



## **KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN**

**2025-30**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kettering Town Council was created in April 2021 and had its first elections of 20 councillors in May 2021. The next elections are in May 2025. It was vested with the existing allotment sites, the Market Charter, market stalls, and the Mayoral insignia, robes and plate; all inherited from the former Kettering Borough Council. Later in 2021, it assumed responsibility for managing the Kettering charities. In April 2022 it took on management of the town's general markets, and in 2023, responsibility for Christmas lights and some events previously managed by the unitary 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 fourth annual 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 economic and social 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, 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 will continuously explore 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 be an active and constructive partner to other statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations working for the benefit of Kettering and its residents; it will engage with local organisations to meet local challenges, to improve the welfare of its citizens and promote their interests
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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. The Council will regularly review how Town meetings function and how they reach local people and groups. There was a review conducted in winter 2023, but the new Council in 2025 will be asked to reconsider the whole purpose, style and reach of Town Meetings.

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 objective is to provide a presentation of some kind to each Council meeting.

The Council’s website provides access to information concerning the town council’s governance and finance, its policies and activities, news and advice, and to promote and describe the council’s events and activities. It will feature the work of partner organisations where there is a shared project.

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.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Council's objectives above set out its position on promoting and supporting sustainability and sustainable policies.

The Council will continue to explore ways to be more sustainable and encourage sustainable habits within the wider community. It continues to be open to developing measures which embed sustainability and which provide advice and support for local groups and localities. All committee and Council reports address the climate change implications of the report's subject matter. The Finance and Governance Committee has the subject of climate change mitigation on every agenda.

A comprehensive set of advice on sustainable habits is available on its website, covering recycling, tree planting and bio-diversity, energy use, transportation, business and grants. The Council will consider how it can help promote new recycling ideas, including blister pack recycling described below.

The Council's Planning Committee, when commenting on planning applications, closely examines the sustainability of the proposals being submitted and frequently proposes improvements to those applications, or objects where it does not appear that the application is capable of demonstrating sustainability gains.

In supporting and investing in the allotments leased from the Council, the Council is encouraging and enabling more people to gain benefit for growing their own food and plants and taking exercise.

The Love Wildlife grants scheme, run in 2023 and 2024 was an example of supporting very local projects which improve habitats and re-wilding; this is being repeated in 2025, with an enhanced budget of £8000 and a wider remit for environmental improvements. The Town Lottery also provided grants in 2023 for improvements to one set of allotments and to construct a hedgehog highway along the Ise valley.

In 2024, the Council sponsored seed and plant exchanges and free seed distribution and worked with the Kettering Eco Group, the Kettering Allotment Society and Groundwork Trust in doing so.

It also invested a small sum in testing out the feasibility of blister pack recycling, working with the Mill Rd pharmacy. Medical blister packs are not recycled by local authorities because of the complexity of separating the materials used in their manufacture. Within 6 weeks, the trial had collected over 20,000 blister packs and sent them for specialist recycling. This huge response unfortunately made the project

unaffordable in the longer term, so it had to be paused, but the NHS is considering whether it can pick up the project in some shape in the future.

The Council will work with Age UK and Groundwork Trust in promoting home energy surveys for those people over 66 who were provided with winter fuel grants by the Kettering Charities for the Poor.

## 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 power to provide a market are derived from the 13<sup>th</sup> century market charter for Kettering but also Part 111 and Section 61 of the Food Act 1984. The Council has sought to engage with market traders to understand how best the markets can be managed and developed. The market has been slowly growing over the last 18 months and now offers a wide range of traders and goods. In 2025, for the first time in eight years, traders' market fees will increase slightly to recognise the growth in costs with providing the market. The Council has also been building a programme of specialist markets, encompassing in recent times
  - Food and drink festivals including the Love Food event held annually at Wicksteed Park since 2023
  - Kettfest
  - Summer Saturdays events during 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. In 2023, the Council invested £15,000 in new fencing to the Windmill Avenue allotments and in 2024, agreed to pay for the clearance of vegetation alongside the Slade Brook running through the South End Allotments and to replace part of the fencing and gates at Northfield Avenue allotments. A new lease with the Kettering Allotment Society was agreed in 2024 to run until 2037 for all four allotments under their management. Councillors, through the Allotments Working Group, continue to work closely with the two local allotments societies.
- The Council, on its creation, became the responsible body for the **South West Kettering Neighbourhood Plan** which had been in development for some time. The plan was the subject of a referendum in 2023 and was approved by over 90% of those voting . It was adopted as formal planning policy in summer by North Northamptonshire Council. The Council now monitors how the plan is working. The Council is also embarking upon a further plan called **Central Kettering Neighbourhood Plan** , (the town centre and surrounding residential areas). It is intended that the plan will be worked through from 2025 to 2026 or 2027, requiring ongoing expenditure in those years. It will necessitate widespread engagement with local people in the areas affected. External expertise in planning and community engagement has been commissioned from ONH planning consultancy to support this process and the Council will allocate dedicated internal sources to supporting the process. The Council has set up an Advisory Panel comprising local stakeholders from the business, voluntary and statutory sectors to oversee and guide the plan preparation. Grants to support the process will be sought from central government.
- **Improving community safety.** The Council has in 2024, made a grant of £1500 to the Northampton Business Crime Network, to fund a reporting system that means businesses can quickly report incidents of anti-social behaviour and then have the confidence that these will be followed up with the relevant agencies. This scheme went live in October 2024. The scheme covers the town centre and also the Grange shops off Stamford Rd. The scheme will be reviewed in late 2025 for its effectiveness. The Council has additionally paid for knife amnesty boxes and bleed kits in and around town from its community resilience fund (see below).

