

Agenda item: OC 41/22

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Wednesday 5th January 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To propose changes to the Service Plan for implementation from May 2022.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the committee notes this report.
2. That the committee agrees to the £30,000 budget allocation, inline with the budget proposal for 2022/23.
3. That the following changes are made to the document:
 - a. That items 6, 10, 20 and 28 are considered for grant funding, with expenditure limited until such time as any options are agreed. Item 20 should not proceed without grant funding to cover this.
 - b. That item 7 is reduced to fewer sessions, open to all suitable groups / individuals across the parish, and is funded through the training budget
 - c. That item 9 is considered as an investment, linked to contract delivery, and is NOT included as part of the service plan spend, but is considered as capitalised over 10 years.
 - d. That item 29 remains on the plan, but that a clear case is made prior to any external company being appointed and only with the further agreement of the Services Committee once assurances are made. However, improvements to CCTV provision on WCC buildings and the surrounding areas can take place.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The service plan has been under discussion for a number of months and the last draft that came to council has expenditure that is at a higher level than the budget will allow. Despite some suggestions that a larger precept increase would enable all aspects to be delivered, the changes proposed in this paper enable delivery of the priorities, whilst acknowledging the limitations of the finances available.

The following items are on the plan, with indicative budgets noted:

CV1 – Advice and representation	£500
CV2 – Community Building and engagement	£0
CV3 – Training, employment, education	£0
5 – Business Forum	£300
6 – Youth Council	£1600
7 – Community First Aid	£7000
8 – Fly tipping	£0
9 – Landscaping	£48,000 ¹

10 – Community Growing Space	£10,000²
11 – Estate renewal and regeneration	£0
12 – Planning applications	£0
13 – Geeks in Sheds/ Library of Things / etc.	£2,000 ³
14 – HAVS monitors	£4,000 ⁴
15 – Blue Light Discos	£?
16 – Building Inclusivity	£-
17 – Cultural events	£-
18 – Community Choir	£200
19 – Local Market	£1000
20 – Arts and Heritage Trails	£5,000⁵
21 – Sustainability Plan	£0
22 – Community Boxing	£0
23 – Youth provision additions	£1500
24 – Carry over youth provision ideas	£0
25 – Comms and Engagement improvements	£0
26 – Library provision	£0
27 – Community Centre development plan	£0 ⁶
28 – Jubilee Carnival	£5,000
29 – CCTV provision	£15,000
TOTAL	£101,100

Key:

1 – This is for a large programme to bring Landscaping onto parish, providing a new depot and storage, etc. This can be considered an investment that can be ‘repaid’ through the landscaping contract over the course of the 11 years that it could run and / or through savings on rental payments on current depot, garage, etc. It will also bring wider benefits to the council in terms of storage, tool library, parking for EVIE, etc. so should be considered in this wider sense too.

2 – There are already grants in place for this provision and, if successful, will mean a much smaller (if any) contribution is needed from this budget.

3 – This is, in part, reflected in the funding within 1 above. The provision for this ‘library’ would be within the costs associated with the creation of the space at Rochfords and whilst a budget will be needed for other aspects, most of the larger costs will be met within the budget allocated within 1.

4 – HAVS monitors are essential in terms of compliance with H+S and will be necessary. If possible, this money will be recovered through the Landscape services budget, but this may not be possible.

5 – Arts and Heritage trails – only if grant funding can be found, so can be ignored from a budgetary viewpoint.

The items that are **in bold** have the potential for attracting grant funding, which is discussed below.

If the grant funded elements are removed, then the total reduces by £10 – 15,000, reducing the overall total to around £85 - £90k.

If the Landscape depot development is removed and capitalised over the life of the contract (10 years), then this reduces the overall total to around £40 – 45k. Some of this may also be included

within the grants programme, if successful. NB It is essential that this is considered within the overall Landscape contract considerations, which will be discussed early in 2022.

With a proposed budget of £30,000 for service plan delivery, this means that there are some decisions that need to be made in terms of priorities.

The items in red would be the recommendation of the council manager, based upon feedback from priorities survey, previously ratified agreements and the focus of the council. This totals just over £30,000, with the extra coming from small reductions in the landscape / youth services budgets and slightly lower amount allocated (£1500 for No13, grant applications for No 28, etc).

The big exclusion is the first aid, which it is recommended is reduced to a more reasonable level (perhaps three sessions) and some of the training monies elsewhere in the budget are used to deliver this, with additional grant options to be explored to deliver some / all of this too.

It is also recommended that the CCTV provision includes both reactive and fixed options – embedding / improving CCTV within our buildings (NFMP, CHMP, TBMP and EAC, alongside No95 and the new landscape depot) should be included within this budget as these areas are also areas which currently have a lack of oversight.

This paper makes clear the need to refocus our approach to grant applications. Many of the items noted would, potentially, be eligible for funding from grant givers and this should be explored as an option where possible. Given this, the grants group will be tasked with providing options for the items noted, as well as offering a vision for the future, focusing on sustainability and applications that meet an agreed need.

The recommendation of the Council Manager is that £30,000 budget is sufficient, and that the following changes are made to the service plan:

- That items 6, 10, 20 and 28 are considered for grant funding, with expenditure limited until such time as any options are agreed. Item 20 should not proceed without grant funding to cover this.
- That item 7 is reduced to fewer sessions, open to all across the parish, and is funded through the training budget.
- That item 9 is considered as an investment, linked to contract delivery and is NOT included as part of the service plan spend, but is considered as capitalised over 10 years.

- That item 29 remains on the plan, but that a clear case is made prior to any external company being appointed and only with the further agreement of the Services Committee, once assurances are made. However, improvements to CCTV provision on WCC buildings and the surrounding areas can take place.

This proposal ensures that the priorities noted by the public consultation are provided, that the budget is sufficient and responsible and gives 'wriggle room' for additional elements that will arise through use of the 'emerging priorities' budget. The focus on grant applications MUST be included in the

coming calendar year (we have seen this start over 2021 with some success which can be expanded upon).

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

22.23 Service Plan v2 for Full Council.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: OC 42/22

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Wednesday 5th January 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the Committee on the stance of the current year's budget (2021/22).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Please refer to Summary report via Scribe for payment and receipts breakdown.

All AYTD figures are based on data as at 14.12.2021 (time of writing report). Where a number is dictated in a parenthesis “()” this is a negative number.

At Q3. A healthy budget should be at no more than 75% spent / 25% remaining. Although some items are paid for annually, or quarterly for example and this should be taken into consideration when reviewing the payments and receipts breakdown.

Total receipts budgeted for 2021/22 (Scribe) **£970,690.02** AYTD NET £958,674.16 **(12,015.16)** remaining for the last quarter of the year. This is less than 25% remaining to meet our projected income targets for this financial year, which is a healthy position to be in. 98% of our target has been reached.

Total payments budgeted for 2021/22 (Scribe) **£900,054.60** AYTD NET £650,916.24, **£249,088.38** remaining for the year, to stay on target. We are relatively on track with our spending, showing at around 72% spent for the year.

As we are all aware, restrictions are back in place and capacities in our meeting places have been reduced to 20 over the Christmas period, to be reviewed again early January 2022. We are not yet sure, of how long the current restrictions may stay in place, or worsen and therefore we should remain vigilant when spending and ensure we are sticking to budget.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Receipts:

This includes full receipt of Precept, LCTRS and Landscape Grant. Hire of meeting places currently total £33,209.71, depending on the situation with COVID we are unsure how this figure may be further affected. The remainder is inclusive of successful grant applications submitted by officers and VAT returns (Q1 & historical

previously discussed from last year) Q2 still awaiting and Q3 to be submitted in January 2022.

Payments:

All annual payments have been paid; we should keep an eye on any spend that is over 75% spent. However, there are areas of underspend which has meant we look to be on track with our spending. No other 'big ticket' items to be expected, however it is worth noting that December's payroll run has NOT been included in total payments for this month, as this report has been written prior to payroll processing.

AGAR – CCLA

It is worth noting our AGAR figures will look slightly different this year, given that our £200,000 CCLA deposit has been split, and now £100,000 sits in long term investment LAPF (Local Authorities Property Fund) this means, you should prepare for our reserves to look to be reduced by £100,000 as the LAPF money will no longer sit in short term investments, but in (Long term) Assets.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived, at this juncture the budget looks healthy. I would urge prudent spending for the rest of the year, and to keep reviewing our income streams to see whether there is any further affects due to COVID19 and the everchanging climate surrounding this.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Summary report (14.12.21).

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO

Agenda item: OC 43/22

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Wednesday 5th January 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the Committee on the results from our interim audit report dated 23rd November 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The following areas were considered and inspected:

- **Maintenance of Accounting Records and Bank Reconciliations.**
- **Review of Corporate Governance**
- **Review of Expenditure**
- **Assessment and Risk Management**
- **Precept Determination and Budgetary Control**
- **Review of Income**
- **Petty Cash and Fuel Cards**
- **Review of Staff Salaries**
- **Investments and Loans**

I am pleased to report that our interim audit was returned with no recommendations or advisories, you can see as per report a 'clean' final page with no suggestions reported.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Interim audit report – 23.11.21.

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO

Agenda item: OC 44/22

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Wednesday 5th January 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide feedback on the priorities survey for consideration with our Service plan planning, and budget setting for 22/23.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee reviews this feedback in consideration with our budget ratification for 2022/23.**
- 3. That the Committee considers feedback when making decisions re: Service plan items/spend for 2022/23.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

We went live with our priorities survey on 09th November. Through new measures of engagement such as pushing the priorities survey through some of our projects such as community fridge and café, on the last feedback report in November we had 152 responses, so far (at the time of writing this report.) we have 154, an additional 2 responses completed through the online survey.

We have seen 31 responses through the online survey, and 123 paper responses. In terms of precept 82 responses came back with this question completed, (just over 50%.) the reason for this being that we requested youth team did not request responses on precept through their projects.

There can be full consideration and discussion based on what we would like to prioritise using the Service plan delivery allocated budget for, and ensure we are prioritising areas of high value as much as possible.

Due to the fact we have not seen a major increase in the submissions since the last paper, there have been minimal amendments made to the last figures you were provided. Whilst a full breakdown follows, as this is the last feedback to be submitted, I have provided an overview in terms of ranking:

Importance of current Services:

Top 3

- 1. Community Fridge (78/154)*
- 2. Environment (73/154)*
- 3. Landscaping (79/154)*

What would you like to see more of?

Top 3

1. CCTV (72/184)
2. Activities for older people (59/154)
3. Support for youth (55/154)

Precept

In rank order

1. About right (57/82)
2. Too much (14/82)
3. Too little (11/82)

Firstly, we asked residents which of our services do you think are important? (this was a select 3 option, however some responses did tick 'all' and suggested that all listed were equally important.

In terms of highest priority from responses received so far, community fridge was front runner with 51% of respondents voting for it. Closely followed by Environment (47%) and Landscape (44%)

43% of people suggested community support was the most important priority in terms of services we provide, 40% of people responded with youth and events. Wellbeing and advice came in at 36% and community centres tallying 30% and least important from the list given was Grant aid receiving 37 votes in total, 24%.

I believe what was quite telling was many responses noted that they had ticked or would like to tick more than three because all services listed were important to our residents and they did not want to be contained to 3 options. We did receive several responses that selected all the listed options as equally important.

Q1. Which of our services do you find important?	Paper (123)	Online (31)	Total
Youth Service	46	15	61
Wellbeing and advice	40	15	55
Grant Aid	25	12	37
Environment	48	25	73
Community Fridge	57	21	78
Events	45	15	60
Community Support	46	20	66
Community Centres	32	15	47
Landscaping	46	23	69
Other	1	3	4

Secondly, we asked, what would you like to see us provide more of in 2022/23? CCTV currently is sitting at the top of the list with 47% of our residents suggesting they would like to see us provide more CCTV around the Parish. Activities for older people came in at 38% and thirdly youth and market came in at around 36% with 1 vote between them. Highest priority for our respondents.

30%- 35% of people suggested they would like to see more waste bins (47 votes), dog bins (49 votes), events (50 votes). All of these are prioritised around mid-range importance to our respondents.

Defibs (33 votes – 21%) and Grit bins (19 votes – 12%) were least important to our residents.

We will review the thoughts and ideas of residents who selected and provided a response to the ‘something else’ option during our review of all feedback ready for discussion in December’s full council however this was the lowest ranked response (7%).

Suggestions given for ‘something else’ for transparency were as follows:

- Estate skips (3)
- More community garden planters
- Christmas event to make decorations
- Rewilding
- More benches between shops and estates

Q2. What would you like us to provide more of?			
Waste bins	34	13	47
Dog bins	34	15	49
Events	41	9	50
Grit bins	14	5	19
CCTV	51	21	72
Support youth	45	10	55
Activities for Older people	47	12	59
Christmas lights	29	9	38
Market	39	14	53
Defibs	20	13	33
something else	3	8	11

Our final question was in response to our precept levels.

We had 52% of responses that answered the question regarding our 3% suggested precept rise, looking at the votes, 57 out of 82 people suggested this level of increase was ‘about right’ that equates to just shy of 70% of our response group regarding precept suggesting this rise is fair. However, 17% of respondents suggested this was too much (14 votes out of 80) and 14% suggested the rise was too little to support what they wish to see around the Parish (11 votes in total.)

Looking currently at the figures it shows a general trend of residents seeing the projected 3% rise as a comfortable one. Which would suggest a budget that is fair to the majority of our current focus group.

This feedback will be considered for a comprehensive discussion at Full Council to ensure that Service plan delivery and service budgets are accurate, fair and in line with guidance from our residents where possible.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Decisions and discussions should be made regarding what we would like to prioritise our Service plan budget on for 2022/23 with the budgeted £30,000 and what we

would like to either postpone or move forward with the caveat that it will only be done with successful grant bidding.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO

Agenda item: OC 45/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Wednesday 5th January 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To agree the final budget for financial year 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Committee notes the report.
2. That the budget options as circulated are considered and an agreed precept level is approved.
3. That the budget be approved with the agreed precept rise.
4. That the Committee agree to fund the new landscape depot and agree a period of 'capitalisation' that it should be paid back over.
5. To note that our Balance carried forward for the end of this year (2021/22) will be accounted differently and therefore our reserves will look to be reduced by £100,000 as our LAPF (Local Authorities Property Fund) investment will now sit in box (9) and not be included in our total reserves box (7).

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

It was requested that we provide a budget which would provide the council with options regarding precept rise, due to the fact that the costs for the new landscape depot which has been planned for, will need some significant funding. Whilst we can look to capitalise this funding over a period of five (5) years and reduce the landscape services budget by circa £5,000 per annum from 2023/24 for ten (10) years (the life span of the new proposed Landscape contract) we will still need to fund the depot site from next year's budget. The costs submitted total £48,660.

This amount of money will need to be taken from our reserves and will leave us in a deficit budget for 2022/23.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The financial impact of any precept decision should be looked at holistically, we were hoping to be clear of the uncertainty that Covid has created over the last two (2) years, but this does not seem to be the case.

We managed to close the year last year (during the worst of the Covid19 restrictions, and closures etc) with a surplus. With that in mind you will note from the three (3) options provided to you regarding our proposed budget for next year all run a deficit budget. With the amount of money needed to assist with the set up for the Landscape depot there is no other way around this, it must be funded from reserves.

The balances of our reserves will reduce by £100,000 this is because £100,000 has been moved out of reserves and now sits in a long-term investment scheme, so while the balance reduces it is not reflective of the actual situation. However, we no longer account for this as cash we have readily available (reserves).

Balances brought forward from 2021/22 have been projected at £454,345.57 before this reduction. Actual BBF £354,345.57.

A 3% precept gives us a further deficit of £44,863 / Balance Carried Forward £309,482.

A 5% precept gives us a further deficit of £32,591 / Balance Carried Forward £321,754.

A 7% precept gives us a further deficit of £20,341 / Balance Carried Forward £334,003.

The difference between the best- and worst-case scenario is £24,500. In the scheme of our whole budget for the year this is negligible.

Taking all into consideration and after review of the Priorities survey and the majority vote that 3% (inflation) increase for the precept was widely viewed as 'about right' and given the complications COVID19 has provided for people, I would suggest the 3% rise is the reasonable compromise to make, given that this is the first year in my employment that Woughton has seen a deficit budget and given that all of our options provide a deficit I would continue with the 3% rise and a deficit budget of £44,863.

I would, however, urge that there be formal agreement as to how we will ensure that the Landscape team pay this back over the course of the new Landscape contract from 2023/24.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Interim audit report – 23.11.21.

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO