

Committee and Subgroup Restructure

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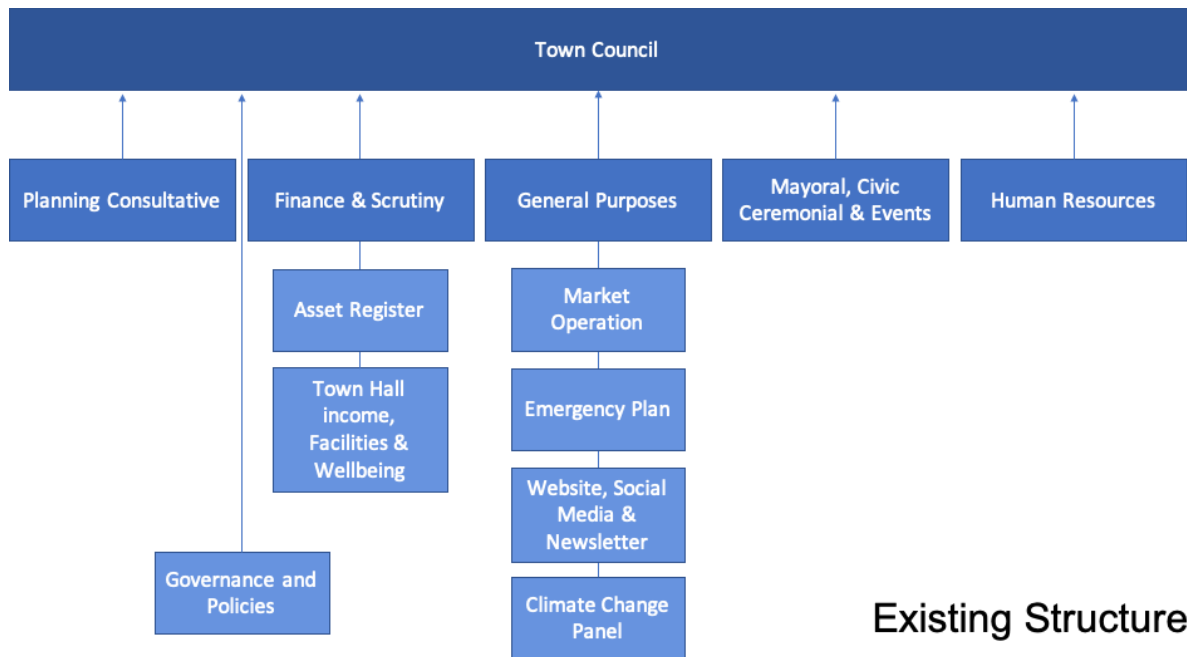
Brief

After a year on the council, discussions with fellow Councillors and the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk it occurred to me that there were some unclear lines of responsibility within the existing Committee and Subgroup structure and some duplication of effort.

As part of the Aims and Objectives Task and Finish Group it was agreed that I would go away and suggest a re-shuffle of responsibilities to ensure the Council operates efficiently.

After determining what the responsibilities of the altered Committees should be, it was apparent they needed renaming to better reflect their new focus. For this, I looked at the names of the Committees from other high-performing Town Councils for inspiration, which are appended to the end of this document.

Existing Structure



Existing Structure

Planning Consultative Committee

Meetings: 16

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Existing Responsibilities

- Planning and Licensing
- Highways Matters
- Waterways
- Railways
- Represent Town Council in Planning Matters

Finance and Scrutiny Committee

Meetings: 5

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Existing Subgroups

- Asset Register
- Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel

Existing Responsibilities

- Management of Council's Financial Affairs
- External Financial Regulations
- Annual Estimates of Income and Expenditure
- Setting of the Precept
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Remuneration of Member's Allowances
- Maintain Council's Asset Register
- Capital Spending
- Release of Funds from Reserves
- Virement between Budget Heads
- Borrowing or Investment
- Purchase or Sale of Assets
- Review Significant Financial Implications from other Committees
- Grants and Special Projects
- Pro-Bono Use of Town Hall
- Managing Financial Overspend

General Purposes Committee

Meetings: 4

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Existing Subgroups

- Climate Change Emergency Panel
- Emergency Plan
- Website Social Media & Newsletter

Existing Responsibilities

- Town Hall
- Cemetery and Tranquillity Garden
- Holy Trinity Churchyard
- Garden of Remembrance and War Memorials
- Rother Street Market
- American Fountain and Clock
- Tiddington Road Mooring
- Hatton Rock Storage Facilities
- Allotments
- Street Furniture
- General Purposes Risk Assessment

Mayoral, Civic, Ceremonial & Events

Meetings: 6

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Existing Responsibilities

- Civic Events
- Civic Insignia
- Shakespeare Birthday
- Heritage Open Days
- Armed Forces Day
- Remembrance Sunday
- Christmas Lights Switch On
- Victorian Christmas Festival

Human Resources Committee

Meetings: 3

Max Members: 7 + Mayor

Quorum: 4

Responsibilities

- Staffing Levels
- Job Descriptions
- Grading and Renumeration
- Beadle and Macebearers Appointments & Dismissals
- Councils' Chaplain
- Holiday Entitlements
- Performance Management
- Appointment and Dismissal of Town Clerk /Deputy
- Staff Appointment Dismissal Oversight
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Health and Safety

Proposal

Themes

Theme 1 – Transfer spending responsibility to individual committees from Finance and Scrutiny

- Individual Committees should be assigned Budgets and Designated Reserves to spend within the fiscal year
- Committees should have responsibility to manage and operate their own budgets
- Spending decisions inside these budgets should not go to Finance, the decision should be made by those who own the budget
- Finance should be an oversight, audit, and budget-setting committee

Theme 2 – Empower the Events Committee with responsibility for income and self-promotion

- We need a more purposeful plan for self-promotion and the generation of income through various initiatives
- Events naturally need promotion and may have a commercial element
- Having a committee focussed on proactive community engagement and communication makes sense
- Encourage pro-bono and charged use of the Town Hall

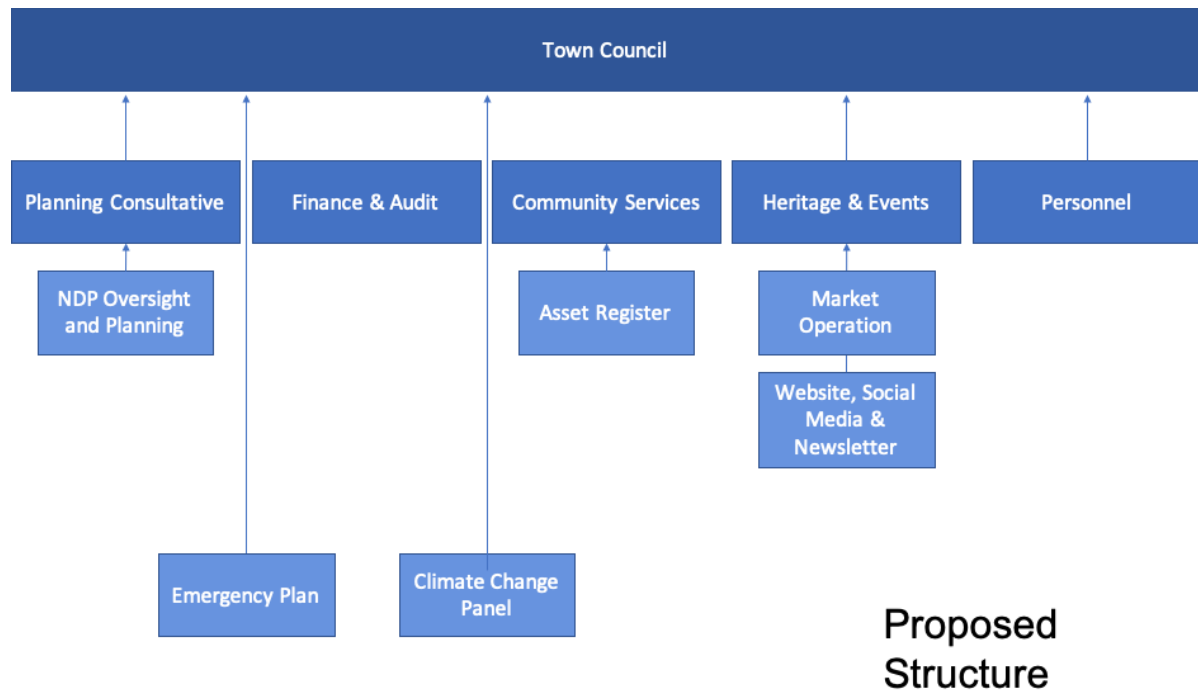
Theme 3 - Encourage more discussion and debate in Committees, reduce reliance on sub-groups and ensure important decisions are brought to the full council

- Work should be done by councillors offline and brought to committees for discussion and debate, formal subgroups are not always needed
- Should not be afraid of creating T&F groups where necessary but ensure they have a short life; any Councillor can be a member of a T&F group
- Need to ensure important decisions are not hiding in committee minutes when they should be brought to full council
- Important subgroups should report to full Council

Theme 4 – Push initiatives spawned in Aims and Objectives into relevant committee

- Aims and Objectives lasted too long, we need to ensure that important ideas and initiatives have a permanent home
- NDP is an important function of the Town Council, we should represent this as a subgroup which reports to Planning

Proposed Committee Structure



Planning Consultative Committee

Meetings: 16

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Subgroups

- NDP Oversight and Planning

Responsibilities

- Planning and Licensing
- Highways Matters
- Waterways
- Railways
- Represent Town Council in Planning Matters

Community Services

Meetings: 4

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Subgroups

- Asset Register

Responsibilities

- Maintain Council's Asset Register
- Capital Spending
- Purchase or Sale of Assets
- Grants and Special Projects
- Town Hall Maintenance
- American Fountain and Clock
- Tiddington Road Mooring
- Hatton Rock Storage Facilities
- Allotments
- Street Furniture
- Cemetery and Tranquillity Garden
- Holy Trinity Churchyard
- Garden of Remembrance and War Memorials

Finance and Audit

Meetings: 5

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Responsibilities

- Setting the Budget
- Management of Council's Financial Affairs
- External Financial Regulations
- Annual Estimates of Income and Expenditure
- Recommendation Setting of the Precept
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Release of Funds from Reserves
- Virement between Budget Heads
- Borrowing or Investment
- Financial Overspend
- Insurance

Heritage and Events

Meetings: 6

Max Members: 9 + Mayor

Quorum: 3

Subgroups

- Market Operation
- Website, Social Media & Newsletter

Responsibilities

- Civic Events
- Civic Insignia
- Shakespeare Birthday
- Heritage Open Days
- Armed Forces Day
- Remembrance Sunday
- Christmas Lights Switch On
- Victorian Christmas Festival
- Rother Street Market (Markets)
- Town Hall Income
- Cemetery Income
- Pro-Bono Use of Town Hall
- Town Centre Strategic Partnership

Personnel

Meetings: 3

Max Members: 7 + Mayor

Quorum: 4

Responsibilities

- Staffing Levels
- Job Descriptions
- Grading and Remuneration
- Beadle and Macebearers Appointments & Dismissals
- Councils' Chaplain
- Holiday Entitlements
- Performance Management
- Appointment and Dismissal of Town Clerk /Deputy
- Staff Appointment Dismissal Oversight
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Health and Safety
- Town Hall Workspace and Wellbeing

Non-Committee (Full Town Council)

Subgroups

- Climate Change
- Emergency Plan

Responsibilities

Note: This is not an exhaustive list but intended to point out important matters which should not be delegated to a committee.

- Remuneration of Member's Allowances
- Governance and Policies
- Spending of CIL

Shared Responsibilities

Note: This is a non-exhaustive list of responsibilities shared by all Committees.

- Financial Management
- Environmental Impact of Decisions
- Maintaining and Updating Risk Assessments
- Management of Terms of Reference
- Ensuring Equality
- Suggesting CIL Spending Projects

No Longer Required

Subgroups

- Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing (*work transferred to selected Committees*)
- Governance and Policies (*changes to be taken to full Council*)

Responsibilities

- Review Significant Financial Implications from other Committees (*work transferred to all Committees*)

Notes

Financial Management

- Work will need to be undertaken to tie individual Budget lines and Designated Reserves back to Committees
- Finance and Audit Committee will look at creating more designated reserves where necessary
- Individual members will be required to take on slightly more responsibility in Committees to be briefed on the status on the budget:
 - Management accounts are freely available to all Members
 - Questions can be sent to the Deputy Town Clerk in advance of the meeting
 - Where required (and only when absolutely necessary), the Deputy Town Clerk can attend meetings by request
- Where possible, fully costed proposals should be taken to Committees by Members

Town Hall

- Responsibility for the Town Hall is split between three committees:
 - Community Services should look at the maintenance and upkeep of the building
 - Heritage & Events should look at how to maximise the use of the Town Hall both commercially and non-commercially
 - Personnel should look at how the Town Hall operates as a workspace for Town Council Staff

Neighbourhood Development Plan

- A new Subgroup (NDP Oversight and Planning) should be initiated to track progress towards the projects outlined in the NDP
- The Subgroup should also review decisions around policies to ensure the plan is being actively defended
- The group should start a checklist or rough plan for items to go into the next NDP

Noted Terminology from other Parish Councils

Cirencester

Community Services, Corporate Group, Land & Property, Finance & Audit, Personnel Group
Planning

Weston-Super-Mare

Personnel, Policy & Finance, Heritage, Arts & Culture, Tourism & Leisure, Community
Services, Planning

<https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Committee-Structure-Approved-16-Sept-2019.pdf>

Sevenoaks

<https://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Documents/2019%2005%2013%20MINUTES%20ACM%20APPENDIX%20E%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf>

Finance and General Purposes, Open Spaces & Leisure, Planning, Personnel, Community
Infrastructure

Knutsford

Environment and General Purposes, Events and Town Management, Finance, Assets and
Operations, Personnel, Planning

<https://www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk/council>

Trowbridge

Policy & Resources, Town Development, Leisure and Information Services, Neighbourhood
Services