

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the committee on the situation with policies, following discussions at last months meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That the committee notes this report and attached policy list.**
- 2. That the committee agrees the list of policy changes that are suggested, to streamline the policy suite.**
- 3. That the committee tasks the Council Manager and Committee and Member Services Officer (CMSO) to review all policies noted, upload the most recent versions to the most suitable place(s) (e.g. website, Brightpay) and to ensure that there is a folder on Sharepoint containing ALL policies.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

As part of an annual review of policies, the Council Manager became aware that there are some inconsistencies with review dates, storage and visibility of some policies. This includes the policies on the website being out of date in many cases, with the same being true of those uploaded to the Brightpay App (the HR system that is used).

Whilst there is a spreadsheet that monitors the policy review dates (this is used by the CMSO to direct this committee), this doesn't currently have any way of checking off when changes to policy mean replacing in other places. *It is recommended that this be adjusted to have a 'reviewed date' and a further 'uploaded to website / Brightpay' column.*

There have also been new policies introduced which haven't resulted in older policies being removed or updated. This means that in some places, there are a number of policies that cover the same area (e.g. there is an Appraisal and Review Policy AND a '1to1 Supervision and Support policy' – these could / should be one policy).

Some policies are also contradictory, where different policies state different approaches to the same issue (e.g. the procurement policy is different from the financial regulations). These issues need to be resolved to ensure clarity.

There are also some issues around consistency of branding, where policies are in different formats – these should also be addressed.

Ensuring all these issues are addressed and embedding a system that promotes access, updates and consistency should be relatively straightforward but will take time to ensure everything is correct to start with – reducing the number of policies, ensuring

that there is no repetition, placing them in the most suitable place and making sure that they are correct will take a little time. *It is recommended*

*that the Council Manager and CMSO spend an afternoon working through this prior to the new council year.*

The current policy list from the website (with stated review dates) is:

Standing Orders	May-22		
Ops ToR	May-22		
PLAD Tor	May-22		
Services ToR	May-22		
Role of Ambassador	May-22		
Lead Member Roles	May-22		
Social Media	May-23	NOT branded	
Guidelines for broadcast	May-22	NOT branded	
Councillor / Officer Protocol	Nov-24		
Code of Conduct	May-22	Needs updating	
Councillor Allowances	May-22	NOT branded	Needs review
IT for councillors	May-22	Needs updating	
121 policy	Aug-22	Has been reviewed - check when	
Appraisal and review	Aug-22	Link to 121 policy	
Lone working	May-22	Has been reviewed - check when	
H+S Policy	Nov-21	Has been reviewed - check when	
Absence and Leave	Aug-22	Needs updating	
Anti-bullying and harassment	Aug-23		
Capability and Sickness	Nov-22		
Equal Ops	Aug-22	Needs updating	
Maternity	Aug-22	Has been reviewed - check when	
Officers Expenses	Jan-22	Needs branding	
Officer Code of Conduct		Not found on website	
Recruitment and Retention	Aug-22		
Redundancy	Jan-22	Not branded – link to ‘employment’ policy?	
Emergency Advice Policy	Aug-22		
IT security policy	Aug-22		

Disciplinary / Background	Feb-23	
Training	Aug-22	Needs updating
Volunteer	Feb-22	Not branded
Financial Regs	May-22	
Procurement	Aug-22	Needs updating and linking to Financial Regs
Banking	Aug-22	
Investment Strategy	Sep-22	Has been reviewed - check when
*Regen	May-22	
*EY and Childcare	May-22	Not branded but has been reviewed
Safeguarding		Has been reviewed - check when
Information Policy	May-22	Needs updating
Fol scheme	May-22	
Comments, compliments, etc	May-22	
Gifts and hospitality	May-22	
Whistleblowing	May 2023	

There are also some further policies that don't sit on the website that should be included within this process:

- Employee Handbook
- Grievance Policy
- ToR for Internal Audit
- Driving at Work (sit within a H+S suite)
- Employment Policy – link to Redundancy policy?
- Retention and disposal
- Risk Register / Contingency Planning (recently updated)
- Asset Register (recently updated)
- Write off and disposal policy.
- General privacy statement
- GDPR and Data policy

On the whole, the policies are good, robust documents that cover the essential elements of what is needed. Reviewing, branding and agreement should not be too difficult and will result in a set of documents and a process that enable access to all policies by all officers and members, with access to relevant documents to all via the website.

### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Failure to update accordingly makes many aspects more difficult – from Quality Council awards to funding bids, people want to see up to date, effectively managed policies. This will help ensure that this is the case for WCC.

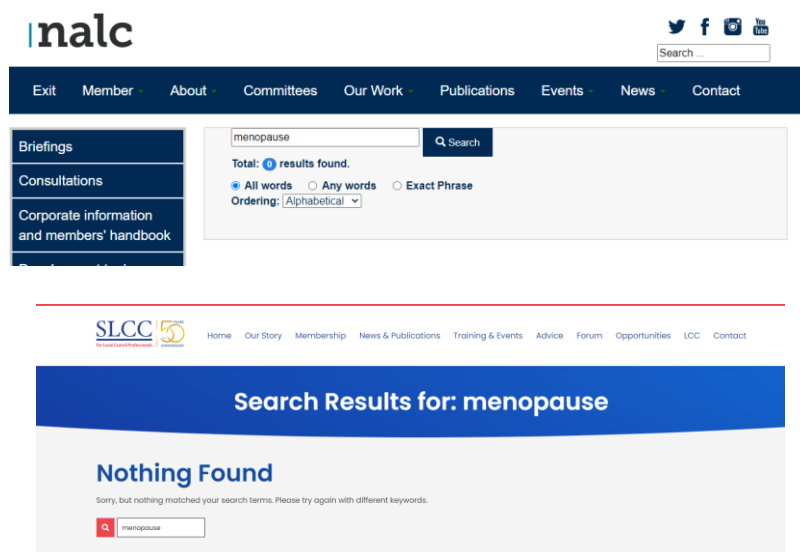
**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## Agenda item: OC 118/23



### Woughton Community Council Menopause Policy

Version 3 – March 2023

***Additions at meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023***  
**V3 to include addition of 'over' 12 months.**  
**Language change to take 'woman' out and use 'person' or 'person who menstruates' for inclusivity.**

**To return for March Operations meeting.**

## Introduction

WCC is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here.

Menopause is a natural part of every woman's life, and it isn't always an easy transition. With the right support, it can be much better. Whilst every person does not suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. We want everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. ~~This is not just an issue for women, men should be aware too.~~ This is an issue for everyone to be aware of.

The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of menopausal people are in work. Research shows that the majority of people are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager, nor ask for the support or adjustments that they may need.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment – however, if the Council wishes to amend the Menopause Policy, staff will be consulted on proposed changes.

## Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the Council's policy and practices, supported by Human Resources and Occupational Health, where appropriate.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support people at work.
- Ensure that people suffering with menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles or studies.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure people that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.
- Provide information and support to those working and living with people experiencing the menopause.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Council staff and will also impact on volunteers and councillors.

## **Definitions**

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a person 's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. It is a natural biological state – the time when a person 's ovaries stop producing hormones and, for menstruating people reach menopause naturally (e.g. not using hormonal contraceptives), menstruation will cease. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a person has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for people reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a person to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness, or other reasons.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause, often considered a 'transitional stage' when a person may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms (such as brain fog, hot flushes, night sweats, anxiety). This can be years before menopause and becomes menopause when a person hasn't menstruated for **over** 12 months.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

It is important to recognise that experiences of menopause vary widely. Menopause can occur naturally, but equally may be as a result of surgery (e.g. hysterectomy) or medical treatment (such as chemotherapy). Some people may also experience menopause without menstruation, for example if a hysterectomy has taken place but one or both ovaries remain. Menstruation may stop many years before symptoms are present.

Menopause is an individual experience which is unique to the person experiencing it.

## **Symptoms of Menopause (including peri and post menopause)**

It is important to note that not every person will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of people do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some people also experience difficulty sleeping.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

*Members of staff:*

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health.

- Being open and honest in conversations with managers/HR and Occupational Health.
- If a member of staff is unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supporting them, they can speak to the Operations Manager, their union or request details of the external HR or Occupational Health services.
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

#### *Line Managers (see Appendix 1 for Managers' Guidance)*

All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy and Guidance.
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- Use the guidance in Appendices 1 and 2, signposting and reviewing together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates.
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to.

