

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**To: All members of Woughton Community Council**

**Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Nick Scott (Vice-Chair)**, Eamonn Bobey, Janette Bobey, Tony Coughlan, Margaret Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Penny Glasgow, Michael Holland, Luke Louis, Charlie Marsh, Ruth McMillan, Deanna Norris, D'Anne Mordecai, April Rennie, Liz Simpkins, Lorna Webb, Alan Williamson

### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of Council to be held on **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024** commencing at **6:30pm** at the **Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG**, when the business set out in the following agenda will be transacted.

**Members of the public can attend in person, submit questions in advance and or watch live via [www.facebook.com/woughtoncc](http://www.facebook.com/woughtoncc).**

Steve McNay  
Council Manager

**Please ensure that your mobile phone and other electronic equipment is switched to silent or is switched off completely during the meeting.**

**Microphones are live at all times – if you are not speaking formally within the meeting, please do keep any additional noise to a minimum and be aware that anything said within this meeting will be in the public domain.**

**The Calendar of Meetings can be accessed at:**

**<https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meeting-calendar/>**

## **AGENDA**

### **FC 18/24 Apologies for Absence:**

To receive and record apologies from members.

### **FC 19/24 Declaration of interests:**

Under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, made under s30 (3) of the Localism Act, members must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting, and any additional interests not previously declared.

### **FC 20/24 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:**

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on:

- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**(Attached)**

### **FC 21/24 Chair's Announcement(s)**

### **FC 22/24 Questions from the public:**

To allow questions and comments from the public (maximum of 10 minutes in total).

### **FC 23/24 Ward Matters arising:**

Information from Members on ward matters for deliberation at future meetings:

### **FC 24/24 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:**

To give an opportunity to the Woughton & Fishermead Ward Councillors to verbally report to the meeting, on their ward activities and to raise any issues, along with their work on Milton Keynes Council and on its activities.

### **FC 25/24 Estate updates from councillors**

To give an opportunity to all councillors to provide a brief update on activities and issues from the estates they represent.

### **FC 26/24 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:**

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Maggie Ferguson**
- b) MKALC - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith**

**(Verbal reports)**

### **FC 27/24 To note the minutes from the following Committees:**

- a) Planning, Licencing & Development - Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- b) Operations & Resources - Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- c) Services & Communities - Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

**(Attached)**

### **FC 28/24 Council Manager's report:**

**(Report by the Council Manager attached)**

**FC 29/24 To propose committee membership for Clls. Marsh and Webb, following co-option at the previous meeting.**

For committee membership to be discussed, with formal proposals and ratification of any decision.

**FC 30/24 To propose a change of agenda item to promote time efficiency.**

Paper to discuss the proposal that the Estate Updates item on the agenda be modified to a 'sixty second update'.

**(Report by the Chair of Council attached)**

**FC 31/24 To inform the council of proposals and preparation for the Annual Meeting(s) in May**

Paper to explain agreements from Operations Committee around policy review, meeting format and engagement suggestions.

**(Report by the Council Manager attached)**

**FC 32/24 To update the council on the Neighbourhood Plan review**

Clarification of the current group, next steps and agreements in place.

**(Report by the Council Manager attached).**

**FC 33/24 To inform the council of the Quality Council scheme, expectations and standards needed, with a view to submission for the May 2024 round of assessment.**

**FC 34/24**

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, the Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

## Full Council

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes**

**Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Nick Scott (Vice-Chair),** Eamonn Bobey, Janette Bobey, Tony Coughlan, Maggie Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Michael Holland, Luke Louis, D'Anne Mordecai, Deanna Norris, Liz Simpkins, April Rennie, Alan Williamson.

**Also present:**

Steve McNay (Council Manager)  
Marta Sobis (Responsible Financial Officer)

**In attendance:**

Two (2) members of the public.

**FC 01/24 Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)  
Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)

**AGREED**

**FC 02/24 Declaration of interests:**

The were no declarations of interest

**NOTED**

**FC 03/24 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

**Proposed by Cllr Smith. Seconded by Cllr Scott. Unanimous vote to accept.**

**FC 04/24 Chair's Announcement(s)**

There is a 'Use it or lose it' campaign for local bus use, following the buyout of Arriva by another company.

Storms, winds and floods recently have not affected the parish too badly – some minor damage from winds, some minor flooding and one issue with more significant flooding from a burst water main (the Chair thanked the Landscape Team who assisted the resident in question).

Please can everyone report missed waste collections as the contractors don't appear to be catching all the issues.

Please also report pot holes as there is 'more money than pot holes' currently. It was noted that whilst size matters, depth is the key indicator for repair work.

Councillors were reminded that the leaving 'do' for Mr Brian Barton takes place on Friday evening.

**NOTED**

**FC 05/24 Questions from the public:**

There were a number of questions from the public that were presented by Cllr Holland, referring mainly to outstanding issues of public realm within the Eaglestone estate.

**NOTED**

**FC 06/24 Ward Matters arising:**

Cllr Simpkins requested clarity regarding the assisted collections scheme as several residents have experienced difficulties with where and when waste should be collected from.

The SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) work continues on Netherfield, but it was suggested that this was slower than anticipated and communication around the process has been poor at times.

**NOTED**

**FC 07/24 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:**

Cllrs Fuller and Smith updated council on activities and pressures. Potholes, housing, poverty, cost of living all relatively constant issues which are being dealt with. It was noted that there is some support available for people experiencing hardship, including owner occupiers – councillors and residents were encouraged to contact the Ward Councillors if necessary and that they will '*always find some money*'.

The recent period of cold weather has brought some of these issues to the fore, with heating costs being a major concern. The weather may also have delayed some of the SHDF work (noted above).

Cllrs requested that blocked drains be reported as we approach the key time for flooding, based on historic rainfall. Preventative work may help ensure that impact is kept to the minimum. Cllr Maggie Ferguson reported significant issues with a drain near the church on Broadlands which the ward councillors will investigate as remedial work appears to be of short term benefit.

**FC 08/24 Estate updates from councillors**

Following agreement at the previous meeting that space would be made on the agenda to enable 'estate updates', the following was stated from each estate:

Beanhill (Cllr Williamson) – reporting dog bin issues, waste and other issues which impact the estate.

Coffee Hall (Cllrs Scott, Norris, Fuller and Mordecai) – trees continue to be an issue, with Cllr Scott collecting information with a view to an estate wide approach. Lots of reporting of public realm issues (fly tipping, street furniture, etc). Cllr Norris was congratulated by Cllr Scott for the way she has approached being a councillor.

Eaglestone (Cllrs Holland, Simpkins, Louis and Coughlan) – Cllr Holland ran through a list of reports submitted, covering a range of public realm issues, including further attempts to address the flooding at the pond, as well as flytipping, litter, highways issues, etc. Cllr Simpkins said that it appears that the work needed on Harrier Court *may* be starting soon, as there is now a tender document and some residents moved out in preparation. This was welcomed.

Tinkers Bridge (Cllr Rennie) – an increase in fly tipping has been noted. There have also been a number of incidents of dogs off lead, which can cause anxiety. Cllr Rennie stated that residents have been good at reporting issues, which is a positive step. The Community Food projects continue to be very busy. Work to support vulnerable residents has provided some positive outcomes.

Netherfield (Clls Bobey, Bobey, Ferguson and Ferguson) – significant issues with waste bins in the park, following the removal of bins following allegations of vandalism. This has led to the only bins being those provided by the Residents Association, meaning that they are collecting, removing and disposing of significant amounts. Concerns about the disappearing footpaths and impact on people using them, with health and safety concerns. A further request for a schedule of works from SUEZ, the waste contractor which the Council Manager will try and obtain.

Peartree Bridge (Cllr Smith) – Replacement roof programme has restarted, with leaseholder properties now the focus. Canal and River Trust are planning a clear up along the length of the canal through the parish, which people may wish to get involved in.

**FC 09/24 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:**

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Maggie Ferguson – contact has been made and an annual meeting is being investigated.**
- b) MKALC - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith – Next meeting end of March and looking to get Highways involved.**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith – due on March, where the focus will be on buses and the Accessibility Fund.**

**FC 10/24 To note the minutes from the following Committees:**

- a) Planning, Licencing & Development - Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Williamson
- b) Operations & Resources - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Michael Ferguson

**Agreed**

**FC 11/24 Council Manager's report:**

The Council Manager explained that given the pressures of time and the relative lack of update, that this item was ignored. Weekly updates to councillors on Fridays and monthly updates via Facebook will cover all essentials.

**FC 12/24 To propose co-option of applicants to the two (2) vacancy Beanhill seats.**

Following a discussion prior to the meeting, the following was proposed and agreed:

- (a) That Lorna Webb is co-opted onto Council to represent Beanhill, and
- (b) that Charmain Marsh is co-opted onto Council to represent Beanhill.

There were two votes with the outcome of 12 in favour and 2 against for both.

**Proposed (via paper) and RESOLVED that Lorna Webb and Charmain Marsh are co-opted onto council.**

#### **FC 13/24 Budget and Precept for 2024/25.**

The Council Manager spoke to the paper written in partnership with the RFO and including feedback from discussions that have taken place over the past 4 – 5 months, especially within the Operations Committee. The changes that have been made were explained and, alongside explanations of deficits, reserves, impacts of inflation and the unknowns for the coming year. The real costs to residents were also detailed at each Council Tax band.

**Proposal (via paper) – that Council agrees to the budget, as detailed in the attached paper. 10 in favour, 4 against. RESOLVED**

It was acknowledged the budget will continue to evolve over the coming months, as further information and work around organisational efficiencies become clearer.

There was further discussion around precept levels, the importance of prudent fiscal management and the need to try and overcome some of the issues around low level increases during the current year, the impact of that in reserves and the need to be realistic about the coming year. The recommendation from the Council Manager, Responsible Finance Officer and the Operations Committee was a 15% precept increase, in line with the budget noted above.

**Proposal (via paper) – that Council agrees to a 15% precept increase for the 2024/25 financial year. 10 in favour, 4 against. RESOLVED**

Following the vote, Cllr J Bobey requested a further option be considered, but due to the vote having already taken place, further amendments were not possible under the Standing Orders.

#### **FC 14/24 Defibrillator subsidy paper.**

Following an application for a free defibrillator, the Council Manager reported that whilst this was not successful, that a 'half price' option was offered. This provided an option to provide a machine, with a heated cupboard, for £750 plus VAT, with an additional cost of installation (needs an electricity supply) or around £150 plus VAT. This equates to a cost of around £900 per site.

Council referred to previous discussions around defibrillators and a view that whilst there is a value in them, access, maintenance, distance, etc. are all barriers that mean that they can be limited in their value. There are around 10 machines within the parish, based at places such as schools, businesses and shops. Many of these are NOT accessible, due to opening hours. In addition, the issue of bleed kits was also noted – access to these is also helpful, but there is currently no national 'map' of these, as there is with defibrillators.

As has previously been discussed, provision of First Aid training was felt to be important, as this covers a wider range of situations.

**Proposal from Cllr Scott, seconded by Cllr Norris that:**

***‘Woughton Community Council provides first aid training across the parish, to those within their communities’.***

**RESOLVED – Unanimous.**

#### **FC15/24 Waste Services update – December 24.**

The Council Manager spoke to the presentation that was included within the paper pack for this meeting, covering waste, recycling, street cleaning, landscaping, play parks and cemeteries.

There were concerns that the presentation was not representative of the experiences of those in the room, with a level of missed collections that didn't feel aligned to the report. Similarly, issues around assisted collections were noted.

As a result of these views, the report encouraged all councillors, residents and officers to report any issues, using the online portal where possible, so that the contractors and MKCC are able to address any issues, have a full understanding of the situation on the ground and reports reflect this situation.

**NOTED**

#### **FC16/24 External training options.**

The Council Manager presented two training offers:

Modern Slavery, offered by DWP via an online portal and

Bystander Intervention Training, offered through MKCC via online presentations and videos.

Community Speedwatch training was also mentioned – this is going to Services in February, including information about requesting 20mph limits.

Cllr Scott stated that he has undertaken the Bystander training and had found it very useful and encouraged others to take part, especially as it is free. The Council Manager suggested that he could arrange sessions that could take place in Chambers where they could be undertaken together.

**Proposal (via paper) – that councillors consider whether the training is suitable and relevant for them and / or officers of the council and that the Council Manager arranges sessions in Chambers if suitable numbers are interested.**

**RESOLVED – Unanimous**

#### **Date of next meeting:**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 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 7:56PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Woughton Community Council

### Planning, Licensing & Development Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.**

**Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Donna Fuller, Deanne Norris, April Rennie, Alan Williamson.**

**Also present:**

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer).  
Steve McNay (Council Manager).

**In attendance:**

Cllr Michael Holland.

**Also in attendance:**

Two (2) members of the public.

**LD 107/24 Apologies:**

Cllr Eamonn Bobey (meeting)  
Cllr Janette Bobey (meeting)  
Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)  
Cllr Luke Louis (work commitment)  
Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)

**AGREED**

**LD 108/24 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED**

**LD 109/24 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):**

**Application no:** 23/01985/FUL

**Proposal:** Erection of five dwellings

**At:** 4, Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3AB

A member of the public spoke on the above planning application.

Access road is an unadopted highway even though the Highways Department at Milton Keynes City Council placed an objection, Milton Keynes City Council also claim access is not a material consideration as it is a private road. Emergency vehicles would not be able go down as the road is too narrow, refuse vehicles cannot

enter due to their size, and the top of the access road would be too far away for residents to leave their refuse. There is no pathway and street lighting for the safe use by pedestrians and so is a health and safety matter. The access road is too narrow with no turning circle, Milton Keynes City Council claim there will be enough parking spaces available according to their parking standards requirements. There is also a blind bend.

Milton Keynes City Council's Environmental Health Directorate have placed an objection regarding the noise survey undertaken, it needs to be brought to their attention that the survey was taken behind road way sound barriers.

Two (2) trees have tree preservation orders, which the applicant wants removing with all the trees on the canal side.

Milton Keynes City Council has indicated that the leylandii can be removed, even though there is evidence of bats there and makes a noise barrier. A tree shade plan has not been provided. There are concerns to the habitat with the proposed removal of the trees. The report provided by the applicant's environmental consultants highlights the loss of habitats and trees. Planning law dictates that any planning application should prove that there will be an improvement to the biodiversity, but will be in this case a net loss, even Milton Keynes City Council's ecologically officer suggests that the report is not fit for purpose and that the planning application should be withdrawn.

Anglian Water and the Rivers & Canal Trust have indicated that they will place an objection.

Residents of Marshworth and Holmfield Close feel this planning application is detrimental to the area.

**NOTED**

**LD 110/24 Chairs announcements:**

The craft club sessions have moved to Monday mornings.

This is the last meeting for the Committee & Member Services Officer, the Council Manager has already circulated an email inviting officers and councillors to a farewell event.

It is blue bins week; sacks are only provided to allocated residents.

**NOTED**

**LD 111/24 Minutes of previous meetings:**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

**LD 112/24 To agree submissions to Milton Keynes City Council on the Planning Application(s) received:**

**a) Application no:** 23/01988/FUL

**Proposal:** Construction of a new self-contained classroom, located at the rear of the existing building.

**At:** Cottisloe Building, Milton Keynes College, Woughton Campus, Chaffron Way, V6 To V7 Milton Keynes, MK6 5LP.

**RESOLVED**

**That the committee has no objections to this planning application.**

**b) Application no:** 23/02683/DISCON

**Proposal:** Approval of details required by conditions 3 (Surface Water Drainage Scheme) and 11 (Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme) and part discharge of condition 9 (Lighting Plan) of permission ref. 22/01498/FUL

**At:** St Pauls Catholic School, Phoenix Drive, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EN.

**RESOLVED**

**That the committee has no observations to make on these conditions to the planning application.**

**LD 113/24 To update the committee on any planning concerns:**

**Application no:** 23/02654/NMA

Milton Keynes City Council, under their powers provided by the above legislation, **Permit** the Non-material amendment seeking amendments to the Proposed Site Layout Plan and Landscape Masterplan approved via condition 1 and the Drainage General Layout Plan approved via condition 10 (relating to permission ref.

22/03184/FULM variation of condition 1 (approved plans) seeking minor amendments to permission ref. 22/00809/FUL - erection of a new radiotherapy centre)

**At:** Milton Keynes University Hospital, Standing Way, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD

**Application no:** 23/02515/DISCON

Milton Keynes City Council, under their powers provided by the above legislation, **approve** the Approval of details required by condition 7 (Bicycle Parking) of permission ref. 23/00242/COU

**At:** Unit 3, Merton Drive, Redmoor, Milton Keynes (Tesla)

**PLANNING ENFORCEMENT ENQUIRY**

12, Squires Close, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5HE

Having investigated this matter and undertaken a site visit the planning enforcement officer can confirm that the property has permitted development rights.

Having assessed the carport which falls under the category of Part 1, Class E, Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order, it was found that the carport is not on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation and would not require planning permission as it is permitted development.

Accordingly no breach of planning control and this case has been closed.

Unit 1, Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 1LA

Having investigated this matter the planning enforcement officer confirmed that the unauthorised scrap metal business has been in use since 2010 by Zimcraft at this location (for the requisite 4/10 years) and is immune from formal enforcement action.

Accordingly, in relation to S171 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, no enforcement action can be taken and this case has been closed.

**RESOLVED**

**That the committee notes the report.**

**LD 114/24 Responses to previous planning applications:**

**Application no:** 23/02549/FUL

**Proposal:** Proposed demolition of existing store and construction of a retail unit  
At: Former Milton Keynes City Council, Landscape Store, Chadds Lane, Peartree Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3EB.

**Response letter has been submitted to Milton Keynes City Council's Development Control Directorate.**

**NOTED**

**LD 115/24 To update the committee on the following planning application:**

**Application no:** 23/01985/FUL

**Proposal:** Erection of five dwellings

**At:** 4, Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3AB

It was pointed out to the meeting that there now does appear to be a proposal for the provision for electric vehicle charging points.

The meeting supported the residents in requesting to call in this planning application.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the council notes the report and associated documents.**
- 2. That the council supports the residents in requesting to call in this planning application.**
- 3. That council supports the residents objections, which will be passed to the planning authority by the Council Manager by the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

**LD 116/24 To consider licensing application(s), and to agree any submissions:**

Street Trading Consent Renewal - Max Kebab - Trading At Barnfield Drive Netherfield – 132881.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**

**Street Trading Consent – Renewal**

Renewal application received on the 12/12/23

To sell: Hot takeaway food

**Monday – Sunday**

**Hours applied for  
16:30 – 22:30**

Street Trading Consent New - Royal Taste of Pak, Woodley Head, Peartree Bridge, ref 168740

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**

**Street Trading Consent – New**

Received an application on the 19 December 2023 from the above.

To sell: Hot takeaway food.

**Hours being applied for are**

**Monday - Sunday 17:00 – 20:00**

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee has no objections to the licencing applications.**
- 3. That the committee seeks assurances that the Royal Taste of Pak will not block access to the car park during trading hours on Peartree Bridge.**

**LD 117/24 To inform the committee relating to a consultation about Areas of Attractive Landscape (AAL's):**

As part of this study for the New City Plan, Land Use Consultants acting on behalf of Milton Keynes City Council are looking to arrange an online workshop to collect the views of key stakeholders around the aspects people value about Milton Keynes's local landscapes.

This workshop is provisionally set for the **evening of Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024**. Further information about this workshop and joining instructions will be circulated in the new year.

**RESOLVED**

**That councillors who may be interested in this event put a placeholder in calendars for the relevant date and time.**

**LD 118/24 To update the committee on the Neighbourhood Plan project, working group membership, and work stream proposals:**

Following the agreement to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan renewal and the confirmation of both funding and access to technical support from the Locality programme, membership of the working group to progress this work was agreed at the recent Full Council meeting. Cllr Sue Smith will Chair the working group.

The meeting agreed to add Cllr Donna Fuller as a member onto the working group.

The Working group will meet for the first time at the end of January 2024.

The new group will need to look in the first meeting at developing Term of Reference for the group, alongside appointing suitable Chair / Vice Chair roles. It is advised that these roles include at least one (1) elected member. An annual meeting schedule should also be considered, working to develop a calendar that enables as many as possible to play a part within the group – this may include both daytime and evening sessions. It is also recommended that the group proposes any budgetary needs that they may have (e.g. travel support, refreshments, secretariat, resources, etc.) to enable this to be included in any budget creation within the council, prior to the start of the new financial year.

Looking at the information sheets from O'Neil Homer, there is a focus on both reviewing existing and creating new policies to sit within the new plan. Some existing

policies need little or no adjustment, with others needing some changes, following the review that took place earlier this year.

In terms of new policies, the suggested elements for inclusion are around communications infrastructure, and 'renewable energy' – this is an area that sits within a broader piece of work that is looking more broadly at the 'green' agenda – sustainability, environment, biodiversity and so on. Given this, it is recommended that this working group may be well placed to undertake some of the initial work around this element of the Neighbourhood Plan, returning to the Neighbourhood Plan working Group with findings.

The other issue is that of technical support. As noted in the supporting papers, Oneil Homer have encouraged the group to access the technical support elements for two (2) key issues - Design Coding and Housing Needs Assessment. The latter of these has already been applied for and agreed to.

As previously noted, there will be a demand for officer support, which has become more pressing following the resignation of the Committee & Member Services Officer. Whilst the Council Manager is eager to be involved and support where possible, it is essential that the group understands that they will be responsible for much of the day-to-day administration of the group, with support on an 'as and when' basis.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report and supporting papers.**
- 2. That the committee notes the current membership of the working group and the proposed days for meetings.**
- 3. That the working group agrees to a date to meet, where Terms of Reference, Lead Roles (Chair / Vice Chair) and a meeting schedule can be agreed.**
- 4. That the committee agree to a programme of works, including the 'technical support' programmes, as detailed in the attached papers from O'Neil Homer.**
- 5. To add Cllr Donna Fuller as a member onto the working group.**

#### **LD 119/24 To update the committee on the yellow line request process:**

From 1 January 2024 Milton Keynes City Council are changing how they accept requests for double yellow lines.

Before double yellow lines may be installed, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) must be enacted so that any enforcement may legally take place. The legal process to create a TRO can take several months, especially if there are objections to the proposals, and includes formal and informal consultation periods.

The proposals must also be publicised in the Public Notices section of the local newspaper which costs Milton Keynes City Council to advertise.

A significant number of proposals do not move past the initial informal consultation stage due to a lack of community support for a scheme.

Parish, community and town councils will have more input to the initial engagement process for their own areas.

Support and guidance will be provided by the Highways Liaison Team and a toolkit will be available on the Milton Keynes City Council website including draft text to use to communicate any potential scheme, and there are many online survey tools available for free.

Information about parking enforcement including obstructive parking, double yellow lines and commercial vehicles parked in a residential area, can be found on the Milton Keynes City Council website.

**RESOLVED**

**That the committee notes the report and supporting documents.**

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Local Centre, Council Chambers, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:20PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Woughton Community Council**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.**

**Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Liz Simpkins (Vice-Chair), Eamonn Bobey, Luke Louis, April Rennie, Tony Coughlan, D'Anne Mordecai, Deanna Norris, Alan Williamson**

**Also present:**

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

Marta Sobis (Responsible Financial Officer)

**OC 73/24 Apologies:**

Cllr Donna Fuller (Other commitment)

Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)

**All agreed and accepted.**

**OC 74/24 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED**

**OC 75/24 Chairs Announcements:**

Chair noted one mistake within the agenda (OC 78/24 has an incorrect name) and assured the meeting this would be corrected in the meeting and minutes.

Chair also reminded everyone that the waste collections return no normal this week – bin days is now back to Tuesdays for the remainder of the year,

**OC 76/24 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):**

No questions received.

**OC 77/24 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

**Proposed: Cllr Smith. Seconded: Eamonn Bobey.**

**OC 78/24 To inform the committee of a change of officer at Milton Keynes City Council and updated details within the Safeguarding policy:**

There are two new named individuals within MKCC with oversight of safeguarding issues, the two being Debbie Long and Kay Newnam. The policy has been updated and is available on the WCC Website.

**Noted**



**OC 79/24 To agree the List of Payments, Bank Reconciliations for the month of November and December 2023:**

The list of payments and bank reconciliation forms were provided for signature and agreed. There were only December 2023's to complete, as Novembers have previously been signed off.

**Noted**

**OC 80/24 Budget update, with revised figures following updated requests, information and staffing issues:**

The Council Manager explained that as the committee responsible for finance (although final budget and precept decisions must be made at Full Council), final budget sheets were provided for examination and questions. This included an updated 'Scribe' budget, reflecting the linkage to the accounting software, previously discussed and agreed.

Main changes are:

- small increase to events budget (reflecting both D Day and 50 Years of Woughton celebrations),
- additional monies within the IT budget, reflecting likely cost rises and replacement equipment,
- £1000 allocated in each of the following areas, reflecting previous discussions and agreements and a reality following recent floods and the need to replace equipment.
  - o Kevin Wilson Trust
  - o Memorial contingency
  - o Flood equipment replacement
- Some differences in the way that wages are coded within the Scribe sheet – whilst some roles cover several areas (e.g. Youth Manager also covers Safeguarding, which was coded to HQ), payments are made to one cost centre. Amounts remain the same, but coded slightly differently.
- An additional amount in both income and expenditure relating to community centre repairs (with a view that we bring in additional funding for this purpose).

These updates and budget also included a 15% precept increase, leading to a deficit budget of just over £40,000. It is expected that this will be reduced due to the staffing changes that have happened and are planned.

Questions were also asked and answered regarding LCTRS (Local Council Tax Revenue Support Grant), additional feedback from consultation, and inflationary considerations. Concerns about the impact of an increase on residents were also noted.

The following recommendations were proposed:

- 1. That the committee notes the report, associated budget, and changes.**
- 2. That the committee acknowledges the significant challenges that WCC faces this year and in coming years, especially if LCTRS is reduced or withdrawn.**
- 3. That the committee agrees to the recommendation of a minimum of 15% precept increase for 2024/25.**

**4. That this recommendation is taken to Full Council for agreement on 29th January 2024, in line with legislation and to ensure timely submission of the precept request for.**

**Agreed – 9 in agreement and 1 abstention**

**OC 81/24 Review of charges for rental of community venues:**

The RFO explained that the charges for community centre rental were required annually and had been flagged within the internal audit. Following research and comparison with similar centres in other parishes, the charges were broadly comparable, even with centres that provided additional resources / better parking / newer buildings / etc.

The resident rates were questioned, as there was concern that neighbouring parishes were offering lower rates. Simpson and Ashland do offer rates at £12.50 per hour for the village hall. The residents of Woughton can have a 'party rate' of £50 for 5 hours – equivalent to £10 per hour, however the basic resident rate is higher at £15 per hour. The Council Manager will double check to ensure that the 'party rate' is advertised on the website.

There were also queries and comments around charity rates and that some charities could afford the basic rate. Some additional work can be undertaken to look at whether an assessment of income and differing levels of charity rates may be implementable.

Further discussions took place around how to increase usage, with an acceptance that the buildings are in need of work, that some have issues around parking and placement and that a 'working party' to explore options would be a helpful approach. It was also agreed that

A new proposal was put to the meeting:

- 1. That charges will be held at current levels until July 2024.**
- 2. That work will be undertaken to investigate rates, increasing bookings, repairs and maintenance and long-term proposals, with a further paper provided to this committee in July 2024.**

**Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith  
– unanimous.**

**Seconded: Cllr Alan Williamson**

**Resolved**

**OC 82/24 Terms of Reference for Incident Plan update working group:**

The initial proposal around guidance for the Incident Plan review were provided by the Council Manager. Except for the suggestion for estate-based groups (item D on the paper), they were considered to be a useful base from which to work, with item D to be reviewed by the group at first meeting.

Cllr Rennie requested that she be included within the working group, which was agreed.

Thanks were passed to the Landscape Team and other officers for the excellent response to an incident earlier this month where flooding placed residents houses at risk.

**Noted**

**OC 83/24 New NALC model contract – for information only:  
(Verbal report by the Council Manager & NALC model contract attached)**

The new 'model contract' was provided. Comments noted around the lack of inclusion for sustainable travel within the 'travel expenses' section and a view that the contract did not improve upon the current contracts and additional policy that WCC works within. However, committee members will, if they so choose, look further at the contract and pass comments to the Council Manager.

**Noted**

**OC 84/24 To move and second and then to be put to the vote the following motion:**

**Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

**That by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

Prior to the vote on this, the Council Manager provided a brief update on some changes that have been made to holiday entitlement and payments for part-time / occasional or part-year workers. These won't have a major impact on WCC but do affect bank caretakers and occasional workers within the youth service.

**The committee notes the HR updates – passed unanimously.**

**The vote was then taken and passed unanimously.**

**OC 85/24 To consider various HR matters:**

The Council Manager provided an update on the continuing work, following the resignations of officers and the reviewed structures and focus for the council. This work has included initial discussions with managers, a 'time and motion' study (which has been exceptionally useful) and will move towards a more concrete proposal for March 2024.

The Council Manager also updated on the Community Garden officer, funded via Big Lottery Fund, following queries previously around employment of another officer during the uncertainty. The Council Manager explained that this post was part of the agreement with Big Lottery Fund, that it would be 'cost neutral' (all relevant costs covered by the funding) and as such, it was recommended that this post be advertised with an aim to have in place for the start of the new council year.

Some further comments were made around the people that may be interested in the post and the Council Manager agreed that advertising at allotments, MK College, etc would help ensure a wide range of applicants.

The following proposals were made:

- 1. That the committee agrees to continued work with managers and others around the proposed new model, with definitive costings and a proposed model to return to this committee in March.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to the Council Manager advertising for a part time Community Garden Officer, in line with the grant agreement, on the understanding that the wage costs associated will be fully covered by the BLF grant.**

**Resolved - unanimous.**

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.55 PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **Woughton Community Council**

### **Services & Communities Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm  
Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber,  
60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.**

**Present: Cllrs Nick Scott (Chair), Janette Bobey (Vice-Chair), Eamonn Bobey, Deanna Norris, April Rennie, Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson.**

#### **Also present:**

Tash Darling (Youth Manager & Safeguarding Lead)  
Steve McNay (Council Manager)  
Sean Perry (Community Services Manager)

#### **SC 65/24 Apologies:**

- Cllr Liz Simpkins (personal commitment)
- Cllr Maggie Ferguson (unwell)
- Cllr Michael Ferguson (unwell)
- Cllr Donna Fuller and Cllr Sue Smith (another meeting)
- Cllr D'Anne Mordecai (personal)
- Cllr Penny Glasgow (illness)
- Cllr Ruth McMillan (illness)

**AGREED**

#### **SC 66/24 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest

**Noted**

#### **SC 67/24 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):**

There were no questions received.

**Noted**

#### **SC 68/24 Chairs announcements:**

To receive announcements from the Chair.

- Reminder that Mr Brian Barton has a leaving do coming up – card will be at FC next week and contributions welcome.
- Full Council is coming up on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> and this is where budgets and precepts are agreed, so please try and attend if at all possible.
- Storm season is here – the weekend was a bit squirly, but no serious damage that we know about. Storm Jocelyn is next – as usual, keep an eye on neighbours and take action to secure things, especially trampolines.

**RESOLVED - Noted**

#### **SC 69/24 Minutes of previous meetings:**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair

**RESOLVED - Proposed by Cllr Nick Scott, seconded by Cllr April Rennie**

**Communities and Environment Fund Application(s)**

**SC 70/24 Covid 19 Families UK:**

Application received for £1,000 towards various items requested for a National day of Covid remembrance Milton Keynes Memorial event to be held at Campbell Park.

*Lots of discussion, including concerns about the level of funding, number of applications outstanding with other parishes, danger of WCC funding to higher levels that they should and worries around ability to deliver an event with the timescales involved (6 weeks away).*

**RESOLVED - Proposal – Cllr Scott proposed a reduced amount of funding - £200. Seconded by Alan Williamson. Unanimous.**

**Reports**

**SC 71/24 To note the Southend Halloween, Fireworks & Festival held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Evaluation Form:**

£400 awarded towards coach hire costs. *Some additional feedback from Eamonn and Janette, reflecting on some challenges, but that all had a good time.*

**RESOLVED - NOTED**

**SC 72/24 To note the Moorfriends, trip to Twinlakes Theme Park on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023 – Evaluation Form:**

£1,050.00p awarded towards coach hire. *Some concerns expressed about the feedback form, with issues with the late submission (this was explained that the applicant was new, spent some time in hospital, etc.) of the form and no breakdown of the geographic breakdown of attendees. This was expressed as a concern that as Moorlands covers a wider catchment area, knowledge of where people came from in terms of the funding is requested for future events and that this is needed for future grant applications.*

*An additional point was made that the funding guidelines no longer state that WCC doesn't fund schools. This appears to have dropped off somehow and will be changed back.*

**RESOLVED - NOTED**

**SC 73/24 To update the committee on the early use of the CCTV cameras and proposal to move one of the CCTV cameras to Tinkers Bridge.**

*Lots of discussion around the benefits or otherwise of CCTV use, with general view that they bring additional benefits and that a move to Tinkers Bridge would be sensible, to address the concerns noted around habitual dog poo leavers.*

**RESOLVED Proposal (via paper) – to move camera from Coffee Hall to Tinkers Bridge – unanimous**

**SC 74/24 To update the committee on event planning for the coming year and request information about preferences for activities and inclusion, plus feedback regarding December events.**

**Proposal (via paper) that:**

*Committee agrees to initial funding of £2000 for D Day*

*Committee agrees to initial funding of £8000 for Woughton is 50*

**RESOLVED Unanimous.**

*There was some discussion around Commonwealth Day? 11<sup>th</sup> March – suggestion can we engage with community members to get them involved and potentially have some food from around the commonwealth. No formal proposals.*

**SC 75/24 To propose investigation of speed camera training for residents**

*There has been discussion over several years around Speed camera use / Community Speedwatch. Investigate options and whether there is anything that can be done. Paper to come to this committee covering costs, expectations, etc. Also look at the concerns that residents may be targets if they are part of this project.*

*A request was also made to also include 20mph zone application rules and how to apply for them.*

*Suggestion was that TVP should also be part of the speedwatch programme too.*

**RESOLVED Proposed by NS – That the Council Manager provide details of Speedwatch programme and training, and how to apply for 20mph zone to this committee. Unanimous**

**SC 76/24 To have an initial discussion regarding a Service Plan for 2024/25**

*Whilst no formal ideas were proposed, a suggestion was made that committee and the wider council use the old service plans as a base from which to work – the Council Manager agreed to send round some links.*

*Committee agreed that over the next few meetings, to consider and submit ideas towards a service plan.*

*NB Previous Service Plans can be found at <https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/services/service-plan/>*

**RESOLVED – Noted**

**SC 77/24 To update committee on the response to the bus service sponsorship requests**

*The Council Manager updated that as of today, no response have been received. They will send follow up letters now that the festive period is finished.*

**RESOLVED - Noted**

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:33PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*Full Council – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

*Agenda Item FC 28/24*

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update the Council on activities and delegated decisions since the last report.**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the council notes the report.
2. That the council notes the delegated decisions taken.

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

It has been a busy start to the year, with the usual budget / precept / service plan preparation as well as staffing issues, weather chaos and co-option of new councillors in the absence of a Committee and Member Services Officer. I have now also had a full month plus of 'Clerking' meetings, with all aspects of summoning, minuting, publishing and all the other jazz that goes alongside all falling within my remit now. There have also been some big juicy planning applications to deal with – some good outcomes on these (mostly). Whilst Woughton is unique as a council (and a parish), my role has felt more 'clerk' than previously, dealing with more traditional local council issues.

Marta and I have been reviewing some software options, with the current payroll / HR system being somewhat inflexible in its approaches – no options for part time workers, shared roles, annual leave management, etc. so a few alternatives have been investigated and it looks like Staffology is the preferred option (although the name is questionable). This will be included for the new council / financial year and should ensure both accurate reporting to Council and more effective management of HR and payroll services.

A number of grants have been submitted, with some successes already – the large grant towards the refurbishment of NFMP and the courts has been back and forth with the funders a few times, which suggests that this will be strongly considered. Due to hear about that in March. A very quick application for CCTV for all buildings was submitted to TVP and this has, this morning (19<sup>th</sup> Feb) been confirmed. This is just under £8,000 for Wi-Fi enabled CCTV to be installed at every building (all community centres, depot, Hub and No 95). Some others are in process and updates will be provided as and when known.

Linked to this is some possible partnership work – MK College may be involved with some refurbishment work at Eaglestone, with some additional elements offered via Place for People at Netherfield. This is all really helpful, given the massive quotes we are receiving for works in places - £27,500 to paint the squash courts was the most outrageous, but there are others that are equally high.

A group of officers, including me, attended the official launch of the 2024 Vital Signs report – this is the 'state of the city' report that is produced by the Community Foundation and makes for some interesting reading. The report was sent round via email and can be found on the Community Foundation website.



I have also had meetings with MKCC (councillors and officers) around possible options for increasing investment and action in the parish, specifically around things like planning, community resources and public realm. Whilst there are currently no specifics, some interesting ideas being proposed. This was followed by a meeting with Michael Bracey, Chief Exec of MKCC, who reiterated some of these ideas, encouraging WCC to be proactive and encourage appropriate development if / when it comes, alongside a number of other issues.

There was also a meeting with Cllr Marklew Wilson (Lead at MKCC for parishes), Kay Petit plus the Chair and Leader of WCC, to discuss the future of LCTRS. Whilst there is nothing guaranteed, there were very positive statements around the value of the work done by WCC, the importance of protecting that and that there will be some money, in whatever guise, to help continue that. I requested that if possible, a longer term 'settlement' be agreed, to enable suitable timescales for planning and preparing. As always where LCTRS is concerned, watch this space.

The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Practitioners Conference was the first 'in person' SLCC conference I have been to for a while and it was really useful. Some excellent sessions on business planning, project management, writing proposals and tenders, knife crime, AI – a diverse range of sessions, which with time to also network with other clerks and companies, meant it was a couple of days well spent.

We have also seen meetings of the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group, Incident Plan review group and the 'Green' Working group – all of these meetings have seen some positive first steps and provided a roadmap of sorts in terms of what needs to come next.

We also had Brian Bartons leaving do, where councillors, officers, volunteers and a previous Council Manager attended and presented Brian with an air-fryer, a 'Point' t-towel, a bottle of fizz and a card signed by dozens of people. I think that he was appreciative of the efforts made and has popped in a couple of times since to explain how hard it is doing nothing...

I have attended a few online events – managing grievance and disciplinaries, Martyns Law update, and a couple of online meetings of the NALC Larger Councils Committee, of which I am now an elected representative.

Alongside this, all the usual meetings which have seen some really positive resolutions made and passed by committees – this includes a start on working towards the Annual Meetings, a training calendar and the annual Service Plan, which was missed during the current year. There was also an update on Councillor Allowances at the recent Operations Meeting which may be of interest.

**Delegated decisions:**

- Catering for Brian's leaving do (approx. £150)
- New HR software (around £100 a month)
- Agreement to fix the heating in CHMP (if refused by MKCC) including some roof work (£1,000)

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## **Woughton Community Council**

Full Council - Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Agenda Item FC 30/24

### **Purpose of the report**

To update an Agenda item to make time efficiencies.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the council notes the report
2. That council agrees to rename the agenda item “sixty second estate update” and limit each estate to a maximum of a minute.

### **Main Issues and considerations**

Following the introduction of the ‘Estate Updates’ agenda item, this proposal is that, whilst council wants to have updates on each estate, this should not be at the risk of not having enough time for important and difficult decisions that need time allowed for debate.

This proposal is that we will have 1 member from each estate doing the update (switching councillors each time, unless only 1 member representing estate).

The update should include anything that would be useful for other councillors to hear - any issues that people are dealing with and any updates. Good news stories but limited to 60 seconds.

### **Staffing Implications**

None

### **Other implications**

None

### **Author**

Cllr Sue Smith.

# WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Agenda Item FC 31/24

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update council on preparations for the Annual Meetings, including a proposal to include greater engagement with residents.**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That council notes the report.
2. That councillors all consider involvement in the document and policy review that takes place each May.
3. That council notes the decision of Operations Committee to include some Neighbourhood Plan review engagement within the Annual Meeting evening.

## **MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Annual Meeting of the Council is due in May, with the date set as Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May (due to bank holiday). As part of this annual meeting, alongside elections for all the posts (Chair, Leader, Vice, committees, etc.), there is also a need to review a suite of policies, procedures and papers, as detailed in our Standing Orders.

This includes:

- Review of delegation arrangements
- Review of Terms of Reference for committees
- Appointment of members to such committees
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations\*
- Review of relationships with external bodies (including MKCC)
- Review of Asset register (see separate paper)\*
- Review and confirmation of insurance\*
- Review of all subscriptions and memberships\*
- Review of councillor allowances (see separate paper)
- Review of policies relating to:
  - o Complaints procedure (Comments, compliments and complaints)
  - o Data Protection (GDPR and Data Policy)
  - o Freedom of Information (Information Policy)
  - o Press / media relationships (Guidelines for broadcasting)
  - o Employment policies and procedures (many and varied – staff handbook is the ‘cover all’ and is due for a refresh. This is currently sitting with the HR provider).
- Calendar of meetings for the coming year

Those denoted with an asterix (\*) to be led by RFO. All others by Council Manager.

At the Operations Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> February, it was agreed that members of that committee would be involved in reviewing this policies, through use of a ‘shared folder’, where documents can sit and be edited / commented upon by a number of people. Given the nature of some of these documents,

members who don't sit on Operations may feel that the importance of these means that they would also like to comment – the link to the shared folder will be sent to ALL councillors for comments to be added if they so choose.

In addition, a further resolution was proposed and passed that, with an aim to engage more with residents as part of the annual meeting, that a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) engagement event would be included within the evening, with an aim to both engage people in early discussions around the NP but also potentially to have some wider discussion in line with other councils.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Operations Committee Minutes 12.02.24

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

# WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*Full Council – 26.02.24*

*Agenda Item FC 32/24*

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update council on Neighbourhood Plan review progress and plans**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That council notes this report
2. That councillors consider the current gaps in membership and consider suitable candidates
3. That councillors consider how they may want to engage with residents within their wards

## **MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) review has now started, with an agreed membership (albeit with some gaps). Initial plans have been agreed and ratified and a programme of works agreed. This includes a recommendation that WCC will receive the 'technical support' offered alongside the grant, covering the key areas of Housing Needs Assessment and Design Codes.

There has also been an engagement event at Beanhill, which has started the discussion on that estate. This wasn't a planned event but came about as part of the wider work happening with the engagement and co-option of new councillors. This was seen as a positive step and is potentially something that could be replicated in other areas. Cllr Smith will be able to give more detailed feedback on this.

The next step with O'Neil Homer, the consultants appointed, is to have a 'walkabout' to start the process, looking at the realities as opposed to the paper based version so far. From there, reviewing the relevant policies within the existing plan, looking at the additional elements and working to both engage and record the views of residents will be key.

As can be seen from the attached document, some of the existing elements remain 'as is', with others needing some modification and then some new elements altogether. Agreement from a core group as to meeting schedules, getting an annual plan in place and fitting the demands of this project around the already challenging meeting schedule will be important – as noted in a different paper at this meeting, an annual meeting plan should be agreed at the Annual Meeting – whilst this isn't a formal meeting, having this in mind when developing the calendar would be helpful.

In addition to the existing membership, there remain some gaps in terms of the community members. As was noted in the paper LD 118.24:

*Membership currently is:*

*Peartree Bridge  
Eaglestone  
Coffee Hall  
Leadenhall  
Beanhill  
Netherfield*

*Cllr Ruth McMillan – NB No RA in place.  
Cllr Liz Simpkins PLUS an RA representative  
Cllr Deanna Norris - NB No RA in place  
Cllr Penny Glasgow PLUS an RA representative  
Cllr Alan Williamson PLUS and RA representative  
Cllr Janette Bobey plus Eamonn Bobey (RA representative)*

*In addition to the members noted above, Cllr Sue Smith (Chair of WCC, Chair of Planning) will also sit on the group. There will also be support from O'Neil Homer (ONH) and officers from Woughton Community Council.*

*The Council Manager would encourage the group to look outside the 'usual suspects' and try and engage wider representation from across the communities. The list above includes councillors and ex councillors only and it is felt that others would be helpful to engage to get a fuller picture. Working groups are able to appoint anyone who would be useful to the group and the group is encouraged to do so.*

*The new group will need to look in the first meeting at developing Term of Reference for the group, alongside appointing suitable Chair / Vice Chair roles. It is advised that these roles include at least one elected member. An annual meeting schedule should also be considered, working to develop a calendar that enables as many as possible to play a part within the group – this may include both daytime and evening sessions. It is also recommended that the group proposes any budgetary needs that they may have (e.g. travel support, refreshments, secretariat, resources, etc.) to enable this to be included in any budget creation within the council, prior to the start of the new financial year.*

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Woughton NPR\_Scoping session revised schedule of draft policies\_Dec 23

#### **AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

# WOUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## DRAFT REVISED POLICIES AND ACTION PLAN (DECEMBER 2023)

### INTRODUCTION

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The table and schedule below reflects an analysis of made Woughton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2031 policies, including the content of the paper entitled “*Review of the Neighbourhood Plan – Update for Council – February 2023*”

The Steering Group (SG) will need to update the evidence bases for the draft revised/new policy ideas as set out in the action plan.

The next meeting of the Planning Committee (8<sup>th</sup> January) should consider the inclusion of the draft policies as set out below, **agree** the actions for the group in order to complete the review of policies, and **agree** the scope of the Local Centre Study, Renewable Energy Generation Study and the Infill Development Study ( included in the accompanying report entitled Woughton NPR Brief.)



K = Keep M = Modify D = Delete

New = New Policy Number

STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE							
MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
<b>DESIGN</b>							
WN1	DISTINCTIVE GRID SQUARES	Y	Y		<b>RETAIN</b> Group have suggested minor modification to amend final sentence.. <i>primary use of the relevant grid square</i> <b>without altering the road layout</b>	<b>ACTION 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Group to provide updated content for 3.5 – 3.7</li> <li>o Group to review heritage assets.</li> <li>o Suggested update may conflict with existing policy wording WN13. Group to review.</li> </ul> <b>NOTE:</b> ONH will update the 3.5 to reflect Plan MK Plan policies.	WN1
WN2	MEDICAL FACILITIES	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<b>ACTION 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Group to update evidence base to see if facilities are meeting the needs of residents now and in the future.</li> </ul> <b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.9 to reflect Plan MK policies	WN2
WN3	SELF-CONTAINED GRID SQUARES	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<b>ACTION 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Group to update evidence base to update narrative in 3.11-3.13</li> </ul>	WN3



**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
						<p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will update 3.11 to reflect Plan MK policies</p>	
WN4	GREEN GRID SQUARES	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<p><b>ACTION 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to review/update green infrastructure</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will update 3.14 to reflect Plan MK policies</p>	<b>WN4</b>
WN5	PLAY AND ACTIVITY AREAS	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<p><b>ACTION 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to review 3.21 which identifies facilities which should be retained or re-provided in the event of redevelopment.</li> <li>Is there an updated Woughton Play Area Study or is it still current as the evidence will help shape the work on infill opportunities"?</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will update 3.19 to reflect Plan MK policies</p>	<b>WN5</b>
WN6	LOCAL GREEN SPACES	Y	Y		<p><b>MODIFY</b></p> <p>The group have suggested removing Rectory Farm (query? designation is still active unless you wish to see</p>	<p><b>ACTION 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to review/update areas designated as Local Green Spaces and accompanying Annex D <i>(This will need to be completed</i></li> </ul>	<b>WN6</b>

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
					<p>this site developed) Please also note the term "very exceptional circumstances" is the most robust and provides protection at the same level as green belt.</p>	<p><i>prior to reviewing infill/redevelopment opportunities</i>)Group have identified the following, which will need to be mapped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To define the Tinkers Bridge park boundary.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To define the Eaglestone park boundary.</li> <li>• To add the park on Daniels Welch, Coffee Hall.</li> <li>• To add the skateboard park on Netherfield.</li> <li>• To add the Owl and Pussycat park on Netherfield.</li> <li>• To add the Village Green on Coffee Hall.</li> <li>• To add all community gardens along with their locations.</li> <li>• To add the Peartree Bridge Orchard.</li> <li>• To add the orchard sited between Farthing Grove and Broadlands on Netherfield at the Ashlands end.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Any landowners of <u>new proposed sites</u> will need to be informed.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will update policies following receipt of output from Action 6.</p>	
WN7	TREES IN THE PUBLIC REALM	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.24 to reflect updated MK Plan policies.</p>	<b>WN7</b>

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
WN8	COMMUNITY GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS	Y	Y		<p><b>RETAIN/MODIFY</b> Group have questioned whether the parking element of the policy is still current or should more sustainable approaches be encouraged?</p>	<p><b>ACTION 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to review if parking remains an essential element or whether other ancillary facilities should be identified.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update policy depending on outcome of action 7</p>	WN8
<b>HOUSING POLICIES</b>							
WN9	HOUSING DESIGN	Y	Y		<p><b>MODIFY</b> Group would like to remove references to cul-de-sacs. Add wording around type and location of tree planting, bends on developments and Pepperpotting of flats.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to consider applying to Locality for a Design Code (technical package from Locality) to help clarify and refine this policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update policy depending on outcome of action 8</p>	WN9
WN10	HOUSING MIX IN REGENERATION GRID SQUARES.	Y	Y		<p><b>MODIFY</b> Group would like to update policy to reflect current position, to read: <b>WN10 Housing Mix on Renewal Estates</b> – specifying Netherfield, Tinkers Bridge, Beanhill and Coffee Hall.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to consider applying to Locality for an updated Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) to confirm requirements detailed in policy are still correct. This will also provide useful detail for infill/local centres renewal evidence base.</li> </ul>	WN10

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
						<p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update policy depending on outcome of action 9</p>	
WN11	HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION	Y	Y		<p><b>MODIFY</b> Group would like to update policy to add: <b>“That housing should be provided for young people and those on low incomes”</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Group to review evidence of effectiveness of current policy.</li> <li>○ Please note that there is little evidence of any local or neighbourhood plan policies which make this provision for young people and low income earners for HMO, however the NPPF supports provision of housing for all and if the HNA is commissioned it is suggested that the plan looks in detail at this type of home and these categories of renters to see if the evidence can be compiled to make a case to include this wording.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.44 to reflect Plan MK updated policy and to update policy once HNA evidence available.</p>	WN11
<b>ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES</b>							
WN12	REDWAYS AND OTHER FOOTPATHS	Y			<p><b>RETAIN</b></p>	<p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.47 to reflect Plan MK updated policy.</p>	WN12

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
WN13	BUS ROUTES AND FACILITIES	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	<b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.50 to reflect Plan MK updated policy.	<b>WN13</b>
<b>BUSINESS AND RETAIL POLICIES</b>							
WN14	COMPETITIVE GRID SQUARES	Y	Y		<b>RETAIN</b>	<p><b>ACTION 11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group have requested consideration be made for those working from home, a policy to. Provide advice and signposting and provision for small business start ups. Suggest that this could be added to supporting text but as a policy may need to be considered more in respect of local centre renewal opportunities. (WN15)</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update 3.54 to reflect Plan MK updated policy.</p>	<b>WN14</b>
WN15	GRID SQUARE LOCAL CENTRES	Y	Y		<b>MODIFY</b> Please note hot food takeaway is now use class Sui Generis. Betting shops remain Sui Generis and as such both need full planning. Permission to be created.	<p><b>ACTION 12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to review proposed Local Centres Study as part of review. This is likely to result in further detail being added to this policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update supporting text 3.56 to reflect change of use class and 3.58 and 3.60 to reflect updated Plan MK policies.</p>	<b>WN15</b>

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
WN16	NETHERFIELD LOCAL CENTRE	Y	Y		<b>MODIFY</b>	<p><b>ACTION 13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy may also be modified to reflect the outcomes of the Local Centres Study.</li> </ul>	<b>WN16</b>
<b>SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES</b>							
WN17	EDUCATION FACILITIES AT LEADENHALL	Y	Y		<p><b>RETAIN/MODIFY</b></p> <p>The Group have suggested that the relocation of Milton Keynes College is now unlikely.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to update evidence base to consider whether to retain the element relating to the college.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update supporting text 3.63 to reflect updated Plan MK policies</p>	<b>WN17</b>
WN18	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	Y	Y		<p><b>RETAIN/MODIFY</b></p> <p>The Group have suggested that the relocation of Milton Keynes College is now unlikely.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group to update evidence base to consider whether to retain the element relating to the college.</li> <li>Group to review and update Appendix A.18.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH to update supporting text 3.65 to reflect updated Plan MK policies.</p>	<b>WN18</b>
WN19	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	Y			<b>RETAIN</b>	N/A	<b>WN19</b>

**STATUS OF PLAN POLICIES & PROPOSED REVISED POLICY SCHEDULE**

MADE POLICY DETAILS		K	M	D	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW
WN20	REGENERATION: REFURBISHED HOUSING			Y	<p><b>DELETE AND REPLACE</b></p> <p>The Group have indicated that this policy should be completely re-written and updated although the fundamentals of the overarching vision are retained: refurbishment will be supported and small scale, 'infill' housing is also supported, with provisos around green infrastructure, no loss of 'protected' green spaces and general protection of biodiversity.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Group to the confirm the scope of the infill opportunities study</li> <li>o Group to subsequently review the outputs of the study.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will then prepare a new WN20 Justification, Intent and Policy wording once the study has been completed.</p>	WN20

NEW POLICY IDEA	STRATEGIC POLICIES	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW POLICY NO.
RENEWABLE ENERGY	SC2 SC3  Wind Turbines SPD  Landscape sensitivity to Wind Turbine and Solar PV Development SPD.	<p>The Group have expressed a desire to create a policy which encourages low carbon and renewable energy generation.</p> <p>These may include PV, ground source heat pumps and wind turbines.</p> <p>It is noted that for wind power, proposals will only be granted (SC3 – D) where the proposed site is identified in a Neighbourhood Plan or other DPD and that the proposal has the backing of the community.</p>	<p><b>ACTION 17</b></p> <p>Group to approve the scope of the renewable energy regeneration study and review the outputs once completed.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will prepare WN21 Justification, Intent and Policy wording once the group has reviewed the study.</p>	WN21

NEW POLICY IDEA	STRATEGIC POLICIES	NOTES	ACTION PLAN	NEW POLICY NO.
COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE	CT9 D8  D7 Local Plan now deleted.	The Group have expressed a desire to create a policy which details how and where communications infrastructure may be installed	<p><b>ACTION 18</b></p> <p>Group to photo good and bad examples and also seek to include within Design Code work.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> ONH will prepare WN22 Justification, Intent and Policy wording once the group has reviewed the study.</p>	<b>WN22</b>

#### STEERING GROUP ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

##### ACTION 17

- o Approve the content of this note and make relevant preparations. Advise ONH of any changes to the proposals.

##### ACTION 18

- o Approve the scope of the studies relating to infill development, local centres renewal and renewable energy generation.

##### ACTION 19

- o Update the content of Annex A Profile of Woughton to reflect Census 2021 datasets.
- o Update Annex B with current Plan MK relevant local polices list.

##### ACTION 20

- o The SG should maintain a record of consultation (including correspondence with owners on matters such as Local Heritage Assets and Local Green Space for example) and collated in the final Consultation Statement that will be submitted with the Submission Neighbourhood Plan and other submission documents.

##### ACTION 21

- o Update the supporting narrative to the introduction and vision and objectives.





# WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*Full Council – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

*Agenda Item FC 33/24*

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: To inform council about the Quality Council Award Scheme, with a recommendation that a submission in May 2024 is made.**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That council notes this report and attached papers.
2. That council notes the evidence that is needed, the elements currently missing and works with officers to ensure all needed is in place.
3. That once all relevant documentation is in place, that a submission is made for accreditation, with an aim to submit for the May 2024 round of assessment.

## **MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The council has, for a number of years, been investigating the potential for registering and being accredited as a 'Quality Council' within the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS). This is the scheme managed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that aims to raise standards within the sector, through a defined set of criteria being met (see the attached 'Guide to the Local Council Award Scheme').

There is no legal standing to the scheme, but there is a view amongst some within the sector that being assessed and awarded suggests that the council is well managed. There are benefits to councillors, as allowances can be paid at a higher level for 'quality councils' (25% higher than the 'basic' allowance).

There are three levels of award:

- Foundation (basic coverage of legal compliance)
- Quality Award (more in depth, with some additional elements that show that the council is achieving more than the basics)
- Quality Gold (the highest level, showing long term planning, community engagement and a more 'corporate' approach to organisational management).

Attached to this paper are details of

a) the standards at each level and

b) the assessment by the Council Manager as to whether WCC currently meets this standard.

As can be seen, the Foundation Award is easily achieved – the only outstanding issue is that of an 'Action Plan'. This would, in a normal year, be achieved by the provision of a Service Plan, but as there was no plan for 2023/24, the importance of developing one for the coming year is clear.

This would be the simplest way of being recognised and registered as 'Quality'.

The Quality Level is also achievable, but potentially not this year (due to the 'electors engagement at the annual meeting' element). It may be that if there is a proposal submitted for how WCC intends to do things differently this year (e.g. build Neighbourhood Plan engagement into the Annual Meeting),

then the remainder are principally new policy documents and / or written clarification of what we are currently doing. This would be achievable by May, but would be more challenging to deliver, especially with the current lack of staff in key roles.

The Quality Gold level is currently not realistic but should be something to work towards in the coming year(s).

This paper is intended to inform councillors about the elements that are needed to achieve the quality status and emphasise that this must be a council wide approach, with involvement and engagement at all levels.

### **May 2024 round:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Deadline for LCAS applications	3 May 2024
Deadline for NALC to provide triage feedback to councils	24 May 2024
Deadline for councils to respond to triage feedback	7 June 2024
Deadline for applications to be sent to panel	21 June 2024
Deadline for panel results	2 August 2024

The next round of submission is in May 2024, with a cut off of 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

### **Suggested proposal:**

**“That the council tasks the Council Manager with creating a Local Council Award Scheme submission for the XXXX level for final agreement at Full Council on 29<sup>th</sup> April, to be provided to the assessment panel on or before 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024”.**

### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

Depending on the level suggested, there will be a level of additional work needed to ensure all is in place and correct prior to submission. If a higher level award is decided upon, this may be considerable (e.g. policy development and ratification, etc.)

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- Icas-guide-2023
- Icas-accreditation-feedback-template

### **AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME | ASSESSMENT FORM

<b>Name of council</b>	Woughton Community Council
<b>Name of assessor</b>	
<b>Date</b>	Feb 2024

### Instructions

Please place an X in the box corresponding to the appropriate outcome for each of the criteria. If any criteria are partially met then a comment is needed to explain this. Otherwise comments are optional. Please keep comments brief and constructive, as they will be provided as feedback to the council.

### The Foundation Award

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it publishes online:					
1) Its standing orders	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>
2) Its financial regulations	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
3) Its Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a> and Councillor profiles - <a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/who-we-are/councillors/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/who-we-are/councillors/</a>
4) Its publication scheme	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>
5) Its last annual return	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/</a>
6) Transparent information about council payments	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/</a>
7) A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/</a>
8) Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee and sub-committee meetings	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/</a>
9) Current agendas	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meetings/</a>

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
10) The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/finance/</a>
11) Its complaints procedure	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>
12) Its accessibility statement	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>
13) Its privacy notice	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/official-documents/</a>
14) Council contact details and councillor information in line with the transparency code	X				<a href="https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/who-we-are/councillors/">https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-information/who-we-are/councillors/</a>
15) Its action plan for the current year		X			WE DO NOT HAVE AN ACTION PLAN – THE SERVICE PLAN WOULD MEET THIS EXPECTATION.
16) Evidence of consulting the community	X				Annual consultation / NP meetings, RA meeting attendance, etc.
17) Publicity advertising council activities	X				

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
18) Evidence of participating in town and country planning	X				Planning Committee minutes.
The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it has:					
19) A risk management scheme	X				
20) A register of assets	X				
21) Contracts for all members of staff	X				
22) Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money	X				
23) Disciplinary and grievance procedures	X				
24) A policy for training and development of staff and councillors	X				

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
25) A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year	X				
26) A clerk who has achieved 12 CPD points in the last year	X				

### The Quality Award

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation Award and that it also publishes on its website:					
1) Draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within four weeks of the last meeting	X				
2) A Health and Safety policy	X				



Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
3) Its policy on equality	X				
4) Councillor profiles	X				
5) A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community		X			Not formally in place. Relatively simple to comply with.
6) A grant awarding policy	X				
7) Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting		X			They don't, so hard to evidence!
8) An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review		X			Not in place, but reasonably straightforward to compile from existing work undertaken.

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
9) Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report, online material and at least four news bulletins a year		X			No annual report
10) Evidence of helping the community plan for its future			X	X	Neighbourhood planning?
The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it has:					
11) A scheme of delegation (where relevant)		x			Nothing formal, although in development.
12) At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election	X				Just....

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not met</b>	<b>Partially met and accepted</b>	<b>Partially met &amp; not accepted</b>	<b>Comments</b>
13) An annual report that is actively shared with the community		X			
14) Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public		X			
15) A qualified clerk	X				
16) A formal appraisal process for all staff	X				
17) A training policy and record for all staff and councillors	X				

**The Quality Gold Award**

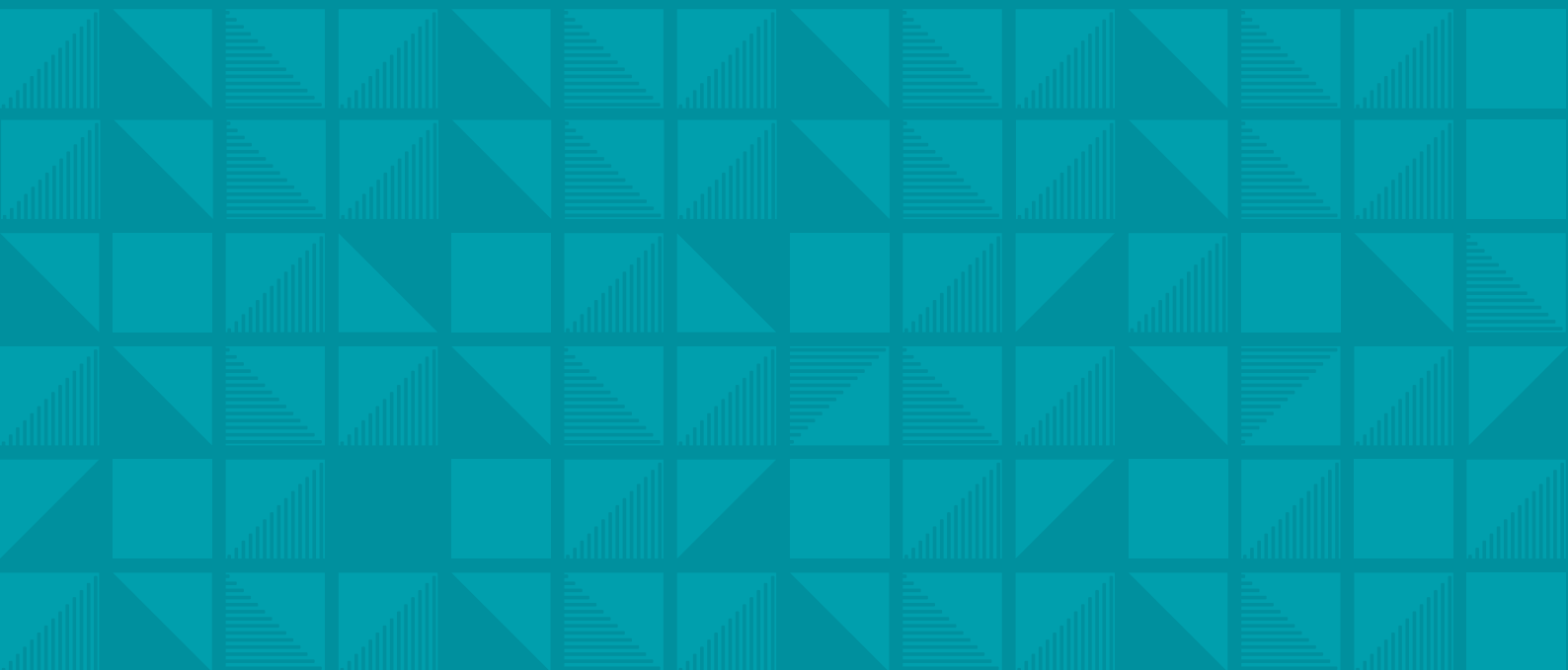
Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation and Quality Awards and also publishes on its website:					
1) A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community		x			10 year plan would cover this, once information is provided.

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
2) An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of:		x			We don't do an annual report – we maybe need to do so.
a) engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods					Questionable.
b) community engagement influencing council activity and priorities	x				Annual survey, response to café feedback, etc.
c) a wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community	x				Massively
d) co-operating constructively with other organisations	x				Lots of joint work.

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting, that it has prepared statements (of no more than one page each) to be presented to the accreditation panel showing how it:					
3) Ensures that the council delivers value for money	x				
4) Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community	x				NP
5) Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change		x			Working on this.
6) Manages the performance of the council as a corporate body					Check what this means.

Criteria	Met	Not met	Partially met and accepted	Partially met & not accepted	Comments
7) Manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business plan	x				Sits within the appraisal policy.

# A guide to the Local Council Award Scheme





## THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME EXISTS TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSES OF THE VERY BEST LOCAL COUNCILS, AND TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT ALL LOCAL COUNCILS TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

All local councils want to serve their local communities and make a real difference to the lives of the people that live there. This scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.

The scheme was created in 2014 and is managed on behalf of local councils by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB). Councils can apply for an award at one of three levels:

**The Foundation Award** demonstrates that a council meets the requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice.

**The Quality Award** demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.

**The Quality Gold Award** demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

The scheme sets out criteria to meet at each level covering selected aspects of the council's work. Councils can seek to progress through the tiers over time thereby raising standards. Councils of any size can aspire to an award appropriate for their budget and level of activity.

To support transparency, every award level has a requirement for certain information to be published online (plus some information that does not need to be published). In all instances the council confirms that the required documents, information and conditions are in place (whether published or not) by resolution in public at a full council meeting. For Quality Gold, councils also provide statements for submission to the panel demonstrating excellence in their activities. The panel may ask for additional information to check the accuracy of claims.

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## CONTENTS

### 06 AWARD CRITERIA

This section sets out in brief what is required for each award and then explains in more detail the evidence that the accreditation panel is looking for. Councils should find this additional guidance helpful in identifying what is required.

### 18 ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Local Council Award Scheme is a form of peer review. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of an accreditation panel.

This section outlines guidance for County Associations (CALCs) managing the process for accreditation. These are not strict rules, and CALCs can tailor this to local need in consultation with NALC.

### 21 FEES

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to NALC
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or regional accreditation process.

### 22 EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow the sector to feel ownership of the Local Council Award Scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. This section outlines the evaluation and improvement process that will allow the scheme to be dynamic and respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

A COUNCIL CAN REGISTER TO TAKE PART IN THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME BY VISITING [WWW.NALC.GOV.UK/LOCALCOUNCILAWARDScheme](http://WWW.NALC.GOV.UK/LOCALCOUNCILAWARDScheme)

THE STEP BY STEP PROCESS FOR APPLYING TO THE AWARD SCHEME CAN BE FOUND IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS SECTION ON PAGE 18.

THE CRITERIA IN THIS BOOKLET APPLY TO COUNCILS SUBMITTING THEIR APPLICATIONS TO THEIR LOCAL ACCREDITATION PANEL. THE CRITERIA FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME ARE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.

TO ACHIEVE A FOUNDATION AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT HAS THE DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR OPERATING LAWFULLY AND ACCORDING TO STANDARD PRACTICE. THE COUNCIL ALSO HAS POLICIES FOR TRAINING COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS AND IS BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that all documentation and information is in place for the Foundation award and where applicable, is published on its website. The council also needs to evidence it has:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Its standing orders	Council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code	
Its financial regulations	Its action plan for the current year	
Its Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests	Evidence of consulting the community	
Its publication scheme	Publicity advertising council activities	
Its last annual return	Evidence of participating in town and country planning	
Transparent information about council payments		
A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors		
Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee and sub-committee meetings		
Current agendas		
The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year		
Its complaints procedure		
Its accessibility statement		
Its privacy notice		

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A risk management policy		Disciplinary and grievance procedures
A register of assets		A policy for training and development of staff and councillors
Staff contracts		A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money		A clerk who has achieved 12 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year

The council notifies the accreditation panel co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

## WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The panel seeks assurance that a council acts lawfully and according to standard practice. Unless it is a matter of law, the panel is not making a judgement on the quality of the evidence at this level; it simply confirms that the documentation and information is in place, up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. For those documents that are not posted up online, the panel may ask to see the evidence if it is considered necessary.

- All policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.
- Standing orders, financial regulations, the Code of Conduct, publication scheme, accessibility statement, privacy statement and complaints procedure are public documents tailored to the specific council. Standing orders or financial regulations explain procedures for contracts and internal controls. There should be evidence of an open media policy which does not restrict engagement with the press. For councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 they also demonstrate compliance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- The council does not need to publish the councillors' registers of interests on their own website provided that there is a working link to the complete register of all councillors' interests on the principal authority's website.
- The council's website should include the name of the clerk and contact details (address, phone, email) for the council as a corporate body.  
It should also publish the names of councillors and councillors' responsibilities in compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code.
- The council posts up a scanned copy of the last annual return. The panel checks that the council has a limited assurance (unqualified) opinion from the external auditor; the opinion may contain recommendations for consideration as long as a qualified opinion is not given. The panel checks the arrangements for internal audit and internal controls. From 2017, councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 will not be required to submit their annual return for audit. Panels check that these councils comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
- Information on all payments must be transparent and in accordance with financial regulations and statutory proper practices.
- The calendar (in any format) includes the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Annual Parish/Town Meeting and both meetings must be held during the correct statutory period. The calendar also shows that the council has at least four full council meetings a year.
- Similarly, the minutes for full council meetings over the last year include the Annual Meeting of the Council. If relevant, the council also posts up the minutes of its Finance Committee to demonstrate transparency according to statutory regulations and of its Planning Committee showing that procedures for reviewing planning applications are correct. The panel checks that minutes and agendas demonstrate the lawful convening of meetings and decision-making and that all meetings allow the public to make representations to the council.

- The council can post up the current or next year's budget (or both). Budget documents would normally show columns comparing the year in question with the two previous years; they include information on income and expenditure (or receipts and payments) and show how the precept was calculated.
- The council must publish an action plan; as a minimum this is a one-page document listing the council's objectives for the current year. It is not a parish plan which is a plan for the future of the community; the council can extract objectives for action from the parish plan depending on its areas of responsibility.
- The panel seeks at least one piece of evidence from council publicity that it consults and actively serves its community. Publicity might include an annual report, web material or news bulletins. The information gives a flavour of any council activity such as lobbying principal authorities, giving grants to community groups, the provision of a service or helping with community events. For guidance, councils can refer to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Similarly any form of consultation is suitable, including surveys, online polls, focus groups or public meetings.
- Council documents demonstrate that the council participates in the planning system by, for example, commenting on planning applications or working on a neighbourhood plan. Decisions on planning matters must be made in properly convened meetings and, if required, by delegation to a committee. Some decisions may be delegated to an officer.
- The panel may wish to check that insurance policies have been reviewed and are up-to-date and that the council recognises insurance as a way of mitigating risks to public money. The panel does not seek to judge the appropriateness of the insurance policies themselves.
- Contracts, disciplinary/grievance procedures, a risk management policy and register of assets can be based on a model but tailored to the specific council. They are not published. The contract(s) for staff can be provided in redacted format, or if there are reasons why the contract cannot be shared then the council provides a statement from a full council meeting confirming that all staff are employed under an appropriate contract. The risk management policy shows the council has considered health and safety of staff, councillors and others as appropriate.
- A training and development policy for staff and councillors can be a short statement of intent while a training record gives dates, titles and providers of development activities undertaken by named individuals in the last year, including, for example, events, online courses, learning on the job and qualifications. Councillors undertake a range of development activities such as attending conferences, undertaking training, or reading about developments in the sector. The clerk's training record includes evidence of CPD such as training, conference attendance, mentoring and studying for qualifications. CPD points are allocated according to a system published by the IDB.

TO ACHIEVE THE QUALITY AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION AWARD AND HAS ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT. THE QUALITY AWARD CRITERIA INCLUDE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE.

The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation award and all documentation and information is in place for the Quality award and where applicable, is published.

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within four weeks of the last meeting	A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	
A Health and Safety policy	Councillor profiles	
Its policy on equality	A grant awarding policy	
	Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	
	An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	
	Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins	
	Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	

The council also needs to evidence it has:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A scheme of delegation (where relevant)	At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election	A qualified clerk
	An annual report that is actively shared with the community	A formal appraisal process for all staff
	Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public	A training policy and record for all staff and councillors

The council notifies the accreditation panel's co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

## WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that the criteria for the Foundation Award are in place if the award was granted more than one year ago. The exception to this is if the council received the Foundation award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the Foundation criteria again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

It then considers the additional criteria for the Quality Award.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information with a light touch, seeking reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and according to good (rather than best) practice. The panel confirms that the documentation and information is in place and up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. For those documents that are not posted on the website, the panel may ask to see the evidence if it is considered necessary.

- All council policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.
- Draft minutes (marked Draft) of all council and committee meetings should be posted up as soon as possible after the meeting and within at least four weeks. The minutes will show that the council monitors its actions, internal controls and performance against the budget at least every three months.
- A community engagement policy demonstrates the council's commitment to hearing what people in the community think and communicating its own actions and decisions. The council also gives grants to community organisations and publishes a grant awarding policy.
- Councillor profiles normally contain a photo and reference to the ward represented (if relevant) but personal contact details are not required.
- The panel seeks evidence that the council has in place light touch policies for managing Health and Safety, including its duty of care to staff and promoting equality in compliance with legislation. For example, evidence might include employment documents or statements on agendas.
- Evidence that electors can contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting can come in any form; for example, it could be an invitation to attend and participate in discussions or a record of how community groups spoke about their use of grant funding over the last year.
- The action plan (or similar forward plan) summarises findings from community engagement and sets out aims and objectives that respond to community views. The action plan includes a timetable for actions to be completed with dates for reviewing the plan. The council's budget shows how the action plan is put into practice and manages risks to public money.
- The council is expected to produce an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins throughout the year. The annual report and news bulletins must be online even if they were also distributed in hard copy such as in printed newsletters or village magazines. If the council uses social media such as Facebook or Twitter, this will be evident from the council's website. The accreditation panel will read the materials looking for evidence of community engagement, council activities and promoting democratic processes. The panel expects to see that the council consults the community in at least three different ways (such as surveys, focus groups, online or street polls and community workshops) and engages with other organisations, including community groups and the principal authority(ies). It will look for at least three positive actions for the community in the last year.

- The annual report should be actively communicated and shared with the community. It might be produced digitally and/or in hard copy. It is accepted that it cannot always be distributed to all households, but digital versions could be distributed by email and social media. Hard copies could be left at prime locations in a community, including a library, doctors' surgeries, schools, pubs, shops or residential homes.
- The panel seeks evidence from council documents and online information that it supports the community in planning for its future. This can include at least one contribution to creating, implementing or reviewing a parish or town plan, a design statement or a neighbourhood plan, holding community planning events, facilitating debate in the community about planning applications or registering community assets. The panel seeks evidence that the council has considered environmental matters as part of how it plans for the future of the community. This may be through the planning system such as considering environmental impact in neighbourhood plans, or through engagement with the community. The council might also undertake activities to engage with the community on the environment outside of the planning system, this might include tree planting, litter picking, reducing carbon and addressing climate change.
- The panel also seeks evidence of promoting elections and the value of the democratic process; this might include explaining how the system works, advising people of election dates and promoting the value of being a councillor.
- At the time of making the resolution, at least two-thirds of the seats on the council must be filled by councillors who stood for election at either the last ordinary elections or a by-election. This shows that the council represents the community through democratic processes. Councillors who stood for election, even if elected unopposed, do count, while councillors who were co-opted or appointed cannot count. If two thirds is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up to the next whole number using the table below.

Total council seats

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

4 4 5 6 6 7 8 8 9 10 10 11 12 12 13 14

Two thirds

- The panel may wish to check that a council properly operates the delegation of decision-making to committees, sub-committees and officers (where relevant). Arrangements for delegation may be set out in standing orders or in a separate scheme of delegation.
- The panel seeks evidence of how the council handles correspondence with the public and takes a customer service approach. Evidence shows how the council plans for and manages correspondence with the public, this might include examples of the council has addressed complaints, queries and other communications in the past year. It might also include any policies or training for staff that illustrates the council's commitment to customer service.
- A qualified clerk is defined in Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. The clerk (and deputy clerk) should be properly remunerated with a contract in accordance with terms and conditions set out in the national agreement or in a local government scheme.
- The panel may ask to see the document setting out the formal appraisal process that must be in place for all staff. It checks that the council has a training budget and may ask to see a general training policy for staff and councillors with a detailed record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year. The panel seeks assurance that a training culture is embedded in the council. The clerk is expected to achieve at least 12 Continuous Professional Development Points every year. The CPD guidance on how points are allocated can be downloaded from NALC's or SLCC's websites.

TO ACHIEVE A QUALITY GOLD AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOUNDATION AND QUALITY AWARDS, AND IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BEST PRACTICE BY ACHIEVING AN EXCELLENT STANDARD IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation/Quality awards and that all documentation and information is in place for the Quality Gold award and if applicable, is published.

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods</li> <li>– Community engagement influencing council activity and priorities</li> <li>– A wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community</li> <li>– Co-operating constructively with other organisations</li> </ul>	

The council needs to evidence all criteria in the first section and also provide statements (of no more than one page each) showing the accreditation panel how it:

GOVERNANCE	COMMUNITY	DEVELOPMENT
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Ensures that the council delivers value for money	Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community	Manages the performance of the council as a corporate body
	Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	Manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business plan

The council notifies the accreditation panel when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online, and the prepared statements.

## WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that criteria for the Foundation and Quality Awards are in place if an award was assessed more than one year ago. It then considers the additional criteria for Quality Gold. The exception to this is if the council received a Foundation or Quality award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the criteria for that award again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information in some depth. It seeks reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and aspires to excellence. The panel also seeks evidence of councillors and officers working together as a corporate body to achieve the criteria at Quality Gold level. Complying with the guidance below, the panel confirms that up-to-date documentation and information for Quality Gold is in place. The panel may ask for further information or talk to councillors and staff. The panel will be interested to note whether the council already has a reputation for being at the forefront of best practice. Councils seeking the Quality Gold Award should be aware that the panel is a peer group applying their own standards of excellence to the criteria explained below.

- In identifying excellence, the panel confirms that the council operates within the law as explained in standard works of reference, demonstrates transparent, efficient and effective decision-making and governance and exercises sound financial management.
- The panel also seeks reassurance that the council is not experiencing destructive internal conflict or that nothing has occurred to bring the council into disrepute.
- The council works to a forward plan (or business plan) created for at least three years even if this takes the council beyond the next election. This plan explicitly responds to community engagement. It sets out the council's aims and objectives for both the council and the community and shows how they will be achieved including financial forecasts for both revenue and capital for the duration of the plan.
- The annual report, web material and news bulletins publicise the work and achievements of the council and contain substantial evidence that the council takes the lead in actively representing and serving all parts of its local community. The council therefore addresses the diversity of its community, including, for example, different age groups, service users, physical locations, housing types, language, employment status and skills.
- These sources of information also show that the council seeks out and responds to views and ideas expressed by its community. The council uses a variety of ways (at least four) of consulting and involving local people to understand their views. There should be evidence that the council identifies local needs and views through community engagement that are then addressed in constructive council action. These sources also show that the council promotes local democracy.
- The panel seeks evidence that community engagement is at the heart of determining council priorities. Evidence shows this engagement leads to actions and projects within the council that deliver positive outcomes for the community. The council is innovative; this is the case if the council undertakes actions that are still relatively new or unusual for that council. There is evidence that the council embraces new ideas and trying new projects. The panel also checks that the council is co-operating with other organisations, including community groups, its principal authority(ies) and other agencies to provide an effective service to the community. Co-operation includes but is not limited to partnerships.

- The statement on ensuring value for money explains how the council reviews the quality and costs of its activities to confirm that the costs are appropriate. This could include, for example, the cost of the clerk's role in serving the council, the purchase of computer equipment or a grass cutting contract. It may also include reference to criteria from the other award levels as a number of these criteria do provide evidence that the council offers value for money.
- The panel seeks evidence that the council has considered climate change and other environmental issues and has engaged with the community on these issues. The council will have considered how it can support or facilitate the community to take actions that could have a positive environmental impact for the local area, or more widely.
- The statement on leadership in planning for the future shows how the council engages with a range of activities that influence the planning system and facilitate community-led planning. Activities may include, for example, identifying and representing community views on planning applications and local plans, working on parish or town plans, or holding community-led planning activities such as Planning for Real® or community conferences. The statement should include the council's approach to neighbourhood planning.
- Finally, the statements on performance management explain the processes by which the performance of the council as a corporate body is constantly improved and shows how the performance, skills and knowledge of each individual in the council is managed to help the council achieve its objectives on behalf of the community. The statements also include confirming that each member of staff has their own professional development plan and that the majority of councillors participate in a member development programme that is specific to their roles and the needs of the council. It is important to show evidence that the council is a good employer.



## A GUIDE TO THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Local Council Award Scheme is a form of peer review. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of a local accreditation panel.

The aim of this accreditation process is to be as simple, efficient and flexible as possible. It also seeks to ensure that every council that wishes to take part in the scheme is able to, and is assessed in a reasonably consistent way.

### REGISTRATION

1. The council registers its intention to apply for a specified award online at [www.nalc.gov.uk/localcouncilawardscheme](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/localcouncilawardscheme)
2. Contact NALC at [lcas@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:lcas@nalc.gov.uk) or on 020 7637 1865.
3. The council pays a registration fee to NALC to cover the costs of managing the national scheme, including: administration, national online resources, quality assurance and review processes.
4. NALC provides the applicant with a template application form and the contact details of the co-ordinator of the appropriate accreditation panel.
5. NALC provides the panel co-ordinator with information of the council's application.
6. When a council is ready to make its application to the accreditation panel, its clerk notifies the panel co-ordinator that the council has passed a resolution confirming that all the documentation and information is in place for a specified award and submits a completed application form with any additional documentation required.
7. The council pays the accreditation fee which covers the costs administering the local service.
8. The local panel co-ordinator keeps a record of all applications and monitors their progress.
9. When the accreditation panel makes its decision it informs the council. It also completes an online form to allow NALC to update national records.

### ONLINE CONNECTIVITY

The Award Scheme requires councils to publish certain information and documents online. In exceptional circumstances a council may not be able to put documents online because of poor digital connectivity in the local area. In this case, the council applies to the panel co-ordinator for permission to submit evidence for an award in an alternative format. The co-ordinator must be confident that poor digital connectivity is the problem rather than an unwillingness to use an online service for publishing council documents.

### THE ACCREDITATION PANEL

The accreditation panel is set up by a County Association or a regional group of County Associations. The aim of any panel arrangement is to facilitate training, promote consistency and help manage the workload. Where an individual County Association is unable to support the scheme, a council will be able to submit their application

to an appropriate neighbouring or regional panel.

County Association's may adapt the accreditation process to fit local need. They are able to discuss this with the Improvement and Development Manager at NALC, for support and guidance.

The panel co-ordinator manages a pool of up to ten potential panel members, in the expectation that between three and five members are required to review each application. The panel includes experienced councillors and clerks as well as someone independent of the sector with an understanding of local government.

Panel membership should be reviewed by the panel co-ordinator every two years.

At the beginning of the accreditation process a panel is drawn together from the pool of potential members. The panel could choose a lead panellist or chair if needed to facilitate decision making.

All panel members are expected to use email or an online service to read a council's documents and also act in the spirit of a Code of Conduct; for example, they do not assess an award for their own or a neighbouring council.

The accreditation panel determines how often an accreditation process occurs, or an appropriate trigger for this to take place. For example, a panel may decide to convene every two months or may wait until the receipt of ten applications (as long as this is no later than two months after an application has been received). Panels should note that all costs of administering the panels must be met from application fees. So, to minimise costs, the panel can convene and conduct its business remotely rather than face-to-face. The resources provided by NALC will support this way of working.

The local panels have discretion over the detail of how they organise the accreditation process. In consultation with the panel co-ordinators, NALC will provide regularly updated guidance and support for accreditation panels.

### THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The emphasis of the scheme is on encouraging and supporting the improvement of councils. The aim of the panel is therefore to help councils to achieve awards and panels are urged to be constructive.

The panel checks that the criteria for the relevant award have been met in published and/or requested information. Most documents and information will be posted on a website. Where it is not appropriate for a document or information to be on a website, the panel is permitted to ask to see electronic versions.

As all information and documents are available online or in electronic format, the panel's work can be done without meeting. Each member of the panel completes a form showing their responses to the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator reviews the completed forms from the panel which decides whether additional information or documents are required.

Panel members do not need to examine every document in detail but are advised to carry out spot-checks enabling them to make recommendations.

For Quality Gold, the panel may wish to discuss the council’s activities with councillors, or staff or visit the parish but the cost of doing so must be covered by the fee.

**THE OUTCOME**

When the panel is satisfied that it has seen sufficient information, the findings are presented in a report agreed by the panel. The panel makes one of three recommendations to the council:

- The Award is achieved.
- The Award is achieved but the council is advised to make some small changes.
- The Award is not achieved until specified improvements have been made.

If a council has applied for a higher award but has not achieved all the criteria, the panel can award a lower award if appropriate.

The aim of the scheme is to be supportive and help councils achieve the status they have applied for and so it is expected that achieving a lower (or no) award would be an exceptional circumstance. The panel should let the council know as soon as possible if it appears that they have omitted necessary evidence or it appears likely that they will not achieved the award, and the council should be given some time to respond to that feedback.

The co-ordinator informs the council of the outcome within two months of being notified of the application. They also inform NALC of the outcome and successful councils are included in a published list. NALC issues a certificate and provides resources to help the council celebrate and promote their achievement which is sent to the council and panel co-ordinator.

Councils and accreditation panels will be contacted by NALC for feedback on the process and the benefits of receiving the awards.

A council may appeal to the IDB (with an additional fee) if it feels that the panel’s decision is unjustified. The IDB will appoint two representatives to review the appeal and the IDB’s decision is final.

**UPGRADING ACCREDITATION, RE-ACCREDITATION AND REMOVAL OF ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation lasts for four years.

**Applying for a higher award:**

- If a council wishes to apply for a higher award, it makes a fresh registration and application.
- A council can make a fresh application for a higher award at any time. If this is within one year of the previously successful accreditation, the panel does not need to revisit evidence that was previously approved.

**Re-accreditation:**

- The council may seek re-accreditation at the same level after four years. If it does not achieve a new accreditation or re-accreditation before four-year end-date, it loses its award.

**Removal of accreditation:**

- The council is expected to maintain its reputation by meeting the criteria throughout the four years.
- Although some circumstances may change, the council will not lose its award unless a significant event such as an audit, employment tribunal, court case or police investigation demonstrates the council’s poor performance. In this case, a panel co-ordinator asks the IDB to appoint two representatives to review the situation. The IDB assesses the severity of the case before deciding whether to impose a sanction which may include the removal of all awards or returning the council to a lower award.
- The council can appeal to the IDB if the decision to remove an award is taken in which case two different IDB representatives review the case and their decision is final.

**FEES**

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to the National Association of Local Councils
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or regional accreditation process.

The registration fee paid to NALC is £50 paid by all councils for each level regardless of size.<sup>1</sup>

The accreditation fee<sup>2</sup> varies according to:

- The award applied for
- The income of the council
- The council’s accreditation history.

	ANNUAL INCOME UNDER £25,000	ANNUAL INCOME OVER £25,000
Foundation Standard	£50	£80
Quality Standard	£80	£100
Quality Gold	£100	£200

The accreditation fee covers the cost of the accreditation panel decision making process only. County Associations may charge additional costs for advice, training or support of applications. Those services and fees will be determined locally.

The IDB will review fee levels annually.

The fee is reduced by 20% if the council sought accreditation at a lower level within the previous 12 months as the checking process covering criteria for the previous award requires less work.

<sup>1</sup> All figures quoted are excluding VAT.

<sup>2</sup> The figures quoted are the discounted rates for members of NALC. Both the registration fee and accreditation fee are reduced by 50% for member councils. Non-member councils must pay the full fee ie double the figures quoted in this grid.

## EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow councils to feel ownership of the scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. It should also allow the scheme to be dynamic and able to respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

Twice a year, representatives of the IDB will check at random a small sample of awards by carrying out spot checks of documents and information posted on a council's website.

The findings will not affect a council's award but will be used to improve the training for accreditation panels and to inform regular reviews of the scheme.

### EVALUATION

At the end of each accreditation process the council and the panel will be sent a short evaluation questionnaire. This will aim to gather feedback on the process, the criteria, the resources provided by NALC and how they could be improved.

One year after accreditation the council will be contacted again. The council will be encouraged to apply for the next level of award, to make use of the fee discount. The council will also be asked to describe the benefits they have felt from being accredited by the scheme and their feedback on the scheme as a whole.

### IMPROVEMENT

The feedback collected will be used to inform improvements to the scheme. The whole scheme, including the content and accreditation process, will be reviewed every year.

These reviews will alternate between:

- A light touch approach only making urgent required changes where these are considered critical to the scheme.
- A wider ranging review aiming to best address collected feedback from all parties.
- The IDB will oversee all changes to the scheme.

