

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th July 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Jordan Coventry (Chair), Elina Apse (Vice-Chair), Maggie Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Phil Hopcraft, Luke Louis, Ruth McMillan, Sue Smith, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager).

In attendance:

Cllr Liz Simpkins.

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer).

Samone Winsborough (Responsible Financial Officer/Operations Manager).

OC 26/22 Apologies:

Cllr Liz Simpkins (unwell and attended the meeting via Zoom Video Call)

AGREED

OC 27/22 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Liz Simpkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item OC 37/22 as she is an Eaglestone Ward Member.

NOTED

OC 28/22 Chairs Announcements:

The Chair asked residents to take care in the heat and to check on their neighbours, and asked Members to look out for their residents also.

The Services & Communities Committee meeting is being held on Wednesday 20th July 2022 at 6:30pm.

The AwayDay will be held on Saturday 30th July 2022.

NOTED

OC 29/22 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the public.

NOTED

OC 30/22 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Wednesday 29th June 2022 Were **AGREED** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

OC 31/22 To update the Committee on policies due for review and any amendments suggested:

The Operations Manager updated the Committee on policies due for review and any amendments suggested.

1to1 Supervision

Reduced frequency of one to one's from every two (2) months to quarterly this will be included in the contract list, changed pronouns to be non-gender specific.

The policy to be review again in August 2024, or as per legislative changes.

Employment policy – August 2022

Some minor formatting changed; no content changed. Review again in August 2024, or as per legislative changes.

Absence and leave policy – August 2022

No amendments made to content. Review again in August 2024, or as per legislative changes.

Appraisal and review policy – August 2022

No amendments made to content. Review again in August 2024, or as per legislative changes.

It should be noted that the Operations Manager and the Council Manager will be finalising changes to the appraisal process, including the potential for a '360 approach' templating has been completed by the Operations Manager with only final amendments and agreements to be made, over the summer. With a view to bring to committee for agreement in September.

Sickness policy

No amendments made to content. Review again in August 2024, or as per legislative changes.

Tendering process

No amendments made to content; however the Operations Manager thinks there may be a need to make a slight change to the tendering thresholds. As this would be linked to the Financial Regulations and is an amendment to financial policy this may need to be taken to Full Council for review.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**

2. That the Committee ratifies the 1to1 Supervision and support policy, Employment policy, Absence and Leave, Appraisal and Review, Sickness Policy and Tendering Procedures.
3. That the committee agrees to refer the review and potential amendment of tendering thresholds to a meeting of the Full Council.

OC 32/22 To update the committee on the stance of the budget for 2022/2023 as at Quarter one (1):

The Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting on the stance of the budget for 2022/2023 as at Quarter one (1).

There is a forecasted spend of £1,064,510.46 and anticipated income at £1,020,648.00. Running as a deficit budget of £43,862 (this is without considering the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place roof which is an additional £26,000 that needs to be taken from reserves) Therefore there could be a deficit budget of circa of £69,862.00.

However, this is based alone on forecasts at the point of inputting the budget at the beginning of the financial year and so far, the budget stance looks promising.

£407,463.29 is guaranteed income that will be received.

The actual receipts at this point in the year is £591,994.46 (£428,653.54) remaining for the year. To deduct the £407,463.29 fixed income from this figure to show there is a need for an additional £21,190.25 to meet the projected income for this year.

Due to the fact a deficit budget is being projected additional focus will be given to try to surpass the projected targets for income, whilst minimising any unexpected or unnecessary spend.

Hall hire is, at this point in the year surpassing suggested targets. They should be at £10,000 at Quarter one (1) to hit the £40,000 projection. They are currently equating to £15,777.75. At the moment it is +25% on this target area, which is promising. Should the hall hire hit the projected £40,000 for this financial year there will be an income of £24,000, ensuring to surpass (slightly) the projected income target (by circa £2,000).

An additional income has been set at £20,000 target for this year and are currently forecasting over the 25% marker for this budget line too. £7,920 being made from the provision of number 95 Jonathan's on Coffee Hall which sits as additional income rather than hall hire. (It is also worth noting that the VAT returns are coded to additional income) and so while this is not showing on the budget forecast, yet it is expected to receive £11,324.72 (as per the VAT report). Taking the additional income to £19,244.72 for the year, and therefore it is strongly suggested that it will exceed the targets set for additional income.

It is important to try and recuperate as much of the projected £69,000 deficit as possible. The Responsible Financial officer is positive in making great strides in shortening the gap between income and spend, and to try to work to a point where at least most of the initial deficit of £43,862 is met.

This is a promising start to what was forecasted to be a somewhat bleak year financially.

Payments/Expenditure

The projected payment line sits at £1,064,510.46 so the spend should be circa. £266,127 at this point in the year it is showing a spend of £263,144.00 and therefore there is currently an underspend of circa. £2,980.00, this includes the additional spend for the Surface Go's which had not been budgeted for (circa. £11,000 NET) and the initial works for the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place roof of £17,825.00 (the additional works were only invoiced at the point of writing this payment and therefore the payment will not be reflected in these reports. There is an unexpected additional spend of £27,825 at this point in the year and therefore the spend would have been far less.

Reflecting on the budget position as per the cost centres, all budget lines look relatively healthy (except for the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place because of the unbudgeted works that took place to replace the roof there.)

Cost centres should be showing around the 75% remaining mark at this point in the year.

While there are a few areas to keep an eye on, it is also a positive position regarding the expenditure.

As long as managers are monitoring their budget and spend (as they should be by reviewing their monthly budget reports.) and with prudent spending for the rest of the year the budget should end up in a better position than forecasted.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the report.

OC 33/22 To update the Committee on the Quarter 1 VAT return April-June 2022:

The Responsible Financial Officer updated the Committee on the Quarter one (1) VAT return covering April to June 2022.

The Quarter One (1) VAT claim has been successfully submitted, and have claimed a total of £11,324.72. This shows a steady progression since services and spend were restricted during Covid-19 and is more reminiscent of the previous VAT returns.

RESOLVED

That the committee notes the report.

OC 34/22 To agree the June 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts:

The Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting the papers should have been already circulated to Members.

The Responsible Financial Officer will meet with the Chair of the Committee to sign off the figures as presented to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the committee agrees the June 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts.

OC 35/22 To update the committee on Contingency planning:

The Council Manager updated the committee on Contingency planning.

Following the situation last month where the organisation was significantly impacted by illness, a request was made to look at contingency planning to cover these eventualities (and more), with specific reference to both the Council Manager and Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager being off at the same time.

The situation last month was very unusual four (4) of the managers were off at the same time (all with the same illness), as well as other key officers for a variety of reasons.

The second specific query was around management if both the Council Manager and Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager are absent. This happens regularly, and other officers continue to deliver in the usual way. This will be far more regular post November when the Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager will be on maternity leave for a year.

During the recent absences, whilst four (4) of the five (5) managers were absent (with only the Landscape and Environment Manager remaining in the office), other managers were still contactable and involved remotely, this reflects the more technologically advanced way that the council has been able to work over the past few years.

The committee felt a further discussion was needed on this matter along with some options to consider at the September committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee allows the summer for service managers to update their contingency plans and for these to be included within an organisational plan.**
- 3. That the committee considers how the Council would like oversight / management to work in the absence of both the Council Manager and Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager, both on an 'ad hoc' basis, but also over the Responsible Financial Officer's maternity leave.**
 - a. Allocation of an alternative 'second in command' when both Senior Managers are absent (possibly the Community Services Manager, Youth Manager, Landscaping & Environment Manager)**
 - b. Delegation 'hierarchy', with responsibility passing down as absences happen**
 - c. Involvement of an agreed level of involvement from councillor(s)**
- 4. To look into further at the September committee meeting along with some possible options to discuss and consider.**

OC 36/22 To provide options for 'wellbeing' support for officers:

The Council Manager provided options for 'wellbeing' support for officers.

To be more proactive about wellbeing, councillors requested some details about what could / should be offered to officers, especially those that have to deal with difficult situations (advice, safeguarding, wellbeing) as part of their role.

The meeting felt this should be extended to volunteers.

The Responsible Financial Officer will review the budget to see how to obtain the money for this service support and parameters put in place so it does not put too much pressure on budgets.

The proposed sessions may not be suitable for all officers, after an assessment has taken place, and alternative arrangements would need to be considered.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee agrees that if needed, officers are able to access 1:1 support to help manage any issues arising from the work they undertake and that this includes:**
 - a. 121 support on an 'ad hoc' basis**
 - b. 121 support on a quarterly basis**
 - c. Quarterly 'group' sessions**
- 3. That the committee agrees to reaffirm the commitment to being a 'Mindful Employer' and offer support to employees when needed, to include agreement for access to 1:1 or group 'therapy'**
- 4. That this is, in the first instance, limited to an initial six (6) sessions, extendable to twelve (12) sessions. If further support is needed, this will need to be agreed with the Operations Manager, Line Manager and Chair of the Operations & Resources Committee.**
- 5. That this support should be extended to all councillors and volunteers.**

OC 37/22 To update the committee on the Eaglestone Activity Centre:

Cllr Liz Simpkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

The Council Manager updated the committee on the Eaglestone Activity Centre.

The situation with the Eaglestone Activity Centre has stalled, due to a disparity between what Milton Keynes Council will provide and what Woughton Community Council have requested. Milton Keynes Council have been explicit that there is no more money to refurbish the centre and that the money spent so far is all that will be spent on the Eaglestone Activity Centre.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Heads of Terms which allows the landlord (Milton Keynes Council) a twelve (12) month break clause, is changed to allow Woughton Community Council the same (which is a twelve (12) month break clause).**
- 3. That if this is agreed, the committee agrees to the lease, based upon the following:**
 - a. That the survey previously undertaken shows no significant structural issues**

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee agrees to the proposed uses noted in the report.
3. That the committee agrees to the Council Manager / Responsible Financial Officer spending up to £1,000 on 'add on's', to enable safe and secure use (such as for stands and lockable screens).
4. That tablets to be used to help with advising residents, for use at fridge/café/community larder sessions, therefore two (2) tablets each to be provided for Netherfield, Eaglestone, Tinkers Bridge, Coffee Hall and Moorlands.
5. That Community Fridge volunteers are to be asked if they need a tablet and this can be revised if they do.

OC 39/22 To update the committee on the provision of grit bins:

The Chair of the committee had spoken to the Cabinet Member Cllr Lauren Townsend who indicated that an agreement should be drawn up, the Chair said there has been no further movement on this for over a year, this recent weather has shown that there could be a bad winter this year.

The Chair asked the Council Manager how many yellow grit bins had been supplied by Milton Keynes Council and he replied he thought it was about eleven.

The Chair also felt that damaged grit bins should be replaced by Milton Keynes Council.

If Woughton Community Council funds the provision of grit bins, in line with the 'Grit Bins 2021/2022'. This will consist of:

- £474 per new bin, including a Highways assessment and ½ tonne of grit.
- £100 per 'refill' (1/2 tonne of salt, as and when needed).

Depending on the number of bins that this committee feels are needed, costs are both 'one off' and ongoing (assuming a refill each year). There are twelve (12) suggested sites, meaning a total cost of £5,688 for installation. This would then require £1,200 each year for 'refills', assuming regular usage.

Cllr Fuller suggested that the audit undertaken on the condition of the grit bins in the area, should be presented to the Head of Highways and the Cabinet Member.

The committee felt it should be made clear that the grit is for the use of residents not Milton Keynes Council staff.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the Council Manager continues to ask for answers from Milton Keynes Council Highways team regarding the replacement of damaged Milton Keynes Council bins.
3. That the Council Manager continues to ask for answers from Milton Keynes Council Highways team regarding the use of yellow grit bins in additional areas.
4. That if unable to use yellow bins, that this committee agrees to fund green grit bins, in line with Milton Keynes Council policy, and decides

on how many and their placement, based on the 'Grit Bin Survey' undertaken in March 2021

- a. That this is agreed as a set number of bins**
- b. That this is agreed as a set amount of funding**
- c. That this is agreed to be deferred whilst all sites are considered, evaluated and agreed by the landowners and / or members of this committee.**

OC 40/22 To update the committee on Fire Safety quotes for Community Centres to ensure compliance:

The Operations Manager updated the Committee on works that need to be completed to ensure that the community centres are fire safe/compliant.

The professional recommendation from the Operations Manager and the Health & Safety Manager is to proceed with installation of fire alarms in the Netherfield Meeting Place and the Coffee Hall Meeting Place as there are no existing fire systems in place in these two community centres.

The quote supplied is £6,249.57 for the Coffee Hall Meeting Place. Also the quote supplied is £4,000 for the Netherfield Meeting Place.

The rest of the emerging priorities budget line can be used to cover the majority of this cost, and potentially look to transfer any surplus money in the budget lines to ensure this work does not fall outside of the budget. Currently there is £10,000 sat in the emerging priorities budget line, although a small amount of £600 was suggested for the Wi-Fi of the trailer the shortfall would be covered with surplus unspent funds for this point in the financial year.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to proceed with the installation of new fire alarms systems in the Coffee Hall Meeting Place and the Netherfield Meeting Place, as a priority.**
- 3. That the Committee allows the use of delegated decisions to proceed with the Netherfield Meeting Place quote at the circa the £4,000 mark. (the Council Manager & Chair of Council to approve).**
- 4. That a timeline is given to renewing the existing systems in the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place and the Youth Centre at No 95 Jonathan's, Coffee Hall once the Community Centre Improvement plan is published.**
- 5. That the Committee agrees for the Community Centre Improvement Plan to be reviewed at this Committee for final ratification at Full Council in the September meeting.**

OC 41/22 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.

AGREED

OC 42/22 To investigate options for Wi-Fi provision for the trailer/portable use:

The Operations Manager informed the meeting of the options for the provision of Wi-Fi for the trailer and general portable use.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to proceed with the Mi-Fi 4GEE option.**
- 3. That the Committee agrees to proceed on a pay as you go sim contract (which will be sourced).**

OC 43/22 To recommend a provider for window cleaning for all the Meeting Places managed by Woughton Community Council:

The Operations Manager informed the meeting a provider for window cleaning is being sought for all of the community Centres managed by Woughton Community Council.

Three (3) quotes have been provided.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to appoint a window cleaner (Quote 2) from Red Clean based in Bletchley for all the community centres on an eight (8) weekly basis at an annual cost of £1,840.**
- 3. That the Committee agrees that the additional monies needed to cover these costs are transferred from the emerging priorities budget line.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 19th September 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:27PM

Chair _____ Date _____