

Monday 4th July 2022

To: All members of Woughton Community Council

Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Jordan Coventry (Vice-Chair), Elina Apse, Janette Bobey, Margaret Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Brian Hepburn, Phillip Hopcraft, Luke Louis, Amber McQuillan, Ruth McMillan, John Orr, Terri Parish, Nick Scott, Liz Simpkins, Lauren Townsend, Alan Williamson, Pam Wilson

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of Council to be held on **Monday 11th July 2022** commencing at **6:30pm** at the **Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG**, when the business set out in the following agenda will be transacted.

Due to the ongoing impact of coronavirus, meeting attendees are encouraged to consider the following guidelines for the meeting:

- If you or anyone in your household have any symptoms (i.e. high temperature, continuous cough, or changes to sense of smell or taste), please do not attend the meeting, and get tested.
- Please sanitise your hands on arrival at the meeting.
- Please note that windows will be open throughout the meeting and dress accordingly.

Members of the public can attend in person, submit questions in advance and or watch live via www.facebook.com/woughtoncc.

Steve McNay
Council Manager

Please ensure that your mobile phone and other electronic equipment is switched to silent or is switched off completely during the meeting.

Please be aware that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast live. Microphones are live at all times – if you are not speaking formally within the meeting, please do keep any additional noise to a minimum and be aware that anything said within this meeting will be in the public domain.

The Calendar of Meetings can be accessed at:

<https://www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/council-meeting-calendar/>

AGENDA

FC 62/22 Apologies for Absence:

To receive and record apologies from members.

FC 63/22 Representative(s) from Thames Valley Police will be in attendance to answer questions and address concerns previously raised, including

- **community policing.**

FC 64/22 Declaration of interests:

Under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, made under s30 (3) of the Localism Act, members must declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting, and any additional interests not previously declared.

FC 65/22 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on:

- Full Council – Monday 13th June 2022.

(Attached)

FC 66/22 Chair's Announcement(s)

FC 67/22 Questions from the public:

To allow questions and comments from the public (maximum of 10 minutes in total).

FC 68/22 Ward Matters arising:

Information from Members on ward matters for deliberation at future meetings:

FC 69/22 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

To give an opportunity to the Woughton & Fishermead Ward Councillors to verbally report to the meeting, on their ward activities and to raise any issues, along with their work on Milton Keynes Council and on its activities.

FC 70/22 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse**
- b) MKALC – **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith, Cllr Pam Wilson**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith**

(Verbal reports)

FC 71/22 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

- a) Planning, Licensing and Development – Monday 6th June

(Draft minutes attached)

FC 72/22 Council Manager's report:

(Report by the Council Manager attached)

FC 73/22 Tin Man Park and sculpture proposal:

(Report by the Cllr Brian Hepburn attached)

**FC 74/22 To agree items for inclusion on Community Infrastructure Fund application(s) to MK Council
(Report by the Council Manager attached)**

**FC 75/22 Update on the Strategy Working Group:
(Report by the Council Manager)**

**FC 76/22 Consideration of whether to offer childcare / dependency support options to councillors:
(Report by the Council Manager attached)**

**FC 77/22 To update the proposed hosting of a knife amnesty bin:
(Verbal update by the Council Manager)**

**FC 78/22 'Cost of Living Crisis' discussion paper and proposals, including possible budget and service plan revisions:
(Report by the Council Manager attached)**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 12th September 2022, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

N.B. Either prior to or after this meeting, Councillors will be asked to sign a 'I have read and understood' sheet regarding the 'Code of Conduct', as agreed at the June Full Council meeting (item FC 55/22).

FC 65/22

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th June 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Jordan Coventry (Vice-Chair), Elina Apse, Jeanette Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Brian Hepburn, Ruth McMillian, John Orr, Terri Parish, Nick Scott, Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson, Pam Wilson.

Also present:

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)
Louise O'Dell (Senior Teacher, Leadership Team The Redway School)
Hollie Russell (Business Manager The Redway School)
June Harrison (Chair of the Friends of Moorlands)
Louise Nash (Secretary of the Friends of Moorlands)

In attendance:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

FC 43/22 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Phil Hopcraft (work)

AGREED

FC 44/22 A representative from the Milton Keynes University Hospital and the Redway School to attend regarding parking issues in the area and to discuss any possible solution(s):

Louise O'Dell Senior Teacher from the Leadership Team at The Redway School and Hollie Russell who is the Business Manager at The Redway School introduced themselves.

Cllr Elina Apse said that there are problems with parking at the Hide and Farmborough on Netherfield, along with the overflow parking from the Milton Keynes University Hospital, there are difficulties accessing the school when pupils are being collected, with buses blocking the entrance, although it is the only entrance, has the school considered staggering drop off and collection times, or another entrance to the school, Cllr Apse was concerned about residents taking matters into their own hands due to the frustration of not being able to access or leave their properties, and about access by emergency vehicles, and has consideration been made about expanding the present car park onto nearby land.

Louise responded that the school is aware and is concerned about traffic and parking issues, Milton Keynes Council has come out and done a survey, to see if a

one way system could be put in place but the cost is too high, there are 200 staff with 62 parking spaces, 130 staff drive to the school and 17 staff do a car share, it has been suggested to have permit parking near to the coop store at the local centre, staff have been told not to park particularly on Farmborough, but do use the bays at the top of the street, but cannot say about other streets, Louise is out every morning with a radio directing traffic as best she can, and asked residents and parents to complain to Milton Keynes Council but the school is constrained due to finances.

Cllr Jeanette Bobey said that this has been a long running problem, and has spoken to the Headteacher, the problem is getting worse, now the school has taken on the old housing office is the extra parking and land on that site not helping, or being utilised to full affect?

Louise replied that the number of pupils has gone up over double, including staff, Louise has been on site with Milton Keynes Council and suggested using the land to increase parking the response is that there is not enough money to do the work. The school would like a new access and extra parking spaces using the land but they do not have the finances to do this themselves.

Cllr Terri Parish suggested sending a letter to all residents on the streets leading to the school asking if they were not using their driveway during the day then perhaps a member of staff could make use of it instead.

Louise said that she could arrange this.

The Chair suggested an article could also go in the Woughton Gazette.

The Council Manager said that it was already planned to have an article on parking to go in the Gazette but will add about the parking at Redway School. There is an additional problem of contractor parking reported by residents on The Hide and Farmborough due to ongoing work at the Milton Keynes University Hospital, and it was noticeable by their absence for whatever reason not to have a representative attend this meeting, and was one of the reasons why this matter was put on the agenda, and thanked Louise and Hollie for their attendance.

Cllr Brian Hepburn said would it be possible to use matting material that allows grass to grow through and is used by companies at events that could go on land next to the car park?

Louise replied that due to the cost it was not permissible to provide extra parking bays for residents to park, but Milton Keynes Council did suggest sending a letter to all residents they could simply park on the grass.

The Chair asked if she had a contact of the person who suggested this? Louise replied she could find out and get back to the Chair with an email address.

The Chair also asked Louise if she would be prepared to attend a meeting on parking issues to be held soon, to which she replied that she would be happy to do so. The Council Manager said that he will send her an invitation.

The Chair thanked Louise and Hollie and really appreciated them taking the time out to attend the meeting.

NOTED

FC 45/22 Declaration of interests:

There were no declaration of interests.

NOTED

FC 46/22 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting(s):

The minutes of the meeting held on:

- Monday 9th May 2022

Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

FC 47/22 Chair's Announcement(s)

The Chair everyone for all their hard work in running events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, where were very successful and well attended.

The Chair reminded everyone to take care in the heatwave that has been forecast and those who have pets and children to make sure they are protected from the heat as well. It was suggested that an article is placed in the Woughton Gazette, on tips on how to ensure pets are kept safe in warm weather.

The next meeting of the Operations & Resources Committee will be held on Monday 16th May 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub in the Council Chamber.

NOTED

FC 48/22 Questions from the public:

A member of the Beanhill Residents Association asked if they could borrow the street sign cleaning kit supplied by SERCO.

The Council Manager responded that the materials were minimal but none the less the residents association was welcome to borrow the kit.

NOTED

FC 49/22 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr Alan Williamson raised the difficulties of residents trying to arrange appointments to attend the local waste recycling centre and wants something to be done about this.

Cllr Alan Williamson also raised the difficulty of residents accessing the Rapid Demand Service, and have missed appointments due to not getting through to make a booking or not had a vehicle turn up when it has been booked.

Cllr Donna Fuller suggested providing technical facilities such as in the Netherfield Library or the in the Hub that residents could use to try and make bookings online and by phone.

Cllr Brian Hepburn raised that he will be undertaking a survey of residents to suggest moving the Tin Man near to the Moorlands Nursery at the Beanhill Local Centre, using public realm monies, the school and community garden group are happy to be involved, sponsorship has been sought for repairs to take place, but it was felt not to spend any money at the moment where it is situated due to vandalism, and to wait until if and when it is relocated.

The Chair suggested putting this on the next agenda to seek the meeting's support.

The Council Manager said that if Cllr Hepburn can supply an article this week then it can go in the next edition of the Gazette.

Cllr Jordan Coventry said that there will be an agenda item at the July Operations & Resources Committee meeting, with a report from the Community Services Manager suggesting ways in which the old tablets used by Councillors, can be put to good use for local residents, Cllr Williamson was welcome to attend and make suggestions.

Cllr Brian Hepburn also suggested some joint working in helping residents with runs to the waste recycling centre.

Cllr Maggie Ferguson said residents had transport difficulties getting to the waste recycling centre.

Cllr Liz Simpkins gave an example of a representative from the Eaglestone Guardians who uses a van to do runs to the waste recycling centre and takes away items that have been fly tipped.

The Chair said these issues could be discussed at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. To put on the next agenda to seek the meeting's support on the possible relocation of the Tin Man on Beanhill.**
- 2. To discuss all matters relating to the removal of waste and accessing the waste recycling centre at a future meeting.**

FC 50/22 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Donna Fuller informed the meeting that there is a lot of casework from residents due to the cost of living crises, Cllr Fuller said that a leaflet is being produced signposting residents to appropriate agencies that could help, along with money saving suggestions/ideas.

There are issues with rat sightings on Coffee Hall, and general parking problems, welfare concerns raised by residents.

Cllr Fuller attends the Community Café sessions and is available for any local residents who wish to raise any matters.

Members are encouraged to pass on any residents concerns to Cllr Fuller.

Cllr Brian Hepburn said that he has already produced a guide that has been put on social media advising residents on what help is available and the agencies contact details that they can approach for further advice and assistance, the Council Manager said that he has a copy and will circulate to Members.

Cllr Maggie Ferguson suggested that an article is produced in the next edition of the Woughton Gazette asking residents to not leave out any food or water so as not to encourage rats to keep going into their gardens.

RESOLVED

1. **That the Council Manager to circulate the agency and advice guide for residents written by Cllr Brian Hepburn to all members.**
2. **That an article is produced in the next edition of the Woughton Gazette asking residents to not leave out any food or water so as not to encourage rats to keep going into their gardens.**

FC 51/22 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse - no report.**
- b) MKALC – **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith, Cllr Pam Wilson - no report.**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith – no report.**

Members were reminded about producing written reports.

NOTED

FC 52/22 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

- a) Operations & Resources – Monday 15th May 2022
- b) Services & Communities - Wednesday 18th May 2022

NOTED

FC 53/22 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager updated the council on activities and delegated decisions made since the previous meeting.

Forums, meetings, and events attended:

- A 'partners event' at Hedgerows Family Centre.
- A Flood Prevention meeting in the Council Chambers.
- A parking update meeting.
- The MK Arts group held an event on the ABC park in Netherfield.
- Attended an online session covering the changes being made to s106 funding.
- The first 'Open Air, Open Mic' event took place.
- The first Strategic Plan group meeting also took place.
- The Jubilee Events all took place too.

Delegated decisions taken:

Only one decision taken, which was to buy a Walnut Tree to be planted as part of the Jubilee Celebrations on Coffee Hall. This was part of the refurbishment plan that Milton Keynes Council agreed, but they were unable to source one in time. The total

cost was £270.00p and has been delivered, which the cost will be passed. The tree has been planted.

Any other news:

The Council Manager shall be on annual leave as from Monday 13th June 2022, and will be returning on Tuesday 21st June 2022.

There are challenges keeping the office open to the public due to staff on sick leave.

RESOLVED

That the Council notes the report.

FC 54/22 update on the Lead Member roles:

Council was asked to agree the Lead Member roles for the Council Year 2022/2023 as discussed at the previous Full Council meeting.

The following requested to be Lead Members for the roles as listed:

Homelessness	Cllr Maggie Ferguson
Transport	Cllr Brian Hepburn
Housing	Cllr Janette Bobey

Cllr Janette Bobey requested that her lead role title was changed from “Housing” to “Social Housing”.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the council discusses any further submissions for Lead Member roles at this meeting and that these are added to the list.**
- 2. That the council agrees to the Lead Members on said list, to include those noted above noting the change from “Housing” to “Social Housing” and any further submissions that have been made since this report was written.**
- 3. If there are any conflicts (i.e. any roles with more than one member wanting this), that discussion is held to agree suitability with, if unable to agree, a specific vote to take place.**
- 4. That once agreed, the council ratifies these roles and members and that these will be held until May 2023, where following the election, roles will be reviewed.**

FC 55/22 To propose the reminder of and signing of the Code of Conduct:

Members had already been given a copy of the code of conduct.

The Council Manager will print off for the next meeting the slips which Members can sign that they agree to abide by the code of conduct.

RESOLVED

That the Council Manager to print off for the next meeting the slips which Members can sign that they agree to abide by the code of conduct.

FC 56/22 To discuss ideas for the Community Infrastructure Fund:

Members were requested to consider possible ideas to make applications to the Milton Keynes Council Community Infrastructure Fund for 2023/2024.

Ideas that have already been suggested by council include:

- Solar panels on buildings owned or leased to Woughton Community Council.
- Parking management.

Other suggestions made by officers and residents include:

- Improving buildings owned or leased to Woughton Community Council by ensuring that they are more environmentally friendly by installing solar panels, upgrading windows and doors at the Youth Centre at 95, Jonathans, Coffee Hall, better accessibility at the Netherfield Meeting Place and in the Council Chambers, remote access lighting and heating.
- Improvements to toilets and bathrooms (both upgrades to equipment and access) at the Hub and the Meeting Places.
- Secure bike storage and facilities to promote sustainable travel.

Cllr Pam Wilson suggested addition private meeting space when talking with clients of the wellbeing service.

The Chair further suggested that a discussion needs to take place with Milton Keynes Council about buildings leased by them to Woughton Community Council before substantial investment is made to refurbish them.

RESOLVED:

1. That council considers any ideas for submission to the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) for the next council year (i.e. 2023/2024).
2. That once discussed, the Council Manager develops a costed plan for each idea and clarify the proposals.
3. That once discussed, ideas are consulted upon with residents to ensure that they are supportive of the proposals.
4. That once the information in recommendations 3 and 4 as above is in place, a further report comes to Council for a final decision.

