



Policy and Finance Committee

Date: 19 April 2021

Title: Responsibility and Ownership of the Equality and Diversity Agenda and Environmental Ambitions.

Purpose of the Report: To seek direction on which Town Council Committee is best placed to deliver the Town Council's Environmental Ambitions and Equality and Diversity Agenda.

Contact Officer: Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Five Year Plan – Aim 1 (to consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council).
Implications:	
Financial	None
Human Resources	None
Operational/Service delivery	To ensure policies and procedures remain current and fit for purpose
Risk/Health and Safety	None

1. RECOMMENDATION

Should the Committee be minded, the proposal is

- 1.1 That Council takes ownership of the Town Council's Environmental Ambitions and Equality and Diversity Statement and in doing so, provides direction to the various standing committees and sub-committees who act on its behalf.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Leighton-Linslade Town Council is committed to the change agenda. To support positive change, the Town Council has made clear its commitment to the environment by creating a suite of Environmental Ambitions which underpin many town council services and functions. Of equal value and importance, is the Equality and Diversity Statement which Council endorsed at its meeting

held 25th January 2021. Whilst different documents created for different purposes, they share a commonality. That is, which committee should take overall responsibility in providing a town council direction? Take recycling for example. An argument could legitimately be made that the matter could be considered by at least 5 different town council committees all of whom could argue to have recycling responsibilities. In turn, all 5 committees could arrive at a different solution to address the same problem. Indeed, this situation did come to fruition with the Grounds and Environmental Committee considering a recycling issue at its meeting held 14th December 2020 and subsequent to this, the very same issue was raised at Market Sub-Committee on 25th February 2021 and thereafter, Culture and Economic Committee at its meeting held 1st March 2021. In the extreme, the lack of ownership and decision-making responsibility has the propensity to lead to a divisive council with one committee pitted against another. Whilst this is unlikely to ever happen, the lack of ownership offers little in the way of clarity which is not helpful to members or indeed the community they serve.

- 2.2 As set out at paragraph 1.1, the recommendation is that Full Council takes ownership of both the environmental ambitions as well as the equality and diversity agenda. The top-down approach is considered an appropriate solution in that it empowers all members to engage in debate as the subject will be considered in the full council forum. In this way, ownership is with the members and the Council as the corporate body. Secondly, it offers clarity in that direction is provided by Council to which all committees are bound. In doing so, potential conflict through divergence of opinion is avoided.
- 2.3 Should members be minded in supporting the recommendation, it is anticipated that a paper(s) will be presented to Council on a regular basis setting out the progress the Council is making in terms of meeting both objectives as well as any recommendations considered appropriate in providing the top-down direction to subsidiary committees.

End.