Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2025/2026

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 working on over the coming year and should work alongside the operational plans, that detail the 'day to day' delivery, such as existing services and ongoing commitments. The plan is a combination of officer and member suggestions and feedback from the community, via those routes and the annual survey, engagement activities and general conversations, showing a commitment to both listening too and acting upon resident feedback.

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 BLUE are Operations and Resources Committee
Items in GREEN are Planning, Licencing and Development Committee

There are some items which sit across either a few committees (e.g. where a project impacts both service provision and financial income) or should be a whole council approach. These items have been left blank.

This plan should be considered as a 'living document', updated and altered as the landscape changes, things are completed or where circumstances change. As was seen in 2020, a plan needs to be flexible and respond to both known and emerging priorities. This is reflected in the budget that has been agreed for this year, with budgets allocated towards Service Plan items, whilst also having an amount that is allocated to those issues that emerge over the year. There are times where this flexibility is what makes the local council sector so valuable to its residents – the ability to move quickly.

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2024/25

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Committee responsible

Introduction

Many of the elements noted in this plan link to an overarching approach that aims to take a different approach within the council and wider parish. Over the past decade, the approach with the council has been focused on the issue of poverty, with this being the theme of grant policies, service delivery and much of the discussion within meetings, committees and consultations. This was increased with the 'cost of living' crisis, the impact of the pandemic and the ongoing pressures on finances within all levels of government. Whilst poverty remains a significant issue for many within the parish and services and support remains a major part of the council's delivery, it is also felt important that aspiration and encouragement is prioritised. Supporting the view that the parish has much to offer and is not just poverty and disadvantage, is a focus within this plan and the wider council and community.

As a result, the issues of pride in the parish, building skills and resilience, improving public realm and supporting aspirational approaches run through this document. Creating estates that are attractive, well maintained and designed to provide great community facilities supports this approach. The housing improvements taking place on Netherfield, Tinkers Bridge and Beanhill support this too, as does the work that has been done to improve public spaces (refurbishment of the ABC park, the renewal of the Barista Park, public realm improvements across the parish have all happened over the past year). But it isn't just about place, it's about people. Supporting residents to develop new skills, to try new activities, to lead healthier, happier and more active lives. And, most importantly, to expect and aspire to more.

The items noted below cover a wide range of approaches, from one off events to ongoing services. Physical spaces to aspirational thoughts. And all should be considered against a backdrop of

'What is best for the people of the parish?'

And the only way to know this, is to talk to people. To meet people where they are. To ask questions. To consult on decisions. To increase the democratic involvement and encourage new, innovative ways of doing things, even when these may be scary. And these conversations need to take place at all levels – much feedback comes from occasional conversations where a caretaker, a landscaper, a café volunteer or a councillor hears an idea, a viewpoint or a comment that can help shape the parish. We can take these, as well as the views collected through more formal routes, and help work together to build a parish that thrives, that succeeds and that builds upon the strengths of our community.

This plan underpins the work that will happen over the coming year. But we will also continue to deliver the ongoing services and support that made Woughton the 'Council of the Year' – services that focus on the people of the parish.

This is aspirational and a different approach to previously. Some things will work, some may not. But all will help us build understanding, learn from the experience and continue to move forward.

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2024/25

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Committee responsible
1	Continued refurbishment of Meeting Places	To provide a better-quality experience for renters and users and to try and improve occupancy rates within the centre	Taking a priority approach and working within reasonable budgets, the continued improvements to community centres is a key part of delivering quality spaces to the local population. To this end and following a programme of change over the past few years, work will continue to develop the centres. This may include: new kitchen at TBMP, replacement ceiling and lighting at CHMP, new windows at No 95, upgraded toilet facilities at NFMP and accessibility issues better managed at No 99.		Estates Manager (works) Council Manager (funding)	Operations Committee
2	Library of Things	To provide access to range of equipment that may be useful for residents at low or no cost.	With the initial launch having taken place in 2024/25, building upon this work is the focus for the coming year. This to include a publicity push, events and activities to drive membership and usage, increasing the range of equipment available and working with other existing resources within the city (e.g. repair cafes) to offer an increased range of activities.	Within existing budgets	Estates Manager / Environment Team	Services
3	No 99 Jonathans	To develop a space that helps provide a 'Health and Wellbeing' space for the parish	Following the successful delivery of the building, the focus is now on creating a diverse, sustainable approach that provides a range of services and support to the residents of the parish. This may include applying for longer term funding for development work as well as developing an initial programme, focusing on the needs of the population, specifically around positive health outcomes, skills development, aspiration development and social interactions. As noted above, some further work is needed to ensure the building is accessible and useable by all.	TBC – some budget may be needed, but any major works will be investigated via grant funding (e.g. SPF)	Council Manager	Full Council – delegated to Services (delivery) and Operations (finances)
4	Public Realm improvements	A visible and impactful approach to making changes to the parish, bringing unloved spaces back into use and improving the appearance of the parish.	Identify key spaces on each estate to provide projects for Payback and potential community approaches. This could include play parks (e.g. the mosaics at Two Halls Play area), utility spaces (such as the old 'pocket parks' on Beanhill and other estates), areas subject to ASB (the 'ends' of the garages in Netherfield) or simply focusing on an area for litter picks, painting bollards, cutting back, path edging, etc. This will not only provide a very visible example of works being undertaken but also provide opportunities to build upon successful 'multi agency' events that have happened previously (e.g. tree planting).	Costs are going to vary, but are likely to be minimal, other than use of tools (already in place) and potentially paint, etc.	Estates Manager / Environment Team	Services
5	Community Arts	Building a programme and approach, making use of the 'Artist in Residence' and other resources locally.	Create a programme of work, events and activities, utilising the community artist and other local resources to build a wider art focus within the parish, linked to public realm, community activities, schools, older people, etc. with a view to provision of exhibitions, creation of resources, etc.	TBC, but support offered from MKCC with funding attached.	Whole team, dependent on approaches agreed	Services

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2024/25

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Committee responsible
6	Communications from WCC	Improvements to the Communications of the council, including a review of the communications policy	Due to changes with budgets and staffing structures, the appointment of Communications Officer didn't happen and is unlikely (but not impossible) within the current year. Given this, a different approach is needed, with officers within the current structure taking both individual and collective responsibility for publicity. Work has started with some basic website training for key officers, but further work needed to ensure responsibility and accountability with key officers. This work to include a focus on the policy, with links to all aspects of social media, website, posters and newsletters, branding, publicity, etc.	None identified, other than officer time and potentially some software licenses.	Operations Manager	Operations
7	Woughton is 50 – building upon the successes	To continue to focus on the heritage and history of the parish, building a lasting legacy and archive.	Legacy work continuing from the initial events during 2024/25. The successes of this work, such as the refurbishment of the community art on Netherfield, to be shared and continued, with a view to this approach spreading around the parish to other areas (links to item 4, above).	Within existing or grant funding	Youth and Community Manager / Community Development	Services
8	Neighbourhood Plan Review	Updated plan, reflecting current views	Updating the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the changes that have taken place since 2017, when the current plan was made. Work has started on this with consultants, but further work to undertake over the coming year.	£15,000 budgeted for the coming year	Council Manager	Planning
9	Environmental, biodiversity and carbon neutrality plan	To have an extended, considered and long term plan for the approaches that WCC will take around the 'green' agenda, including carbon neutrality, biodiversity and other environmental initiatives.	The Green Initiatives Working Group (GIWG) to continue the work in this area, building upon the initial document provided via Operations Committee. To include a wider approach, covering issues broader than the 'biodiversity' focus provided to this point, and linking to service delivery, investment and procurement, policy, practice and any funding / grant applications May link in with external partners (e.g. Donut Economics, Open University) for support and further applications to the Carbon Neutrality Fund and other grant givers for additional infrastructure projects.	TBC	Council Manager Environment Team Green Working Group	Operations, but links to all.
10	New community space on Peartree Bridge	Investigate the potential and viability of provision of a community building on Peartree Bridge	To include potential use, costs, planning concerns, charitable status, funding bids, etc. with a view to being able to make a considered and evidence based decision on whether another building is needed, wanted, going to be suitable, etc.	Unclear at this point, but officer / councillor time in the first instance	Council Manager / PB councillors	Operations
11	Lease agreements, asset transfers and long term plans	Ensuring that robust, timely and manageable agreements are in place for all buildings / resources	Working with MKCC and others to clarify ownership / management of community buildings and spaces, ensuring suitable investment and management in place and ensuring best value for residents. The initial focus on Eaglestone Activity Centre (currently no formal agreement in place), and the 95 – 99 Jonathans terrace, with a view to asset transfer to ensure long term provision of youth / community initiatives. This will enable investment in solar, sustainable building models, long term investment	Some legal costs may be needed, but limited (usually around £2k per lease, where needed)/ Longer term investment planning	Council Manager / Estates Manager	Full Council

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2024/25

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Committee responsible
			strategies and income / expenditure balance, whilst ensuring access to suitable spaces and resources across the parish.	to come at a later stage.		
12	Local Government Award Scheme	Continue to evidence the benefits of the work undertaken by WCC.	Build upon the initial achievement of Foundation Quality Council, continue to develop, with work towards Silver accreditation (following a change in the scheme) with the associated work needed to evidence the way that council consults with and engages with local residents and the wider community.	£100 submission fee for the silver award	Council Manager	Full Council
13	Healthy food initiatives	Broaden the food offer and consider health impacts linking to healthier communities	Within the cafes, youth provision, events and other places where food is offered, look at alternative options (e.g. culturally diverse, vegan / vegetarian, etc.) and the balance of food offered, especially around healthy foodstuffs. To be balanced alongside the use of donations and ensuring that it remains enticing and enjoyable.	Within existing budgets and donation costs	Food Coordinator	Services
14	Cycle Culture	Cycling initiative to encourage more use of bikes and sustainable transport.	Building on the work undertaken in 2024, inclusion of the 'Wheelie Big Picnic' in the annual events calendar and continuing to investigate opportunities to support skills development, cycling infrastructure and sustainable transport approaches.	Within existing	Youth and Community Manager	Services
15	Living Archive and Arts & Heritage Trails	Building on the existing 'Love Exploring' trail, celebrating the arts and heritage of the parish	After initial work leading to the Tinkers and Netherfield Trail, celebrating the 'street art' and other community installations, the 50th Anniversary year is a really good time to launch this for the whole parish and build further options. • Look at our existing art and repair as necessary. • Get some new art onto the parish. • Document what we have, what's happened here, who has lived here and still does and what they have to say. • Develop the trails properly. • Work on the podcasting idea previously discussed.	Work with MKCC and others to create project and identify funding possibilities.	Youth and Community Manager	Services
16	Play Parks	To review all parks within the parish, identify urgent works and develop a collaborative approach with other stakeholders to improve them.	Refreshing play parks and looking at settings that are suitable for both younger children (e.g. under fives) and those with disabilities *as well as general use and spaces for older children*.	No specific funds attached.	Environment Team / Youth and Community Manager	Services / Planning
17	Food	Create a local 'street food' festival	Following positive responses to the idea of a food festival on parish, and with a link to the 'pride in place' theme and building aspiration within the locale, delivering a food festival, using local providers (e.g. RA's, faith groups, local producers) and building this into an event that includes a market of Woughton based creatives.	Space, officer time and potentially some funding for rental of some equipment.	Community Development / Youth and Community Manager	Services

Woughton Community Council Service Plan 2024/25

Item No	Description	Objective	Details and key issues	Approximate costings	Lead Officer/Member	Committee responsible
18	Advice and wellbeing	Development of new approaches and a more 'joined up' way of working	Making best use of staffing resources and partnerships, to develop group approaches, workshops, upskilling, careers fairs, etc with the aim of building resilience, personal development and happier, healthier communities. Working with community members to create activities and approaches that work for and with them.	Within existing model, with grant funding where appropriate.	Youth and Community Manager	Services

This programme of works should be considered as the 'base' from which work is undertaken. This doesn't mean that things not noted cannot be undertaken (there is a specific 'emerging priorities' line within the budget) but that these are the priorities for the council over the coming year (and in some cases, longer).

The plan will form the basis of work with officers (through 1:1 meetings, appraisals, etc.) and with councillors to focus the approach of the council and work to achieve the aspirations noted.

It is likely, as in previous years, that some items will be fully met, others will be discarded as priorities change, and some will be partially completed and roll over into future plans. This is not a 'score sheet' as such, but a direction of travel that provides the basis for service delivery.

This plan will be uploaded to the website, provided to all officers and councillors and forms part of any submission to external bodies, in terms of forward plans.