

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Liz Simpkins (Vice-Chair), Luke Louis, Ruth McMillan, Alan Williamson

Also present:

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)
Steve McNay (Council Manager)
Marta Sobis (Responsible Financial Officer)

OC 46/23 Apologies:

Cllr Donna Fuller (holiday)
Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)
Cllr D'Anne Mordechai (personal)

AGREED

OC 47/23 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 48/23 Chairs Announcements:

The Chair welcomed Marta in her new role as Responsible Financial Officer.

NOTED

OC 49/23 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the public.

NOTED

OC 50/23 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 11th September 2023 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

OC 51/23 To review the proposed 2024/2025 version one (1) of the draft budget:

Version 1 of the proposed budget for 2024 / 2025, is based upon the current understanding of the budget headings and for the basis in any public consultation.

The budget sheet as circulated includes both the reforecast for the current year and three (3) possible options for the coming year (2024 / 2025), based upon precept levels.

There remains a number of unknown elements, there are no details of the council tax base, the likely uplift in the landscape grant, confirmation in writing of the LCTRS grant, potential wage increases and so on. Given this, assumptions have had to be made.

The three (3) budget proposals have varying levels of surplus or deficit, however, it should be noted that, as with the current year, there is no 'service plan' costed and no emerging priorities funding in place.

A regular contribution to reserves should be considered, especially following the past two (2) years where below inflation level increases have led to a reduction in the level of reserves held. Whilst they are currently just within acceptable levels (at 4 months delivery costs), any further deficits would place the council in a position of extreme risk. Any deficit budget at this point would be against the advice of both the Responsible Financial Officer and Council Manager.

The recommendation of the Council Manager and Responsible Financial Officer is that a surplus budget must be delivered in the 2024 / 2025 financial year.

The work around how council choses to replace the previous Operations Manager role and review any other staffing implications as a result of this work will continue, but any decisions may not have been clarified prior to the budget setting deadline of the January 2024 Full Council meeting.

The Committee asked for the running and maintenance costs and the total bookings for all the Community Centres for the next Services & Communities Committee meeting in October 2023 for further consideration.

The Committee agreed to the version 1 2024 / 2025 budget as a basis for going out to public consultation.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the committee notes the report and budget proposal as circulated.**
- 2. That the committee begins the consideration process around the coming year, priorities for the council and impact on budgets.**
- 3. That the committee agrees to use this budget as the basis for the consultation with residents, asking about their views and the reality of inflationary pressures, service delivery and similar.**
- 4. That this committee recommends that this process includes the wider council with Full Council also receiving this proposal at the October meeting.**
- 5. To provide the running and maintenance costs and the total bookings for all the Community Centres for the next Services & Communities Committee meeting in October 2023 for further consideration.**

OC 52/23 To agree attendance and the names of up to two (2) delegates to the B&MKALC Annual General Meeting followed by a 75th Anniversary Celebration and Excellence Awards Event:

The awards take place from 5:45pm to 6:30pm followed by a vintage cream tea celebration.

Admission is from 4:45pm (no late admissions for the Awards, doors close promptly at 5:00pm).

Tickets are limited and restricted to two (2) representatives per member council. The awards event directly follows the Annual General Meeting and separate attendance at the Awards event is not possible.

The committee agreed that Cllr Ruth McMillan and Cllr Alan Williamson will represent Woughton Community Council as the two (2) voting delegates to the B&MKALC Annual General Meeting followed by a 75th Anniversary Celebration and Excellence Awards Event.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Ruth McMillan and Cllr Alan Williamson to represent Woughton Community Council as the two (2) voting delegates to the B&MKALC Annual General Meeting followed by a 75th Anniversary Celebration and Excellence Awards Event.

OC 53/23 To agree a new Equal Opportunities Policy:

The existing Equality and Diversity policy is now due for review.

There is a new policy that is based on the NALC template and links to other new policies that have been ratified.

The committee agreed to adopt the new policy.

RESOLVED

That the committee agrees to adopt the new Equal Opportunities Policy.

OC 54/23 To review the Complaints Form:

The committee agreed to omit the complaints form from the new Equal Opportunities Policy.

RESOLVED

That the committee agrees to omit the complaints form from the new Equal Opportunities Policy.

OC 55/23 To inform the committee regarding the White Ribbon Campaign event:

The event is to be held on Saturday 25th November 2023, 4:00pm meet at the Milton Keynes Gallery, at 5:45pm a short walk to the Milton Keynes Rose, with a 6:00pm start for the vigil, participants are asked to bring a torch or battery tealight.

The committee suggested holding a vigil at the Coffee Hall Remembrance Garden, and to take this agenda item to the next meeting of the Services & Communities Committee for further consideration.

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends to the Services & Communities Committee, to consider holding a White Ribbon Vigil at the Coffee Hall Remembrance Garden.

OC 56/23 To inform the B&MKALC Representative Cllr Paul Harvey of any questions or issues that can then be put on Woughton Community Council's behalf to the NALC Larger Councils meeting to be held on Tuesday 31st October 2023:

The committee suggested that this agenda item is discussed at the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED

That this agenda item is discussed at the next Full Council meeting.

OC 57/23 To Update the committee on the appointment of an external HR company, and the next steps:

A three (3) year contract has been signed, and the Council Manager will be meeting online with representatives of the company as they wish to look through all staff contracts and the Staff Handbook to ensure all are fully compliant with the latest HR legislation.

The Council Manager will feedback to the at the next committee meeting.

NOTED

OC 58/23 To move and second and then to be put to the vote the following motion:

Cllr Sue Smith moved and Cllr Alan Williamson seconded 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 59/23 To start initial discussions on organisational staffing structures:

The committee agreed to pay increases in line with the job evaluation process for two (2) officers.

The committee also agreed to continue the staffing structure discussions to ensure suitable resources are in place.

The committee reminded councillors that any reference requests should only be provided by councillors if in a personal capacity.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee agrees to pay increases in line with the job evaluation process for two (2) officers.**
- 2. That the committee also agrees to continue the staffing structure discussions to ensure suitable resources are in place.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 13th November 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:00PM

Chair _____ Date _____