FC 57/22 To note the cancellation of the Services & Communities Committee meeting due to be held on Wednesday 22nd June 2022:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that the Services & Communities committee meeting, to be held on Wednesday 22nd June 2022, in consultation with the Chair, has now been cancelled.

NOTED

FC 58/22 Update on the Strategy Working Group:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that the group met for the first time on Monday 27th May 2022.

Cllr Ruth McMillan was recently appointed, meaning that the group now has full membership.

The initial meeting included looking at previous plans and starting to consider some overarching principles that would contribute to the plan. These included:

- Life skills.
- Community engagement.
- Building a 'property fund'.

Other key points included:

- Building on the volunteering roles.
- Creating aspiration.
- Highlighting success and positivity.

The next stages will include reviewing a vision and mission and values statement, setting some key aims, developing plans to achieve those aims and providing an overview of the areas that matter to the council. It may be that lead members will assist on this, especially where there is cross over between these roles and the key areas for the plan.

The group agreed to meet again after a month on Monday 27th June 2022 at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED

That Council notes the report.

FC 59/22 Update on the Jubilee celebrations:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that the Jubilee weekend took place between Thursday 2nd June and Sunday 5th of June 2022, with a range of activities and events taking place across the Woughton Community Council area.

Despite some challenging weather on Saturday morning, the events appear to have gone off without a hitch testament to the hard work and organisation of the volunteers who created them.

Thursday 2nd June 2022 saw Jonathans Court start proceedings with an afternoon event and garden party. This was followed later with the Woughton Beacon lighting.

Friday 3rd June 2022 saw the Eaglestone Kite Festival, which Woughton Community Council had supported the event. With an estimated 350 attendees (and 100 kites being snapped up in less than an hour). Also on that day was the Coffee Hall Residents Association event, with a programme of live music, face painting and food stalls. Attendance was significant.

Saturday 4th June 2022 saw the Netherfield Residents Association event at noon, on the Alphabet Park, with a rodeo bull, inflatable house and a range of stalls offering fun for all the family. The Residents Association planted seventy (70) sunflowers and then also a tree which was planted as part of this event. There was around 150 attendees and nearly £200 raised at the raffle.

Tinkers Bridge Residents Association had space inside the meeting place (with a buffet) and outside (with a BBQ too), art, crafts, and a beautifully decorated hall, as well as stalls outside, a raffle and other activities. The weather was very much against this event, but nevertheless, there were over 90 attendees.

Beanhill Residents Association took over the Moorlands Centre with food, flags and festivities including stalls, tombola and another beautifully decorated hall – with somewhere between 175 to 200 attendees.

Then there were the smaller events the households and streets that got together to celebrate, and a chance to meet up and enjoy a celebration for the first time in a while.

A huge thank you is due to all the volunteers who enabled these events to happen.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council notes the report.**
- 2. That council offers a formal declaration of thanks to all involved in organising the events across the Woughton Community Council area.**

FC 60/22 To further propose the hosting of a knife amnesty bin, with alterations to the original proposal:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that in April, a report was presented to council suggesting that a knife amnesty bin be installed on Coffee Hall, as requested by Thames Valley Police. At that time, it was suggested that the bin should be installed inside a building, with the reception area in the Hub having been identified as a suitable location.

Council expressed concerns about the safety of the bin placement, with members of the public coming into the offices, with blades, at the same time as officers are at work. The request was that an invite was extended to a representative of Thames Valley Police to discuss alternative options.

Prior to this invite being issued, a further email was received stating that the bin can be installed outside, reducing the risk to staff.

Cllr Jordan Coventry requested regular updates on the amount of use and if successful the bins could be rolled out to other areas.

Cllr Elina Apse requested that a risk assessment takes place on any site chosen, and was concerned how secure a bin would be.

Members wondered if Thames Valley Police would be responsible for the risk assessment as it was their bin, or whoever owned the land where the bin might be placed.

The Council Manager said that a Thames Valley Police representative will be attending the next Council Meeting, and will put the concerns, comments and questions raised, to the representative, who can then answer them at the meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council considers the new proposal, outlined in the report.**
- 2. That if council feel that this addressed the concerns that prevented the bin being placed on Coffee Hall previously, that the council agrees to the installation of a knife bin.**
- 3. That if agreed, the Council Manager, Lead Member (if applicable) and Thames Valley Police agree on a suitable place for the bin to be installed.**

FC 61/22 Friends of Moorlands:

A Communities & Environment Fund application has been received for £1,340.00p towards the cost of four (4) coaches for a trip to Great Yarmouth.

RESOLVED

- 1. To award £1,340.00p towards the cost of four (4) coaches for a trip to Great Yarmouth.**
- 2. That the Friends of Moorlands are requested to advertise the trip to Great Yarmouth, with posters, in the Residents Association Facebook page, and to provide information that can go in the next edition of the Woughton Gazette.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 11th July 2022, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:38PM

Chair _____ Date _____

FC 71/22

Woughton Community Council

Planning, Licensing & Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th June 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Janette Bobey (Vice-Chair), Donna Fuller, Luke Louis, Ruth McMillian, John Orr, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager).

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer).

LD 01/22 Apologies:

Cllr Nick Scott (work)

AGREED

LD 02/22 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

LD 03/22 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

LD 04/22 Chairs announcements:

The Chair congratulated all Residents Associations for their successful and well attended Platinum Jubilee events.

NOTED

LD 05/22 Minutes of previous meetings:

The minutes of the meetings held on:

- Tuesday 19th April 2022
- Tuesday 3rd May 2022 (special meeting)

Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and was signed by the Chair.

LD 06/22 To agree submissions to Milton Keynes Council on the Planning application(s) received:

a) Application no: 22/01234/PRIOR

Proposal: Prior approval for the installation of an 18 metre high monopole supporting 6 no. antennas and 2 no. transmission dishes, 4 no. equipment cabinets and development works ancillary thereto.

At: Land At Barnfield Drive, Netherfield, Milton Keynes

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee objects to this planning application on the grounds of a loss of visual amenity.**
- 2. That the committee believes that this planning application goes against the Milton Keynes Council planning policy that a mast must not be sited within 50 meters of a residential dwelling.**
- 3. That this committee expresses its concern that if this planning application is approved that it will mean a loss of open space used by local residents.**
- 4. That the Council Manager to write to the Milton Keynes Council Planning Directorate with the objections to this planning application as raised by the committee.**
- 5. That the committee encourages residents living near to the proposed site to also make their views known by writing to the Milton Keynes Council Planning Directorate.**
- 6. That the committee also encourages the local Residents Association to submit their comments to the Milton Keynes Council Planning Directorate.**

b) Application no: 22/00829/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a single storey outbuilding to be used ancillary to the existing dwelling

At: 95, St Dunstons, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5DW

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee has no objection to this planning application.**
- 2. That the committee requests that if this planning application is approved that it is subject to a condition that the proposed outbuilding cannot in the future be converted into a separate residential dwelling.**

c) Application no: 22/01307/FULM

Proposal: Variation of condition 8 (Biodiversity Enhancement (Compliance) (attached to planning ref. 20/01433/FUL for the demolition of single storey prefabricated Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit and partial demolition of two storey Ambulance Service building and the erection of new 2 storey building to accommodate same day emergency care and short stay unit for adults.)

At: Milton Keynes General Hospital, Standing Way, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD

RESOLVED

That the committee has no objections to this planning application.

LD 07/22 To agree submissions to Milton Keynes Council on the Licencing application(s) received:

Carlo's (Reg X837 TEV) on 10/05/2022 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide.

RESOLVED

That the committee has no objections to this licencing application.

LD 08/22 To discuss the Neighbourhood Plan review:

The Committee looked at the first three (3) elements of the Neighbourhood Plan, reviewing suitability and suggesting any changes.

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 & 1.2 Keep paragraph as is.

1.3 To change the paragraph to reflect this is no longer a new plan and remains an exemplar of a plan covering a large urban area, to replace any reference to "regeneration" with renewal".

1.4 A referendum will not be held if the details have not changed significantly, legal advice would need to be sought to clarify this matter.

1.5 Keep paragraph as is.

1.6 May need to consult residents if any major changes are proposed to this document.

1.7 It is unclear at this stage if there is a need to consult or go to a referendum.

1.8 Need to reflect and review the mechanisms to consult and undertake a referendum.

1.9 Need to reconsider a 15 year regeneration strategy along with policies but paragraph pretty much to stay the same.

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1 & 2.2 May need to review the 2031 regeneration target in light of the Strategic Plan and Neighbourhood Plan reviews.

2.3 Are the key objectives still relevant and up to date perhaps they need better definitions and links with other policies and more broader objectives.

Housing

Are the objectives for more social rented housing the right amount, what is meant by high housing standards?

Green Infrastructure

Are the objectives enough does it reflect current thinking, such as solar panels, ecological heating systems, to possibly include in the paragraph all homes must be built to high green standards?

Employment

Are the objectives too limited, look at linking with the renewal agenda.

Health

Need to look at wellbeing, mental health, dentistry, other suggestions as listed are fine.

Design

What is meant by classic Milton Keynes appearance, sympathetic to present street furniture and housing?

Community Facilities

Need to define what a community facility is and where they would be located, especially if a building becomes vacant.

Transport

Need to update as no mention of electric vehicles, scooters, charging points, amount and location, parking challenges, general infrastructure additions and refurbishment need to be considered.

3. Land Use Policies

3.1-3.4 Scene setting, better definition of social and affordable housing and more investment needed once right to buy is taken into consideration, all forms of housing tenure should be available, including a range of housing providers.

3.5, 3.6 & 3.7 Factual statements in paragraphs, more detail is needed, extend list of heritage assets, update ownership of the Old Rectory on Peartree Bridge, keep present road layouts.

3.8-3.10 Need to look into medical facilities and whether they meet the present needs of residents, ensure services are not withdrawn and provided elsewhere, services should be enhanced.

3.11- 3.13 Keep grid square policy as is, look at supporting local business start ups, concerned at loss of some businesses on estates, refurbish community facilities, look at land use to enhance facilities, need to find out what does the neighbourhood require.

RESOLVED

- 5. That the committee notes the report and the relevant passages of the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- 6. That the committee considers the suitability of:**
 - a. Introduction and Purpose**
 - b. Vision and Objectives**
 - c. Land Use Policies (Spatial Principles)**
 - i. Policy WN1 – Distinctive Grid Squares**
 - ii. Policy WN2 – Medical Facilities**
 - iii. Policy WN3 – Self Contained Grid Squares**
- 7. That any variation is re-written and returns to the committee next meeting for agreement.**

8. That this process continues, considering different elements each meeting until the entire policy has been reviewed.

LD 09/22 To note the planning decisions issued by Milton Keynes Council:

The Council Manager updated the meeting on the following applications that have had decisions issued by Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate, and have also been considered by this committee:

Application no: 22/00347/CLUE

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for the existing change of use from dwellinghouse (Class C3) to HMO (Class C4) since October 2010.

At: 21, High Trees, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5AQ - **APPROVED**

Application no: 22/00423/FUL

Proposal: Retrospective demolition of an existing entrance porch due to structural damage, and erection of a new single storey entrance porch.

At: 8, Merlin Walk, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EP - **APPROVED**

Application no: 21/03437/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings, land reprofiling and development of 3 no. Class B8 storage and distribution units with associated access, servicing, parking and landscaping detail.

At: Former Arcadia Unit, Merton Drive, Redmoor, Milton Keynes, MK6 4AG - **APPROVED**

Application no: 22/00263/FUL

Proposal: The erection of a single storey rear extension.

At: 36, Forest Rise, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EU - **APPROVED**

Application no: 22/00670/FUL.

Proposal: First floor extension and loft conversion to existing annexe including the raising of roof height by 1.22 metres to match the main house and re-pitch annex roof to create vaulted ceiling with gable-end roof, balcony and roof lights.

At: 1, Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3AB. - **APPROVED RESOLVED**

That the committee notes the report.

LD 10/22 Information update of the planning & licencing applications as the committee did not meet in May 2022:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that due to there not being a committee meeting held in May 2022 the planning and licencing applications that were sent during late April / early May 2022 did not get considered formally.

The following licencing applications as being non controversial were circulated to the appropriate ward councillors for information only:

- Mister Softee (Reg T402 POA) on 22/04/2022 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 16:00 to 21:00**

- Mister Softee (Reg J192 NVV) on 27/04/2022 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 16:00 to 20:00**
- Saverio's Ices (Mr Softee N191 ORP) on 27.04.22 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 15:00 to 18:00**

The appropriate ward councillors were consulted for their observations on the following planning applications:

- **Application no:** 22/00673/FUL - **Proposal:** Installation of self-service car wash bay **At:** Shell Uk Ltd, Bleak Hall, Grafton Street, H7 To H8 Milton Keynes, MK6 1LJ.

It was not felt that this application was controversial and so was not responded to.

- **Application no:** 22/00953/FUL - **Proposal:** The erection of a single storey rear/side extension and realignment of existing side boundary fence including the change of use of open amenity space (resubmission of 21/02337/FUL) **At:** 62, Forest Rise, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EX.

This is an application that reflects previous similar applications that were suitable and would be managed through existing Milton Keynes Council planning policies. An additional meeting was not requested.

- **Application no:** 22/00951/FUL - **Proposal:** Erection of garden studio **At:** 48, Golden Drive, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5BJ

It was not felt that this application was controversial and so was not responded to.

- **Application no:** 22/01054/FUL - **Proposal:** Replacement external ramp with new railings, external walkway with new railings, external front and rear balconies with roof and guttering/rainwater pipes, replacement of external staircases, new main roof tiles, fascia boards, guttering, rainwater pipes, new external doors and windows **At:** 9-22, Harrier Court, Eaglestone, Milton Keynes, MK6 5BZ

This is the application that has been in the pipeline for about five (5) years. The Council Manager has consulted with the ward councillors from Eaglestone, who have also worked to gather views from local people, but this is a positive step to address the issues with the flats at Harrier Court, having been neglected for many years. There has been no negative commentary and generally a very positive response to the proposal.

RESOLVED

That the committee notes the report.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 4th July 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Local Centre, Council Chambers, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:40PM

Chair _____ Date _____

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**Full Council****Monday 11th July 2022**

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update the council on activities and delegated decisions made since the previous meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

9. That council notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

There is limited news to share, as since the last meeting, I have mostly been at home, firstly on leave and then with a period of illness. I am, thankfully, now recovered and playing catch up.

There haven't been any delegated decisions made.

Discussions have continued around the MK Communities 'app', being developed as part of the Gatekeeper project with the Open University (this was originally agreed in 2019 but has been significantly hampered by a worldwide pandemic). An initial engagement event took place to find a core group of 10 older people, who will become a study group and initial feedback has been useful. More broadly, the project has been somewhat chaotic with delays and communication issues causing some worries. However, the app is now up and running and the next stage can commence – this will enable posting of jobs and responses from volunteers to help with them, building community connections and, we hope, stronger links.

I, alongside Cllr Ferguson and the Community Services Manager (Sean) attended an online session looking at how MKC are utilising the Old Bus Station to support homeless men. This is a new initiative, providing a service that offers support to people who are unable to access other services – apparently, hotels are resistant to housing single men and many projects are 'dry' meaning anyone who has drunk alcohol or used substance cannot attend. The Old Bus Station offers a men only service, where as long as guests are 'compos mentis', they can attend (although not use within the building or surrounds). There was some useful information, but queries raised by attendees were not answered fully and some concerns remain around how this new service might work in practice.

I have also met with Lizzie, a wellbeing practitioner, to consider whether there is potential for her to offer sessions to residents, officers and councillors. She will be submitting a proposal.

Sue Smith and I attended a 'Reviewing Your Neighbourhood Plan' session held online – this was a NALC session and was of limited use. Whilst there was some helpful information, much was focused on the creation of a plan, with much less around the review process. It is also noteworthy that much of it appeared to be

aimed at rural communities. We have another session 'in person' organised by BMKALC on 7th July (after writing this paper, but prior to this meeting), which I can update people on verbally.

The council has been significantly affected by illness – immediately following the last meeting (13th June), three managers plus me were unwell, with other officers also poorly and others on annual leave. This left huge gaps in staff cover, with those remaining prioritising the delivery of services – the cafes, larder and fridges opened throughout, the landscape and environment teams continued and, with some exceptions, the youth service continued too. Whilst upon return there was a lot of catch up, the officers who remained did an excellent job of keeping the ship afloat. The situation has been a useful reminder that a review of contingency planning is due and each directorate will be reviewing their plan over the coming months, with a view to having a whole organisation review in autumn. Whilst the situation was extremely unusual, reviewing and updating is always a useful process.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**Full Council****Monday 11th July 2022****PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To seek Council's approval to support the residents of Beanhill on the restoration of the Tin Man and other works required on site up to a decent standard.

RECOMMENDATION:

10. To consider supporting the residents of Beanhill with the tin man project.
11. To agree to change the small area directly behind the tin man from overgrown shrubbery into a Wizard of Oz themed garden to be maintained by the Moorlands School and volunteers.
12. To agree to support the residents of Beanhill on the restoration of the tin man to hopefully bring back to a decent standard.
13. To support the residents on the repainting of play equipment within the tin man park including the wooden structures in the woodland area.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The tin man has been part of Beanhill for over 40 years and sited most of that time in the tin man park. In the past couple years or so the damage has been considerable and if not dealt with immediately there are concerns for safety due to exposed mesh wiring and broken concrete sections.

The tin man park is a vital part of our community and lately has been used for many events and will continue to do so, the residents and the school have been looking at ways to help each other with some park areas within the community, and this is a great project not just for residents but the school, to keep an active role within the community, and for the children to help in it while learning about one of the classics. Not to mention children learning to keep the tin man safe for future generations.

The plan is to have the tin man where needed welded and new parts added along with restoring some features of his face and enclosing damage around his feet, he will then be repainted silver and hopefully be covered with an anti-graffiti paint to protect him.

The base around the tin man concrete will be fixed and will be painted bright yellow to signify the yellow brick road and if permission given the path will extend from the statue to about 10 meters in a wave pattern at the back of the statue which will be surrounded by a garden area that will be mainly small shrubs and bedding plants etc. This will all be to stage a bigger scene of the wizard of oz. We are also in talks with the possibility of a mural being painted on the end of the bungalow nearest this area which will picture more characters from the wizard of oz and will again once completely be treated with anti-vandal covering.



Examples (as above) of the damage to the Tin Man.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Woughton Community Council will have no costs other than help with the clearance of some shrubbery which will need shredding.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

All these works such as the statue restoration and the play equipment etc., The costs are being covered by donations and will include volunteers.

AUTHOR

Cllr Brian Hepburn - Beanhill Ward

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 11th July 2022**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To agree applications to the Community Infrastructure Fund for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATION:

14. That council agrees to the submission of the following items for the Community Infrastructure Fund
 - a. Improvements to toilets, making them accessible and suitable (where possible) as 'Changing Places' toilets at TBMP and CHMP
 - b. To install auto openers on the external of NFMP, plus the toilets and the doors to Chambers.
 - c. To provide solar panels and accessories at Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place
 - d. To buy and instal secure bike storage at the Hub, to promote sustainable travel.
15. That if agreed, quotes are obtained, and final submission is made to MKC by end of August 2022.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) is an annual fund, administered by MKC, that provides *match funding* for local councils (town, parish and community) towards the following themes from the MKC Plan:

- Getting the basics right
- Stronger Communities
- Action on climate change
- Sustainability and biodiversity
- Sustainable transport

There is up to £20,000 per parish available, on the understanding that this is 'matched' by the parish (e.g. if MKC given £10k, there is a further £10k that is paid by the parish).

Proposals submitted have been limited, focusing mainly on improvements to buildings (including solar and bathrooms), plus some stuff around sustainable transport, primarily secure bike storage. As a result, the following are suggested as suitable for submission, as we have evidence of need and support from people with regard to these.

- Toilet improvements at CHMP, including auto opening, improvements to disabled equipment and refurbishment of existing facilities – cost of approximately £10k (will be nailed down prior to submission)
- Alterations to the toilets at TBMP to enable them to be ‘all users’, rather than the disabled toilet in the main hall – widening of the door frames and auto openers, plus the addition of suitable equipment / auto openers, etc. Cost of approximately £10k (will be nailed down prior to submission)
- Addition of ‘auto openers’ on doors at NFMP (main door (button only) and toilets) and Chambers doors, to enable access for all. Cost of around £600 per opener, plus installation – approximately £3,000 (see <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B082HDCBTT/>)
- Installation of solar panels at TBMP, alongside relevant ‘battery’ storage if possible. Costs for a 4kw system (suitable for a 4 person house) with panels, converter and battery are around £12k (see <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/cost-guides/solar-battery-storage-system-cost/>), with different levels depending on what is wanted (e.g. a 6kw panels only system for £7k ish - https://www.deegesolar.co.uk/how_much_do_solar_panels_cost/)
- Secure bike storage for The Hub, to support sustainable travel. Cost of around £5k, plus VAT, installation and racking (£7k ish all in – see <https://kbsdepot.com/online-shop/Secure-bicycle-shelter-p417305307>)

These items, in total, represent £40,000 worth of investment - £20k through CIF with a further £20k needed from other sources (either from existing resources or through grant applications). Depending on the formalised costs prior to submission, some items may need to be excluded.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Agenda item FC 40.22 Community Infrastructure Fund 2023-2024.
Agenda item FC 40.22 Quick Guide to CIF Applications 2023-2024.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**Full Council****Monday 11th July 2022****PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update council on the Strategy Group discussions from 27th June 2022****RECOMMENDATION:**

16. That council notes this report
17. That the Strategy Group becomes more focused, with papers provided for discussion and agreement, with an aim to concentrate on key issues
18. That council considers whether there is a need for a less formal group discussion forum, where a more 'free flowing' conversation can take place.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Strategy Group met for the second time on 27th June, with an aim to clarify some of the underlying agreements that would form the basis of the plan. Whilst this wasn't achieved, there was some excellent discussion around a range of other issues:

- Engagement with our diverse communities. How can we, as the local council, ensure that the traditions of other cultures are understood and respected?
 - o Engaging with 'community leaders' where possible
 - o Working with our whole community to show that all are welcome if they wish to be involved (whilst acknowledging that some people don't)
 - o Consideration of translation services for publicity materials
 - o How can we demonstrate that if you live on Woughton for only one day, you are 'one of us' and as such, have a voice and are welcome?
 - o Having 'trust' in our communities, even if what they say isn't what we think that they should want!
- People moving into Woughton get a welcome pack, that includes all relevant information. This was linked to wider discussions about the cost-of-living impact and making sure people know where they can go for help.
 - o In 10 years time, the Advice service builds resilience, works proactively and supports personal choice and responsibility, whilst being there when it is needed.
 - o A flexible, multi-skilled workforce that responds to changing needs (a la Tesco, where team members move to where they are most needed at key times)

The group looked briefly at the previous plans – the overarching view was that things remain quite similar, with the advice service being created, focus on regeneration, concerns about life expectancy and the disparity with other areas – many things that were included in those plans would probably be included in any new plan. Things are 'better' than they were 5 years ago, but not good enough, so how can we measure

success? What, as a council, should we be doing to show our value? Do we need KPI's, metrics, outcomes, etc..

Other items of note included:

- Push to be a test area for Universal Basic Income and agitate for change
- What do we have control over and what don't we – what should be included in a strategic plan and what sits outside?
- How can we manage the ongoing reactive stuff whilst also ensuring that the longer term, strategic oversight is addressed?
- Can we do an additional edition of the Gazette that focuses on the cost of living crisis?

The meeting, whilst useful, did not produce the high level, strategic outcomes that are needed. As a result, it has been suggested that we look at a more structured approach in future meetings, with a paper that addresses key areas of the councils work with some suggestions of what we may consider to be realistic expectations for 10 years time, which can then lead to plans for how to get there.

The meeting also showed the significant value of have some space to explore ideas with councillor colleagues, so councillor may wish to consider whether a less formal session, without agendas / minutes / etc. would be beneficial to promote the type of discussions that took place within this group.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**Full Council****Monday 11th July 2022****PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To consider the issue of childcare provision during council meetings.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 19. That council notes this report.**
- 20. That council considers whether WCC should provide childcare / dependency support to councillors, both immediately and as part of any engagement process for April 2023 elections**
- 21. That council considers what route WCC should take:**
 - a. Provision of a 'creche' within the Hub during meeting times**
 - b. Employment of a team of carers (adult and child friendly) that can be used by councillors within their own homes**
 - c. Payment of allowances, in line with those offered by principal authorities, to people with caring responsibilities**
- 22. That council considers whether to send letters informing others of a wish to provide allowances (if this is decided), to include:**
 - a. Other parish councils within the city**
 - b. NALC, BMKALC, SLCC, etc.**
 - c. MPs for MK and Cabinet / Shadow Cabinet members with responsibility for local government**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As a council that aims to ensure equality and inclusion, the current rules regarding the payment of childcare expenses a barrier to this. Whilst councillors at unitary, borough and national level are all able to pay childcare (and indeed, dependency allowances) and, since 2011, councillors at parish level in Wales have been able to do likewise (up to £403 per month), the law in England continues to prohibit the payment of these allowances. This is defined in the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, where parishes are excluded from the piece relating to these allowances (covers district, county and London Boroughs only). Whilst this is an area that NALC have campaigned on very briefly in 2019, it seems unlikely that this situation will change any time soon as it does not appear to be a high priority for many.

It is worth noting that childcare responsibilities (and dependency duties more widely) tend to fall more heavily on women than men, with research suggesting that 2/3rds of duties fall on women (when in opposite sex two parent households) and 90% of single parents are female. The rules that are preventing WCC from paying for direct expenses, could therefore be considered to be directly discriminatory, in breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Whilst we are unable to pay expenses to councillors for childcare, there is nothing in legislation that would prevent us from offering childcare directly – the Localism Act 2011 allows councils with General Power of Competence, in simple terms, it gives the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. Therefore, one route for us to consider would be to provide childcare when relevant meetings are taking place. Whilst there would be some considerations (where, who, costs, etc.), this approach would enable WCC to meet the needs of all within the community, encourage and support a more diverse meeting and councillor group.

Another option could be to ‘employ’ carers directly, who we can then use to support councillor dependents. This would potentially be harder to justify, but still sits within the ‘GPoC’ rules about ‘anything that is legal’. It is likely that people would need to be employed on zero hours contracts and simply used as and when needed.

These approaches would mean that we would be less likely to face a challenge under the Equalities Act (although we would welcome a more general challenge to this legislation).

Following a similar paper being presented at Operations and Resources, a further proposal was made that we pay allowances, as they do at principal authority level, informing all relevant parties that we will be doing this and waiting for the fallout. This would be unlawful, and the Council Manager cannot, as the Proper Officer, recommend this as an option.

Despite this not being recommended, it is likely that this approach would bring publicity to this issue (and to WCC), which may have benefits in the longer term, including legal discussions about the potential incompatibility of the legislation involved. It would also make a very clear statement that WCC would like to see inclusive, modern government at this level, despite the lack of commitment that appears to be indicated by those with more power.

It is recommended that council considers whether WCC should provide support to parents who may find it difficult to attend meetings otherwise and, if so, consider the approach that may be taken. At this time, there is no direct demand for this, but there have been queries raised by potential candidates for election as to how these issues may be supported by WCC. Given this, consideration and decision would be helpful, especially with whole council elections due in May 2023.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Agenda Item: OC 25/22

Appendix A – Suggested letter for partners

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Name
Address
Address 2
Postcode

July 2022

Dear XXXX

Re: Childcare and Dependency Leave payments for Local Councils

We are writing in advance of the local elections in May 2023, where our councillors are all up for election and we are likely to see contests in many of our 19 seats. This is to inform you of and to request your support with the council's decision to offer childcare and dependency support to prospective councillors, despite the legislative restrictions around this.

As you may be aware, councillors within the principal authority (for us, Milton Keynes Council) are able to be paid these allowances. The same is true of our colleagues within local councils in Wales. However, in England, local councils (town, parish, and community councils) are prevented from being able to offer this support.

90% of single parents are women¹. In two parent households (where parents are opposite genders), 66% of caring duties fall to women². These statistics were further exacerbated by the pandemic and, combined with the significant barriers that childcare costs already place, this issue is one that clearly impacts women more than men (whilst acknowledging that there are also men who have caring responsibilities).

The view of this council is that this breaches equality law, prevents access to all within our communities to play a full and active role in local democracy and as such, should be challenged. This is an area that has been raised consistently with our national umbrella organisations, but without any visible or sustained pressure to make change. As with many aspects of the sector, this situation is indicative of legislation that is dated, out of touch and in conflict both with newer law and with a modern, inclusive, and ethical approaches to democracy and governance.

The council has suggested that an initial approach will be that we employ carers / babysitters and then provide them to those who need them, bypassing the 'allowance' element. However, this is not always going to be suitable, as those with specific needs may have carers / sitters that are known and suitable. If this is the case, we would strongly consider whether allowances to cover the costs of this support would be the right approach to take. Whilst it is acknowledged that this may be in breach of the LGA1972, it would be compliant with the Equalities Act (2010).

We know that there are significant risks where a local council acts outside the law, but as with the 'remote meetings' issue, there are times where law is in conflict and without clarification and agreement from those with the power to do so, councils at the local level are left in a position where they manage as best they can. WCC is able to be more flexible, due to having General Power of Competence, but others are not so lucky and are left to the mercies of a range of legislative acts from the past 150 years.

We would be interested to hear your views on this.

- Is this rule (non-payment of dependency / childcare allowances) one that you have found prevents people from standing as candidates?

- Do you believe that the current exclusion of allowances is compliant with Equalities legislation?
- Do you feel that this is an area where government (and our representative at national level) should be pushing for change, either specifically or more broadly in terms of a modernisation of the sector?

Thank you for taking the time to read this and, we hope, to get in touch. I will be collating response on behalf of council, so please send any views to steve.mcnay@woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,



Steve McNay
Council Manager
On behalf of Woughton Community Council

1 - ONS (2019) [Families and households](#), Table 1.
2 - ONS (2016) Women shoulder the responsibility of 'unpaid work'

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 11th July 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To consider the impact of the 'Cost of Living Crisis' and Woughton Community Council response to this.

RECOMMENDATION:

23. That council considers this paper and associated issues
24. That council considers a position on whether WCC should make changes now to address the 'cost of living' crisis or whether this sits elsewhere
25. That if change is wanted, a clear view from council is offered on priorities and funding
 - a. That council considers the list of options and states whether these are a priority or not
 - b. That council considers this alongside the budgetary implications and possible staffing resource issues
26. That council states the funding approach to be taken
 - a. That provision fits within existing budgets
 - b. That savings are made elsewhere to fund any new initiatives
 - c. That funding is sought from external sources, charities, councillor ward allowances, etc.
 - d. That additional funding is allocated from reserves (please note that this is NOT recommended by RFO / CM at this time)
27. That the Council Manager works with the Service Committee to clarify details once council has given a steer on what is / isn't wanted. Where necessary, work and delivery will commence over the summer, but that a full report will come back to Full Council in September.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

There is a view that the current inflationary pressures, increases in daily living costs and the failure of wages / benefits to keep pace, is likely to lead to significant challenge for many within our parish. Whilst accurate figures for income levels, benefits recipients, etc. is not available, there is a view that we, as the council closest to the people of the parish, should take a proactive approach and look at our service provision and budgets, to see what (if anything) we should alter / change.

It is often the case that Woughton feels the impact of fiscal pressure before other areas. This is primarily due to the lack of 'wiggle room' that many people have – whilst more affluent areas may have residents that can reduce spending on non-essentials, there are people in Woughton that simply don't have any non-essentials left – they have already gone. There is anecdotal evidence already that people are stopping direct debit payments to energy companies and similar. Whilst this will

potentially help with short term cash flow, it simply pushes the impact to later in the year where energy costs rise again and winter energy usage bites.

We have also heard of other issues; people cancelling broadband contracts, reducing food shopping, accessing more community fridges / cafes / etc. And we have seen an increase in food bank referrals for local people. Numbers remain low but have doubled over the past few months.

Woughton Community Council (WCC) is already well placed to support people with these issues. With an established advice service, community food approaches, links to charities and other organisations and with a youth service that helps ensure the wellbeing of our young people, these well used services can help to mitigate some of the worst impacts.

Despite this support, the reality for many is that all the advice in the world is not going to increase their income, reduce their expenditure or make their situation any easier. It is essential that officers and councillors acknowledge and accept the limitations that we have, passing on to other agencies where necessary. The WCC Community Team are in the process of creating resources that help provide details of these agencies to others.

With all the above considered, there remain difficult decisions for the council to take. Is the current level of service provision sufficient? Are the resources that we have used correctly? Does our budget enable additional resources to be committed, or does the council need to live within the current means? Are there projects or ideas that should be sacrificed to create some additional money to spend on support? And what should that support be?

Budgets

There may be some room to make savings within the budget to allow additional 'cost of living' resources, but this will, potentially, leave WCC vulnerable in future years, especially if the choice to use reserves is made.

The budget that WCC has for this year is not generous – whilst the positive outcome to 2021/22 means that this year is proposed as 'break even' (ish), there have already been significant costs that were NOT budgeted for – the Tinkers Bridge roof (almost £27k) and new IT equipment (£12k) and this is unlikely to be the only unplanned spending (additional staffing budget to cover absences, end of the contract for the pickup, preparations for the new Landscape contract if taken, etc.)

Conversely, we had identified areas where savings could be made – there was a budget of £5k for Jubilee celebration, with £1500 unspent. There is £10k in 'events' which is likely to be underspent. The service plan has some items that could, if wanted, be postponed / cancelled / reduced to free up money. There is also the £10k 'emerging priorities' budget line.

It is also important to consider the impact of any further reductions in funding for next year from MKC which will, undoubtedly, cause significant hardship in 2023/24. Whilst WCC has a healthy level of 'reserves' (currently in the region of £500k) it is NOT recommended that these are used.

Current Service Provision

Our existing provision offers a decent level of support, over several different service areas and offers help to hundreds of people each week. Council may wish to consider whether alternative delivery or extensions to that which is offered should be in place.

Our **Wellbeing and Advice Services** (WAS) consists of two part time staff members, one that has a primary focus on wellbeing and the other on advice, with significant cross over where necessary. In total, these officers currently provide around 50 hours per week of provision, with additional support from the Community Services Manager and others where necessary. There is also significant support from volunteers, including councillor support with specialist knowledge. This is lower than previously, due to part time hours.

The advice service offers an appointment-based approach, with sessions available at The Hub, both Hedgerows and Moorlands Family Centres and, where appropriate, in other venues. This is supported with 'distance options' too, using phones / emails / online tools. This works extremely well for some residents.

Council should consider whether this is felt sufficient or whether additional resources may be needed in the coming months and, if so, what / how these might be offered. Directly employ additional staff, contract an external agency (such as CAB), look at other options that would help, such as group sessions.

Our **Community Food** approach offers community fridge and larder, plus a café three times weekly. These sessions are open to all and are currently not restricted to people from within the parish. For both the fridge and larder, this is an approach that is agreed with the 'umbrella' organisations (Hubbub, Sofea and Food Connect), whilst the Café is a WCC provision and arguably takes the most resource. Concerns have been noted about the impact of 'out of area' visitors attending the café meaning that there may not be sufficient for Woughton residents. *One suggestion is that we make it a 'membership' scheme (similar to the way we previously offered subsidised swimming to Woughton residents), where membership is only open to people within the parish.*

The current provision for WCC is daytime – the fridge, larder and café all take place during working hours and, whilst the Netherfield Community Fridge opens one evening a week, there is a lack of 'out of hours' provision. This links to anecdotal evidence that there is food going to waste due to a lack of 'collectors' in the evening, where many shops dispose of their stock. *Is this an area that WCC should consider, both in terms of provision of 'collectors' for out of hours food and provision of out of hours fridge / café / etc? If so, what additional resources may be needed to be able to deliver this additional support and service?*

Our **Youth provision** provides a range of services, many of which include access to food as well as the support, activity and signposting that is part of everyday youth work. Whilst some sessions are targeted at specific groups, many sessions are open access, meaning any young person within the age range can attend and make use of the service. This provision has been further strengthened over recent months

through additional funding through MKC for holiday provision – this offers funding for activities and food for children in receipt of free school meals, which has been bolstered by existing funding to make this open to all.

There is further encouragement to set up ‘homework clubs’ – sessions that take place after school and offer safe spaces and light meals (jacket spuds, toasties, beans on toast) for young people. There is no funding for ongoing running costs or staffing – this would need to be found by WCC. *Council should consider whether this is something that is a priority and if so, whether they believe that funding should be found internally for ongoing costs (staffing, food, etc.)*

Our **communications** can also be a useful tool to share relevant information with local people, be that via The Gazette, website, social media pages or posters / leaflets within other services. There are often articles / posts that include tips around money saving or similar subjects and we will continue to promote these as they arrive. A suggestion has been made that a one off ‘Cost of Living Crisis’ edition of the Gazette could be created and delivered to each household, whilst others have suggested that this may be engendering unnecessary fear in some. *Council should decide whether this is something that the feel should happen and if so, what contents should include.*

Additionally, there is currently no specific ‘communications’ officer – this is done by most people to some extent and overseen by the Council Manager. Creating new resources, collating information, developing webpages / leaflets / etc are all additional demands that can be considerable. *Council may wish to consider whether some focused resource to develop these areas (creating ‘directories’ for councillors and officers, creating specialist Gazette articles, etc.) should be identified and funded.*

And finally, our **councillors** and the casework they undertake brings considerable value. Whilst we don’t collect any statistics or information about this, we know that there are many, many people that get support via councillors, often with complex and challenging issues. This includes both parish and ward councillors, with the support that comes through MKC for this. *Having suitable resources and information for councillors, alongside agreed ‘referral’ routes (knowing when to pass over to other people / agencies) is key to being able to manage this effectively.*

Financial Impacts and considerations

As noted above, there is some flexibility with current finances, but this is limited and will have an impact in the long term. The service plan and budget has been agreed and ratified and long-term plans are based around prudent spending and management of reserves. Any decision that involves additional use of reserves should be agreed by council and taken carefully.

This paper has been created quickly, due to requests from councillors and as such, the figures below should be considered as approximate – whilst they are felt to be reflective of the likely costs, without further work this cannot be guaranteed.

WAS changes. As noted, we currently have 51 hours of provision (25 hour and 26 hour posts). These posts were both originally at higher levels and as such, there is the potential for an additional role at around the same level (20 -25 hours). This

would cost around £19k per year for 20 hours (including pension, NI, etc.) rising to £23.5k for 25 hours (again, assuming pension costs etc.) – this is based on £12.82 per hour, plus oncosts (a £25k salary).

Alternative approaches would vary in costs and reach – group approaches (e.g. a session looking at anxiety management) would cost between £40 - £100 per session for up to 12 participants, depending on the nature of the work. With most sessions of this type running for around 6 weeks, this equates to £240 - £600 per ‘course’.

Buying in sessions from the CAB has previously been considered and, when last investigated costs quoted were:

Fortnightly Outreach sessions for Parish Councils:

£4,400 per annum

£2,200 6 months

Weekly Outreach Sessions

£7,400 per annum

£3,700 for 6 months

Appointments would be 3 slots per week.

Specific work around information, directories, publicity, and communications are included below.

Community Food options

Our community food (fridge, larder, café) is predominantly provided using volunteers, overseen by the Coordinator. Any additional services (such as evening / weekends) would mean additional volunteer and staff cover – at least one officer would be needed for suitable safety and security (and preferably two). There would also be additional volunteer management demand, with associated costs. Costs would be around £18 per hour (incl.) per officer, so assuming a weekly evening session for 2 hours (3 with set up / take down), this would be an additional £2800 per year.

This would not include any collection costs. Again, whilst volunteers could be used for this (as has happened previously), there remain costs associated with this – fuel costs, cover where volunteers are unable to cover, etc. Clarity around who / what / where collections would take place would also need to be investigated – based upon the work undertaken during the early pandemic, collections were in three corners of the city and as such, travel was around 20 miles per evening (£9 in expenses if claimed = £460 per year).

Making the café a ‘membership’ option (as the larder already is) would be relatively cost neutral – the BRO has access to a machine and would be able to check eligibility and allocate a membership card, so costs would be simply the cost of cards / small staff time (pennies per person).

Youth homework clubs

Whilst volunteers could be sought to support this (especially from local schools, where the educational expertise would be welcome), some level of staffing will be essential. Assuming two-hour sessions (with set up / clear up either side meaning 3 hours in total on a couple of night per week, this will cost around £50 per session, per staff member. With the additional cost of food provision being predominantly met

through the donations to fridge / larder, ongoing costs would be £2,000 (one member of staff for one session per week, for 40 weeks), increasing by the same for each additional session / staff member needed (so if two staff members for two sessions per week = £8,000). This doesn't include any building costs. However, there is the potential for these clubs to be 'added on' to existing provision – Mondays at NFMP, prior to Youth Club and on Thursdays to run alongside the existing youth session at EAC (utilising the small meeting room for the Homework Club). With the additional of a session on a Tuesday at CH, this would provide excellent coverage with considerably lower costs.

Communications work could be undertaken by other officers / individuals, either within existing roles (possible, but unlikely) or could be bought in on a 'one off' consultancy basis. Costs would be based on what was required, but likely to be around £30 p/h. This would be the bit that focuses on creation of new stuff – directories of information, updating and creating new website pages, collation and rewriting of articles that would contribute towards the Gazette, etc. There is some capacity within the existing team to take this on, but some additional resource would be useful if more extensive work is needed.

The cost of an additional Gazette publication, printing and distribution would be in the region of £2500 (this includes the design, printing and distribution to all households).

This work would also provide resources for councillors to help enable them to direct accordingly, signpost and have access to the relevant information that might bring additional value.

Additional Options

There are alternative sources of funding; charities, grants, external bodies, etc. that may (and I emphasise *may*) be able to support these initiatives.

The Kevin Wilson Woughton Trust (KWWT) is one option – this is the charity that the council has been discussing for some time which has been held up by issues with banking. Despite this, the charity was agreed at council on 27th January 2020, including the proposal that any unspent grants monies 'rolled into' the charity. Since this agreement, almost £25,000 has been unspent from this budget line, potentially leaving a significant resource (if council agree that these monies should be transferred – it should be noted that this money remains within WCC reserves currently). Final agreement is needed from the charity regarding grants policy and who / what is eligible, but this would potentially provide additional resource.

The grants group can also be tasked with finding suitable opportunities, if council is clear about the projects that they prioritise – ongoing costs are unlikely to be met, but new initiatives and projects could be possible.

Conclusion

There are some significant decisions for council to consider and agree to.

- Should we change our service plan and budget to respond to the 'cost of living' crisis?

- Is an expansion going to change the situation for residents, or are the issues outside our control or capacity (energy costs, inflation, etc. are all outside our realm, but impact on residents – will our input make a difference or are these issues unmanageable no matter how much advice is offered)?
- Should we expand our services, despite the impact this will have on our resources? Can we continue to add more provision without more resource, where many officers are already at (or beyond) capacity? Or should we only provide additional elements that can be funded through savings or additional income from elsewhere?
 - o Tweaks to the existing budget (see page 1), with potentially £10 - £25k of savings possible
 - o Grants from outside agencies (e.g. MK Community Foundation, KWWT)
 - o Use of grant pot (internal), councillor ward allowances, etc.
- Is this work that others should be doing (e.g. MKC, who have considerably more resources and, arguably, more responsibility)?
- If council *does* feel that WCC should make changes, what are the priorities for the council?
 - o Additional advice and wellbeing support
 - Should this be internal or 'buying in' external options?
 - Individual sessions, group approaches or a combination of both
 - Should this also include Education, Training and Employment support?
 - o Homework clubs
 - If so, is the proposal that they are held at CHMP (on the route from schools and resources already there) acceptable?
 - o Communications and development of resources
 - o Additional 'Crisis' edition of the Gazette
 - o 'Membership' scheme for community café
 - o Additional resources allocated for collection of food in the evenings, with additional fridge sessions running alongside
 - o Other things.

These are challenging discussions and decisions, but they need to be considered and agreed with some level of urgency if they are to be in place in a timely manner. There is likely to be an increase in demand for many parts of this proposal in autumn / winter 2022, when energy costs increase, and inflationary pressures continue to affect other aspects of life.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Covered in the discussion above, but there is an impact on staff where any new initiative is developed, especially where this leads to additional time demands.

AUTHOR

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