

**WOLVERTON AREA ACTION PLAN: PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

Accountable Cabinet Member: Councillor Chris Williams

Contact Officer: Michael Moore (Senior Planning Officer) MK 252352

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To give LDF Panel Members an opportunity to comment on an early draft of the Wolverton Area Action Plan Preferred Options document currently in preparation for public consultation.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Panel be invited to give its views on the draft document.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Wolverton Area Action Plan is being prepared as a direct result of the Council accepting the suggestion of the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector that such a plan should be prepared to help regenerate Wolverton Town Centre. The plan aims to regenerate Wolverton by encouraging development on a number of key sites within the town. With the notable exception of the Agora, it does not generally include sites where planning policy guidance is already in place, sites with existing planning permission or sites at an advanced stage in the planning process.
- 3.2 The Wolverton Area Action Plan is being prepared as a Development Plan Document (DPD) under the new development plan system introduced by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Work on the plan started in 2005. The plan is being prepared to advice published by the Government.
- 3.3 The Preferred Options document is very much a work in progress as the outcome of other work and detailed studies such as parking and transport and detailed design advice and illustrative material etc has yet to be included within it. However, the broad content and outlines of the document are recognisable.

#### **4. Content of Preferred Options Document**

##### 4.1 In essence the document consists of the following main elements

###### 1. Introduction

Outlining the background to the area, what an Area Action Plan is and why the Council is producing one. Text covers what this stage is for and why we are consulting on this document, including specific consultation arrangements and how to comment on it.

###### 2. Vision and Objectives

Introducing the vision for the town centre, how it was formed etc...including how it has been amended to incorporate comments at the Issues and Options stage. This section contains the objectives of the plan (para 2.2) and explains how the vision will be turned into reality through proposals for the redevelopment of key town centre site and a series of policies designed to ensure development is brought forward suitable for Wolverton.

###### 3. Consistency with National, Regional and Local Policy

The Plan is required to demonstrate how it fits with other relevant policy advice such as the review of Regional Spatial Strategy, the Milton Keynes and Sub-Regional Strategy and the MK Community Strategy. Do members think this is too long, is there anything else that should be included?

###### 4. Review of the Issues and Options Consultation

For continuity, this section will show how the responses to the Issues and Options consultation reported at the last meeting of the LDF Advisory group have informed work on the Preferred Options document. This could include a summary of the key findings in the document and inclusion of all the results in an appendix.

###### 5. Strategic Proposals

This section will feature a strategic proposals map to be produced by the Council's Urban Design team, which will provide a spatial interpretation of how MKC sees the AAP proposal being met. It will show: -

- Key and potential areas of change,
- Key connections and pedestrian areas
- Key new links, such as over the canal and areas of enhanced linkages such as to the train station
- Existing areas of change
- Key landmark buildings and areas of change
- Other key developments within the vicinity (details to be updated)
- Site specific proposals

#### Site specific proposals

##### a) The Agora, Tesco, Railway works East and Creed Street

For each of these introduce its location and why it is a key area of change within the town centre.

Outline what the proposals of any future redevelopment will be and why this is being done (i.e. the principles/drivers for development of the site). This should include an indicative land use plan of how the proposed changes could be delivered on site. There should also be some indication of any particular requirements in terms of design (i.e. for the Agora, respecting views of the Church, size of buildings etc...)

Acknowledge any particular issues (such as existing retailers in the Agora), constraints to development (such as the potential cost implications of purchasing the land and the knock on effect that this has) and needs that the area has.

Could also acknowledge that any other options that were considered for development and why these were ruled out.

This section should suggest how future development would be taken forward (e.g. the development of the railway works could be taken forward through a Masterplan created jointly by the Council and St Modwen as landowner).

This is where the main work from Urban Design will fit in.

#### Potential areas of change

##### b) The town centre core and the Railway works East

Outline how these areas could be subject to change in the future if circumstances allow.

For the town centre, acknowledge that if Wolverton is to become an attractive and competitive retail option then there will need for investment in the retail frontages and the public realm.

For the part of the railway works that is currently operational, outline the current working arrangements (e.g. the length of the lease etc...) but stress that after this period is over the Council will be willing to support redevelopment of the site. Give broad possible land uses that the size and context of the site would be suitable for and acknowledge that these uses would have to be compatible with redevelopment of the eastern part of the railway works.

### c) Generic Topic Areas

Including highways, parking, pedestrian and cycling movement, public transport, open space and biodiversity.

For each topic outline what the preferred option for the AAP is (e.g. for public transport- how can it be made a more attractive option, for highways- where are the main problem areas that need to be addressed and where are new accesses needed).

Findings of parking and transport study to be fed into this report here

## 6. Policy Directions

This section introduces the 5/6 main theme areas that were established in the Issues and Options Document. It introduces the key themes that the policy will be addressing. The reasons why and how the policy will be achieved. These will include

- Defining the town centre and a coherent and functional town centre
- Housing provision
- Protecting character,
- Encouraging economic growth
- Waterside development
- Improving the retail offer of the town
- Site based policies, improving connections, protecting amenity etc...

Then for each theme provide some context as to the issues that need to be addressed, why these are important and what the general context of the policy will be.

As an example, for a canalside policy the reasons for the policy being needed could include- 'the canal provides scope for high quality waterside development' and 'the canal is poorly integrated with the town centre'. The policy direction could say 'a policy on canalside development will set out the Council's requirement for increased activity on the canalside. The policy will provide details of how access to and across the canal should be improved and how the canals integration with the town centre could be enhanced. The policy will have regard to how the role the canal plays as a wildlife corridor and recreation important leisure facility can be enhanced through development'.

This section could also include a table showing the local plan polices that these new policies will override (or this could be in an appendix).

## 7. Viability and Deliverability

The section on deliverability should have regard to who is responsible for taking forward the proposals in the AAP and how this will be achieved.

It should relate to any market testing that has taken place to ensure viability and deliverability

## 8. Proposals Map

There needs to be a draft proposals map showing the AAP area, the town centre boundary, primary retail area, areas of change etc...

## 9. Appendix

The appendix will need to include:

Plans of the movement network,

A table showing the relationship with existing policies (i.e. which Local Plan policies will this plan override) (See above)

An analysis of the reasons for choosing the preferred options and,

An urban design guide

## 5. Implications

### Policy

- 5.1 The production of any Area Action Plan for Wolverton features in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) for 2006-2009, which the Cabinet agreed to in April 2006. The LDS is currently the subject of discussion with the Government Office for the South East (GOSE)

### Resources

- 5.2 No estimates have yet been produced on costs however the estimated total cost of the previous consultation, excluding staff costs, was around £3500 (excluding VAT) of which printing costs were the largest component. Documents are expected to be produced in house to reduce costs. Failure to deliver the document within the timescale set out in the Local Development Scheme may mean reduced Planning Delivery Grant in the forthcoming financial year.

### Legal

- 5.3 As a DPD document when adopted the Plan will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. The adopted plan will form part of the Council's Local Development Framework

## **E-Government**

- 5.4 The adopted DPD document and other documents will be available on line.

## **Equalities**

- 5.5 To help people respond to consultation on this document, whose first language is not English, the document will have script in different foreign languages together with contact details of where further help could be obtained.

## **Background Papers:**

1. MK Local Plan Inquiry - Inspector's Report: Part 2 (November 2004)
2. Adopted Wolverton Regeneration Strategy, Supplementary Planning Guidance (September 2004).