

Agenda item: SC 102/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Services & Communities Committee

Monday 28th September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on fly-tipping and the WCC approach.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That WCC continue to work with the principle authority around management of fly tipping.**
- 3. That WCC continues to investigate the use of CCTV cameras to address some fly-tipping hotspots, as agreed previously.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

We have seen significant issues around fly-tipping across the parish over recent months and are getting regular contacts from residents unhappy about the impact and frequency.

Our Environment team continue to take a proactive approach, addressing issues quickly and with an educational approach in the first instance. This often addresses issues effectively, with people being made aware of the situation, how best to deal with their waste and managing this accordingly. Alternatively, it means that we are made aware that a collection has been arranged and a date for the waste to be removed, which is then followed up on.

Bigger challenges remain when looking at situations where there is no clear offender. These are reported in line with MKC guidance, but this does not always result in removal or management of the waste. The regular meetings between WCC and MKC around these issues have been 'on hold' due to the current situation, but should be restarting shortly, which may have an impact.

The lack of enforcement powers is also a challenge, which continuing work with MKC aims to address, both in terms of expectations and any use of CCTV investment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The level of demand is increasing the amount of time that officers are spending, with associated demand on finance allocated to these roles. However, it remains manageable at the current time.

Any increased use of CCTV will have a financial impact, as discussed previously within a number of meetings. Without a clear plan for use of and outcomes from the

investment, the council has stated it is unwilling to commit to this expenditure at the current time.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

As noted above, the demand on officer time is increasing, but remains within agreed levels.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: SC 103/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Services & Communities Committee

Monday 28th September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide an update on the Service Committee Annual Service Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Council Manager continues to work with officers to achieve the plan, with variations based on this paper.**
- 3. That the committee considers items for the service plan for 2021/22, so that these can be considered during budget planning.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Following the Coronavirus pandemic, the closure of WCC offices and buildings, shops, schools, etc. and the ongoing impact of the restrictions relating to the pandemic, the service plan that was agreed for delivery this year is in need of review to reflect this impact.

The service plan has 21 items on it, of which 10 sit within the Service Committee remit. Some are unaffected, some will need adjusting and some will not be met this year. Briefly, this breaks down as:

1 – Woughton on the Road. The trailer is up and running and the wrapping should happen, if somewhat later than anticipated. City Fibre have agreed to support the wrapping of the trailer and designs are being finalised currently. The trailer has provided an excellent resource over the summer and this can be extended to include a variety of other provision (pop up Community Fridge, pop up café, etc.)

2 – Community Allotments. Transfer is progressing. Planning being considered. Big Lottery have halted ALL non-CV-19 funding for six months, so progress will be slowed by this. However, alternatives will be investigated, and work can start once land transfer is agreed and planning permission given.

6 – Increase the equipment library. Due to MKC refusing permission for additional storage, the 'hold' on the community growing space and the need to reduce spending, we will replace broken but not increase the number of items this year. Some additional items in place (pressure washer, carpet cleaner) and webpage / online form being created.

8 – Resident Skills Development. No face-to-face training at the current time, but potential for some 'online' options. To be discussed in RA Forum.

10 – Waste, recycling and the environment. Difficult currently and impact on summer plans likely. Building understanding, volunteer teams and similar restricted by situation, but work is continuing,

nevertheless. Significant work to do to promote Woughton cleanliness, including focus within Gazette, during trailer sessions and generally during day-to-day operations.

12 – Community Development – continuing, but in a different way. Some good work started (e.g. Beanhill Comm Garden, online Res Association Forum) but restrictions limit significantly.

13 – Events. Trailer and Play Rangers have happened. Pop up café has been successful. Limits to what is possible, but consideration for different types of event continuing.

17 – Youth Council. Unlikely in 2020, but potential for early 2021 for new council year / new school year (either May or September). *Saving made through placing 'on hold' but may be needed in early 2021.*

18 – CCTV. Decision to make on spend, given impact of CV19 on budgets. Meeting with TVP and MKC arranged and update to be provided once this has happened.

19 – MK Storehouse. Decision made and reduced funding awarded.

There are some items on this list that, due to the pandemic, will be 'rolled over' into 2021/22. However, there are also a number that will be complete. Given this, idea for focus from the committee for the next council year should be considered and suggested, to become part of the planning process and budgeting preparation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Some savings are likely and necessary due to impact of Covid. Full breakdown of savings to be provided within Resources and Finance committee after half year budget is finalised (October 2020)

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

No variation noted. Some officers have had variations to usual working patterns and focus, due to situation, but nothing specific within this proposal / paper.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Service Plan 2020/21.

AUTHOR:

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: SC 104/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Services & Communities Committee

Monday 28th September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on the Summer programme and outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the report is used to provide guidance for service delivery over the coming months.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

During the summer, the council provided a range of opportunities for people to engage with the council during the period where the offices were closed. This included use of the trailer to provide focal points on all estates, Play Range provision, community fridge opening with new processes and the pop-up café. The council also provided food parcels throughout the early part of the pandemic.

Trailer provision. This provided six weeks of weekly provision on all estates (shared provision on Coffee Hall / Leadenhall) with councillors and officers staffing the trailer. Attendances were varied across the estates (see table one below) and included both the opportunity to speak to WCC, report concerns, collect dog waste bags / reusable bottles and get information about services, waste and recycling, etc.

Play Rangers provided sessions throughout August, covering the same places as the trailer, offering open access play within green spaces across the parish. This included a range of different activities and projects and focused on the whole family, rather than being restricted to only children. Attendances were similarly varied (see table two below).

The pop up café ran from August into September and is continuing whilst the weather allows. This provided free drinks and cakes, using the green space between the office and the church on Coffee Hall. Attendance was fairly consistent (see table 1 below).

Community Fridge re-opened on July 14th, with a new way of delivering, reducing risk and access, alongside limiting the amount that could be collected to enable more people to be involved. Figures for the fridge have been consistently high and have benefited from the new 'Food Connect' project and use of volunteers to support delivery. Overall figures at time of writing (18th September) are:

Total in since restart (14th July) – 5666kg. The vast majority of this has been handed out, with the highest level of distribution taking place on Tuesday 15th September, where almost a third of a tonne of food was collected by attendees.

There were some highlights from the summer – the session on Tinkers Bridge where we trialled a ‘pop up’ community fridge resulted in significantly higher numbers of visitors to the trailer, the placement of the trailer on Eaglestone meant significant visitor numbers, but many of them were from neighbouring parishes (Campbell Park especially, due to proximity and travel routes) and the distribution of the reusable bottles saw excellent results, with (we hope) a reduction in the need for and use of single use plastic drink bottles.

The Community Fridge originally reopened in CHMP, but has now returned to its original space and is working well. Volunteers are now managing this delivery, overseen by the community team.

Table 1 – Trailer visits

Session	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Total
Netherfield	6		8	7	8	10	39
Peartree Bridge	2	4	3	1	3		13
Beanhill	3	8	6	4	6		27
Coffee Hall	5	3	2	2		3	15
Eaglestone	10	11	10		14	6	51
Tinkers Bridge	6	3	19*	4	4		36
Pop up cafe				21		22	43
TOTAL VISITS							224

*denotes pop up fridge session

These figures are based on total number of visitors. It is worth noting that many were returning visitors for a number of weeks (e.g. PB for weeks 1 – 3 had 2 of the same people attending, so number of unique visitors will be lower).

30 sessions run (not including café) from a potential total of 36. Total visits (not including café) = 181. Average visits per session = 6

Average visits per venue:

Netherfield – 5 sessions / 39 visits = 8 average
 Peartree Bridge – 5 sessions / 13 visits = 2.5 average
 Beanhill – 5 sessions / 27 visits = 5.5 average
 Coffee Hall – 5 sessions / 15 visits = 3 average
 Eaglestone – 5 sessions / 51 visits = 10 average
 Tinkers Bridge = 5 sessions / 36 visits = 7 average*
 (removing fridge session = 4.5 average)

Table 2 – Play Ranger attendance

Estate	Total Attendances
Netherfield	92
Peartree Bridge	23
Beanhill	32
Coffee Hall	17
Eaglestone	37
Tinkers Bridge	24
Total:	225

There were 5 sessions cancelled due to the weather – one on each estate.

It is worth noting that the café has continued into September, with a similar level of attendance each week – somewhere around 20 per session. This type of delivery will be extended to include additional pop up café' sessions on Tinkers Bridge and Beanhill from 25th September.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The costs of providing the sessions over the summer were relatively high, due to the limited numbers we saw and the nature of the situation. Due to restrictions on who is able to transport the trailer, the need to have sufficient numbers of Play Rangers to meet demand, even if that demand doesn't transpire and the impact of weather (extremely hot, extremely wet, extremely windy at different times) all played a part.

In very rough terms, staffing for the trailer was around a full-time staff member - equal to around 3 hours per session (x 6 sessions x 2 staff = 36 hours per week.

Play Rangers is similar, but with three officers for slightly fewer hours – again, equivalent to around a full time staff member.

Community Fridge is now open for 12 hours per week (extended from end of September to also include a Saturday session once a month), with one officer around, but mostly volunteers doing face to face stuff. In addition, food collections, weighing in and out, cleaning, etc. also takes a certain amount of time, but this is included within the overall cost of the staff employed to manage the community team delivery.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

The delivery over the summer was covered within existing staff and will continue to deliver using similar. As the summer progressed, the set up and delivery became easier – councillor involvement was both appreciated and useful, freeing up some officer time to do other things and the use of volunteers has helped reduce the overall staffing costs of providing the community fridge.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

The summer delivery was useful and whilst the direct costs may seem high, the additional benefits of being accessible, visible and engaged with our communities is a cost that cannot necessarily be assessed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: SC 105/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Services & Communities Committee

Monday 28th September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on plans for the Autumn / Winter programme.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to the following proposals**
 - a. That the community fridge continues to open with current hours, but also offers a monthly Saturday slot.**
 - b. That the Pop Up cafes expand to include Tinkers Bridge and Beanhill, to enable residents to access officers / councillors / information / etc. whilst the offices remain closed.**
 - c. Youth services continue to deliver in line with current regulations, offering safe, Covid compliant sessions where possible and making best use of outdoor spaces where practicable.**
 - d. That there is ongoing review of service delivery, in line with government guidelines and best practice, with adjustments where necessary.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

All information in the paper is correct at time of writing, but the situation is fluid and changes to government regulation, restrictions and practice are likely.

Current service delivery has been detailed in other papers presented to this committee and this proposal expands upon this to include possible delivery over the coming months.

Community Fridge will continue as it is, opening Tues – Thurs between 10am – 2pm, but will expand to include a Saturday session between 10am - noon, on the last Saturday of the month. It will also provide ‘pop up’ sessions within the cafes (see below).

Pop Up Cafes, outdoors, on Coffee Hall, Tinkers Bridge and Beanhill will happen weekly (weather permitting) to enable residents to access information, officers, resources and drinks / cakes. These sessions will also provide ‘pop up’ community fridges, with non-perishable (i.e. things NOT in a fridge) good, using the Community Fridge model. This will extend the reach provided by the trailer over the summer months and provide a bridge to whatever we are able to provide, if anything, during the winter. It is anticipated that these sessions will be able to continue into November and possibly longer.

Youth services have recommenced, after the hiatus of the pandemic and summer provision. Youth services sit outside the current restrictions and therefore we will be looking at limited numbers / splitting session to enable access safely and in line with guidance. Where possible, sessions will take place outside and if not, will be limited.

Landscape and Environment are relatively unaffected and will continue as they usually would, but with the relevant safety measures in place, regarding social distancing, hand sanitising, face coverings, etc.

Community Centre use is complicated and will vary between users. The Operations Manager is investigating our duties under the track and trace system and reviewing all current bookings to ensure Covid compliance. Some will be able to continue, whilst others will be cancelled / postponed.

Events remain a challenge. We know that many of our usual events will not be taking place this year, with the Remembrance parade cancelled, many Christmas events not able to happen and any large gatherings being in breach of current restrictions. Given this, we will continue to work with partners to see what we can do to provide a different approach, as we did with Apple Day. This may mean limited numbers, distanced events (e.g. outdoor walks, maintaining distancing), online approaches or similar. Further work is needed around this and remains very uncertain.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Covered more fully in other papers with regard to Community Centres. In terms of other aspects, any planning will include the contingency of not taking place, so limited spending will happen until clear that it will bring benefit.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

All delivery will continue with agreed staffing regimes.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: SC 106/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Services & Communities Committee

Monday 28th September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on Covid-19 response and future planning.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee agrees to the recommendations within the paper attached, namely:
 - a. Virtual meetings continue for the time being, reviewed monthly.
 - b. Investigate further IT and comms training for officers and councillors.
 - c. Prepare plans for any further 'lock down' or restrictions, including the re-tasking of officers where appropriate.
 - d. Work with our statutory sector colleagues around vulnerable community members.
 - e. Continue to focus on engagement through use of pop up cafes, trailer, online events, Facebook updates and similar.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The attached paper reflects on the WCC response to the Covid 19 pandemic, what went well and what challenges remain. It looked at what we did well, what we need to consider for any further incidents and what changes we need to look at for any further outbreaks, changes to restrictions or impacts over the coming months.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nothing new – we know that the pandemic will have significant impacts, but these have been well documented elsewhere.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Need for flexibility within working practices clear, but the team is well used to this and is responsive and able to deal with change well.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

The situation remains very uncertain. Whilst this paper explains the situation at time of writing, this will undoubtedly change over coming months. We need to maintain a proactive approach, whilst also reacting when necessary.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Reflection on CV-19 paper.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Covid-19 – Review, reflect and planning for the future.

Following the recent (and current) pandemic, the 'lockdown' and other impacts, Woughton Community Council (WCC) has reflected on the challenges and successes from the first phase of the pandemic and refreshed the plan for any future lock down or similar.

This situation was one that was covered within the Incident Plan, but the speed and severity of this pandemic was unprecedented. Many organisations struggled with the very basic needs and, overall, WCC managed a relatively trouble-free move to a very different way of working with extremely limited notice (24 hours). This is testament to the commitment of officers, councillors, and local residents at this difficult time.

Positives:

- Effective IT and communications meant a smooth transition to home working and closure of the offices.
- Continuation of essential services (advice, wellbeing, youth) moved online, utilising both existing IT and via a Zoom account. This has proved hugely useful for delivery of accessible council meetings, online Youth provision and helped other organisations (such as MKC, Resident Associations and similar) to be able to offer services via this format.
- After a period of 'lockdown' changes to delivery methods enabled landscaping and environment services to continue. There was a 5-week hiatus, which led to some delays with actions, but this was managed and the team 'caught up' relatively quickly.
- The Community Fridge closure caused some difficulties for some residents, but provision of food parcels went some way to managing these. Working with existing partners (Hubbub, SOFEA) meant this was actioned relatively quickly and with the support of residents, resident associations, councillors and officers, we were delivering up to 160 parcels a week at the height of demand.
- Closure of the offices and community centres prior to the official lockdown was positive, despite concerns at the time. Taking clear steps, based on the safety of all, showed a commitment to the welfare of local people, whilst acknowledging the income loss from the centre rentals.
- Use of the trailer, provision of Play Rangers and the Pop Up café were all huge bonuses – being able to provide opportunities for residents to make contact, outside and in a safe way, helped provide a consistent and accessible presence within the parish. Whilst numbers accessing this were limited, those that did access found it useful.

Challenges

- Stopping all services at the early stage was, at the time, the right thing to do. However, with suitable safety measures in place (face coverings, sanitisers, single occupancy vehicles, etc.), landscaping and environment support could have continued throughout. This can be looked at in the future, if any repeat.

- Offering advice, wellbeing and youth support using online only is a challenge. Whilst we were able to maintain contact and provide support, it is not as effective as face to face / group approaches. Consideration to be given to provision of services in a safe way in the event of any future lockdown.
- Food parcel delivery, access to the Community Fridge and similar. Closure of the fridge was again, the right decision to make at the time. The system of delivery meant that continuing to operate in that manner was unsafe and with restrictions around travel, collection of food for the fridge was also difficult. However, with hindsight, the fridge could have remained open using the new delivery method with a shorter delay. Since re-opening, this has worked well and can continue in the event of any future outbreak, The food parcel service was also a challenge. Whilst the community team were able to ensure that people got what was needed, this was significantly helped by using volunteers. This took a toll, is not guaranteed and WCC should consider how far moving staff around to ensure sufficient resource is there in future can happen. For example, if there is a further lockdown, can we move staff from an area which cannot operate to delivery of parcels.
- Ensuring the wellbeing of officers and councillors must also be a priority. Whilst online 'team meetings' have gone some way towards ensuring regular contact, those who are shielding, live further away, are unable to access the offices or are otherwise distanced from colleagues may have felt less supported than previously. The difficulties of ensuring regular catch ups, 121's, etc. also plays a part in this and so any future closure should address some of these issues where possible.
- The trailer, whilst a very positive resource, is limited in its use by the number of people able to operate it. This means that transporting the trailer can only be undertaken by one of two managers, which is not an effective use of resources. Consideration of training more junior staff in its operation, where suitable driving licences and insurance are in operation, may go some way to addressing this in the longer term.
- Staffing resource more generally has been mixed – some teams and officers have found themselves extremely busy over the course of the pandemic, whilst others have seen far fewer demands on their time. Whilst this is not controllable in many cases, looking at how we can fairly and equitably share the demands across the organisation is something that may be needed in the future.

There are other external factors that have played a significant role over the past months. A lack of clarity around rules, complex and conflicting advice from local and central government, partner organisations facing significant changes to their working practices with a knock on effect on how we work with them and a very mixed level of understanding from residents have all had an impact on our delivery.

Planning for the future – dealing with NOW, local lockdowns, additional demands and similar.

As noted above, there were significant positives to take from the WCC response to what was an unprecedented situation, locally, nationally and across the world. Whilst

our reach is limited, we were able to continue to deliver, adjust and respond to an ever-changing set of rules and regulations and worked to meet the needs of our community.

Despite these successes, it is important that we don't rest upon our laurels; there were mistakes made and, with the benefit of hindsight, things that could and should have been done differently. To continue to develop our response, learn from our experiences and provide the best support we can, reviewing and reacting to whatever comes in the future is essential.

It is clear that we cannot rely on central government to provide information or explanations of legislation in a timely manner; on a number of occasions, changes were discussed, but clarity came less than 24 hours before new restrictions were imposed. In the early stages, there was simply no clear guidance available to local councils around delivery, safety, expectation, or collaboration. This was also true, to a lesser extent, with our colleagues at Milton Keynes Council. Given this situation, WCC will need to continue to develop protocols and support systems, risk management and delivery methods internally. Our experiences over the past six months show that this is achievable and realistic.

Continue to meet virtually where necessary to develop, agree, authorise, and implement policy decisions quickly and effectively, communicating to essential audiences via all methods available. This may include issues around closures, additional / reduced restrictions and service delivery.

Our IT and communications infrastructure has worked well and the positive relationship we have with Cloudy IT, our provider, have strengthened this further. They have been responsive to any issues, resolved most issues quickly and effectively and ensured that we remain connected, accessible, and able to deliver what we need to. This needs to continue.

Maintain and build upon our existing provision with additional training and utilising additional software included within the package.

Our service delivery has continued throughout, but as noted above, this has been dependent at times on the goodwill of local volunteers. *We need to ensure that we can deliver the essentials using our own resources where needed, utilising the volunteer resource appropriately and acknowledging the impact this can have on them.*

Be prepared to re-task officers with new roles where necessary. This may mean closing other services to ensure immediate needs are met. Work to be undertaken with all officers to ensure suitable skills, availability and understanding is in place.

Food provision, support to vulnerable community members, shopping, prescriptions, etc. has predominantly been managed through other groups; the MK CV19 Support Group who worked in the early stages (with limited impact locally and some concerns around their methods), Food Bank, resident associations, etc. There remains a significant barrier between us as the local council and the principle

authority in terms of information sharing, which has been addressed with MKC. A more effective way of ensuring suitable support, using the combined knowledge, skills and resources of both agencies (and potentially others who play a role, such as health, CNWL, etc.) would be preferable, despite the challenges this brings.

We should continue to work with our colleagues across the statutory sector to try and ensure that ALL people who may be vulnerable within the parish are supported effectively. This should include, where possible, information sharing protocols, close liaison with social care, health and estate officers and clear guidelines around what can and cannot be provided.

Building upon the safe, socially distanced and Covid compliant events and activities, to ensure that we remain engaged with our communities, especially regarding consultations and feedback around the essential issues for local residents. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Priorities and budgets for 2021/22.
- Planning issues, especially where potentially controversial.
- MKC consultations, especially where likely to impact upon significant numbers of local residents.
- Access to support and services.
- Regular 'updates' to keep people informed and up to date.
- All public council meetings, both via access to Zoom where speaking / questions are requested and via Facebook live for those that simply want to stay informed.

Continue to focus on engagement, utilising all resources available, continuing the positive changes that have taken place during the pandemic and developing new ways, taking into account the challenges and changes that are taking place as a result of CV-19.

Conclusion

Woughton Community Council has made significant changes to how we work, how services are delivered and how we remain in contact with our residents. The speed and effectiveness of our response to the pandemic has, with some caveats, been successful, as has been shown by the feedback from our colleagues across the local council sector and beyond.

Continuing work on updating our Incident and Emergency plans, reviewing all aspects of our service delivery, and reviewing council provision on a monthly basis are all elements of the next stage. The items noted above will form part of this, but these reviews and continuing development should not be limited; the situation is fluid and we need to respond accordingly.

A huge debt of thanks is owed to officers, councillors, resident associations, charitable groups and residents for their work in managing the situation. This is something that should be celebrated and noted once we are able to do so. This could be in the form of Chairs Awards special, estate-based celebrations or an 'end of the pandemic' festival. However, the loss of life, ongoing impacts of 'long covid'

and effects on our community must not be ignored – any ‘celebration’ must acknowledge the sadness and damage done.

Steve McNay
Council Manager
September 2020