- **Improving road safety** through the management of **speed devices** for road safety purposes. The Council renewed the two speed devices it inherited from the former Kettering BC, on Stamford Rd and Rockingham Rd and installed a third device in Pytchley Road. A fourth device will be installed in St Marys Rd in 2025 and a fifth device, paid for by NNC, will also be installed in Thurston Drive. All are solar powered. The devices warn motorists who are travelling over the speed limit.
- **Planting schemes in** Kettering Town centre. NNC inherited the very popular planting schemes in Kettering centre, which features planters and hanging baskets, with colourful frequently renewed displays of plants through a large part of the year. This was not a service NNC provided to other towns in its area, so it was agreed that the Town Council would pick up the cost of continuing to provide the displays. The Civic Society awarded their annual rose bowl for the best improvements in Kettering jointly to the Town Council and NNC gardeners in 2024 for the planting displays. £28,000 was spent in 2024 and an increased budget of £34,000 in 2025/6 will enable the scheme to be extended down Station Rd, to more frequently spray weeds on the highway in the areas where planting displays are in place and to reintroduce winter planting in beds (this latter aspect having been dropped in 2022).
- 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 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. 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. It has also paid for knife amnesty boxes to be installed in Rockingham Rd (2022) and next to the swimming pool (2024). The Council was gifted the catenary wires in High St and Market St on which to mount Christmas lights and, in the case of Market St, to provide all year round nighttime illumination. The Council would like to see improvement in electricity supply points in town to support an expansion of its markets and increase potential for events, as well as enable a digital notice board to be installed for the Town Council to promote its work and profile. It is working with the providers of smart hubs to explore how it can make use of these facilities in future. In the meantime, a physical notice board is to be erected near the entrance to the Newlands Centre to promote events, meetings, activities and consultations. The Council is also supporting efforts to develop the former Gala Bingo site in High St, to turn it into an indoor venue and community hub for the benefit of the town. This is a long term project being led by BHVA. The Council has supported the project financially to date and supported the designation of the building as an asset of community value.



- The Council's growing **Events Programme** was transformed in 2023 by the addition of Kettering by the Sea and the Christmas lights switch on, but also by other new events, such as the Love Food Festival at Wicksteed Park, Friday night discos in the Market Place, both of which proved very popular, skateboard tuition days, and the Midsummer Market, to showcase what the voluntary sector does for the Kettering community. The budget of £120,000 also embraced the cost of hiring in Christmas lights, which the Town Council took on from NNC.

Most events take place in the Market Place, which is an ideal venue, but we are conscious that other parts of the town centre and the wider town can feel excluded from that, so we supported Kettfest's desire to appear throughout the town, and have provided the santa's grotto and the Christmas giving tree within the Newlands Centre since 2023. Some of the festive music during December will be sited in the High St. Love Food at Wicksteed Park was also partly a response to last year's consultation which advocated more events there. Bands in the Park and the skateboarding tuition sessions also took place outside the town centre of course.

The main features of the events budget in 2024 will be retained in 2025, with some changes resulting from the experience of previous years, so that in 2025, the events programme will include:-

- Free events focused on the **town centre**, to promote footfall there
  - **Summer Saturdays** - three music, shopping and activities days in the Market Place once a month, featuring local musicians and traders, from April to June. The June event coincides with Armed Forces Day and takes that as its theme.
  - **Vegan market**; a showcase not just for vegan food but related products, for a more sustainable future
  - A four day **Continental market** taking place in October 2025 in the market place
  - **Friday night discos** - two of the hugely popular discos are planned for 2025, hosted by local DJ Bill Burton and friends.
  - **Charity Market** - each year since 2023 the Council has provided a free early evening showcase for the voluntary and community sector, with entertainment and music, which is popular with the sector but which attracts relatively few members of the public. We are reviewing how we can attract more people to the event and are in discussion with Northamptonshire Community Foundation and the Lord Lieutenant's office about tying this in to the county wide *Big Help Out* programme

- **Skateboard tuition days** . In 2024, following an initial event in 2023, we worked with Illicit Skateboarding to put on a series of three events at the Ise skatepark which introduced people to skateboarding, included a competition for more experienced users, and which gave advice and help to youngsters of all ages. It reached a demographic that the Town Council doesn't usually reach through its other events and were very popular.
- **Kettering by the Sea**. Following its successful re-introduction in 2023, this event expanded to cover 7 days a week for just over three weeks in August 2024 with a giant sand pit, ice cream and smoothies, shows and entertainment, and the popular fountains, all happening in the Market Place. Each year, thousands of visitors enjoyed their day there, in good weather and bad. It brings in families and children who might not otherwise enjoy a holiday by the sea, helps fill in the long summer holidays and helps businesses in the town centre.
- **Bands in the Park**. Each year, we put on 10 Sunday day time concerts at Rockingham Road Pleasure Park, with the support of the park owner, NNC, and two concerts in the Market Place on a Saturday. The park concerts drew healthy audiences but the bands in the town worked less well, so we are discontinuing the latter.
- **Love Food, at Wicksteed Park** was a new venture in 2023, sponsored by the then Mayor, and which saw the park turned into a food festival, with entertainment, demonstrations and live music. It was very popular and was re-run in 2024, when attendances by traders nearly doubled and more public attended than in 2023. It is now a regular feature of our calendar, taking place at the last weekend in summer before schools go back. .
- **Christmas events and activities** We will continue to provide in 2025, -
  - The Christmas Lights Switch on event at the end of November
  - A real Christmas tree in the Market Place and a Christmas Giving Tree (jointly provided with Newlands Centre and NNC) in the Newlands Centre
  - A Santas's grotto and elf station, jointly provided with the Newlands Centre
  - Christmas markets on three Saturdays leading up to Christmas
  - Music and Entertainment throughout the town centre on Saturdays

In addition the Mayor and Deputy Mayor introduced two new Christmas events into the calendar in 2024

- A Christmas Tree Festival, hosted at St Andrews church at which xx local groups took part in showcasing their organisation's work through the medium of decorating a Christmas tree provided by the Council and Ise Grden Centre. All 20 of the trees provided were taken up by local organisations to showcase their work.
  - A Christmas party for looked after children hosted at the Corn Market Hall, for 40 local children and their families, in partnership with NNC Childrens' Services, Homestart, Freedom Leisure and local volunteers.
- **Remembrance events**
    - **Remembrance Sunday** - outdoor service and parade, organised with the help of the Royal British Legion and local faith groups,
    - **Holocaust Memorial Day** in January each year to mark the victims of genocide throughout the world, hosted by the Mayor
  - **A half marathon and fun run** . The Council contracted with Run Through, a national organiser of running events, to provide a local half marathon on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024, with a view to it becoming a regular feature promoting Kettering regionally. Starting and finishing at Wicksteed Park it includes a range of other activities, including a 5k fun run.
  - **A major military and cadet** march in the town centre in June 2025. Whilst not organising this event, the Council is supporting its management and meeting some of the costs. This is an event previously hosted in Northampton.

The total cost of these events will be £115,000 in 2025/6.

Included in these costs are payments to events supervisors. The Council employs several people to manage events on the day they take place, providing oversight, first aid, support to traders and entertainers, and giving us an insight into how events perform and how they can be improved. Similarly, the Council employs staff to manage Kettering by the Sea throughout its run.

- **Christmas Lights.** The Council has entered into a three year agreement with Blachere Illuminations to provide Christmas lights across the town centre, starting in December 2023. The cost of this agreement, plus the cost of electricity and some access arrangements from key buildings, is about £40,000 per year. The lights will build on that which Kettering has traditionally enjoyed.

- **Kettfest** proved very popular again in 2024, with a big increase in footfall in the town centre recorded on the day. The Town Council provided £1500 of cash support to this event, and also provided back office services to ensure it and the market within it went smoothly. Indirectly, it also provided £6000 to the Kettering Cultural Consortium (see below) which went on supporting the event. However, the event is now of such a scale that the costs of putting it on have grown with the size. The Council proposed and the Cultural Consortium agreed that in future, the Council would meet the total cost of the event – approximately £15,000 – and would take on the project planning for it, whilst the Consortium would remain responsible for the creative content and for appointing someone to act as creative director.
- **Kettering Cultural Consortium.** The Council re-constituted and expanded the membership of the Kettering Cultural Consortium in late 2023, providing it with a grant of £10,000, some of which was used for Kettfest above. The Consortium brings together venue owners, events organisers and businesses to collaborate, share information, bid for funding and jointly promote events and cultural activities. The KCC funding several activities and programmes in 2024 and committed monies towards more projects in 2025. It will engage with the development of NNC’s cultural strategy as that is prepared during 2025. The council’s grant, on top of that for Kettfest, will be £5000 in 2025/6

**Grants programmes.** The Council has several grants programmes in place, with some £40,000 available every year

- A ward initiatives fund which gives every councillor £500 to spend on projects or events in their ward, or to help with research and communication work. Each year, 20-25 organisations are helped in this way.
- A small grants fund of £10,000 to support local services provided by the voluntary and community sector - 4 projects and organisations are being supported in 2024/5. One of the more successful projects in early 2024, led by Kettering Civic Society was to paint BT boxes in several locations with artwork depicting local features or activities. This project is unique in the UK and generated sponsorship for more boxes to be done and was also built upon by Buccleuch Academy pupils who produced artwork for the giant planter outside the Grange shops, unveiled in September 2024 .
- £5000 is additionally provided, under three year service level agreements, on helping local groups with their core costs – the current agreements are with Accommodation Concern, the Kettering Food Bank and Kettering Homestart and these arrangements last until March 2027.
- A community resilience fund of £7500 to help communities help themselves, with a focus on supporting vulnerable groups and localities – in 2024, the Council supported Shopmobility to stay open at the point it might close, helped the Kettering Amateur Boxing club fund new floor mats and a new canvass for the boxing ring,

- An environment and biodiversity fund - £8000 goes towards supporting local groups and schools develop projects which improve habitats or the wider environment 15 projects were helped in the first two rounds and 5 more grants were made in January 2025.
- 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 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. At a time of high fuel costs, the fuel grants charity is an important extra help for hundreds of vulnerable older people in our community.
- The management of a **Town Lottery**. This was launched in June 2022; it is generating about £4000 a year in funds which can go to good causes in the town. The Council originally chose three themes for the proceeds- housing advice and support; health and well being and sustainable lifestyles; a total of 5 awards were made in 2023/4. The Council revisited its approach to grant making in 2024 and agreed that in future there would be one main grant each year and in 2024-5 this would be for a cultural objective. The Council consulted with the Kettering Cultural Consortium about how this would be determined and is awaiting a proposal for how the money can be best used. 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 NEW SERVICES

- Apart from its own projects, the Council recognises that there will be activities or facilities previously provided by NNC which might cease due to their budgetary pressures. The Council will consider taking on NNC services subject to a fully costed business case being made in each case for doing so. Similarly, if the Council is offered facilities to manage, then it will need to understand what it is taking on, the condition of the facility, its running costs and its function, and the prospects for maximising the asset. The Council will not expect to pay to acquire any assets being transferred from NNC. It will nevertheless aim to help NNC reduce its costs without loss of services or assets to the community.

- The Council will, during 2025-6 and beyond, provide the following new services:-
  - **Kettering Central Neighbourhood Plan** which will establish planning policies covering the town centre and the largely Victorian and Edwardian housing areas to the north and east of the town centre. The work will extend into 2026 and go hand in hand with the development of the core spatial plans being developed across North Northamptonshire. The neighbourhood plan policies will aim to:-
    - Protect and enhance the role of Kettering town centre in particular to
      - Build on the policies set out in the Town Centre Area Action Plan 2011
      - Set principles and standards for the conversion of existing buildings and the re-use of redundant buildings and sites
      - Protect historic and character areas and buildings from unsympathetic development
      - Extend and improve green spaces and public open spaces
      - Develop public facilities for commercial and community benefit
      - Support a safe night time economy
      - Enable active travel by enhancing existing and creating new cycle and walking routes
      - Address parking needs for residents and visitors alike
    - Protect and enhance the quality of life for residents in the older parts of town, including those living in the town centre, in particular to
      - Set standards to improve the quality of new housing, in terms of amenities, sustainability, energy and water conservation, parking provision, space standards and appearance
      - Improve the streetscape for older areas of housing
      - Protect and improve the public realm
      - Extend and improve green spaces and public open spaces
      - Develop public facilities for commercial and community benefit
      - Enable active travel by enhancing existing and creating new cycle and walking routes
      - Address parking needs for residents and visitors alike
  - **Public toilets.** We will continue to develop 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 upon, and the emerging costs of the project, have continued to slow down its provision. The

Council has agreed to buy some land from NNC at Wadcroft car park but progress is very slow. There will be £100,000 available for this project, held in a reserve account. The budget provides for the running costs of the toilets once they are open.

- **War Memorial.** The Council aims to take on responsibility for the war memorial from early 2025, under a 25 year lease from North Northamptonshire Council. The Council will ensure it is cleaned and any repairs undertaken and look at ways that wreaths can be left securely on the memorial and not blown away by the wind. Grants may be available to support such work.
- **Town Centre Regeneration.** The Council will explore how it can improve the appearance of the town centre and its attractiveness utilising unspent monies from its 24/5 budget
- **Youth Services.** The Council will also, with partners, explore how it can provide more facilities or opportunities for young people across town to provide social and life skills, to divert individuals away from anti social behaviour and crime and improve employability, utilising unspent monies from its 24/5 budget and drawing down grants from third parties.

## REPRESENTING THE LOCAL AREA

The Council is consulted by NNC on **planning applications** it receives and on **alcohol, premises and pavement 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 15 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 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 a Council meeting if need be.

The Council will be an active partner in the **Kettering Urban (east) Local Area Partnership** (part of the integrated care system), and the Kettering Volunteer Network, and will work with the voluntary and community sectors in identifying need and helping meet local needs, where necessary through its grants programmes. It will work with community associations and community centres where requested to do so and support promotional work for their services and functions, for example on warm spaces, food banks and community support. During 2023/4 the Council and the Mayor led on the development of a directory of organisations providing mental health support which was adopted by the LAP and which will exist in electronic and paper format.

The Council helped renew and extend the role of the **Kettering Cultural Consortium**. The renewed body will

- Share information about events planning across town
- Collaborate on the provision of events and co-design events and/or programmes of events
- Make bids for external funding
- Promote events and venues
- Support specific projects - three projects were supported in 2024, on top of Kettfest and two further events are already planned for 2025.

The Council **appoints** councillors or local people to

- The Local Area Partnership
- The Kettering Charities for the Poor and the William Martin Charity
- Stockburn Memorial Trust
- The Kettering Twinning Association



- The Board of Kettering Homestart, as a non voting member
- The Maplefields Community Association Management Committee
- Hanwood Park Community Trust
- Kettering Pubwatch

It also appoints two people as parish path wardens.

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.

East Kettering urban extension continues to be built out. The Council has a place on the emerging Community Trust, overseeing public space and facilities within the development and expects to be engaged on changes to the plans for Hanwood Park. In 2023, the Council joined with other local interests in successfully changing the plans for the road connectivity from the development into the Grange estate which would have adversely affected the Green Patch and the residents nearby. It supported the successful campaign to prevent the new secondary school being a boys only school and the development of junction 10A on the A14 which is now funded and in the detailed design stage . It will continue to argue for the best use of the developer contributions from the development for on and off site investment and for the delivery of the Weekley-Warkton Avenue and off site junction improvements.

## **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. The Mayor raises money for chosen charities during each year of office, with over £2000 being raised in 2023/4. Regular events to mark International Womens Day have been supported as well.

The Mayor has the opportunity in their year of office to promote and innovate and each Mayor has brought new ideas and activities into play which have become a regular feature of the town's life and environment.

A new coat of arms has been granted to the Town Council by the College of Arms, which reverts to elements of the pre 1974 coat of arms. The Mayoral chains of office were updated with the new coat of arms during 2024.

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. The Council’s decision to fund the planting schemes in the town centre, to take up the cost of Christmas lights and Kettering by the Sea and to innovate to develop a half marathon, blister pack recycling and pay for the painting of BT boxes are all examples – big and small – of how it can react positively to local needs and wants.

## COMMUNICATION

The Council has a **communication strategy** and a **social media policy**, and has built a reliable social media presence. It will continue to grow this means of communication. It has taken on the social media accounts associated with “This is Kettering” and will aim to do the same with those currently operated by the Kettering Cultural Consortium. The Mayor also has a dedicated facebook page. The Council will utilise the social media apps promoted by North Northamptonshire Council.

The Council also adopted a new logo and imagery during 2022, to improve its recognisability.

The Council has been publishing a regular e-newsletter from early 2024, aimed at members, partner organisations, its business partners and suppliers, market traders and other key stakeholders, to set out its news, opportunities, and to support consultation and engagement.

The Council promotes its **events programme** through social media and its website, through posters and flyers, and via a printed brochure which is widely available. There are limited places where posters can be legally erected in town but the council has an arrangement with NNC to use the noticeboards on the market place and the railings around the Manor House Museum Gardens as required. An arrangement also exists with the Newlands Centre to use their poster sites as well. The Council has made available material in the tourism hub NNC has set up at Rushden Lakes, and regularly uses the library and other sites to promote its activities and events.

## **BUDGET AND RESOURCES**

The Council started its life with a modest budget to ensure it could function and assume those responsibilities it inherited. Budgets since then have expanded as the Council's work and responsibilities have expanded. The proposed budget for 2024/5 will cost the average household in Kettering 55 pence a week. This is significantly below the average precept of a parish council in the UK. It is likely that the Council will continue to consider increasing its reach and functions in the coming years and expanding its budget to meet those costs.

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 £18,000 to its election fund, to pay for the costs in 2025 - and in 2029- of 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. Both funds earn interest. In 2025/6 the Council will review the policy for both these reserves.

The Council will also continue to 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. It will manage any grants secured by the Kettering Cultural Consortium from external funders.

