

## Woughton Community Council

### Operations Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 6:00pm via Zoom Video Call and Facebook Live.**

**Present: Cllrs Jordan Coventry (Chair), Alan Williamson (Vice-Chair),** Elina Apse, Margaret Ferguson, Ruth McMillan, Liz Simpkins, Sue Smith.

**Also present:** Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer), Steve McNay (Council Manager), Samone Winsborough (Financial Responsible Officer / Operations Manager) Tash Darling (Youth Manager & Lead Safeguarding Officer), Sean Perry (Community Services Manager).

**In attendance:** Cllr Donna Fuller.

**OC 102/21 Apologies:**

There were no apologies.

**NOTED**

**OC 103/21 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED**

**OC 104/21 Chairs Announcements:**

The Chair informed the meeting that there is a meeting of the Thames Valley Police Forum to be held at 5:00pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021, a link will be sent to all Resident Associations and Councillors, the meeting will be streamed live on Facebook and written questions can be submitted in advance.

**NOTED**

**OC 105/21 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):**

There were no questions from the members of the public.

**NOTED**

**OC 106/21 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021, were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

**OC 107/20 To review the Safeguarding Policy Audit:**

The Safeguarding Lead Officer said that over the past few months, the level of safeguarding concerns and the time spent on this has increased significantly. This is

felt to be linked to the current pandemic, the closure of some services or restricted access to other elements (e.g. schools closed / no social worker home visits).

Increasingly, issues are coming from other officers, Councillors or members of the public and being managed by the Safeguarding Lead Officer. It has been agreed that this is the correct way to manage safeguarding and should continue, but there may be a need for additional resources, either in the short term or over a longer period, to ensure best practice and other aspects of the organisation are not neglected.

In response to the audit, reflection on the demands of safeguarding highlighted within the organisation alongside the actions recommended (initial action plan) should form the basis of a working model to be developed and presented to Full Council for agreement to implementation into council wide practice.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes this report.**
- 2. That the committee reflects on and contributes to the actions suggested in the audit.**
- 3. That the committee recommends the actions from this audit form the basis of a working model to be developed by the DSL / CP lead, Clerk and senior management team.**
- 4. That the committee recommends that the said model (to be implemented into Woughton Community Council wide operations) be submitted for agreement by Full Council, for the purpose of strengthening Woughton Community Council safeguarding procedures.**

#### **OC 108/21 To note the amended current disciplinary procedure in the staff handbook:**

The Operations Manager informed the meeting that the current disciplinary procedure in the staff handbook and the disciplinary policy needed to be amended.

The current disciplinary procedure is one that has been inherited from the previous HR provider.

ACAS policies suggest that once a warning is written even if this is informal becomes a formal warning. Whilst informal mediation, conversation and target setting is always beneficial in early stages of any concern this is something that can be advised in staff one to ones and appraisals. However, the disciplinary process is used for disciplining an act which is not in line with Woughton Community Council policy and procedure. The Operations Manager suggested that an unsatisfactory conduct procedure adopts the widely used 'three step' process, first, final and then dismissal the same as that for misconduct. All other stages remain the same.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to the amendments and to adopt the new procedure.**

#### **OC 109/21 To agree a disciplinary policy:**

The Operations Manager informed the meeting that the disciplinary procedure currently does not sit in a standalone policy therefore can only be found in the employee handbook. To improve transparency and to make all reasonable efforts to

ensure all policies and procedures are easily accessible to staff the Operations Manager recommended that the policy is approved as the 'disciplinary procedure' to be circulated to all staff and published on Brightpay for access.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee approves publication to all staff and the upload of this procedure onto Brightpay.**

**OC 110/21 To update the committee on proposed training for councillors and consideration of other sessions / subjects:**

The Council Manager updated the committee on proposed training for councillors and consideration of other sessions / subjects.

It was suggested that there is induction training and mentoring for the newly elected Councillors for Beanhill and Leadenhall Ward's.

Training at an intermediate level for Councillors, and possibly a buy in for training by other providers.

It was further suggested that Councillors could shadow Officers, so they are aware of the work that takes place at the Hub, along with mentoring for Councillors and succession planning.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report and proposed / booked training.**
- 2. That the committee supports the sending of regular training updates from B&MKALC.**
- 3. That the committee considers any further training that may be required or beneficial for councillors.**
- 4. That the Committee and Member Services Officer, in conjunction with the Council Manager and Chair of the Operations Committee, develops an annual training plan for 2021/2022.**
- 5. That the Committee and Member Services Officer, in conjunction with the Council Manager and Chair of the Operations Committee, develops a rolling training programme covering the council term.**

**OC 111/21 To update the committee on the website:**

The Council Manager updated the committee on the website content improvements which will be migrated over to the current website by Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes this report and updates to the website.**
- 2. That committee members assess the current website and consider any further changes that they would like to see.**
- 3. That the changes are implemented and the new content / site design commences on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

**OC 112/21 To update the committee on the re-opening of the Hub and delivery of services within the 'roadmap' suggested by government.**

The Council Manager updated the committee on the re-opening of the Hub and delivery of services within the 'roadmap' suggested by government.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the Council Manager, Operations Manager and Health and Safety Manager, in conjunction with the Community Services Manager, continues to monitor the situation and adjust the plan (if necessary), reporting back to this committee / Full Council where appropriate.
3. That the committee agrees to the proposals discussed below, namely:
  - a. That the Hub remains closed until at least 17<sup>th</sup> May (Step 3) \*
  - b. That the Hub opens on reduced hours for a period of 6 (six) weeks after re-opening, to assess benefit, visitor numbers and impact. \*
  - c. That the Operations Manager creates and manages a roster to ensure suitable levels of officer cover for both Hub opening and phone coverage.
4. That service provision continues and develops in line with the elements noted below, namely:
  - a. Play Rangers programme for Easter holidays publicised and delivered, starting on 30<sup>th</sup> March. \*
  - b. 12<sup>th</sup> April\* – Community Centres are re-opened for groups that can meet the relevant standards and safety measures. This will include limited use for Youth Clubs. Volunteers will restart within the community fridge.
  - c. 17<sup>th</sup> May\* – outdoor events, such as pop-up cafes, etc. restart and a programme of events for the remainder of 2021 to be developed and shared.
  - d. 17<sup>th</sup> May\* - The Hub reopens between 10am – 3pm on Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri, with consideration of both a ‘late night’ and weekend opening (this can be discussed and will need to be agreed in advance with suitable staffing in place).
5. That a full review of all aspects takes place at the end of June 2021 and further plans return to this committee.
6. That the committee considers the long term staffing and delivery implications stemming from the past year and, at a future meeting, consider flexible working arrangements, working from home, remote and/or hybrid meetings and similar.

It should be noted that these dates are based upon the various steps within the ‘roadmap’ being met – anything marked with an \* is subject to change.

**OC 113/21 To move, second and agree 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.

**AGREED**

**OC 114/21 To agree the insurance tender:**

The Operations Manager provided the committee with insurance tender quotations.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to change provider to Axa through Came & Company.**
- 3. That the Committee decides on whether to opt for additional professional indemnity insurance.**

**Date of next meeting:**

To be agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:00PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT