

Agenda item; OC 16/23

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations & Resources Committee

Monday 12th June 2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To review the policies noted and make changes where appropriate and / or refer to Full Council for agreement.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee reviews the following polices:**
 - a. Financial Regulations 2023**
 - b. Write off and disposal policy.**
 - c. GDPR and Data protection**
 - d. Information Policy**
 - e. Social Media Policy**
- 2. That the committee agrees the review timescales for each policy.**
- 3. That any changes are made, and policies are then saved to the new Sharepoint Folder, Brightpay (where suitable) and the website (where suitable).**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The five polices were provided to committee members via Sharepoint after the previous meeting for review and any comments. At time of writing, no comments had been received by committee members with regard to any of the policies.

The Council Manager has reviewed all the policies and the following recommendations are made:

Financial Regulations

These are the 'model' regulations provided by NALC and as such, reflect best practice and the relevant legislation. Changes suggested are limited, but some may be worth considering.

- A review of levels and limits within 1.32 – these have been static for some time, so a review is useful even if no change (no change is recommended by the Council Manager)
- 1.72 Increasing the petty cash float to a level of £200.

It is important to note that whilst this is the limit of recommendations for change, the review process has raised some additional issues around reporting mechanisms and as such, it is recommended that the Council Manager works with the Finance Team to ensure that all relevant reporting duties are complied with. This includes:

- 1.5 – A review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control – this is partially covered by the Internal Audit process, but it is recommended that this is further covered by a review within this committee early in the calendar year, prior to the submission of the AGAR.
- 1.18 – Quarterly signing of the bank reconciliation by ‘a member other than the Chairperson’ – it is recommended that committee decides who this member should be.
- 1.39 – ‘regular’ provision to committee of statements relating to the budget, noting any significant variances. It is recommended that this committee decides on what ‘regular’ means – it is recommended that quarterly ‘at least’ – is this sufficient or more often?
- 1.41 – banking arrangements should be reviewed regularly (including bank mandates) – again, clarity of ‘regular’ from the committee’s viewpoint (recommended that annually as part of the review noted in 1.5 is agreed).
- 1.46 – List of payments to be provided to this committee around regular payments. Not sure this has happened, so needs to be in place for the next meeting and then provided each April at the start of the financial year.
- 1.58 – approval of direct debits needs to happen every two years. Again, it is recommended that this happens at the next meeting of this committee and is included in the annual review in future.
- Review of the Investment Strategy has happened relatively recently, but can also form part of the annual review of relevant elements of financial control.
- 1.109 – checks of ‘stocks’ and stores. Whilst we don’t have significant stores as such, a check on what there is should happen and be noted, so again, include within the annual review.

The principal here is that council is compliant and records that compliance – an annual ‘financial health check’ covering the above would be sensible.

Write off and Disposal Policy

No changes are recommended.

GDPR and Data Policy

This is basically okay as is, with just one concern about ensuring that the Data Protection Officer role is embedded within a job description (either Council Manager or Deputy - RFO / Operations).

Information Policy

This policy is linked to the GDPR above but expands upon this and provides a comprehensive overview of how we will manage requests for information. There are no recommendations to change this.

Social Media Policy

This policy details the organisational approach to social media and links to Code of Conduct and similar. It was looked at relatively recently where the ‘Civility and

Respect' addendum was added (agreed via OC77/22). No further changes are recommended.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Policy documents shared via SharePoint to all committee members.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: OC 17/23

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations & Resources Committee

Monday 12th June 2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To propose a small working group to review the Emergency Incident Plan for the parish.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That committee undertakes a review of the Emergency Incident Plan.**
- 2. That to facilitate this, a small working group or similar is created.**
- 3. That this group sits under the Operations Committee, reporting back at each meeting.**
- 4. That the review works to be completed before the September 2023 meeting.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Incident Plan, initially created pre-2020, was last reviewed in 2021 as part of the annual policy review. Following recent events, new equipment and approaches and following the recent pandemic and associated impacts, a full review and refresh is now due.

To help facilitate this, a small working group, sitting within this committee, is recommended to work on this. It is not envisaged that this will be a wholesale new document or approach, but more a look through to embed the learning and experiences that have changed since the first inception.

The group will decide on the best time to meet, frequency and format.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

It may be that the group would like involvement of officers, e.g. H+S Lead, which can be requested as and when needed.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Incident Plan.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: OC 18/23

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations & Resources Committee

Monday 12th June 2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update this committee on preparations and proposals for community centre improvements.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee begins to consider approaches that they would like to see to 'cover' any closures and suspension of services during that time.**
- 3. That the committee agrees to any additional funds that may be needed to enable ongoing provision and decide what is a reasonable level to allocate.**
- 4. That the Council Manager and Ward Councillors continue to chase up MKCC for the agreed funding to enable works to start.**
- 5. That this paper and any recommendations are shared with the Services Committee at their next meeting, to ensure that service provision can also be managed effectively.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Council has agreed to fund a series of improvements across the community buildings owned or managed by WCC. This includes in the first instance, Coffee Hall and Tinkers Bridge, with funding agreed by MKCC. Whilst this funding has been agreed in principle, WCC has yet to have any formal confirmation of this and continues to await confirmation.

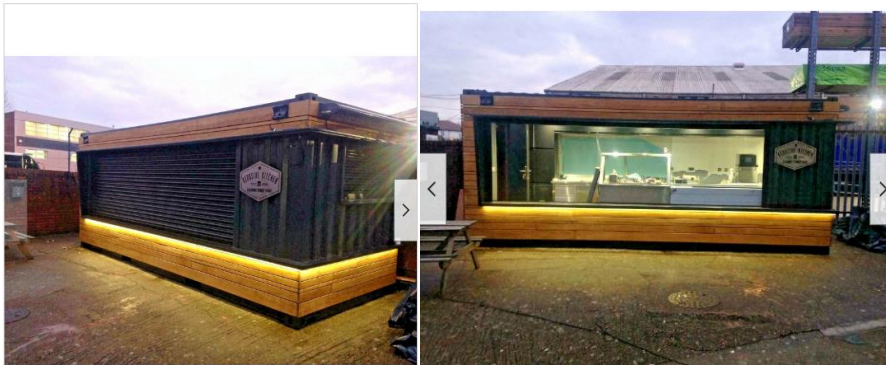
In addition to the above, agreement has also been reached that a large funding bid will be made to enable the refurbishment of Netherfield Meeting Place – this bid will be prepared over the summer for submission in September and will, potentially, include a series of bids to enable the courts, parking, etc. to be improved, alongside the centre itself.

Concerns have been raised with regard to the potential impact of closure of the two initial centres, as these host a series of community events each week which are considered essential – the community café, community meals, community larders all take place within CHMP and TBMP and, with closures of each likely to be between 4 – 6 weeks, there is concern that the loss of these services will negatively impact on residents. To address this, alternative provision is being investigated and considered.

CHMP is, in some ways, much easier to manage as the Community Fridge sits separately and can, if necessary, host the Community Larder on a Wednesday. With the Chambers next door and potential use of the green space outside, the impacts of the meeting place closure can mostly be mitigated by use of these spaces and resources.

TBMP is more challenging, with building closure meaning that there is no access to any of the spaces internally and, with nothing similar on the estate, options are more varied:

- Use of Netherfield Meeting Place. This is a distance away (under 1km if walking) and is on a different estate. This may mean some people are unwilling to travel, but is within a reasonable distance. This would be the simplest way of providing an alternative venue and, whilst some additional storage would be needed, this could easily be placed within the 'courtyard' area. There is a kitchen which would be suitable for meal prep and all the necessary equipment is in place. As things stand currently, there are no bookings that would need to be cancelled to enable this.
- Provision of a 'temporary' building or similar on Tinkers Bridge. This could be the trailer, a Portacabin type building (rented – costs start at around £50 per week according to <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/cost-guides/portable-office-hire-prices/>) or a container building that could be bought and then utilised elsewhere once works are finished. Costs vary and transport is an issue, but something similar to the picture below would cost around £8k, delivered.



There would be issues around utilities, permissions, placement, etc. but this would be a suitable base from which to work. It could also then be placed elsewhere or sold on. Use of a generator would help ensure basic facilities could be provided.* We would also work with the contractors to minimise the time where facilities were inaccessible – an external tap and socket would enable provision of water and electrics to any temporary provision and we may be able to have these in place during the latter part of the week, where most provision takes place.

- Closure of the services for a period of 4 – 6 weeks. This is not felt suitable and would mean that for services such as the larder, people would be unable to get the food that they have paid for.

The hope is that we can get the work started and completed over the summer period to minimise disruption.

Further clarification will be needed once funding is in place to nail down exactly what alterations and improvements are wanted and this will be linked to the additional funding that is in place via the CIF scheme.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

* There is an issue in terms of placement on Tinkers Bridge for any temporary structure, due to the prevalence of trees and other barriers. However, there are some spaces and further investigation would be needed to identify and ensure somewhere suitable can be accessed and provided.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager