

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context

Wolverton is one of the pre-new town settlements in Milton Keynes that provides essential everyday services for local residents and visitors to the town. Originally developed around its function as a strategic stop on the rail line between London and Birmingham, Wolverton is steeped in industrial heritage and has a distinctive character that sets it apart from other parts of the city.

The town has slowly suffered due to the emergence of Central Milton Keynes (CMK) and the decline in manufacturing, which traditionally has been the basis of the town's success. There has been a lack of investment in the town and the general appeal of the town centre as a destination has fallen as it struggles to compete with new emerging centres in and around Milton Keynes.

A substantial amount of work has taken place over the last few years to encourage regeneration of the town. Much of the regeneration has been stimulated by the Healthcheck process undertaken in 2002. From this, and the subsequent Wolverton Regeneration Strategy, formally adopted in 2004, change has already started to happen. Earlier this year planning permission was granted for the conversion of the grade II listed Former Royal Train Shed and Reading Room buildings into around 300 new dwellings and community facilities, made possible by a grant from the Sustainable Communities Fund, available to Wolverton due to Milton Keynes' position in a growth area.

Other recent or impending improvements to the town include the development of the Secret Garden next to the canal, the granting of planning permission for homes on the former EMEB and Bong McCorquodale sites and the conversion of the Market Halls building into a new library and Town Council office.

To complement and take forward the momentum of this initial success, Milton Keynes Council (MKC) is preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) to coordinate development within the town centre. This document will form part of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF), which will eventually replace the current Local Plan. The production of the AAP will help to ensure that individual projects coming forward are not developed in isolation and work together to enhance the town centre.

1.2 What is an Area Action Plan and why produce it?

An AAP is a new type of planning document that the Government want to see produced under the new planning legislation, which was introduced in 2005. The purpose of the plan is to coordinate and deliver development within the town centre up to 2016.

An AAP is being produced for Wolverton for several reasons. The first of these is that the Council accepted the Local Plan Inspectors' recommendation that an AAP would be a suitable vehicle to take forward the work already started on the regeneration of Wolverton. The availability of four hectares of redundant railway works, a relatively large brownfield site for Milton Keynes, also makes it important to have a policy framework in place to ensure sustainable and efficient use of the land.

The production of an AAP will help to ensure that Milton Keynes Council continues to take forward the commitment that it made in the 2004 **Community Strategy** to address and support the regeneration of the towns and neighbourhoods that are in need of revitalisation.

1.3 The Consultation Process

One of the key features of the new planning system is the requirement for community involvement to be a more integral part of the plan making process. It is important that the Council involves the community at every stage of the process and ensures that community views are heard.

The AAP consultation process began in May 2005 when **preliminary consultation** sought to engage the community in the plan making process and initially assess the key issues in Wolverton.

Feedback from this initial consultation, along with the previous work on the Regeneration Strategy, helped to inform the production of **the Issues and Options** document, which was published for consultation in April/June 2006. We received approximately 150 responses from local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders, which alongside other studies, on issues such as transport, provided valuable input into the production of this **Preferred Options** report.

This is the second major stage of the plan making process and once again it is important that we receive views from the public and local groups so we can ensure that the needs of the community are being met.

Once this consultation is completed the comments will be evaluated and any required alterations to the document made. This will then form the **Submission Version** of the AAP, which will then be subject to a further six-week consultation period, following which any outstanding issues will be dealt with by an independent inspector, before the document is adopted as Council policy.

Alongside this consultation the Council is also undertaking a **Sustainability Appraisal** of the AAP, which seeks to ensure that the plan meets objectives of sustainable development. Details of the Sustainability Appraisal can be found on the Councils' website at www.mkweb.co.uk/local_plan_review. Any comments you have on this document can be directed to the address provided over the page.

1.4 The Preferred Options Consultation

This report forms the basis of how MKC thinks Wolverton town centre should develop over the next 10 years. It sets out a clear vision and objectives for development, and identifies key areas of change that can be brought forward to deliver this vision. The report highlights specific proposals for these sites and also sets out the proposed policy directions against which individual applications would be assessed, and how delivery of the proposals will be taken forward.

