

Agenda item: FC 239/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council Committee

Monday 18th January 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on the stance of the budget as at Q3 (31st December 2020).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

You will note the supporting report “detailed income and expenditure by Account” whereby figures have been reported against our **original** budget set for April 2020.

Where *AYTD is specified this refers to Actual Year to date (spend)

Where *Budget is specified this refers to what was originally budgeted for this FY.

Where *VAR is specified this refers to the variance/difference between the Budget and ATYD figure(s)

Where a number is dictated in a parentheses this is a negative integer.

All AYTD figures are based on data as at 31.12.2020.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

At Q3. A healthy budget should be at no more than 75% spent.

Our income sits at AYTD £858,526 inclusive of full payment of Precept, LCTRS and landscape funding, this stands against the budgeted £998,410. Our income currently stands at 86% - due to COVID constraints on the budget you have been made aware on the impact(s) on our original budget. Our hall hire still stands at (£61,837) this is due to the sales ledger rectification that took place this year amending incorrect accounting which incorrect debtors totalling £64,000 was deducted from our end of year figures. Therefore this is currently sitting from our original budget of £65,000 at 4.9%. Our additional income is 34.6%, AYTD £17,304 against the proposed £50,000 at the beginning of the year.

It should be noted that due to COVID our VAT returns have not been paid by HMRC this means we are awaiting payment of £16,189.89 which has not yet been received, we are having issues with our current accounting provider getting online with Tax digital and therefore this could be the cause of the

issue, the returns have been sent again today (11/01/2021) recorded delivery and will be tracked, but there is certainly a delay with payment.

Our income is sat at 86% £858,526 – our expenditure is at 63.1% spent which provides some relief to our losses of income. Our AYTD expenditure is £628,052 opposed to the original budget of £995,842. A VAR of £367,790 form the original budget (VAR Net income over expenditure of £227,906)

Our balance carried forward (total balances and reserves at 31.03.2020) last year was £417,189. (However this included £67,531 worth of debtors which was inaccurate and therefore we have deducted £64,000 worth of said debt), our total cashflow currently sits at;

Metro Acc1 -	£320,303.33
Metro Acc2 -	£ 46,595.15
Barclays –	£ 49,884.86
CCLA investment -	£200,000.00

Therefore our Total cash and investments currently totals £616,783.34 with 25% of the year left to go.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO

Agenda item: FC 240/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 18th January 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update Council on the Priorities and Budget Consultation feedback received.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council notes the report and attached information.**
- 2. That Council considers this feedback when deciding on the Service Plan, budget and precept level for the year 2021/22.**
- 3. That Council agrees to the Council Manager providing a response to the specific elements noted in the feedback, where appropriate, providing this to council in February 2021 for publication in the Gazette in March / April 2021.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Priorities and Budget Consultation has been 'live' since early December, closing on 5th January. Due to significant restrictions in place, the level of engagement has been lower than had been hoped (no face-to-face events, no engagement directly with public, focus mainly 'online' and via Gazette and Community Fridges). Despite this, response levels were slightly higher than last year (just under 100 responses – this compares to 82 last year and 27 the year before).

The full responses are attached to this paper, but to highlight feedback:

- Feedback came from every estate, except Redmoor. Responses were, on the whole, in line with population numbers, except Eaglestone which had lower than expected response rates.
- All services are valued, with the Community Fridge the highest scorer. This is, in part, due to the consultation being pushed at the fridges, so many people attending would have prioritised this most highly. Despite this, environment, landscaping, youth and advice / wellbeing were equally valued.
- Community Fridge and Landscaping were noted as the services that most people had directly benefited from over the past year. Again, responses from the fridge users may have skewed this.
- In terms of what should be prioritised, a similar picture – fridge, landscape, environment, community support, youth and advice / wellbeing all scored well. Events, community centres, grant aid all less so.
- Precept levels were supported at the higher end – 10% or higher was the preference of 65%, with a further 5% at 7%. The remainder were mostly 'no increase'. NB It should be noted that at time of the consultation being launched, we were unclear about income. A smaller size is now possible without detriment to services (7% would be sufficient).
- 60% of respondents were between 45 – 64 years old, with 70% female.

There were some themes in terms of additional feedback – rats, community support (in it's widest sense) and landscaping all came up. There were also some issues that we can feedback to the principal authority as they don't fall under our remit.

There were also many positive 'thank you's', 'keep up the good work', etc. Full details of all feedback is included in the pages below. It is recommended that these form the basis of an article in the next edition of the Gazette, explaining what we ARE doing, what we CAN do and what falls outside our remit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This feedback should be considered when deciding on the budget and precept for 2021/22. The level of responses that suggest a higher level of increase do offer some suggestion that a rise will be understood, but this feedback should be noted in line with the previous note – any rise below 10% was highlighted as leading to significant service cuts – with the clarification of LCTRS funding for the year, this is no longer the case and the RFO / Council Manager recommendation of a 7% increase stands.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

This feedback shows that the services (and therefore the officers) are valued and with the recommended budget, there are no staffing implications.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Attached, detailed feedback from the consultation.

FC 224/20 – Previous budget update from RFO.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 241/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 18th January 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To agree the 2021/22 Budget and Precept.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to the proposed budget for 2021/22**
- 3. That the Committee agrees to the recommended precept for 2021/22**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Following on from the budget paper produced at the last full council (supplied as a background paper for reference) that displays a comprehensive overview of the budget and several scenarios concerning precept.

The RFO recommends the budget previously provided is ratified as the standing budget for Financial year 2021/22 – on the excel document attached.

The recommendation after review of circumstances and budget consultation feedback is that the precept should be increased by 7% for Financial year 2021/22.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The financial implications of any precept decision should be looked at with a holistic view of the implications COVID19 will have on our budget this year, and further effects and constraints we may have in the following years. A 7% increase will give us a surplus as previously discussed in the last budget paper. This surplus will be to aid us in the use of our reserves at the end of this Financial year which will be used to buffer our loss of income for almost a year on all hall hire and provision of service, plus some historical accounting rectifications which have been corrected this year. There is likely to be a deficit in Financial year 2022/23 with further potential losses to funding, whilst still delivering and forecasting a high demand on services. Therefore, it is pivotal we recuperate losses where possible to ensure we are financially prepared for any further pandemics or situations similar to the one faced this year – and potentially still into early next year.

Speaking of the effects of COVID there has been further loss in the reduction of our council tax base rate, so the 7% increase only shows a marginal increase on the precept for this year, increasing from £574,899 to £577,811 (circa £3000 increase) a significant amount of work has already taken place on cost and efficiency savings where possible to make this agreement worthwhile.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

RFO time to input into new accounting system.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Budget Planning January 2021 (xsl.)
Budget Planning 2021/22 – 3 years

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough
RFO

Agenda item: FC 224/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 14th December 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To propose a budget for 2021/22, with three-year projected budget included and to propose precept level for 2021/22 for consultation with residents.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council notes the report, proposed budget sheet and three-year projections.**
- 2. That a further report is provided to Council in January 2021, providing details of the consultation and any updates about projected income.**
- 3. That Council prepares to ratify the final budget in January 2021, based upon feedback and updated projections.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Since the publishing of the last budgetary report (16th November 2020) some of the 'unknowns' we had mentioned have been clarified. Therefore, I have built a comparative 3-year budget with a 0%, 5% and 7% precept increase. Prior to affecting a recommendation these comparatives are based on the following presumptions.

- £169,782.00 LCTRS grant for 2021/22 – CONFIRMED.
- Reduced Council tax base rate, £540,011 down from £574,899 for 2021/22 – CONFIRMED.
- £50,000 support from MKC for the following two years 2022/23 and 2023/24 in our bid to continue to fight for fair funding – NOT CONFIRMED.

Most pressing is to look at the effect of our precept for all options, over the next three-year period, this is prudent when budget planning and setting any precept benchmarks.

0% rise (no increase)

No increase in our precept for next year would reduce our precept by almost £35,000 (540,011 down from 574,899) due to our reduced council tax base. Figuratively speaking with efficiency savings we have agreed to make from our original budget no precept rise for 2021/22 would give us a 37,635.81 surplus. To look at the effects this would have on the following year a 0% rise for the following 3 years would give us **(100,000)** deficit in 2022/23 and **(108,000)** deficit in 2023/24.

For clarity no increase rise for next year and then a 5% increase for the following 2 years:

(73,452.74) deficit in 2022/23
(52,718.14) deficit in 2023/24

Total losses of (126,170)

Based on receiving 50,000 support grant from local authority for 2022/23 onwards – therefore losses could be circa 176,000.

No increase rise for next year and then a 7% increase for the following 2 years:

(62,652.52) deficit in 2022/23
(29,821.67) deficit in 2023/24

Total losses of (92,474)

Based on receiving 50,000 support grant from local authority for 2022/23 onwards – therefore losses could be circa 142,000.

5% rise (across 3 years)

A 5% rise would leave us marginally under our current precept level (8000) lesser to £567,011. This would likely give us a higher surplus for 2021/22 of £65,636. However the following 2 years would leave us (45,102) deficit in 2022/23 and a further (22,905) deficit in 2023/24.

Total losses of (68,007)

Based on receiving 50,000 support grant from local authority for 2022/23 onwards – therefore losses could be circa 118,000.

7% rise (across 3 years)

A 7% rise would slightly increase our precept level from £574,899 to £577,811 for 2021/22. This would likely leave us with a further increased surplus for 2021/22 of £75,463. We would likely see a deficit of (22,205) in 2022/23, and then a small surplus of £13,456 in 2023/24.

Total losses of (22,205)

Based on receiving 50,000 support grant from local authority for 2022/23 onwards – therefore losses could be circa 72,000.

2020/21 and COVID Effect – our losses

You will note we account either a loss, or losses in every scenario given, hence why it is important to note the effects any precept decision will have on the following 3 years. It is important to know that we have had a very difficult year due to the constraints and stress that COVID19 had on our budget and mainly our ability to build our income.

We are aware that in September we were looking at circa 30,000 deficit for the end of this year 2020/21. This is more likely to be in the range of 50-60,000 with further losses incurred due to lockdown 2.0.

We have recognised what seems to be realistic in terms of maximum income available for us to be able to bring in, and this sits at 70,000 for hall hire across all 3 years and 40,000 of additional income steadily across three years.

Summary

We know we will need to use our reserves to cover our losses for this year. So it's ever more important to ensure a robust enough budget to assist us with maintaining service and delivery levels.

A 0% rise would leave us with circa 37,000 surplus to recover from 92,000 worth of losses + 60,000 from this year (circa 150,000) this is untenable and would see us using a dangerous amount of our reserves which would provide unsubstantial contingency fees if needed (even with a 5 or 7% rise the following two years the projection is equally unfeasible)

A 5% rise would leave us with circa 65,000 surplus to recover from 68,000 worth of losses + 60,000 from this year (circa 128,000) still leaving a significant £63,000 hole in our finances.

If we take a 60,000 loss and objectively assess the scenarios above it seems prudent to recommend a 7% increase. Although on paper, a 75,000 surplus may seem unnecessary, this really only makes up for the 60,000 loss from this year 2020/21 and the coinciding 22,000 loss in 2022/23 (with support from the 13,000 surplus the following year in 2023/24).

It is crucial to have explained well, the impact Covid has had and will have over the next three years and that we will still be finding ourselves trying to recover from the losses incurred over the next three years.

Again, this budget is based on the information we have at our disposal at the time of writing and includes some presumptions whereby we are still unclear on any future decisions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Budget planning – December 2020.

AUTHOR

Samone Winsborough

RFO

Agenda item: FC 242/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 18th February 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the Council on the proposed 2021/22 Service Plan for agreement.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council notes the report and the Service Plan v4.**
- 2. That Council makes any final additions / adjustments.**
- 3. That Council ratifies the document as the final Service Plan for the 2021/22 council year.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Service Plan has been under discussion for a number of months, having been twice to each committee and to council. There have been a number of iterations, with the most recent one, Version 4, including some additional elements as a result of feedback from residents. This includes:

- Work with the principal authority to address the issue of rats across the parish, focusing on education and direct responses
- Additions made from previous meetings, that include post Brexit work, grit and salt bins evaluation and provision.

Otherwise, the plan remains the same as that previously discussed at Full Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Whilst some costs remain unclear, current plan is approximately £15k, plus an additional £10k allocated to training (separate budget heading).

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

No additional staffing needed to deliver this plan, but additional demands on existing officers is clear.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

2021.22 Service Plan v4.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 243/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 18th January 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update Council on impact of current Covid 19 restrictions and additional risk management proposals.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council notes the report.**
- 2. That Council agrees to weekly reviews within the Senior Team.**
- 3. That Council agrees that if necessary, further restrictions on service delivery are put in place.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

With the new national lockdown in force, alongside high infection rates across the city, there are concerns about the risk to officers, councillors and the public so a further review of risk management and service delivery has taken place.

Significant concerns remain around the continued opening of the Community Fridge – this is, in part, to do with the vulnerability of some staff members, the noncompliance of some people attending the fridge and the recent infections of fridge staff at both Great Linford and Conniburrow fridges (which share a delivery method and staffing).

Further adjustments have already been made with regard to the Landscape Team who have been extremely conscientious about compliance, both whilst outside working and when visiting the offices. This includes provision of further sanitisers, allocation of specific tools and further sanitisation at the end of each shift and further PPE provision (additional face coverings to enable a full weeks worth per operative, reducing the 'single use' waste).

A further risk assessment has taken place, with the following proposal suggested:

Changes to risk management at The Hub.

With the implementation of new restrictions, we have reviewed the current delivery model, use of the Hub and staffing to protect staff, councillors, and the public during this 'lockdown'.

As a result, NOBODY should enter the Hub unless essential and ONLY if agreed in advance. Masks / face coverings will be worn whenever people are inside the Hub and hands MUST be sanitised upon entry / exit and washed / sanitised regularly throughout the day.

The adjoining door to CHMP will be opened to enable Landscape Team to have access to both toilets and other equipment / space to ensure safety and wellbeing.

The fridge model will change slightly – no mask, no service. Reduced hours. Staffing only provided by people who are low risk, have low risk households and who are happy to staff the fridge. Deliveries and donations will be limited to known agencies. Management and coordination will continue to be provided by the Community Services Manager.

- All fridge users must have face coverings. No exceptions.
- All fridge users must use hand sanitisers. No exceptions.
- All fridge users must check in, either with the NHS Test & Trace app or via a sign-in sheet. No exceptions.
- Above rules apply to anyone working in the fridge.
- Reduced session days – 4 hours per day, Tuesday & Thursday only.
- Food deliveries accepted from Food Connect & Abba Father only. No donations accepted from residents or other groups/charities until further notice.

For officers who cannot work from home, the WAS room will be available on a booking basis, with the touchpoints being sanitised between each use. Officers are responsible for ensuring this happens, with relevant sanitiser being provided.

These steps further reduce any risks during this exceptional period. Any breaches of these rules may result in disciplinary action being taken.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

These steps are intended to keep staff and others as safe as possible, whilst retaining some service delivery.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 244/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 18th January 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update council on Salt / Grit bins, specifically regarding Eaglestone.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council notes the report.
2. That Council agrees to further exploration of costs for provision of grit and whether this can be managed via the principal authority.
3. That a further paper comes to either Full Council or Services Committee once these issues are clarified.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Following a request from some residents, investigations have been taking place into the costs of provision and filling of grit bins across the parish. Whilst some elements are clear, others remain unclear, as no response has been received from providers.

The costs of grit bins is relatively small – a lockable, 200 litre bin is £83.75 +VAT (£100.50 incl) – see <https://www.gritbin.co.uk/200-litre-lockable-stackable-grit-bin.html> for details (other providers are available).

The cost of grit / salt is less clear – there are issues of storage, transport, regularity of filling, etc. that all mean these costs are changeable, dependent on weather and demand. However, as detailed in the paper that was submitted to council in March 2020, the approximate costs of filling *existing* bins is around £1000. This is based upon buying direct from suppliers – we continue to investigate whether the principal authority supply would be accessible to us, at cost (it is anticipated that this would be cheaper, due to economies of scale in the supply chain).

The paper from March 2020 also provided greater detail; there are 28 grit bins across the parish:

Leadenhall – none (there may be some within the educational establishments, but no public)

Eaglestone (excluding hospital site) – 7

Peartree Bridge – 6

Netherfield – 7

Beanhill – 3

Tinkers Bridge – 2

Coffee Hall – 2

Industrial estates – none

As can be seen, Eaglestone is well provisioned with 7 bins across the estate already, but some further bins could be provided if need is established.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

As noted above, the cost of bins is relatively small. However, the ongoing costs associated with WCC taking responsibility for all the bins is likely to be around £2,000 per year, plus any costs associated with the transport and filling of the bins (likely to fall to Landscape, as they have the van and sufficient person-power).

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Around half a day per year, per fill, for a team of 2 – 4.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

OC 57/20 – Report from March 2020.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: OC 57/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Operations Committee

Monday 16th March 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on all aspects of grit bins across the parish.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the council manager works with Milton Keynes Council to ensure grit bins are maintained.**
- 3. That the committee considers provision of parish provided grit bins in key areas for the financial year 2021/2022.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Grit bins are currently provided by Milton Keynes Council with a total of 28 across the parish. These are strategically placed, usually around areas that are likely to need grit; schools, health care facilities, supported / older peoples housing, steps, etc. On the whole, the bins are in acceptable condition (see attached) but there are some which would benefit from either replacement or repair (especially the lids, which are damaged / unattached on a number).

The breakdown of grit bins is as follows:

Leadenhall – none (there may be some within the educational establishments, but no public)
Eaglestone (excluding hospital site) – 7
Peartree Bridge – 6
Netherfield – 7
Beanhill – 3
Tinkers Bridge – 2
Coffee Hall – 2
Industrial estates – none

The majority are well placed, steady and contain grit. They vary in size and design and only one that is noted on the map is missing (on Forest Rise in Eaglestone, where there is another one in situ) and one which is upended (next to the office on Coffee Hall). One further one (near Downdean in Eaglestone) is empty.

As things stand, there are some large areas without access to grit; Beanhill has three grit bins, but all within a small area (shops, school, GP's), Coffee Hall only has two (school and local centre), Leadenhall has none, Netherfield has a number, but all at the hospital end of the estate. Consideration should be given to the additional provision of grit bins in key areas, as noted above.

It is unclear at this time whether Milton Keynes Council will continue to service existing grit bins, but Woughton Community Council should be prepared to consider managing this in the event that MKC cease to.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

New grit bins cost approx. £120 each (dependent on size and lockable or not).

Grit / rock salt costs approx. £130 for a bulk bag (850 kg). It is likely that we would need several – each bin contains between 100 – 300 kgs of rock salt. Based on an average of 200 kg per bin and 28 bins, this equates to 5600 kgs (or 7 bulk bags) = £910 to refill all bins.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

To refill bins, we would need to build in staff resource to travel across the parish with the rock salt – there would need to be an area to deliver to and then transfer onto a vehicle. It is likely that this would take at least half a day, even with a full team (4 officers) and potentially longer.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

If the council was to take on responsibility for existing or new bins, this would be a long-term commitment – we would need to then budget for replacement, replenishment and managing the bins forever. It is anticipated that this would cost between £3 – 4,000 per year (dependent on weather, damage and any new bin provision).

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Grit bin map and condition survey (attached).

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager