

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th January 2025, 6:00pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Cllr Deanna Norris (Vice-Chair), Cllr Tony Coughlan, Cllr Penny Glasgow, Cllr Ruth McMillan, Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Alan Williamson

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)
Sean Perry (Operations Manager)
Marta Sobis (Responsible Finance Officer).

OC 160/24 Apologies:

Cllr Eamonn Bobey
Cllr D'Anne Mordecai
Cllr April Rennie

These apologies were accepted by the committee

OC 161/24 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 162/24 Chairs Announcements:

The Chair informed the committee of the sad passing of Cllr Tom Fraser, from Campbell Park Community Council, who has been a long serving member. The funeral will be held on Thursday 16th January.

The Chair also updated the committee on the opening of the new Wellbeing Hub and informed the committee that there will

OC 163/24 Questions from the public:

No questions received.

OC 164/24 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 14th October 2024 were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair, with the adjustment of adding Cllr McMillan to the list of apologies.

**Proposed: Cllr McMillan. Seconded: Cllr Smith
RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote**

OC 165/24 To agree the List of Payments, Bank Reconciliations for the months of October and November 2024:

Cllrs Sue Smith and Deanna Norris examined the paperwork, are satisfied that they are a true and accurate record and will sign them. The auditor has also reviewed these as part of the internal audit process. This was agreed by all present.

**Proposed: Cllr Smith. Seconded: Cllr Simpkins
RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote**

OC 166/24 To provide an update on external training and potential 'in house' provision

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, explaining that Breakthrough Communications have sent through some information on both 'bespoke' courses and individually bookable courses. It

was noted that these courses are 'online' and some subjects may be better delivered in a face to face setting, which would be likely to increase the costs (suggested that at least £200 extra per course).

Cllr McMillan spoke positively about their experience of Breakthrough, suggesting that they provide high quality and sector specific sessions. Sessions could include councillors from other areas (e.g. neighbouring parishes) or be provided on a city-wide basis (if online).

Queries were also noted around how 'bespoke' the sessions may be – whether they are sector specific or tailored precisely to the needs of the parish.

Sessions suggested, as felt useful for everyone, were:

- Creating an effective Council Communications and Community Engagement strategy
- Appropriate use of social media for councillors and how to stay safe online
- Creating a positive internal council communication culture and effective officer/member collaboration
- Building confidence and participation skills and dealing with difficult people and situations

PROPOSAL

That WCC commissions four (4) sessions through Breakthrough, utilising the current savings on offer, for delivery over the coming council year. The sessions to include those noted above and that individual sessions can also be booked if appropriate.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Glasgow
RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

OC 167/24 To update the committee on HR issues, based on the December HR update

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, updating the committee on various HR and related issues.

RESOLVED - noted

OC 168/24 To review and agree the following policies

- Employment Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Capability and Sickness Management

Operations Manager presented the papers and updated policies. No major changes needed on any, but some legislation updated and language changed.

Proposal:

That the committee agrees to the changes noted within the documents noted and ratifies these policies in line with the review timings noted within.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Coughlan
RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

OC 169/24 To inform the committee of the open letter from the Chair of the National Association of Local Councils

The Council Manager shared the content, and the committee considered the included information in a letter sent by Cllr Keith Stevens. This included an update on remote meetings, council tax referendum principles NOT being extended to local councils, English Devolution White Paper and the possible impact on Milton Keynes (potential for a new 'metro mayor' area and which local authorities (LA's) may be part of this) – this was seen as both a positive and negative move, with challenges around choices and spending. Would also potentially impact police, health, transport, etc.

Also covered multi year settlements for LA's, sanctions against poorly behaved councillors and a strengthening of the standards regime, push for compensation for local councils relating to the

increase in NI levels (to bring into line with other statutory bodies), new NALC website and encouraging new councillors to stand and the links to General Power of Competence (GPoC), linking to advert for co-option to the vacant Netherfield seat this week.

Comments were also made around news around potential changes to the 'tips' in Milton Keynes, which will be monitored.

RESOLVED – Noted.

OC 170/24 To inform the committee of the Mayor Awards

The Council Manager shared details of the annual 'Mayors Awards' with a view to supporting nominations for people within the parish. Closing date is 23rd February.

RESOLVED – Noted.

OC 171/24 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.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr McMillan

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

THE MEETING WAS THEN CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC AND BROADCAST STOPPED.

OC 172/24 To consider any relevant Human Resources Matters

The Council Manager addressed some issues around staffing including:

- Agreement that all managers would be placed on the same pay scale, to provide fairness

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

- That the advice worker post, landscape post and outstanding youth work posts would be advertised, with a view to having all officers in post by the start of the new council year (end April 2025) and that the current temporary contract for the advice worker (PT) be made permanent.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

These agreements were made with the understanding that this is all within the previously agreed budget for the coming year and did not constitute any additional spending, with the exception of a small amount to bring managers into line (as noted in the first point above).

Date of next meeting:

Monday 10th February 2025, 6:00pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 6:43 PM

Chair _____ Date _____