

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th January 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Jordan Coventry (Vice-Chair) Elina Apse, Jeanette Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Brian Hepburn, Ruth McMillan, Amber McQuillan, John Orr, Terri Parish, Liz Simpkins, Pam Wilson, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)

FC 153/23 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)

Cllr Luke Louis (personal)

Cllr Nick Scott (unwell)

Cllr Lauren Townsend (personal)

AGREED

FC 154/23 Declaration of interests:

There were no declarations of interests.

NOTED

FC 155/23 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12th December 2022 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

FC 156/23 Chair's Announcement(s):

The Chair informed the meeting that the Netherfield Community Café has gone live and was held between 2:30pm-4:30pm.

At the next Operations & Resources Committee meeting Cllr Paul Harvey from the Executive Committee of the B&MKALC and on the Larger Council's Committee on NALC will be in attendance to discuss the benefits of membership and to answer any questions.

NOTED

FC 157/23 Questions from the public:

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

FC 158/23 Ward Matters arising:

There were no ward matters arising.

NOTED

FC 159/23 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Amber McQuillan – Has been dealing with a lot of casework.

Cllr Donna Fuller – Has attended sessions on the Knife Angel situated outside the Stadium:MK, Milton Keynes City Council is tackling the cost of living crises with financial help from the government, there is an energy cost helpline, various schemes for residents in place, tenants complaining about the portal on the Milton Keynes City Council website when reporting any issues, as their email goes to Serco and not Mears who are meant to deal with any matters, let Councillors know if any Member knows of anyone that needs help with anything, fed back that the Loan Sharks campaign's timing was late as residents had already taken loans out for Christmas, written to the Environment Director about flying tipping that still had not been removed, training to take place soon on the rolling out of the new recycling bins scheme, meeting to take place soon on Netherfield and will be engaging the Members of the ward, the new Community Café starts next Monday with Mears in attendance.

NOTED

FC 160/23 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse** – No report.
- b) MKALC – **Cllr Sue Smith, Cllr Pam Wilson** – No report, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st February.
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith** – No report, the next meeting will be held in March.

NOTED

FC 161/23 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

- a) Operations & Resources - Monday 21st November 2022.
- b) Services & Communities – Wednesday 23rd November 2022.
- c) Planning, Licencing & Development – Monday 5th December 2022.

NOTED

FC 162/23 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager said that he has mainly been dealing with the work on the draft 2023/2024 budget, the warm spaces sessions and committee work.

NOTED

FC 163/23 To provide an update on the proposed budget and precept setting for 2023/2024:

The meeting discussed at length the proposed budget, precept rise, and the need to look at future budget pressures and efficiencies.

RESOLVED

1. That Council agrees to the proposed 2023/2024 budget as presented in the spread sheet.
2. That Council agrees to a 5% rise in the precept.

3. That Council when preparing for the 2024/2025 budget looks at potential efficiencies.

FC 164/23 To begin preparations for the May 2023 local council elections:

Local elections are taking place in May 2023, with all Woughton Community Council seats up for election, as well as one of the Woughton and Fishermead Ward Councillor seats.

This will be the first elections held following the implementation of the new voter ID laws, requiring people to have suitable ID prior to being able to vote. It is suggested that wards such as Woughton are more likely to have people without suitable ID, due to the financial costs of such ID. As noted in Milton Keynes City Council Councillor News:

'Voters who do not have suitable ID will be able to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC). We understand that the national application portal will open from mid-January.'

It is suggested that Woughton Community Council, as the council closest to the residents of the area, should support any publicity around access to the Voter Authority Certificates, to help ensure all residents are able to be part of the democratic process.

In addition, Woughton Community Council currently has a vacancy, and it is possible that other vacancies will arise between now and May. Engaging residents in standing as councillors is also something that helps promote the importance of the 'local council' sector and democracy more widely, as well as ensuring that there is an 'election' – a choice being made by residents.

It is proposed that council agrees to both officers and any councillors who would like to, be supported to promote local elections, promote standing as a candidate, support the delivery of publicity and events to enable people to understand better and to offer advice / support to any potential candidates, whilst offering no preference (by officers). This can include, but not be limited to:

- Website page(s) – NB there is already a 'become a councillor' page
- Social media postings, either with Woughton Community Council resources, or sharing those produced by NALC, LGA or similar.
- Face to face and online engagement events, with current councillors and / or officers offering space and time for people to ask questions, get a feel for what it means to be a councillor and sell the value of local government and the impact people can make as councillors.

There will be requests for community centres on Thursday 4th May, which will impact on other delivery – community café in Coffee Hall, youth provision in Eaglestone, etc. It is proposed that this date is 'blanked out' for polling stations and that other provision is 'on hold' for the day.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council considers the report.**
- 2. That council considers an approach to the elections, specifically:**

- a. That officer and councillors are committed to engaging potential new candidates.
 - b. That council considers this to be part of the role of key officers over the next few months and enables resources to be utilised towards this aim (i.e. social media, website, community engagement, etc.)
 - c. That councillors can agree to be part of engagement and information events for potential new councillors, offering a councillor perspective, advice and support.
3. That council agrees to promote any campaigns relating to voter ID, to ensure that as many residents as possible can be part of the democratic process.
 4. That council agrees to prioritise polling stations within community buildings on election day (Thursday 4th May).

FC 165/23 To provide the current proposed Service Plan items to council for consideration, agreement, or addition:

Council considered the current proposed Service Plan items for consideration, agreement, or addition.

After some discussion it was felt that this agenda item should be deferred until after the working group looked into the service plan and comes back with any recommendations.

Members are encouraged to submit any other ideas.

NOTED

FC 166/23 To update and encourage involvement from councillors in non-statutory groups, events and activities:

Alongside the four regular public meetings (Full Council and the three (3) committees), there are also a range of other forums that councillors may wish to be involved in. This includes:

- The 'deep dives' into the different areas within the council.
- The 'Task and Finish' groups relating to Sustainability and the Environment, Long term planning, Neighbourhood Plan review, etc.
- Activities relating to the 'Winter Programme'

It appears that the best times for these sessions are Wednesdays, preferably prior to the Services & Communities Committee.

The 'Deep Dives' include ongoing discussions that started before Christmas about the youth service (this group is already in place) and the initial date for the Landscaping Service, this is set for Wednesday 1st February, with a follow up booked two weeks later (Wednesday 15th February), it is likely that each 'deep dive' will take more than one session.

It is recommended that the next sessions are:

- Environmental Services (first session – Wednesday 22nd February)

- Advice and Wellbeing (first session Wednesday 22nd March)
- Community Food (first session Wednesday 19th April)

If agreed, Community Centre provision will be arranged for early in the new council year in May 2023. Dates will be agreed once the new calendar is in place.

If additional sessions are needed, these will be agreed by participants.

In addition to these 'deep dives', 2022 saw the start of work towards a long term plan. This group met on a few occasions, but there was limited output from these sessions. These sessions have led to the 'deep dive' approach and council may wish to consider whether this process should conclude prior to any further work on long term planning. The Council Manager would recommend that there is ongoing work towards the Long Term Plan, even whilst the deep dives continue, but is aware that this is an additional time commitment which may be too much. This is especially true if work on the sustainability plan and a neighbourhood plan review also take place.

There is a need for priorities to be agreed, focusing on what is considered most pressing.

There is also a need for clear membership to be agreed, to avoid these groups becoming too unwieldy. A group of around 6 to 8 Members is ideal, including both councillors and officers. To this end, councillors interested in being part of any of the above groups should let the Council Manager know and membership can be confirmed.

There is also a need for Council to consider membership of the planned Estate Renewal Forum. This is an Milton Keynes City Council led project, focusing on how communities across the area can be supported to improve and develop their estates and communities. Whilst 'renewal' sits under the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee terms of reference, given the significance of this proposal, a whole council approach may be beneficial.

RESOLVED

1. That council notes the report.
2. That councillors consider involvement in the various groups and activities.
3. That councillors inform the relevant officers if interested, to ensure sufficient numbers.
4. That the list of dates and times of the groups to be circulated when the calendar is produced for the new council Year.
5. That the Council Manager to provide a list of the groups to Cllr Amber McQuillan.

FC 167/23 To update council on a planning application (22/01877/FUL new dwelling on Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge) with a recommendation to take to Milton Keynes City Council's Development Control Committee (DCC) or, if necessary, to appeal to the Secretary of State:

There was a recent planning application to build upon the garden of 4, Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge. This was discussed at the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee and objections were submitted to the Milton Keynes City

Council Development Control Directorate. Following this, the process was extended by Milton Keynes City Council for the applicant, allowing further submissions and additional information being provided. Woughton Community Council and other relevant parties were not informed of these additions and, when challenged, the Planning Team suggested that they were not 'material' changes.

The planning application has been permitted.

The residents locally as well as the Chair of Planning, Licencing & Development Committee and others have suggested that this decision is incorrect and that further steps should be taken to challenge this. The Council Manager has written to the Development Control Directorate on several occasions asking for clarity around next steps, and has been told that there is no appeal process, other than a judicial review.

Objections remain from the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service, Milton Keynes City Council Flood Team, Anglian Water, etc. as well as a noise assessment that has been flawed by virtue of a closed Groveway.

It is recommended that, in lieu of a Planning, Licencing & Development Committee meeting happening within the next few weeks, that this council agrees to the proposal that the Council Manager, on behalf of the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee and therefore, on behalf of Woughton Community Council, pursues further avenues for appeal, including referral to the Development Control Committee or other steps necessary. If there is any financial cost for action (e.g. if a judicial review is necessary), a proposal will come back to council for agreement.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council notes the report.**
- 2. That council agrees to pursue available options relating to challenging the decision.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 13th February 2023, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, the Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:43PM

Chair _____ Date _____