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Line Manager may:

- Discuss a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.
- Refer the employee to Occupational Health.
- Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical.
- Update the action plan and continue to review.

#### *Occupational Health*

The role of our external Occupational Health provider is, where appropriate to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of individuals as to whether or not menopause may be contributing to symptoms / wellbeing, providing advice and guidance in line with up-to-date research.
- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice (refer to Appendix 2 for more information).
- Provide support and advice to HR and Line Managers in determining and agreeing reasonable adjustments, if required.
- Monitor referrals due to menopause symptoms, and provide additional signposting, where required.



## Human Resources (HR)

HR will:

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and Guidance.
- Attend training sessions, and develop briefing sessions, for staff.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.
- Review the Menopause Advice Sheet (see Appendix 2) and keep this up to date.

## Links to other policies

This policy is linked to:

- Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Officer Code of Conduct
- Capability and Sickness Management

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Managers' Guidance for Colleague Discussions.

Appendix 1a – Confidential Colleague Discussion Template.

Appendix 2 – Menopause Advice Sheet.

## External links

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. These explain how your GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer you. You can find out more information by using the following link

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information>.

The National Health Service provides an overview of menopause. You can find more at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

Menopause information. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>.

Information on hysterectomy. This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy. Further details can be found at <https://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk>.

Henpicked. This site provides information on managing menopause, and an insight into people's stories (see <https://henpicked.net/menopause/>).

## **Appendix 1 - Managers' Guidance for colleague discussions**

We recognise that every person is different, and it is, therefore, not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines.

If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if a male employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation.
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality.
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly.
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) – hand out the Menopause Advice Sheet (Appendix 2).
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the template at Appendix 1a to record the meeting, so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends). Ensure that this record is treated as confidential and is stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom.
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting. Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or break room.

### *Symptoms Support*

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively; support for people should be considered as detailed below:

#### Hot Flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.
- Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform, such as by removing a jacket.
- Have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

#### Heavy/light Periods

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities.
- Request an extra uniform.
- Ensure sanitary products are available in washrooms, in order to obtain personal protection.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.

#### Headaches

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water.
- Offer a quiet space to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

## Difficulty Sleeping

Ask to be considered for [flexible working, particularly suffering from a lack of sleep.](#)

## Low Mood

Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.

Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area.

Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'.

## Loss of Confidence

Ensure there are regular 121's and any relevant Personal Development Discussions.

Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues.

Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

## Poor Concentration

☐ Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.

☐ Review task allocation and workload.

☐ Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment.

☐ Offer quiet space to work.

☐ Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.

☐ Reduce interruptions.

☐ Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time',

so that they are not disturbed.

☐ Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

## Anxiety

☐ Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of work their area.

☐ Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.

☐ Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

## Panic Attacks

☐ Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.

☐ Identify a 'buddy' outside of work area.

☐ Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.

☐ Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety.

If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace.

## **Appendix 1a**

### **Confidential Colleague Discussion – Template**

Member of staff details:

Name

Job Title

Council Department

Main Location

Present at meeting (line manager name and position)

Date of discussion

Summary of Discussion:

Agreed Actions/Adjustments:

Date of next review meeting .....

..... Signed (Member of staff)

..... Signed (Manager)

## **Appendix 2 - Menopause Advice Sheet – How to talk to your GP about menopause.**

If you are suffering from menopausal symptoms to the point, they're getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. But, sometimes, that's easier said than done.

We all know how difficult it can often be just to get an appointment, and then it's often only ten minutes. And talking about symptoms can be hard, let alone if you feel rushed or unprepared. So, what can you do? We've put together some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait. It is all too common for people to feel they must simply 'put up' with [menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you, there are things you can do, and](#) support available. There is no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable.

Read the NICE guidelines. This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. There are [guidelines for patients, which are really](#) useful to read before you see your GP, so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information. That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where you are on the menopause transition aren't always available or accurate – your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So, your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you, based on your symptoms.

Keep a [list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling,](#) and any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it, and it's more likely that together, you'll find the right solution faster. And, if you have any preferences about how you manage your symptoms, tell them that too – for example, if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or not.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause. They are often the font of all knowledge at a surgery and can help you find the best person to speak to – it might not be your usual GP; it could be someone who has had special training in the subject.

Ask for a longer appointment. If you don't think your standard appointment will be long enough, try to book a double appointment, as some surgeries do offer this. Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you don't feel you've received the help you need, ask to speak to someone else. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling, and how it's affecting you.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. Occasionally, there are regional clinics, specifically devoted to menopause. If there is one in your area, and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral.

Take your partner or a friend with you. The chances are, you spend your life supporting others and, during menopause, it's [your turn to ask them for support](#). Your partner, or a friend, will know how the symptoms are affecting you. They could support you at the appointment and find out how they can continue supporting you.

What to expect from your doctor

There are certain things a GP should – and should not – do during your appointment.

They should:

- ☐ Talk to you about [your lifestyle, and how to manage both your symptoms, and your](#) longer-term health.
- ☐ Offer advice on [hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options](#);
- ☐ Talk to you about the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.

They should not:

- ☐ Tell you that it's just that time of your life. Yes, menopause is a natural stage, but please don't feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help.
- ☐ Tell you they don't prescribe HRT. It's up to you what you want to try, and for them to say whether it could be right for you, depending on your medical history.
- ☐ Impose unnecessary time restrictions, such as they will only prescribe this once, or for a year or two. This is an ongoing conversation, and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms, and any help you need. Don't think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help and support available.

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the committee on annual leave entitlements and suggest a 'buy back' for the extra day in 2022/23.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That committee notes the report and the impact on policy.**
- 2. That all new contracts, staff handbook, policies are updated to reflect the upgraded leave entitlement agreed as part of the 2022/23 pay settlement.**
- 3. That due to pressures on time and current leave demands, that officers who are employed are awarded one (1) day of additional pay in lieu of the annual leave day for the current leave year.**
- 4. That clarity is reached on the 'long service' award for additional leave, in line with policy.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

As part of the pay award for all 'Green Book' employees (which includes all WCC officers), an additional day of leave was passed as part of the agreement for 2022/23. This was agreed by unions and employers in Sept / Oct last year.

It was thought at the time that this was an increase to the 'minimum' amount offered – WCC already has a starting level that is higher than this additional day would lead to, so no action was recommended at the time.

Following investigations by the council manager, it is now clear that this is not the case, and an additional day should have been awarded to ALL employees, regardless of the level of leave they are currently receiving. This means that all officers should have had an additional day allocated. This did not happen. As a result, it is recommended that due to the proximity of the year end (leave year ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March) that a payment of one days pay for officers is offered if leave is unable to be taken. This will cost a maximum of £2300 at an average of £82 per officer.

This decision will also mean that extra leave is allocated on an annual basis and everyone will received an additional days leave each year. This means that all contracts, policies, staff handbook, etc. will need to be updated to reflect this change.

Linked to this is some confusion around the allocation of additional leave for employees on the fifth anniversary of their employment. This has previously been suggested as five additional days are awarded, but the Absence and Leave policy

suggests three days. It is recommended that this committee reiterates the policy view that they would like to take.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

Noted above.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

There is a financial implication for this, both in the current year and for future years – whilst there is no direct financial impact, ensuring suitable cover when officers are on leave will mean additional staffing resources are drawn in.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Absence and Leave policy.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager



**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the committee on pay negotiations for 2023/24 and to propose an uplift from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the committee note the report and information from NALC.
2. That the committee notes the impact that this increase will have on the budget for 2023/24.
3. That the committee agrees to award this increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April, on the understanding that any increased offer will result in backdating this additional amount.
4. That the committee also notes that unions have rejected this offer and that industrial action is being discussed.

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

**The following statement came from SLCC on 26<sup>th</sup> February:**

*The National Employers have made a what they term “a full and final offer” in response to the pay claim received from the NJC Trade Unions. The details are:*

- *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.*
- *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine (i.e. points 44 and above)*

*This offer would achieve a bottom rate of pay of £11.59 per hour with effect from 1 April 2023 (which equates to a pay increase of 9.42 per cent for employees on pay point 2) and everyone on the NJC pay spine would receive a minimum 3.88 per cent pay increase.*

*If this offer is accepted, it will mean that an employee on the bottom pay point in April 2021 (earning £18,333) will have received an increase in their pay of £4,033, which is 22.0 per cent over the two years to April 2023. For an employee at the mid-point of the pay spine (pay point 22), their pay will have increased over the same period by £3,850 (13.99 per cent).*

*The increase of £1,925 is the same amount that was agreed for the current year (2022/23)*

*They say that the total national paybill cost resulting from the offer would be £1.093 Billion or 6.42%*

*It is important to note that the increase of £1,925 is for up to point 43 only – the LC3 above substantive range begins at point 42, and scale points above that are offered an increase of 3.88%*

*The National Employers are also seeking “without prejudice” discussions with the NJC Unions on how to restructure the pay spine, bearing in mind the current and future increases to the National Living Wage.*

*All other aspects of the unions claim – annual leave, a reduction of the working week etc have been declined.*

The full time working week is 37 hours which, if tallied up over the 52 weeks of the year, is a total of 1924 hour per year. This pay rise equates to £1 per hour increase, no matter what pay scale an officer is on.

In total, officers are employed for 717.5 hours per week, equivalent to 19.4 FTE staff. If this is used as a baseline, £1925 multiplied by 19.4 staff members would cost £37,310. The current budget has allocated £37,479 for pay increases, but it should be noted that this also includes incremental increases (these are payable for around 12 officers, averaging around £600 each) which adds a further £7000+. The increased wages will also mean additional pension costs, which adds a further 24%. This means that the total increase to the wage bill with this proposal is:

- NJC pay award	£37,310
- Incremental increases*	£7200
Sub total	£44,510
- Pension costs at 23.7%	£10,449
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£54,959</b>

This is around £17,500 more than has been budgeted.

\*This is an estimate and so may be slightly higher or lower.

It is recommended that, as has happened in the past two years, that officers are awarded with a pay rise based upon the offer, on the understanding that if increased, additional backdated payments can be made. In previous years, where a large payment has been made in September, difficulties have been experienced by some officers with large NI bills, student loan bills, impacts on benefits and a disproportionate amount taken in ‘payments’. To avoid this, it is recommended that all incremental payments and the £1925 pay award are given from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

It should be noted that some of the unions involved in these discussions have already rejected this offer and are planning to ballot for strike action. This is due to this increase being below inflation for many.

#### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

**Agenda item: OC 121/23**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the committee on the budget for 2023/24 with additional figures following recent developments.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That committee notes the report and the attached budget sheet.**
- 2. That committee notes the additional expenditure noted below.**
- 3. That committee notes that this budget remains incomplete due to the lack of clarity from MKCC with regard to the Landscape Contract**
- 4. That the committee agrees to a slightly different way of reporting against the budget for the coming year, bringing greater transparency and responding to requests from councillors.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

Since the creation and ratification of the budget in January, there have been some further developments and greater clarity around key issues. This includes both income and expenditure, with some extra monies coming in and some additional payments being needed.

The attached sheet covers the coming year and shows the differences suggested:

- Separation out for the various 'organisational' costs, to promote transparency.
  - o Democracy and governance
  - o Whole organisation services
  - o Organisational Management

This also includes some minor changes around separating out 'uniforms' and 'branding and engagement', meeting and hospitality costs being renamed.

- The move from what were previously 'HQ' costs into services.
  - o Dog and waste bins into Environment
  - o Events into Community Development
  - o Meeting Place costs moving into Services budgets.

Training and development has moved into Organisational Management costs, rather than services.

Also included within the income and expenditure lines are additional elements that we know about – the Big Lottery Funding, Community Centre funding and spending.

Other changes are that all staffing costs that have been proposed and / or agreed have been included – this means the staffing costs now reflect the best case scenario for the coming year, with £1925 and any incremental points allocated. This has resulted in £17k more within the staffing budget than previously, but this does include £25k allocated for ‘cover’.

As can be seen, the Big Lottery Fund is due to pay the majority of the grant in year 1 – this includes a contribution towards wages, which have NOT yet been separated out.

The upshot of all this is that the ‘bottom line’ has moved into a deficit. This is primarily due to the additional payments noted:

- Staffing (£17k more than budget, but with potential ‘claw back’)
- Community Centres investment (£45k added following agreement at FC)
- Slight uplift on Community Centres and ‘Building Costs’ due to the additional costs of annual / regular maintenance, plus a small amount due to the ending of the lease agreement at the Fishermead depot.

This remains a challenging budget, with some wriggle room for additional savings. Until year end is complete, the council will not be in a position to fully know the likely ‘carry over’ figure, or any residual spending necessary to complete the agreed decisions of the council (e.g. depot, pickup, etc.). There are savings that can be made (currently no service plan in place, no ‘emerging priorities’ spend, staffing cover of £25,000 that may not be needed, etc.) but longer terms adjustments are going to be essential to ensure that the string fiscal position that have been achieved, does not go to waste.

#### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

#### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

budget 2023.24 v7 Mar 23

#### **AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

2023/24 Budget with 5 year projection		
	2023/24	20203/24
<b>EXPENDITURE - Democracy and Governance</b>		
CLr Ward Initiatives Fund	£	3,800.00
Communities and Environment Fund	£	12,000.00
Grant Aid - ResAssociations	£	3,500.00
Member Allowances and Expenses	£	25,749.00
		Based on 'quality' allowance and 10 broadband
<b>Democracy and Governance Total</b>	£	45,049.00
<b>EXPENDITURE - Whole organisational services</b>		
Meeting and hospitality costs	£	2,000.00
Insurance Inc Vans	£	9,000.00
HQ - Building Costs (regulars)	£	25,000.00
Vehicles	£	9,630.00
Uniforms	£	500.00
Branding and engagement	£	500.00
		Reflects actual costs
<b>Whole organisation services total</b>	£	46,630.00
<b>EXPENDITURE - Organisational Management</b>		
Affiliations	£	5,250.00
Professional Services	£	4,000.00
Audit Fees	£	4,800.00
Capital Loan Repayment	£	26,818.00
Insurance Inc Vans	£	9,000.00
Newsletters, Websites and Communications	£	5,510.00
Stationary and Amenities and services - HQ	£	4,000.00
IT (previously included broadband and Members IT)	£	25,000.00
Training, Development and Conferences	£	8,000.00
<b>Organisational Management Total</b>	£	84,378.00
<b>Organisational Costs Total</b>	£	176,057.00
<b>Staffing Costs - increments included</b>		
HQ Staffing	£	205,592.71
Youth Staffing	£	104,758.50
Community Staffing	£	145,064.12
Landscape and Environment Staffing	£	249,677.26
Members Staffing	£	32,906.38
Meeting Places Staffing	£	66,229.55
<b>Increments &amp; payrise (5%)</b>	£	-
Staffing cover	£	25,000.00
<b>Staffing Total</b>	£	829,228.52
<b>Landscape - Building costs</b>	£	6,000.00
Landscape - Services Budget	£	18,000.00
Youth - Building Costs	£	7,000.00
Youth - Services Budget	£	8,000.00
Advice - Services Budget	£	500.00
Environment - Services Budget (inc dog bins)	£	9,500.00
Community Food - Services Budget	£	2,000.00
Community Development - Services Budget (incl events)	£	9,000.00
Meeting Places (Costs)	£	65,000.00
Service Plan Delivery	£	20,000.00
Emerging priorities	£	10,000.00
Grants - services payments (BLF)	£	37,629.51
Community Centres investment (agreed)	£	90,000.00
<b>Services Delivery Total</b>	£	282,629.51
<b>Depot / Landscape Investment</b>		
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>	£	1,287,915.03
<b>INCOME</b>		
Bank and Investment Interest	£	3,200.00
MKC LTRS Grant / Deprivation grant	£	168,592.99
Hire of Meeting Places	£	65,000.00
Landscape Grant	£	189,182.87
Precept	£	688,403.88
Grants income (agreed)	£	54,009.51
MKC Funding - Comm Centres and CIF	£	52,000.00
Additional Income Generation	£	30,000.00
<b>Income Total</b>	£	1,250,389.25
Transfer to / from reserves		
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT</b>	-£	37,525.78
Balance carried over from 2022/23 (NB Includes £100k in long term CCLA)	£	520,000.00
Proposed surplus / deficit	-£	37,525.78
End of year carry over	£	482,474.22

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Operations & Resources Committee**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the committee on proposals around community centre improvements, following the award(s) of funding.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Committee notes the report and the award of funding towards improvements.
2. That the Council Manager, H+S Manager and Caretaker Manager prepare a full evaluation of priority areas, within the agreed budget.
3. That this includes the stated outcomes linked to the CIF grant AND agreements with MKCC regarding the submitted quotes.
4. That both EAC and NFMP are also included in any improvement plan, focusing on the most pressing issues.
5. That consideration is given to further investment, if this programme shows clear benefit.

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The issue of making significant improvements at the community centres has been an item of discussion for many months (years?), with funding being the major barrier to this. Following lobbying from ward councillors to MKCC, an award of £40,000 to 'match fund' a contribution from WCC. This funding was agreed at WCC Full Council on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (FC 197/23).

In addition, an application was made for Community Infrastructure Funding (CIF) for 2023/24 to cover improvements to toilets, disabled access and, in a separate bid, solar panels and battery storage at TBMP. This funding is also 'match funding' with the following grant contributions / WCC funding:

- Solar panels / battery	MKCC - £3600	WCC - £3600	Total -
£7200			
- Access improvements	MKCC - £8114	WCC - £8114	Total –
16,228			

The solar funding is straightforward – installation of all relevant equipment, in line with the quote received. **It is recommended that this installation is booked and takes place alongside any improvement works to electrics at TBMP.**

The access is more complex, with the following submitted:

- *Provision of new bathrooms at Tinkers Bridge (£7222) and Coffee Hall*

*Meeting Places (£6605), incorporating gender neutral, disabled access and, if possible, 'Changing Places' approaches (although this is felt unlikely, due to size constraints). This will include suitable equipment, access issues addressed and décor.*

- *Auto-openers at Netherfield Meeting Place and The Council Chambers, plus the toilets, to enable equitable access (£2400)*

**It is recommended that the 'auto openers' at NFMP and The Chambers are undertaken as soon as possible into the new funding regime – these will ensure accessibility to these spaces which has been lacking.**

The previously submitted quotes for the works that MKCC have used include a range of activities, including toilet works noted above, but also a range of other elements – new flooring, new ceilings, decorated throughout, new door furniture and locks on cupboards, etc. It may be that some of these issues can be reduced to make money go further. For example:

- Tinkers Bridge includes the removal and replacement of equipment in both men's and ladies' toilets. However, this is only necessary if those toilets are to become fully accessible and, within the current quote, this is not the case (with the disabled toilet simply having a new access door installed). This would potentially save a significant sum.
- Coffee Hall has the removal and replacement of the kitchen floor, which is relatively new and therefore is unlikely to be at the end of its life. This, whilst small, would also save some money.

There are a number of items that have been included within the quotes that could be altered to provide small, but significant, savings. With the additional funding towards the toilet works (£13,827), plus the potential for further savings by reducing the level of replacements within the existing quotes, it is anticipated that there could be up to £25,000 available to spend on other centres. There is a pressing need to replace the kitchen at EAC (this is both unsightly and becoming dangerous) and a range of outstanding works at NFMP that would be supported by funding for disability access, as noted above.

**It is recommended that WCC Officers, working with councillors and RA's where appropriate, detail a list of 'priority areas' for work within the budget agreed.** As noted above, some of these changes are necessary as part of the funding awarded, but some flexibility remains.

It should be noted that concerns remain about investment into centres where leases and agreements leave WCC open to loss of monies – this is especially concerning at NFMP where the lease, whilst currently in place until 2040, has a 'break clause' for development and has previously been suggested for demolition. However, the same concerns are present to a lesser extent at CHMP and TBMP (although TBMP is owned, so lessened risk).

There was a previous paper that came to council that included discussions around this issue, with an agreement that a consultation was wanted around investment in community centres. It should be noted that this was prior to agreement from MKCC



for the funding noted above and was a parish wide consultation on the use, wants and focus for the centres across the parish. This was agreed to take place post elections. **It is recommended that this continues to take place, but that it doesn't delay the works that can get started when agreed.**

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Refurb for Coffee Hall  
Refurb for Tinkers Bridge

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager