

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2021/22

The Woughton Community Council Service Plan is the document that details the focus of specific work to be undertaken over the coming 'council year' (May – April). This document lays out the specific items, projects, services and initiatives that the council commits to delivering over the coming year and should work alongside the operational plans, that details the 'day to day' delivery, such as existing services and ongoing commitments.

As with previous year, this document is separated into colour coded committee responsibilities, showing the officers and members who have overall leadership on delivering this plan. Whilst all are involved, ownership and accountability are detailed as follows:

Items in **ORANGE** are Services and Communities committee
 Items in **YELLOW** are Operations committee
 Items in **BLUE** are Finance and Resources committee
 Items in **GREEN** are Planning, Licencing and Development Committee

Whilst this document provides a useful basis for work focus, it is essential that new initiatives that become apparent over the year are not ignored but can also be considered for delivery if sufficient financial and other resources are available. As we have seen over the past year, however much planning is undertaken, things will arise that need further action, such as Covid-19. This plan does refer to the recovery from the pandemic, alongside preparing for any further issues that may arise, either from Covid or other, unforeseen incidents.

This plan has been fully costed (where possible) and included within the annual budget setting process. It should be noted that the budget was ratified prior to this Plan being ratified, so there may be some variation and room for adjustment as the year progresses.

THIS IS THE RATIFIED VERSION OF THE SERVICE PLAN – ratified at Full Council on 18th January 2021.

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Type and Committee responsible
<p>Covid Recovery <i>To support our communities in recovering from the impact of Covid-19</i></p> <p>The impact of the pandemic is likely to impact more severely in Woughton than in other areas. This is due to relative deprivation, high numbers of public facing employment roles, insecure employment and potential redundancies and the reduction in central government support around Universal Credit, eviction protections and furlough payments.</p> <p>Evidence shows that the impact is more pronounced in areas of deprivation, for members of the BAME community (Woughton is a very diverse community), people with existing health conditions (Woughton has large numbers of bungalows that often house people with disabilities) and older people, where again Woughton has large numbers.</p> <p>This plan includes several elements that aim to support people in getting the support needed to both recover from the effects of the pandemic and build resilience for the future. Whilst some parts of this plan were in place anyway, the need is now more urgent than ever.</p>						
CV1	Food poverty	To provide options so that nobody in Woughton is hungry	<p>Within the council, we already provide a number of services that aim to reduce food poverty and promote access to healthy food. This includes projects within the youth service, food parcel delivery during lockdown, community growing spaces, the Community Cafes and, although primarily around waste reduction, the Community Fridge also offers access to food. It is essential that the Community Fridge maintains this focus so, to build upon this, a new project will be developed that works alongside existing provision and offers food stuffs to those most in need.</p> <p>This project will work in partnership with The Food Bank, organisations that support the Community Fridge (such as SOFEA and HUBBUB) and local businesses. It may, if there is sufficient demand, include the delivery of a 'Community Larder', which provides regular food for small costs.</p>	<p>Due to existing infrastructure, this project should need relatively small amounts of funding. Storage is a significant issue so some spend on racking or similar may be needed. £1000 budget to be allocated to explore options and trial options.</p>	Community Services Manager / Chair of Services	Project / Services Committee

