several budget headings to support the community in town,
 - A ward initiatives fund which gave every councillor £500 to spend on projects or events in their ward, or to help with research and communication work
 - A small grants fund of £15,000 to support local services provided by the voluntary and community sector
 - A community resilience fund of £7,400 to help communities help themselves with a focus on supporting vulnerable groups and localities

These funds will continue into 2023/4 with some revisions in the light of the experience of the first year

- The management of a **Town Lottery**. This was launched in June 2022; it is expected to raise £3,000 in its first year for good causes; the Council has chosen three themes for the proceeds of the lottery to be spent on – housing advice and support; health and wellbeing and sustainable lifestyles. The objective now is to show how the money is being used in positive ways in order to grow the lottery's reach and income by attracting new supporters.

Future Services

- The Council will, during 2023/24, also
 - Continue to develop its plans to provide a permanent set of public toilets, including disabled and baby changing facilities, within Kettering Town Centre. The original plan was to deliver this project in 2022/23 but delays in securing land for the toilet to be located on and the emerging costs of the project has meant that the scheme cannot be completed before the middle of 2023. The monies allocated in the 2022/23 budget for this project will be held in a reserve account, and added to from the 2023/4 budget, to ensure it can be afforded and managed once provided.
 - Subject to agreement, assume responsibility for the maintenance, renewal, erection and management of Christmas lights and other decorations from North Northamptonshire Council including the organisation of a Christmas Lights switch on event.
 - Develop rewilding and biodiversity promoting schemes in conjunction with local landowners.
 - Develop measures which embed sustainability and which provide advice and support for people who wish to become more sustainable in their daily lives.

REPRESENTING THE LOCAL AREA

The Council is consulted by NNC on planning applications it receives and on alcohol and premises licence applications. It is consulted on highway and public transport projects and initiatives such as the roll out of public electric vehicle charging points. Approximately 25 planning applications are received each month and the Town Council's Planning Committee meets monthly to consider those applications classified as "major" and "minor" applications and all listed building applications. Licence applications are dealt with by consulting the ward members concerned when a new application comes in, with the ability to take contentious cases to full Council if need be.

The Council will be an active partner in the Kettering Volunteer Network and the Kettering Futures Partnership, and will work with the voluntary and community sectors on identifying need and helping meet local needs, where necessary through its grants programmes.

The Council appoints councillors or local people to

- The Kettering Charities for the Poor and the William Martin Charity
- The Kettering Twinning Association
- The Board of Kettering Homestart as a non-voting member
- The Heritage Action Group Steering Committee

It also appoints two people as parish path wardens, who advise the highway authority about problems with public footpaths.

The Council also expects to be consulted on policy development as it affects the people of Kettering, by NNC, the police, the health authorities and national government agencies and departments. It will endeavour to respond to these as they occur. The Council will seek to play a role in the development of integrated care services through the locality partnerships groups being established by statutory agencies throughout the county. It will remain engaged with the Heritage Action Zone development work in the Town Centre.

The Council will consider during the coming year how it can influence the future development of the town centre, respond to the pressures on the town centre caused by declining retail demand and increasing demand for residential conversions and the future of local services such as car parking, street cleansing and parks and open spaces. The need for a new policy framework to be developed by the local planning authority will be a part of that. Equally, the need for a neighbourhood planning exercise elsewhere in the town area will be considered.

East Kettering urban extension continues to be built out. The Council will expect to take up places on the Community Trust overseeing public space and facilities within the development and to be engaged on changes to the plans for Hanwood Park. It will campaign for the on and off-site infrastructure which has been committed to, not least the new Junction 10a on the A14, the Weekley-Warkton Avenue and to help shape junction improvements. It will expect to have its say on the intended access arrangements from the development into the Grange estate.

LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC PRIDE

The Council inherited the mayoral insignia, robes, civic plate from the former Kettering Borough Council, alongside the Market Charter. The chairman of the Town Council is the Mayor of Kettering.

The Mayoralty provides a focus for local businesses, groups and people when they have something to celebrate or commemorate and is a useful focus for telling the story of Kettering and what it does well. It also provides a way in for young people to understand their community and what goes on within it.

A new coat of arms is needed for the Town Council; the council has sought the permission of the College of Arms to revert to elements of the pre 1974 coat of arms and awaits its conclusions.

The Council needs to constructively engage with a wide range of people to achieve its objectives and to demonstrate leadership – it can do that partly through all the measures described above, and within its action plan, but needs to be prepared to be responsive to new challenges and opportunities as they arise and to “have its finger on the pulse” of the local community.

COMMUNICATION

The Council has begun to develop a reliable social media presence and will continue to grow this means of communication. It will utilise the social media apps promoted by North Northamptonshire Council.

The Council developed its Twitter account and created a Facebook page in 2022, and set up an Instagram account. Some improvements to the website were made. The Council has sought to take on the management of the “This is Kettering” website from NNC, but it not yet clear what the outcome of that request will be. The Council will continue to improve its communications activities and to develop an overall communications strategy during 2023.

The Council also adopted a new logo and imagery during 2023, to improve its recognisability.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The Council started its life with a modest budget to ensure it could function and assume those responsibilities it inherited. The budget for 2022/23 took the precept for an average “Band D” home to just under £20 per annum. The budget for 2023/24 will reflect its continuing ambition to develop its services but also to take on additional costs such as Christmas lights, without asking too much of local residents at a time when household budgets are under pressure. The proposed budget for 2023/24 will cost the average household in Kettering an additional 7.5p per week.

The Council has two reserve funds within its budget – one for elections and the other for reserves. Over each financial year until 2025/26, the Council will make a contribution of £16,000 to its election fund, to pay for the costs in 2025 of the next whole council elections and to meet any by-election costs in the meantime. It will also put £30,000 into reserves each year until it reaches a position where it has a sum equivalent to 9 months of operating costs.

The Council will also manage the Mayor’s charity fund, the Town Lottery, and the investment funds held by Kettering Charities for the Poor and the William Martin charity.

The budget for next year is as follows:-

DRAFT BUDGET 2023-2024				
Heading	Sub heading	Budget 22/23	Outturn 22/23	Estimate 23/24
Employees	Employees including all oncosts	57000	66718	87425
Administrative costs	Office Accommodation	12000	12550	8100
	ITC, office, banking and other admin costs	5120	4600	4980
	Insurances	1500	1486	1600
	Society of Local Council Clerks	280	280	290
	Audit	1150	1120	1600
Civic and Democratic	Mayoral allowances and costs	2250	2000	2000
	Member expenses and training	1000	250	500
	Branding/coat of arms	2500	2500	1000
	Town meetings/consultation/engagement	0	250	750
	Election fund contribution	16000	16000	16000
Environmental and Public Services	Market management	10000	17000	14000
	Community infrastructure	20000	18900	20000
	Neighbourhood Plan	1000	750	0
	Allotments	4000	4000	5000
	Bio-diversity and tree planting	3000	3000	3000
	Public toilets installation	40000	0	26000
	Public Toilets management	35000	0	25000
	Traffic speed devices	2400	3500	3500
Community services and events	Small grants and ward initiatives	25000	25000	30000
	Events	47500	46000	112250
	Community resilience fund	7400	7400	7500
	Kettering Town Lottery	1300	340	0
	Kettering Charities	-400	-600	-750
Contingency and contribution to reserves		30000	30000	30000
TOTAL		325000	263044	399745
Tax base		16636		17000
PRECEPT		£19.54		£23.51

Although the Council has one large scale capital investment to make in the coming year (the public toilets), it is not of such a scale that it needs to borrow money to make it affordable and therefore the cost can be met from its allocated funds, topped up by a further sum from the 2023/24 precept.

The Council's staffing establishment comprises

- Town Clerk -37 hours per week.
- Deputy Town Clerk - events and communications – 28 hours per week
- An administrative officer - 10 hours a week – to be recruited

Staff are also employed through an agency to erect and dismantle market stalls for the general and specialist markets, and the Council will also employ casual staff to provide supervision for events on the Market Place and to support activities associated with Kettering by the Sea in summer 2023.

The staffing costs in 2023/24 are much higher than in 2022/3 because of the increases in total staffing resource agreed by Council in October 2022 – they reflect the rising workload, as well as the impacts of the agreed 2022 and potential 2023 pay awards. The out-turn costs in 2022/23 were also higher, as a result of both these aspects.

The Council moved offices in 2022, its lease in the Municipal Office having ended on 31st October. It rents office space in Kettering Conference Centre and meeting rooms space at Toller Church Rooms. It no longer has a Mayor's Parlour and needs to agree a secure storage location for items of Mayoral insignia.

ACTION PLAN 2023-24

Objective	Activity	Details	Resources	Timescale	Responsible Committee or Working Group
Economy Objective 1 - Growth	Hanwood Park urban extension community trust	Secure places on the Hanwood Park Community Trust for KTC.	Member time	During 2023	Council
Economy Objective 2 – Town centre	Markets	Promote and expand the regular weekly markets; Review management and staffing requirements once a public toilet facility is provided.	£1500 deficit expected in year	Ongoing By September 2023	Markets and Events Committee Finance and Governance Committee
Economy Objective 2 – town centre	Public toilets	Adopt land at Wadcroft from NNC through community asset transfer. Draw up specification and agree location for new toilet provision. Seek planning permission. Seek tenders for provision and water supply.	Approx £90,000 purchase and installation costs; assume free to users.	By Feb 2023 By March 2023 By June 2023 By September 2022 By September 2022	Finance and Governance Committee

		procurement process for 2023			
Economy Objective 2 – Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Events Kettering by the Sea	Deliver Kettering by the Sea during August 2023 including associated services, entertainment and learning opportunities for children	£30,000	By August 2023	Market and Events Committee
Economy Objective 2 – Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Events – all other events	Provide an agreed set of events including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street Food Saturdays - Bands in the park - Skateboarding activities - other specialist markets Design event(s) to mark the Kings Coronation in May 2023.	£27,500 plus some money through sponsorship	From April 2023 onwards	Markets and Events Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 – Wellbeing	Allotments	Agree a priority investment programme with allotment societies and implement during 2023/24. Ensure completion of access arrangements with Western Power in	£1200 income per year in rents; £6000 maintenance and development costs £2000 income from Western Power	By March 2023	Allotments WG Finance and Governance Committee

		relation to Northfield Avenue.			
Health and Community Objective 3 - Wellbeing Objective 4 – Safety Sustainability Objective 6 -Climate change mitigation	Community resilience	To seek views about the most effective interventions to support local communities and help local people and places become more resilient; agree what things to fund.	£7500 in budget	From April 2023	Council Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 - Wellbeing Objective 4 – Safety Sustainability Objective 6- Climate change mitigation	Community Infrastructure Fund	To develop a programme of spending which reflects the council's objectives both within the town centre and wider.	£20,000 in budget	From April 2023	Council Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Small grants scheme and a members initiative fund	Review 22/23 scheme and change criteria where necessary. Run grants award programme. Run Ward initiatives fund programme. Re-allocate any unspent ward initiatives monies after Christmas 2023.	£20,000 for small grants; £10,000 for members' ward initiative fund	By March 2023 May-July 2023 April- December 2023 By March 2023	Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Community lottery	Promote and manage the lottery.	Officer time	Decisions on awards in June, October and February each year.	Finance and Governance Committee

		Allocate monies in three tranches during year.			
Health and Community Objective 4 – safety	Speed devices	Ensure all three speed devices work effectively and are maintained. Keep overall provision under review.	£ 3500 for any new device/ repairs and maintenance	Throughout year	Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 5 – Armed Forces Covenant	Remembrance Day events	Support Royal British Legion with costs and management of event, in particular the traffic order and hospitality costs.	£2000	November each year	Finance and Governance Committee
Sustainability Objective 7 Development standards and policies	South West Kettering Neighbourhood Plan	Ensure that the Neighbourhood Planning Committee has the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan once adopted. Ensure Planning Committee is aware of conflicts between the plan and planning applications.	Clerk time	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Planning Committee Planning Committee and Neighbourhood Planning Cttee
Sustainability Objective 7 Development standards and policies	Replacement Area Action Plan for Kettering Town Centre	Engage NNC in dialogue to deliver a planning framework to protect the town centre and adjacent areas for inappropriate	Clerk time initially.	BY April 2023	Council

		or poor quality development.			
Sustainability Objective 6 Climate change mitigation		TO BE COMPLETED			Climate Change Working Group
Sustainability Objective 8 Biodiversity		TO BE COMPLETED			Climate Change WG
Sustainability Objective 9 Walking, cycling and public transport		TO BE COMPLETED			Climate Change WG Council
Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Town Meetings	Agree a programme and themes and organise town meetings during 2023-4.	Deputy Clerk time	By February 2023	Council
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Integrated Care System	Engage with and participate in the structures which will support an Integrated Care System as they are designed and delivered.	Clerk time	Throughout 2023	Council
Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Communications strategy	Develop a strategy to improve communications, maximise use of the website and social media and improve the Council's profile.	Deputy Clerk time	From April 2023	Finance and Governance Ctte
Organisational Effectiveness Objective	"This is Kettering" social media presence	Agree with NNC how this account can be supported and expanded	Deputy Clerk time	By April 2023	Finance and Governance Ctte

11 communications and engagement		or closed down and replaced by KTC social media accounts.			
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