

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th February 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Jordan Coventry (Chair), Donna Fuller (from 6:56pm), Ruth McMillan, Amber McQuillan, Liz Simpkins, Sue Smith,

Also present:

Brian Barton	(Committee & Member Services Officer)
Tash Darling	(Youth Manager & DSL Designated Child Protection Officer)
Steve McNay	(Council Manager)

In attendance:

Cllr Elina Apse (Via Zoom Video Call)

OC 97/23 Apologies:

Cllr Elina Apse	(personal)
Cllr Maggie Ferguson	(unwell)
Cllr Luke Louis	(personal)
Cllr Alan Williamson	(personal)

AGREED

OC 98/23 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 99/23 Chairs Announcements:

There were no chairs announcements.

NOTED

OC 100/23 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the public.

NOTED

OC 101/23 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 23rd January 2023 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

OC 102/23 To note the minutes from the following Sub-Committee:

- a) Human Resources – Tuesday 31st January 2023.

NOTED

OC 103/23 To note and agree the updates to the policies as listed below, in line with the review process:

- a. Health and Safety Policy
- b. Officer Expenses and allowances
- c. Risk Register and Business Continuity
- d. Asset register
- e. Menopause

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the report and the following policy documents:
 - a. Health and Safety Policy
 - b. Officer Expenses and allowances
 - c. Risk Register and Business Continuity
 - d. Asset register
2. That the committee reviews the changes made to the Menopause policy, following feedback, and, ensures that the policy uses more inclusive language, and not just to refer to women.
3. That the Council Manager to go through the Menopause policy and to make the necessary changes for consideration of version 3 of the document at the March meeting.
4. That the committee agrees to a full review of the outstanding policies at the March meeting, except for those within the 'Democracy' remit, which will be reviewed following the election in May.

OC 104/23 To agree all amendments made to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

The committee was appraised of all the amendments made to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at the scheduled review.

In order to review and update this policy the DSL/DCPO has reviewed relevant policies, frameworks, legislation and Milton Keynes Together Interagency Policy & Procedure, Risk Management and Decision-making tools.

Appendix B: Useful Contacts has been reviewed and updated.

Notable differences:

1. Some basic terminology has been edited to ensure terminology is up to date and in particular that the policy is equally related to our regard for vulnerable adults. All references to 'Governing body' have been simplified to state 'Committees and Councillors' as better distinguishes us from an educational setting and is clearer for the public audience.
2. Some minor changes have been made to clarify our responsibilities in order to ensure we do not commit beyond our designated responsibilities.
3. In line with NSPCC and KCSIE guidance training commitments for our DSL/ DDSLs has been updated and detail.

4. A slight re-arrangement in order of points under 'Procedures' has been made in order to prevent unnecessary duplication and a clearer flow.
5. All policies, websites, partner organisations and contact details have been reviewed and updated as necessary.
6. Additional guidance has been included within the Safer Recruitment section 4 in line with government guidance. *Committee to confirm their decision or agree to delegate to the Council manager.
7. The Adult Safeguarding Alert link and details of the new Contextual Safeguarding Team have been included in Appendix B.
8. The linked policies list has been amended.

All amendments have been highlighted in yellow for the purpose of this committee and ease of recognition (they will not be highlighted in the ratified / published document).

Officer time needs to be allocated for appropriate training to be undertaken as agreed necessary by the Council Manager and the Safeguarding Lead Officer. Where possible this will always be done to minimise disruption to daily duties and commitments of officers.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the committee notes the report.**
2. **That the committee notes and decides on the recommendation in point 6. Section 4 in regard to Safer Recruitment trained officers or delegated decision to the Council Manager.**
3. **That the committee ratifies the reviewed and updated policy (at which point all versions will be updated in the Woughton Community Council database and all relevant destinations as deemed necessary by the Council / Operations Manager).**

OC 105/23 To update the committee on pension contribution rates over the next three (3) years:

The committee was updated on the pension contribution rates over the next three (3) years.

Woughton Community Council is a member of the LGPS the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Buckinghamshire Council. This is an 'opt out' scheme, where employees of Woughton Community Council are automatically enrolled, unless they state that they don't want to be. The scheme has contribution levels based upon salary (higher salaries pay a higher contribution rate) and on employers individual schemes within the wider provision the amount that Woughton Community Council has within the scheme verses the liabilities the scheme has for Woughton Community Council employees.

Individual contribution levels are:

Band	Actual pensionable pay for an employment	Main section contribution rate for that employment	50/50 section contribution rate for that employment
1	Up to £16,500	5.50%	2.75%
2	£16,501 to £25,900	5.80%	2.90%
3	£25,901 to £42,100	6.50%	3.25%
4	£42,101 to £53,300	6.80%	3.40%
5	£53,301 to £74,700	8.50%	4.25%
6	£74,701 to £105,900	9.90%	4.95%
7	£105,901 to £124,800	10.50%	5.25%
8	£124,801 to £187,200	11.40%	5.70%
9	£187,201 or more	12.50%	6.25%

Auto-enrolment (the default setting for new employees) is set in legislation and currently the lower earnings threshold for this is £10,000 per annum.

The second part is the employers contribution element. This is currently 25.1% but will reduce to 23.7% for the next three years. This is due to the Woughton Community Council 'pot' being healthier than previously, with a deficit gradually reducing.

The current budget for 2023/2024 for employers pension contributions is just under £100,000. It should be noted that this doesn't include any additional contributions necessary if pay awards are made or if there any new members of the scheme.

There are at present 17 officers who are members of the scheme. There are 10 officers who are not members. If they were to join, would mean significant additional employer contributions (£30,000 plus in total, per year).

The other notable element within the report is that the overall deficit for the Woughton Community Council 'pot' is stated as around £1.36million. This is the amount that the scheme believes that would be needed to meet the liabilities of Woughton Community Council members, should all contributions cease (if Woughton Community Council was to leave the scheme). This is a consideration that the committee and council will need to be aware of when planning suitable reserves, forward plans.

It is a legal requirement to offer a pension to all employees and, with this scheme, Woughton Community Council is compliant with that demand. It is recommended that all employees who are not members of the scheme are asked to officially decline membership on an annual basis, with this process happening each November (to enable effective budget planning). It should, however, be noted that people can choose to join at any point.

RESOLVED

- 1. That committee notes the report and the report from the pension provider.**

2. That the committee notes that the figures are based on the current levels of officers enrolled in the scheme (some have chosen not to be members) and may increase if demand rises.
3. That the committee agrees to an annual update to all officers that aren't members of the scheme to ensure that they wish to remain outside the scheme. This to take place immediately and then each November, as part of the budget planning processes.
4. That Council encourages officers not in the pension scheme to opt in.

OC 106/23 To update committee on the budget position at the end of Quarter three (3) (Dec 31st 2022):

The committee was updated on the budget position at the end of Quarter 3 (December 31st 2022).

This gives a reasonable overview of the potential year end situation, whilst acknowledging that there are likely to be some additional large bills that become payable over the coming quarter.

The overall position is relatively positive, despite a budget that had planned for a fairly significant deficit, the report shows that there is a small surplus against budget just under £16,000 less spent than budgeted for this point in the year. It should be noted that this is an inexact reflection, as some large costs are paid in lump sums, rather than spread across the year.

The income line also is positive, with income that is £17,000 ahead of budget, despite a further three months income to come. Whilst the 'big ticket' payments have been made (precept, LCTRS, landscape grant), income from community venues continues to be paid, as does 'additional income' from a variety of sources (grants, refunds). It is notable that Community Centres are exceeding planned income, this is, in part, due to a return to them being fully open after the past couple of years, but also includes some regular bookings being taken on, providing consistent income.

There are some concerns, however on various budget headings.

There are also some budget issues that need to be considered:

- Repairs are a challenge, and this year has been especially challenging due to both urgent, expensive repairs (two boilers, one roof) and in terms of catching up with 'planned' maintenance that has been missed previously (includes gas servicing, asbestos checks, water checks, electrical installation checks. across all council buildings).
- Energy costs are increasing fast and look likely to continue to be a challenge for the coming year, at least.
- Income from meeting places is increasing but remains below where it was in 2019. The gradual increases are welcome, but costs are likely to outstrip these increases without significant investment in infrastructure.

Despite all the unplanned challenges, everything is within budget. This is down to a combination of the increased income, difficulties in recruiting to vacant posts (or, in the case of the maternity cover, deciding not to cover) and not delivering all aspects

of the Service Plan. Whilst it is likely that the situation will become less positive over the final quarter (expected expenditure in key areas the annual IT contract cost (£20,000), the depot development (£20,000) and the essential electrical works needed for compliance (£6,000), the outlook for year end is not as bleak as had been feared at mid-year (a deficit of around £60,000 was planned it is unlikely to be that much).

As well as the 'Flexed budget' report, there is also a 'Net Position' report that details the actual spend against the whole budget and therefore, the amount left. These reports read together give a fair reflection on the fiscal situation.

RESOLVED:

1. **That committee notes the report.**
2. **That the Council Manager and Accounts Assistant continue to monitor expenditure and income, working towards as close as possible to a 'balance budget'.**
3. **That a further report is provided at the April meeting, detailing year-end figures.**

Cllr Donna Fuller arrived at the meeting.

OC 107/23 To consider a training programme for the council year 2023/2024:

The meeting considered a training programme for the council year 2023/2024, to include new councillors and experienced members.

The following sessions are proposed for inclusion in the programme:

- Introduction to Local Councils (overview of how the sector works)
- Standards in public life
- Safeguarding
- Data Protection and GDPR
- Best Practice for Chairing and facilitating meetings
- Finances in local councils
- Communication and social media
- Working with your community
- Diversity, equality and inclusion

This will sit alongside the existing training offered via NALC, B&MKALC, etc. that are available to councillors and are sent round regularly by the Council Manager.

It is also proposed that longer courses are provided for those that feel these would be of benefit. This would include:

- First Aid (full day)
- Mental Health First Aid Awareness (half day)
- ILCA, FILCA or CILCA (various lengths)

It is likely that some of the sessions can be provided 'in house', officer hours for development and delivery of sessions will need to be considered.

RESOLVED

1. That committee agrees to a training programme for the 2023/2024 council year.
2. That the sessions noted below are considered as the basics for inclusion in the programme.
3. That any additional sessions can be suggested and included if agreed by committee.
4. That additional training can still be accessed by councillors / officers outside this programme on an 'as and when' basis.
5. That the sessions are booked and agreed prior to the start of the new council year.
6. To include each Councillor's training record in their profile on the website.

OC 108/23 To note the example of a completed 360 Appraisal Form and to discuss and agree:

An example of a completed 360 Appraisal Form had been circulated to members of the committee.

Cllr Smith and Cllr Coventry had already undertaken a 360 appraisal with the Council Manager, it was found to be beneficial from having the opinions of other members of staff, unlike when undertaking a one to one appraisal.

A 360 appraisal would be too much work administratively for part time staff so the one to one appraisal system would still be used.

NOTED

OC 109/23 To agree the Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts since December 2022:

The Chair with the meeting's agreement will look through a selected sample of the bank reconciliations, payments and receipts to ensure that there are no discrepancies.

RESOLVED

That the Chair to look through a selected sample of the bank reconciliations, payments and receipts to ensure that there are no discrepancies.

OC 110/23 To move and second and then to be put to the vote the following motion:

Moved by Cllr Sue Smith seconded by Cllr Liz Simpkins

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 111/23 To consider any relevant Human Resources Matters:

The Chair updated the committee and it was agreed more work is needed, members agreed to hold an extra ordinary meeting on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 6:30pm. To

(subject to agreement at the meeting) be held in private session, with one (1) agenda item to discuss a Human Resources matter.

The appointed Human Resources advisor to provide more accurate information.

RESOLVED

- 1. To hold an extra ordinary meeting on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 6:30pm.**
- 2. To (subject to agreement at the meeting) be held in private session.**
- 3. With one (1) agenda item to discuss a Human Resources matter.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 20th March 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, the Council Chamber, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:08PM

Chair _____ Date _____