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CV2	Advice and representation	To provide accessible and timely support around issues arising from the pandemic, such as housing, income, benefits, and employment.	<p>The Woughton Advice Service (WAS) provides access to advice on a range of subjects, bringing clear benefit to local residents. With the full economic impact of the pandemic yet to be fully felt, it is thought likely that there will be additional demand on the advice service over the coming months. During 2020/21, there has been a lower level of demand on the service, due to the lack of face-to-face access, the 'hold' on some aspects of society that would usually provide a need for support (e.g. hold on evictions, increases to Universal Credit, food bank expansion, etc). It is likely that this will change in 2021/22 and that there will be larger numbers of people in need.</p> <p>This need means that the WAS will develop additional capacity, making use of existing staffing where necessary and building clear links to other providers who have specialities. Where possible, we will also provide representation / support if requested and will aim to build 'pro bono' agreements with local solicitors for more complex legal needs. In addition, we will investigate charitable funding to enable legal representation for residents where without this, they would be seriously disadvantaged.</p>	No additional direct costs, as covered within existing resources.	Community Services Manager / Chair of Services	Building capacity / Services Committee
CV3	Community Building and engagement	To provide opportunities for communities to reconnect and restart 'normal' life	<p>The impact of the pandemic has included a lack of events, a lack of contact for many and far less 'fun' than in previous years. The annual Festival was cancelled, Apple Day was reduced, Diwali is unable to take place and the estate based fun days have not been able to be delivered. Alongside this, many of the annual 'trips', often partially funded via the WCC grants scheme have had to be postponed. With birthday celebrations, weddings, family gatherings and potentially Christmas also significantly reduced, our residents have not had the chance to enjoy the usual events that mark the year in Woughton.</p> <p>To reconnect with our communities, support them in celebrating the end of the pandemic / relaxation of restrictions, we will provide events and activities to support this rebuilding. These will include our usual annual events but will also work with Resident Associations to provide estate-based events that bring communities together, once safe to do so.</p>	There is an existing budget allocated for events and activities which will be further supported by effective use of the grants process.	Comm Dev Officer Chair of Services	Events and projects Services Committee
CV4	Training, employment and education	<p>To improve access to and delivery of support to residents of Woughton to promote ongoing learning, development, employment and training for all who want it.</p> <p>Building options for more secure employment and improved conditions.</p>	<p>Woughton, despite being home to several large education providers (including MK College), remains an area where access to suitable support around training, education and employment could be improved. The Council Hub previously hosted a 'Job Club', provided by staff from MK College on behalf of MK Council – this was limited in size, scope and value, appearing to be basically a CV writing / job search approach.</p> <p>Some discussions have taken place around developing a more diverse and engaging service, that includes a range of providers and services under one roof, potentially based within Netherfield Meeting Place. These discussions have been placed 'on hold' due to the pandemic but will be restarted with a view to commencing as soon as is practicable.</p> <p>In addition, Woughton will continue to support the campaigns for employment protections, rights and conditions, including maintaining our 'Living Wage Employer' status, our Mindful Employer registration and similar.</p>	Unclear, but the Job Club programme sits within the Neighbourhood Employment Programme of MKC, so any funding will be linked to that. No additional funding needed, although possible rental subsidy at NFMP.	Council Manager / Comm Services Manager Chair of Services	Project Services

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<p>The following items, whilst not directly related to Covid 19 recovery, have in places been impacted by the pandemic. This may be due to being placed 'on hold' due to restrictions, falling down the priority list whilst the council was addressing more urgent need or, in some case, be new initiatives that have been added for this year.</p>						
5	Woughton Business Forum	To develop a forum for local businesses to promote Woughton as a place to work, bring collaborative approaches and build stronger relationships between companies and the council.	<p>This objective has been under discussion for a number of years with actions taken towards the later point of 2020 with the agreement of some Terms of Reference, decisions regarding membership from WCC and some discussions around the purpose and focus of the proposed Forum.</p> <p>The next stage is to see if there is an appetite for the Forum from local businesses and work up an Action Plan, with the Steering Committee, to build membership and clarity about both the need for and the purpose of any Forum.</p>	<p>Officer time / venue hire only in the first instance.</p> <p>Potential for additional monies needs for hospitality and events in the future</p>	<p>Council Manager / Community Development Officer</p> <p>Chair of Operations</p>	<p>Project</p> <p>Operations</p>
6	To establish a Youth Council for the Woughton area	To give our younger community a bigger say in local matters	<p>This is an objective that was due to be achieved during 2020/21 but was placed on hold due to the pandemic. The need to engage with younger people is clear and the creation of a Youth Council will provide both information and intelligence about what matters most to young people (of whom there are many within the parish) and also aim to build understanding of and engagement with this tier of local democracy.</p> <p>This work will now start again during the early part of 2021 (if safe to do so) with an aim to have a group up and running for the start of the school year in September 2021.</p>	<p>Budget agreed within budget planning for consultants fee and additional costs – approx. £1600</p>	<p>Council Manager / Community Services Manager</p> <p>Chair of Operations</p>	<p>Project</p> <p>Operations</p>
7	IT systems and processes	To maximise use of software included within the IT contract to improve efficiency and oversight	<p>The benefits of an integrated and modern IT system have been clear over the past months, with the organisation showing robust systems and processes than enabled delivery of the full range of council services from remote locations. To build upon this, further training will benefit all officers and councillors to make full use of the systems already in place, plus exploration of new software to better report and collate information regarding services, bookings, finances and Social return on Investment.</p> <p>To review all available software and arrange training where appropriate, making use of Cloudy IT. This will include a review of Sharepoint design and storage to ensure compliance and access and to look at included software to monitor and review performance, HR issues and task management (this should be relatively simple, within existing software).</p> <p>The bigger issue is to review current finance system with a view to replacement in 2021/22</p>	<p>The majority of these issues are simply around better use of existing systems and software, where licences are already paid for and included in existing budgets.</p> <p>There may be some small increases for any new finance system dependent on increased functionality, but this will be minimal.</p>	<p>Operations Manager</p> <p>Chair of Operations</p>	<p>Work programme</p> <p>Operations</p>
8	Training and development	To ensure that officers and members are provided with regular, suitable opportunities for development, in line with organisational needs and identified	<p>Training has been significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, with almost no face to face training being held and limited opportunities for even online sessions, with the limitations that online training brings. It is unclear as to how this may change over the coming year, but we anticipate that options will expand. Whilst due to financial pressures, the budget has been reduced, we</p>	<p>£10,000 budget</p>	<p>Operations Manager</p> <p>Chair of Operations</p>	<p>Delivery</p> <p>Operations</p>

