

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th September 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Deanna Norris (Vice-Chair), Eamonn Bobey, Tony Coughlan, D'Anne Mordecai, Alan Williamson

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

Sean Perry (Operations Manager)

Marta Sobis (Responsible Finance Officer).

OC 135/24 Apologies:

Cllr Ruth McMillian

Cllr April Rennie

Cllr Penny Glasgow

Cllr Liz Simpkins

These were individually accepted as apologies.

OC 136/24 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 137/24 Chairs Announcements:

The Chair thanked everyone involved in the 'Woughton is 50' festival that took place on Saturday, noting that Kevin Vickers (Events Coordinator for WCC) had taken overall responsibility and had special thanks, alongside stall holders, officers and councillors, resident associations, stage providers and those that attended.

The Chair noted that Apple Day is the next event, taking place on Saturday 28th September from noon (apple picking) at the community garden on Rochfords, Coffee Hall.

The Chair also encouraged people to comment on the current ward boundary review taking place, as there is some concern that the parish may be split into three different wards for both MKCC AND parliamentary seats. The Chair provided an email link to send views to.

OC 138/24 Questions from the public:

No questions received.

OC 139/24 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 10th June 2024 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Tony Coughlan

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 140/24 To agree the List of Payments, Bank Reconciliations for the months of June and July 2024:

Cllrs Sue Smith and Deanna Norris have examined the paperwork, are satisfied that they are a true and accurate record and will sign them. This was agreed by all present.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Deanna Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 141/24 To agree adjustments to policies relating to the updated Financial Regulations, specifically Procurement, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders

The RFO spoke to the paper, explaining that following ratification of the new NALC model Financial Regulations prior to the summer break, that the linked policies of Scheme of Delegation and Procurement Policy have been updated to bring into line. The changes are relatively small and relate to the changed levels of authorisation, levels of procurement thresholds and include some recommended changes to the Standing Orders (which will need to be agreed at Full Council).

Councillor comments included that they were pleased to see policies that were harmonious with each other.

PROPOSAL:

'That the committee ratifies the Procurement Policy and Scheme of Delegation and recommends the changes to Standing Orders be proposed at Full Council on 23rd September'.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Tony Coughlan

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 142/24 To consider the budget for 2025/2026.

The RFO presented the first draft of the budget, explaining that due to changes in funding from MKCC, there would be a loss of around £65,000 next year, from the LCTRS fund. This may or may not be followed by further reductions over the coming years. This presents some challenges for the council but, despite this change, the first draft provided a balanced budget with a 6% percent increase (around £50,000 increase).

The RFO explained that the budget was, as always at this stage, based upon some unknowns (e.g. council tax base, any increase in landscaping budget, any agreement on pay increases, etc.) but did look at some changes based upon current spending and knowledge, as well as some ideas around more efficient budget planning. This included a need to change the budget sheet to reflect the joining of the youth and community teams with a shared budget (reflected in increased building costs for 'youth' which relate to No 99, the community wellbeing hub).

It was agreed that some additional work would be done, with a view to sending info to ALL councillors in advance of the next Full Council meeting and possibly arranging a further, standalone meeting to discuss some of the likely financial challenges over the coming years.

- Provision of a three year projected budget, covering any further reductions in LCTRS funding.
- Consider various budget projections based on different inflation rates (currently at 2% ish, but some figures include a 5% increase)
- Provide budgets with a variety of precept increases included, ranging from zero to 20%
- Provide information about the different service costs for the various directorates (e.g. landscaping, community centres, advice, wellbeing, youth, environment, food, etc.)
- Send all relevant information to all councillors.

Proposal

'That the committee considers the first draft, the discussions that have taken place and the provision of the additional information noted above, with the budget papers being sent to all councillors for consideration'

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Tony Coughlan

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 143/24 To provide information about equipment booking process for community groups

The Council Manager spoke to this paper, explaining that this came about as a result of a local group making requests from different officers for the same event, making organisation messy and in danger of things being missed. It was also inefficient to have so many people involved. As a result, a simple online form has been created, which was shared with the meeting.

Proposal

'That the committee notes the report and online form and recommends that this is used by groups with immediate effect and, if possible, is placed within a 'councillor' area on the website'

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Alan Williamson

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 144/24 To receive a presentation on the PLINTH data management system

The committee received a presentation from the Operations Manager around the PLINTH system, which provides a 'client records management' system, currently used by the advice and wellbeing service, with youth provision being implemented this week. There is potential for this also to be used by councillors for casework and for a variety of other options within the council.

Councillors asked questions regarding the security of information, the rules around sharing personal details (e.g. if a parent asked about a young person, or the police requested information). The Council Manager explained that the privacy policy, Data Protection and GDPR approaches covered these issues, citing the 'Gillick competency' ruling regarding young people and both Subject Access requests and the need for legal action to share with law enforcement.

RESOLVED - noted

OC 145/24 To inform the committee of the new NALC website and encourage sign ups from all councillors.

The Council Manager shared a communication from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) which is the umbrella body for all local council ins in England and Wales. They are launching a new website and are encouraging all councillors and officers to register on the site to enable access to information that is relevant to them

It was suggested that this information could go to Full Council to ensure all councillors are aware

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 146/24 To propose the launch of the annual priorities survey

see <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCC2025>)

The Council Manager explained the purpose of the survey and the minor changes made this year, due to the Woughton is 50 approach. Committee suggested that the link is shared online, via social media, etc with a view to running the survey until Christmas, allowing time prior to the January Full Council to take views into consideration, prior to the budget / precept agreement.

Proposal

'That the survey is launched, with a programme of sharing online, via posters, with councillors also encouraged to engage and use their tablets to gain responses'.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Smith. Seconded: Cllr Alan Williamson

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

Date of next meeting:

Monday 14th October 2024, 6:00pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.03 PM

Chair _____ Date _____