The budget for next year is as follows:-

DRAFT BUDGET 2025-2026				Proposed Budget 2025/26	Commentary	
Heading	Sub heading	Budget 24/5	Projected Outturn 24/25			
<b>Employees</b>	Payroll	82250	84000	92000	Out-turn includes 5% pay award for 24/5 Budget for 25/6 includes a) increase in hours Admin officer (15-20) b) increase in employers national insurance costs of £3500; c) 2% pay award in 2025 and d) a review of clerk's salary from February 2026 linked with recruitment.	
	Employers National Insurance	7250	7500	11175		
	Pension costs	11300	11500	12600		
	Payroll administration	240	240	240		
	Staff training	800	1300	800		
	Staff vetting and recruitment	50	150	500		
	<b>sub total</b>	<b>101890</b>	<b>104690</b>	<b>117315</b>	Qualification for deputy clerk; £500 vired from member training in 24/5 DBS checks for all staff from June 24; recruitment costs during 2025	
<b>Administrative costs</b>	Office and meetings Accommodation	14000	13500	14000	Audit fees will increase as the budget does.	
	ITC, office, banking and other admin costs	5750	5250	5250		
	Insurances	3000	2960	3250		
	Society of Local Council Clerks	310	310	325		
	Audit	1800	2000	2100		
	<b>sub total</b>	<b>24860</b>	<b>24020</b>	<b>24925</b>		
<b>Civic and Democratic</b>	Mayoral allowances and costs	1750	1750	1750	New Council after May 2025	
	Member expenses and training	500	0	1200		
	civic regalia and assets	3400	3000	1500		
	Town meetings/consultation/engagement	500	250	500		
	<b>sub total</b>	<b>6150</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>4950</b>		
<b>Environmental and Public Services</b>	Market management	16000	13000	12500	Improved performance  To fund a realistic programme of improvements Proposed increase in spending to widen impact full year running costs  assumes some enhancements to service in 2025.  in year 1	
	Community infrastructure	20000	20000	20000		
	Allotments	10000	10000	10000		
	Bio-diversity initiatives	4000	4000	4000		
	Public Toilets management	30000	0	36000		
	Traffic speed devices	3500	3500	0		
	Town centre planting	28000	28000	34000		
	christmas lights	40000	40000	40000		
	Neighbourhood Plan	10000	10000	12000		
		<b>sub total</b>	<b>161500</b>	<b>128500</b>		<b>168500</b>
<b>Community services</b>	Small grants and ward initiatives	30000	30000	30000	No sign of this progressing by NNC £6k diverted to Kettfest ; otherwise small growth item 23/4	
	Play area contribution Ise Valley	7000	0	0		
	Kettering Cultural Consortium	10,000	10000	5000		
	Community resilience fund	8600	8600	7500		
	Kettering Town Lottery	0	0	0		
	Kettering Charities	-800	-800	-800		
	<b>sub total</b>	<b>54800</b>	<b>47800</b>	<b>41700</b>		
<b>Events</b>	Bands in the Park	5250	5500	6000	additional security/staffing costs  additional security/staffing costs  1 less event, more live music  Assumes increased pitch fees Realistic financial provision for event New event for 2025 For promotional and event supervision costs only Increased effort on promoting events Storage costs are new	
	Christmas events	30000	30000	30000		
	Kettering by the Sea	27750	30000	30000		
	Skateboard coaching	3000	3000	3000		
	Summer Saturdays	5750	5750	4500		
	Town centre events	9000	9000	8750		
	Love Food	1000	1000	0		
	Kettfest	1000	1566	14000		
	Armed Forces Event	0	0	5000		
	Running event	25000	5000	5000		
	Promotional	2000	2000	4000		
	General and storage	500	2750	5500		
		<b>sub total</b>	<b>110250</b>	<b>95566</b>		<b>115750</b>
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>459450</b>	<b>405576</b>		<b>473140</b>
Contribution to reserves		30000	44000	30000		
Contribution to election reserves		18000	27662	18000		
Earmarked reserve for public toilets		0	0	0		
	<b>sub total</b>	<b>48000</b>	<b>71662</b>	<b>48000</b>		
	<b>TOTAL NET SPEND IN YEAR</b>	<b>507450</b>	<b>477238</b>	<b>521140</b>		
<b>Funded by</b>						
	<b>Precept</b>	490,000	490,000	490,000		
	<b>Bank interest and misc income</b>	3000	6,250	4750		
	<b>Underspendings carried forward</b>	2900	2,900	0		
	<b>Other cash in hand at start of year</b>	28962	28962	26390		
		524,862	528,112	521140		
<b>One off expenditure</b>	Public toilets funded from reserve		£99,250	0	up to £79,000	
	Elections 2025 fully funded from reserve		£0			
	Council tax base	17083		17344		
	Precept as per Band D Council tax	£28.68		£28.25		

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 of £100,000.

The Council's staffing establishment comprises

- Town Clerk -37 hours per week.
- Deputy Town Clerk- events and communications - 30 hours per week
- An administrative officer - 20 hours a week.
- A market superintendent - 3 hours a week
- Events Supervisors - three people employed on a casual basis to oversee events organised by the Town Council - supplemented by staff employed in the summer specifically for Kettering by the Sea. .

Staff are also employed through an agency to erect and dismantle market stalls for the general and specialist markets.

An additional person will be employed for up to 13 hours a month to support the development of the new neighbourhood plan.

Staffing costs have risen because of the gradual increase in the Town Council's functions and particularly from its widening events budget and because of changes to employers' national insurance requirements from the last budget. .

