



MEETING PAPER

Subject: Committee and Sub-Committee Structure

Meeting: Finance and Governance Committee

Date: 9th December 2024

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Committees and Sub Committees of LTC-Discussion Paper

This was initially discussed at AID, but only the Parks and Open Spaces and AID suggestions, and it was proposed to send it to Standing Orders and Policies to discuss and make any proposals in time for May 2025 AGM. As Standing Orders struggles to meet. I am suggesting that we defer discussion to the now arranged Standing Orders and Policies on either December 17th or January 8th to discuss committee/subcommittee structure.

I am not convinced that our current committee/subcommittee/working groups structure suits the council's needs. Our standing committees report direct to Full Council and sub committees to their so called 'parent committee'. I think this can lead to unnecessary delay and repetition. Some sub committees have few councillors attending. Maybe we have too many committees/subcommittees?

As a Town Council our key responsibilities are Parks and Open Spaces, Buildings passed to us under the reorganisation order, giving a voice to the people of Lowestoft, managing our finances and keeping within our budget, and delivering net zero by 2030.

I will first concentrate on **AID**. **AID** I think has too many subcommittees, four plus a number of working groups, and with ground maintenance being brought in-house maybe our current structure, like our staffing structure, needs revision.

My initial suggestions are:

AID remains a standing committee and becomes responsible for all buildings, walls and paths and drops responsibility for Inclusion. Inclusion might be better addressed by **Events and Comms** as most of that committees Terms of Reference involve community engagement at all levels. **Community Safety** subcommittee ceases to be a subcommittee and is covered by AID. This makes sense to me as it about protecting our assets as well as making the community feel safe.

Parks and Open Spaces becomes a standing committee and has responsibility for planting, play spaces, **allotments**, trees and pond health. **Allotments** currently reports to AID as does Parks. **Allotments** becomes a working party. Initially I thought Parks could be subsumed into AID as the agendas tend to be repetitive particularly since we have more or less planned all our park refurbishment but by becoming a full Committee it could address planting, pond health, allotments and our play spaces more dynamically and more promptly. This is particularly true since we brought the ground maintenance in house.

Events and Comms takes on responsibility for Inclusion and Community Engagement. Both of our officers responsible for events and comms attend these meetings and part of their role is to engage the community. Friends' Groups could also report to Events and Comms. Possibly look at grants going to Events and Comms before referring to F&G? it might make sense to make Events and Comms a full committee but reporting to F&G. A hybrid?

Planning remains a standing committee but ensures Full council is aware of consultations

Personnel remains a standing committee.

Climate Emergency and Ecological is currently a standing committee, but a number of initiatives are not known by councillors, I think we need to think about how we better engage councillors in the aspiration to achieve net zero and protect wildlife and the environment. If **Climate Emergency and Ecology** became a subcommittee and reported to **Parks** or **AID** it might engage more councillors?

Finance and Governance remains a standing committee, maybe focuses more on exploring external funding as well as allocating funds from budget and recommending high cost items to Full Council?