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		areas of development, to build capacity and quality.	<p>retain a healthy training budget and some ideas for how we might spend some of this. As with last year, the plan is to assess current needs, based upon appraisals and 1:1 sessions, and then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Look at the future needs of WCC and prioritise areas for development b) Identify suitable providers to offer sessions and opportunities c) Build expectation into JD's, to promote access and involvement d) Develop annual programme of training and development opportunities for officers and members e) Include 'soft' outcomes, alongside accredited and qualification-based options. f) Include annual 'awaydays' for councillors, for officers and for the whole team. g) 1:1 support sessions offered to all councillors via Senior Councillor team 			
9	Engagement and communications	To improve all aspects of communication internally and externally from the Council, to include the Gazette, website, social media, email and other options.	<p>Communication is key to WCC delivering its key aims; to represent, support and develop the communities of Woughton. Whilst there have been significant improvements over recent years, including the development of a Communications Plan, new visual imagery, improvements to the website, a more consistent approach with the Gazette and a more professional approach across the organisation, there remains much to do, especially with regard to better use of technology and online options.</p> <p>Whilst online is essential, being both affordable and accessible to most, it is also important that we don't overlook those that may not access online content.</p> <p>To address some of the concerns and to help manage budgetary constraints, it is proposed that the Gazette reduces to 2 editions per year, but that there is a monthly 'e-news' produced.</p> <p>The Gazette will build upon recent advertising to build momentum and become as self-funding as possible, with the view that if costs can reduce, additional editions can be produced.</p> <p>The website updates will continue, with the current test site and live site being combined to make a website that meets both legal expectations and the usability standards for visitors.</p>	No additional costs (in fact, potentially reduced).	Ops Manager / Council Manager Chair Operations	Improvements and updates Operations
10	Fly-tipping and waste management	To reduce fly-tipping, improve waste collection rates and recycling, promote cleaner and greener communities and work across the parish to encourage civic pride.	There is a belief that fly-tipping has got worse across the parish during the pandemic. This may be linked to the closure and subsequent booking system at the household waste management sites (the Tips), people undertaking home improvements during lock down or simply reflect a consistent level of fly-tipping that has been apparent for many years. This issue links to littering, poor household waste management and rubbish collections (including a consultation on provision of wheely bins in the future), rats and pests and reducing levels of recycling within the city, supporting further work for the council in these areas.	No additional budget demands	L+E Manager Chair of Services	Projects and improvements Services Committee

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			<p>To support improvements in this area, WCC will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage residents to contribute to consultations around future waste management, promoting better ways of managing for our estates. - Continue to monitor, report and follow up all incidences of fly-tipping, alongside education of RA's and residents to ensure that they are aware of how to do this themselves - Further education and information, including in each edition of the Gazette, around waste and recycling, using the information sent from MKC partners - Consideration of replacement of dog waste bins with multi-use bins over the coming years, with a decision based upon cost and maintenance - Work with MKC around pest management, building upon the proposed rat pilot on two of our estates - Further investigate the use of CCTV in addressing fly-tipping working with MKC / TVP. Investment only if clear benefits will be forthcoming - Work with RA's to identify areas where community involvement would bring benefit and support initiatives. 			
11	Landscaping	To build upon the successful delivery and comply with new demands from MKC around contract delivery	<p>The Landscaping service was devolved from MKC 5 years ago, with a 'grant' payment scheme in operation, rather than any contract. This has changed with the new contract (running to 2023) and with a new contract manager in MKC and additional parishes taking on landscaping, there is significantly more expectation and clarification regarding the service. There are things that we have previously done that we should not have, whilst equally being things that we should have done that we haven't. Change is necessary to comply with the new demands from MKC and maintain the contract that is in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity around reporting expectations. To this point, we have not been asked for or provided and specific reports to MKC regarding the service, simply delivering as agreed. MKC have now requested regular reports. - Development and delivery of agreed improvements. The Landscape Manager has been working on a long-term plan for all areas of the parish, detailing the approach to be taken in each place. This details current planting / regime, proposed change (if any) and benefits proposed as a result. 	No additional budgetary issues	L+E Manager / Council Manager Chair of Services	Contract Management Services Committee
12	Community growing space	To continue to develop the space behind Rochfords to create growing and additional WCC resources space	This project is another that is being carried over from the previous service plan, having been stymied by a combination of solicitors being struck off, coronavirus delays and a lack of suitable funding opportunities, as a result of a change of focus in response to the pandemic. Some of these issues have now been addressed; we have a new form of solicitors representing us, the land transfer should now proceed smoothly and there is ongoing work around planning that	Grant funding to be sought where possible, with existing (unspent) budget of £10,000 to be used in any urgent / emergency situation	L+E Manager / Environment Officers Chair of Services	Project Services

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			<p>will, we hope, result in a formal application being submitted. The following issues remain outstanding and will be the focus of the coming year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A full, detailed plan of the site, explaining what will be where, costings and plan for use - A detailed plan of site use, including any educational work, proposed or identified groups that have expressed an interest, proposed growing and harvests, and income generating elements and any other relevant information around site use (e.g. landscape depot) - A costed budget, detailing both set up and annual running costs, with any income generation elements included and proposals for where any additional funding will come from. This should include a 1 year, 3 year and 5-year projections. <p>These elements when combined should produce a business case for the site, providing sufficient evidence and planning for council to be able to effectively support any investment and provide strategic leadership for this project, alongside promote and encourage use.</p>			
13	Planning decision making and reporting	To ensure transparent responses to and reporting of decisions regarding planning, licencing and development committee decisions	<p>The Planning, Licencing and Development Committee (known either as 'Planning' or 'PLoD') is a new committee that started with the new council year in May 2020. It has shown considerable benefit already, with regularly busy agendas, clear discussions and responses to some potentially controversial applications and covering an area that is an important part of local council life. With regular applications coming in for planning, less frequent licencing and significant proposals around estate renewal and development, this committee has become and essential part of the governance structure of the council.</p> <p>What hasn't happened fully is embedding this within the website and other reporting systems. To this end (and linking with item 9 on this plan) is to ensure that all applications are recorded, shared via the website / social media and that any response is also then uploaded once the committee makes a decision.</p>	No direct cost, but additional time needed from officers	Council Manager / CMSO Chair of PLaD	Project leading to ongoing work Planning Committee
14	Estate renewal and regeneration	To ensure resident oversight, consultation, and involvement at all stages of any estate renewal programme	<p>With changes made to the 'Regeneration' agenda over the past year, there are now different approaches being explored and new ideas being discussed. These include estate 'panels' to support decisions, significant developments planned for some estates within the parish and a need to ensure that local voices are both heard and acted upon. As the very local council, WCC will have a seat at the table and will work to ensure that ALL residents voices are heard within any decision-making process. To support this, we will use our communications routes, local councillors and Residents Associations, positive relationships with the principle authority and the expertise built through the Neighbourhood Planning process and the agencies that have supported this project.</p>	Officer and councillor time, with possible expenditure on consultancy if necessary	Council Manager Chair of PLaD	Ongoing work Planning Committee

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			In addition, focus on specific issues, such as council housing, trees, rats, and similar will fall within this item, with PLaD leading on these issues and discussions.			
15	'Geeks in Sheds'	To explore the opportunities for technology and building knowledge and skills within the parish.	<p>Technology is moving quickly and there is a need to explore the potential within our community and provide opportunities for residents to develop skills, knowledge and have a chance to 'fiddle'.</p> <p>In a similar way to 'Men in Sheds', this idea suggests a set space / time where people can come together, share ideas and knowledge and create opportunities.</p> <p>At this point, this will be an exploratory item, where we can look to see whether there is an appetite within the parish and, if so, build relationships with relevant bodies (e.g. Cloudy IT, MK College) to see what can be created.</p>	Unclear at this time – early exploratory work to be undertaken and, if suitable, some 'emerging priorities' funding could be allocated.	<p>Community Services Manager</p> <p>Chair of Services</p>	<p>Exploratory Project</p> <p>Services Committee</p>
16	Apprenticeships	To look at the potential for including apprenticeships within the wider WCC workforce.	Having employed apprentices previously, with mixed results, this is still an area which is valued by the council and should be considered if / when we are expanding our workforce further. In addition, looking at how we can support the inclusion of apprentices, work placements, etc. more widely.	Only applicable if formal apprentices start, in line with council agreement.	<p>Operations Manager</p> <p>Chair of Operations</p>	<p>Policy document</p> <p>Operations Committee</p>
17	Post Brexit work	To ensure that the council works proactively to address and manage the challenges that may come from our leaving the EU ('Brexit')	<p>The impact of our leaving the EU is, at this point, quite unclear. However, we do know that there are a number of EU nationals living within the parish who may require help and support in obtaining 'settled status' or other support to enable them to remain part of the community.</p> <p>in addition, there may be further impacts of the leaving; these remain unclear at this time, but could include issues of supply, increased costs, lack of access to essential elements and an increase in nationalism and racially motivated issues.</p> <p>This is an area that is very much in development and will continue to be worked on as the situation becomes clearer.</p>	Unclear, but may mean additional training or bringing in external specialists.	<p>Council Manager</p> <p>Chair / Leader of Council</p>	Unclear at this time.
18	Winter Grit / Salt bins	To evaluate the placement and provision of grit bins across the parish, to enable residents to access when necessary	<p>Previously, MKC provided and 'topped up' grit bins across the parish. Different estates have different levels of grit bins, with Eaglestone being fairly well provisioned, whilst Leadenhall appears to have none at all.</p> <p>We have had requests to check and maintain levels within the bins – an evaluation and full paper was submitted to council earlier in 2020 and this needs to be continued on an annual basis, changing and switching where appropriate.</p>	<p>Cost of new grit bins is around £100</p> <p>Cost of grit is being investigated, as we may be able to access MKC supplies</p>	<p>Landscape and Environment Manager</p> <p>Chair of Services</p>	<p>Policy and actions</p> <p>Services Committee</p>
19	Rats and other 'vermin'	To work with the principal authority and other partners to address the issue of rats across the parish	The issue of rats (and other vermin / infestations) has been an issue for a number of years but has been highlighted within the priorities and budgets consultation as an issue that residents would like greater focus on. Whilst this is primarily an issue for MKC as the principal authority, alongside individual households, there	Unclear, but a limited budget for education can be included (up to £500). Any additional costs (e.g. treatment of	Landscape and Environment Manager / Environment Team	Proposals and actions



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			<p>are issues where terraced housing is provided that need a collaborative and concerted effort to eradicate and manage the issue.</p> <p>There are some 'pilot' schemes that have been planned, but these do not encompass the whole parish. There is also currently a waste and recycling consultation that is likely to lead to the provision of wheelie bins, rather than sacks, which may also reduce the issue. However, in the shorter term, education and support to houses where black bags are used for food waste, the timing of bins being put out, reductions in the storage of waste within residential areas and a variety of other issues also need to be worked with to reduce the impact of rats on local households.</p>	problem areas) should come from MKC	Chair of Services	Services Committee

Service Plan 2020/21 – FINAL VERSION

Ratified at Full Council on 18th January 2021.