

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

2022-2027

INTRODUCTION

Kettering Town Council is new; it was created in April 2021, had its first elections to 20 seats in May 2021, and currently has one employee – the Town Clerk. 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 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 first plan aims to set out a twelve month list of things to do, within a five year envelope of wider objectives. It describes what the Town Council is for, and how it might go about its work. The plan can be 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 recent local government reorganisation within Northamptonshire, unrelenting budget pressures on statutory service providers, 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
- 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

Sustainability

6. 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.
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 already held two “Town Meetings” and intends to develop a programme of these regular meetings, which will 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. The Town Meetings will 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 will be 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.

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 does not currently have the resources to develop a reliable social media presence or a communications strategy. The appointment of a Deputy Clerk for events and engagement will help address that deficit.

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 which could be 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. Over the coming year and more, the Council will look at 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 and transferring services and responsibilities include:-

- The operation of the three weekly markets on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. These largely fell into abeyance during the pandemic and need to be revived; the residual markets are still managed by NNC; a handover will be agreed. The Council will aim to engage with market traders to understand how best the markets can be managed and developed. It will also build a programme of specialist markets.
- Ownership of five allotment sites throughout Kettering, with nearly 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.
- 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.
- Management of speed devices for road safety purposes. The Council will take ownership and responsibility of the two speed devices acquired by the former Kettering BC, and deploy them initially in the wards for which they were purchased, looking to widen out the coverage throughout town

over time. The devices warn motorists who are travelling over the speed limit and can be mounted on lamp-posts and moved between sites relatively easily. Further devices will be purchased and we will explore the option of powering them through solar power.

- The Kettering Charities for the Poor were managed by the former Kettering BC. 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 – at this time – a single flat which fulfils the objectives of the William Martin charity to provide accommodation for elderly persons in need. The Council will be taking on the management of these charities during 2021/22.
- Events – in 2021, NNC were able to provide just over £40,000 to the Town Council to spend on events and activities which encouraged increased footfall in the town centre, as part of the Government’s Welcome Back Fund. The Council has worked with partner organisations to expand existing planned events and put on new ones from November 2021 to March 2022. The Council will look to at least maintain a level of spending on events into future years, to sit alongside those events that NNC is committed to providing. In addition, the Council will support the Royal British Legion each year in the administration of the annual Remembrance Day commemoration.

The Council will, during 2022/23, also

- Look to provide a permanent set of public toilets, including disabled and baby changing facilities, within Kettering Town Centre
- Develop a community grants scheme to support local community groups to flourish and expand
- Develop a ward initiatives fund to enable elected councillors to support activities in their wards
- Develop tree planting 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. 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 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.

Specific projects – such as the Heritage Action Zone and the Glam Project - will also engage the Council as a stakeholder – members are appointed to the stakeholder groups overseeing these projects and this is a model the Council will seek to apply to other projects such as those relating to highway improvements, community safety, health improvement, and to major developments as they occur.

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 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 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 and the Mayor has use of a parlour during their term of office.

The Mayoralty provides a focus for local 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 views. Until then, development of a “brand” for the Council is on hold.

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.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The Council started its life with a modest budget to ensure it could function and assume those responsibilities inherited. The budget for 2022/23 will reflect those new things that the Council intends to carry out whilst not pressing too greatly on the pockets of its residents. Every £1000 spent by the Town Council costs the average (Band D) household 6p a year.

The Council has agreed to set up two funds within its budget – one for elections and the other for reserves. Over the next four years, the Council will make a contribution of £16,000 to its election fund, to pay for the cost in 2025 of the next whole council elections and to meet any bye-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 operating costs.

The Council will also manage the Mayor's charity fund and the funds associated with the Kettering Charities for the Poor.

The budget for next year is as follows:-

To be added once the draft budget has been agreed.

Although the Council has one large scale capital investment to make in the coming year, it is not of such a scale that it needs to borrow money to make it affordable and therefore the acquisition of a toilet block can be met from the usual precept, leaving headroom in future years' budgets for new areas of expenditure without an extra call on council tax payers.

The Council has one full time employee. It is proposed to appoint to a new part time post which will manage events, drive communications, support the Mayor and develop the Council's website and its social media presence. Use will also be made of contractors to deliver, for example, market management and public toilet management. Temporary additional support may also be needed for key dates when the Charities for the Poor fuel grants are being issued, which will be paid for by the Charity Trustees.

The Council rents its accommodation and meeting spaces from NNC, which is a satisfactory way of keeping costs manageable, and providing good facilities for staff, members and visitors.

ACTION PLAN 2022-23

Objective	Activity	Details	Resources	Timescale	Responsible Committee, Sub Ctte 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	By January 2022	Council
Economy Objective 2 – Town centre	Markets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renew and expand the regular weekly markets; identify a management regime and secure transfer from NNC 2. Develop a programme of specialist markets to take place throughout the year 	£3500 as potential to cover any shortfall in income or the cost of an incentive scheme for traders	<p>By April 2022</p> <p>By March 2022</p>	Markets Sub Ctte.
Economy Objective 2 – town centre	Public toilets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw up specification and agree location for new toilet provision 2. Seek tenders for provision and water supply 3. Agree maintenance and cleaning arrangements 4. Appoint clients' agent to manage Installation 	<p>Approx £35000 - £42,000 purchase and installation costs</p> <p>Approx £35000 in annual maintenance and cleaning costs</p> <p>Assume free to users.</p>	<p>By Feb 2022</p> <p>By March 2022</p> <p>By April 2022</p> <p>By June 2022</p>	Finance and Governance Committee

Economy Objective 2 – town centre	Regeneration projects	Engage fully with the Heritage Action Zone and GLaM projects	Member appointees	Throughout 2022/23	Council
Economy Objective 2 – Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a programme of events which supports the town centre, and which provide a variety of attractions throughout the year 2. Work closely with NNC and other event organisers to align programmes 3. Appoint an Events and Communications Officer to manage events 	£40,000+ per annum	By April 2022	Events Sub Committee
			£14,000 per year plus oncosts	Ongoing By April 2022	Staffing Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 – Wellbeing	Allotments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree a re-set relationship with the allotment societies which defines responsibilities of KTC and societies 2. Develop 12 extra allotment plots at Scott Rd after NNC has de-contaminated the area concerned 	£1000 income per year in rents; assume maintenance and development costs of c £5000	From April 2022 During 2022 calendar year	Allotments Sub Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 – Wellbeing	Charities for the Poor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transfer administrative responsibility for the charities to KTC and 	Costs to be met by Charity Trustees	By end November 2021	Council

		<p>administer first year's fuel grants</p> <p>2. Identify extent of temporary resource required for future years.</p>			
Health and Community Objective 4 – safety	Speed devices	<p>1. Transfer licence to KTC and re-start a rota of device installation on approved sites</p> <p>2. Identify additional locations, seek approval and determine need for any extra devices to be acquired</p> <p>3. Explore possibility of devices being solar powered</p>	£2000 buys a new device	<p>By January 2022</p> <p>After June 2022</p> <p>During 2022</p>	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 6 Climate change mitigation	Promoting recycling measures	<p>1. Identify how recycling can be best promoted using KTC website</p> <p>2. Cascade carbon literacy training for members</p>	Lead member time and officer time	<p>By early 2022</p> <p>From January 2022</p> <p>By February 2022</p>	Climate Change Working Party

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Identify how best to engage with schools and community groups 4. Identify potential terracycle project involving junior schools 		By September 2022	
Sustainability Objective 6 Climate change mitigation	Measures to promote sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and implement measures which promote and support a more sustainable lifestyle 	£9000	During 2022	Climate Change Working Group
Sustainability Objective 7 Development standards and policies	South West Kettering Neighbourhood Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Adopt Neighbourhood Plan 3. Support communications work by Forum 	£1000	By Spring 2022	Council
Sustainability Objective 7 Development standards and policies	Replacement Area Action Plan for Kettering Town Centre	Initiate discussion with NNC about a planning framework for the town centre in the light of changing economic conditions	Clerk time	During 2022	Council
Sustainability Objective 8 Biodiversity	Support Green Canopy Initiative with a tree planting programme	Identify how KTC can support the green canopy initiative for the queen's platinum jubilee in 2022 with landowners	£4000	Throughout 2022	Climate Change WP
Sustainability Objective 9 Walking, cycling and public transport	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with the LCWIP 2. Promote Kettering Big Bike Ride – last Sunday 	Lead member time	Throughout 2022	Climate Change WP Council

		every month and Walk-in Wednesdays campaign in schools			
Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Town Meetings	Agree a programme and themes for town meetings during 2022	Deputy Clerk time	By December 2021	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 2022	Finance and Governance Ctte
Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	"This is Kettering" social media presence	Agree with NNC how this account can be supported and expanded	Deputy Clerk time	By May 2022	Finance and Governance Ctte