The Council moved offices in 2023 , to 10 Headlands. It rents meeting rooms space at Toller Church Rooms and at the Municipal Offices. It no longer has a Mayors Parlour. Other venues have been used for some meetings and events.

## ACTION PLAN 2024-5

Objective	Activity	Details	Resources	Timescale	Responsible Committee or Working Group
Economy Objective 1 - Growth	Hanwood Park urban extension community trust	Continue to engage with developer and with NNC in respect of the use of S106 money and the development of infrastructure	Member time  Officer and member time	During 2025-30	Council
Economy Objective 2 - Town centre	Markets	Promote and expand the regular weekly markets;  Implement new fees from April 2025  Work with NNC to improve power supply in Gold St to support more traders  Review management and staffing requirements once a public toilet facility is provided.	£12500 deficit expected in year   Community Infrastructure fund	Ongoing  March -April 2025  By September 2025  By September 2025	Markets and Events Committee  Finance and Governance Committee
Economy Objective 2 - town centre	Public toilets	Purchase land at Wadcroft from NNC	Approx £100,000 purchase and installation costs;	Starting January 2025	Finance and Governance Committee

		<p>Draw up specification and agree location for new toilet provision</p> <p>Seek planning permission</p> <p>Seek tenders for provision and water supply</p> <p>Appoint clients' agent to manage Installation Agree maintenance and cleaning arrangements</p>	<p>assume free to users.</p> <p>Up to £36000 in annual maintenance and cleaning costs</p>		
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community Objectives 3 and 4 Wellbeing and Safety	Anti-social behaviour reporting system for businesses	Monitor and review current scheme to determine if it continues in to 2026.	£1500 grant	By October 2025	Finance and Governance Committee
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres;	Improve town centre appearance	Consider how to invest in the physical appearance of the town centre including shop fronts	Any funds available from 24/5 underspend	Initial report by July 2025	Finance and Governance Committee  Council
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community	Events _Christmas 2025	Deliver a package of Christmas events and entertainments which comprises	<p>£40,000 cost of lights</p> <p>£30,000 for all other elements</p>	By December 2025	Market and Events Committee

Objective 3 Wellbeing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christmas lights and decorations</li> <li>- Christmas tree</li> <li>- Light switch on event</li> <li>- A Santas grotto</li> <li>- Giving tree</li> <li>- Mayoral events</li> <li>- Saturday Christmas markets</li> <li>- Entertainment and music throughout the town centre during the christmas season</li> </ul>			
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Events Kettering by the Sea	Deliver a three week+ long Kettering by the Sea during August 2025 including associated services, entertainment and learning opportunities for children aged under 14	£29,000	By August 2024	Market and Events Committee
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Running event	Provide with external specialist partners, a UK athletics accredited half marathon with associated shorter runs at the same time.	£5,000	In the first quarter of 2026 and subsequent years	Market and Events Committee
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and	Events - all other events	Provide an agreed set of events including - "Summer Saturdays"	£23,000	From April 2025 onwards	Markets and Events Committee



Community Objective 3 Wellbeing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bands in the Park</li> <li>- Skateboarding events</li> <li>- Friday Night Discos</li> <li>- Volunteer Fair</li> <li>- Continental market</li> <li>- Love Food</li> <li>- Vegan Market</li> </ul>			
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Kettering Cultural Consortium	<p>Support Kettering Cultural Consortium with administrative support and support its expansion of remit to improve collaboration between events organisers and venue owners in town</p> <p>Provide grant aid to the KCC</p>	<p>Officer and member time</p> <p>£5000</p>	From early 2025 onwards	Markets and Events Committee
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres; and Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Kettfest	Project plan Kettfest and work with KCC on its delivery and content.	£15,000 plus officer time	By end June 2025 and in subsequent years.	Markets and Events Ctte
Health and Community Objective 3 - Wellbeing	Allotments	<p>Complete registration of allotments with Land registry</p> <p>Agree a priority investment programme with allotment societies</p>	<p>External legal support</p> <p>£1425 income per year in rents;</p>	<p>By March 2025</p> <p>By April 2025</p>	<p>Allotments WG</p> <p>Finance and Governance Committee</p>

		and implement during 2025/26 - review at end of year.  Once registration above complete, finalise access arrangements with Western Power in relation to Northfield Avenue	£10000 maintenance and development costs	In 2025.	
Health and Community Objective 3 - Wellbeing Objective 4 - Safety Sustainability Objective 6 -Climate change mitigation	Community resilience	To engage in dialogue with local groups and organisations about the most effective interventions to support local communities and help local people and places become more resilient.  To provide grant aid where agreed for specific projects.	£7,500 in budget	From April 2025	Council Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Youth Services	Consider the need for and how best to provide for youth services across town, in partnership with others	Any available funds from 24/5 year underspend.  Possible grants available	Initial report July 2025	Council Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community	Community Infrastructure Fund	To develop a programme of spending	£20,000 in budget	From April 2025	Council

Objective 3 - Wellbeing Objective 4 - Safety Sustainability Objective 6- Climate change mitigation		which reflects the council's objectives both within the town centre and wider.			Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Small grants schemes and a members initiative fund	Annual payments to organisations supported by core grant with monitoring of outcomes	£5,000	Annual review in July each year.	Finance and Governance Committee
		Run grants award programme for voluntary and community sector	£10,000	May-September 2025	
		Run environment and wildlife grant scheme	£8,000	August-December 2025	
		Run Ward initiatives fund programme	£10,000	April- December 2025	
		Re-allocate any unspent ward initiatives monies after Christmas 2025		By March 2026	
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing	Community lottery	Promote and manage the town lottery - increase player numbers by 10%	Officer and member time	Throughout year	Finance and Governance Committee
		Identify main grant objective for awards in early 2026	5% of lottery proceeds available for	By March 2026  Decisions on awards in February each year.	

			promotion and admin costs		
Health and Community Objective 4 - safety	Community assets	<p>Ensure all five speed devices work effectively and are maintained</p> <p>Ensure all knife amnesty boxes and bleed kits are maintained for public use.</p> <p>Maintain catenary wires in High St and Market St</p> <p>Subject to its transfer, clean war memorial and establish any grant availability; explore if measures can be applied which retain wreaths where they are lain each year</p>	Community infrastructure funds - £20,000 in budget.	<p>Throughout year</p> <p>By October 2025</p>	Finance and Governance Committee
Health and Community Objective 5 - Armed Forces Covenant	Remembrance Day events	Work with the 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	South West Kettering	Ensure Neighbourhood Planning Committee has the ability to monitor the	Clerk time	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Planning Committee

standards and policies	Neighbourhood Plan	effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan. Ensure Planning Committee is aware of conflicts between the plan and planning applications			Planning Committee and Neighbourhood Planning Ctte
Sustainability Objective 7 Development standards and policies	Central Kettering Neighbourhood Plan	Establish consultation and engagement arrangements and engage stakeholders and public throughout the town.  Secure government grant  Remain engaged with NNC's emerging planning policies  Develop planning policies and consult upon them  Develop final plan	£12,000  External planning and community development resources  Officer and member time  NNC officer time	Detailed timetable to be developed in early part of 2025 Assume timetable continues into 2026/7 Financial Year.	Neighbourhood Planning Committee  Council
Economy Objective 2 - Town Centres  Sustainability Objective 8 - Biodiversity	On street planting schemes Kettering Town centre	Continue and expand scheme to include - 10 more hanging baskets; wed spraying and winter planting from winter 2025 onwards	£34,000	Throughout year	Council Finance and Governance Committee

Sustainability Objective 6, Climate change mitigation, 8 Biodiversity	Sustainable development	Develop and encourage projects which improve local sustainability and which deepen local people's commitments to more sustainable lifestyles  Develop and promote sources of information for local people to use, including through the Council's website, to improve sustainable lifestyles	£1000 in budget to pump prime projects and ideas and provide grants .  Member and officer time	Throughout the year	Finance and Governance Ctte
Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Town Meetings	Reconsider objectives and format of Town Meetings	Clerk time	By July 2026	Council Finance and Governance Ctte
Health and Community Objective 3 Wellbeing Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement	Integrated Care System	Engage with ICS and the Local Area Partnership	Clerk and member time	Throughout 2025-6 and beyond	Council

<p>Organisational Effectiveness Objective 11 communications and engagement</p>	<p>Communications strategy and social media policy.</p>	<p>Produce a regular Newsletter for stakeholders on KTC activities</p> <p>Produce an Events brochure for promoting events</p> <p>Maintain notice boards under KTC control Explore with developers of smart hubs in town capacity for KTC to make use of these facilities promoting events, consultations, meetings and news from KTC.</p>	<p>Deputy Clerk time</p> <p>Events budget £3k</p> <p>Community Infrastructure fund Community Infrastructure Fund</p>	<p>From January 2024</p> <p>Annually, by end of March</p>	<p>Finance and Governance Ctte</p> <p>Markets and Events Ctte</p>
<p>Organisational Effectiveness Objective Objectives 10-14</p>	<p>Support new Council after the May 2025 elections</p>	<p>Agree training plan with outgoing Council</p> <p>Induct new members after May elections with email accounts, ID badges, paperwork for acceptance of office and declarations of interests, Implement training plan</p> <p>Pay for elections cost</p>	<p>£1200</p> <p>Officer and member time</p> <p>£72,000 in reserves</p>	<p>January 2025</p> <p>Within 1 week of election</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Finance and Governance Ctte.</p>

<p>Organisational Effectiveness Objective Objectives 10-14</p>	<p>Appointment of new clerk</p>	<p>Determine pay and conditions and timetable for recruitment</p> <p>Complete recruitment so new person in post by February 2026</p> <p>Consider any new staffing structure with new clerk</p>	<p>Payroll budget.</p>	<p>By July 2025</p> <p>By December 2025</p> <p>By March 2026</p>	<p>Council Staffing Ctte</p>
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