To support the Preferred Options document, a number of technical studies and background work have been included as appendices. These include a Transport and Parking Study, an analysis of key landscape characteristics and an audit of available community space, which are specific to Wolverton, and Employment and Housing Studies that relate to provision in the wider Milton Keynes. Each of these pieces of work can be found on the MKC website at www.mkweb.co.uk/local_plan_review.

1.5 How to comment

To ensure that the Submission Document is fully informed by the views of the community and other key stakeholders we need comments on this document to be recorded on the official consultation form. The consultation runs from ??? to ???. If you want us to consider your views please take the time return your forms to the Council at:

Spatial Planning Division (freepost address???)
Milton Keynes Council
PO Box 112
Civic Offices
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3HQ

For further information please see visit www.mkweb.co.uk/local_plan_review or contact the Spatial Planning Team at:

Email: development.plans@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Tel: 01908 252599

2.0 Spatial Vision and Objectives

2.1 The Vision

Before setting out proposals and policies for the redevelopment of central Wolverton, it is first important to understand what it is we are trying to achieve. A Vision for the future of Wolverton has been established to show what the underlying aims of the town centre regeneration are.

The Vision is not a completely new piece of work. Many of the principles it promotes were established through the original Vision, created by the community as part of the Healthcheck process in 2002. This work has formed the basis for the AAP Vision, which has also been informed by national, regional and local policy, as well as feedback from the Issues and Options Consultation, which has resulted in the introduction of an additional vision point on the natural environment.

In bringing forward development in the Town Centre the AAP has a vision of:

- **‘Place changing’ development on key sites**, making full use of the economic benefits of being located in a regional growth area, whilst protecting and enhancing Wolverton’s existing character
- **A vital and vibrant town centre**, making Wolverton a safe and attractive place to be through improved pedestrian and vehicle networks linking key developments, high quality public realm and enhanced public transport facilities
- **A successful and appealing retail core**, reinforcing Wolverton’s role as an important district centre in Milton Keynes.
- **Interesting, creative and high quality developments**, showcasing and preserving Wolverton’s proud industrial heritage and enhancing the town’s appeal as a visitor destination.
- **A Grand Union Canal**, with high quality waterfront development and improved public accessibility.
- **An increased range and level of housing available in the town centre**, catering for all sections of the local community, helping to reinforce the existing community spirit in the town.
- **Mixed-use development, consistent with town centre areas**, including facilities for the development and growth of a successful economic base.
- **An enhanced natural environment**, with open space and biodiversity features integral to the design of the town.

2.2 Plan Objectives

This Vision will be turned into reality through proposals for the redevelopment of key town centre sites and a series of policies, designed to ensure development brought forward is suitable for the needs of Wolverton. To achieve this a series of objectives have been developed setting out how the Vision will be delivered. These objectives were put forward at the Issues and Options stage and have been tested through Sustainability Appraisal. Their conformity with national, regional and local policy, including the Community Strategy, has also been assessed. An additional objective has been added as a result of the initial Sustainability Appraisal.

The objectives take into account the role that Wolverton is anticipated playing within the future expansion of Milton Keynes. As a growth area there are certain opportunities available to Wolverton that similar towns in other parts of the country do not have. The residents and businesses of Wolverton should attempt to see the growth of Milton Keynes in a positive light, and the opportunities that it brings should be embraced to help secure the long-term future of the town.

The current MK2031 expansion consultation envisages the traditional town centres of Wolverton and Bletchley playing an enhanced role in the way people use Milton Keynes. The Wolverton of the future is seen as an attractive town centre, offering an attractive alternative to Central Milton Keynes as a place to live, work and visit.

Taking this into consideration, the objectives of this document are to:

Objectives
Land Uses

A	Regenerate the town centre by developing a mix of sustainable land uses, suitable for a town centre location
B	Create opportunities for waterfront development close to the heart of the town centre
C	Increase the amount and range of housing available in Wolverton
D	Provide appropriate opportunities to increase both local levels of employment and the provision of facilities within the mixed-use development

Character and Image

E	Ensure an attractive, vibrant and safe town centre, with destination appeal, that people want to visit at all times of the day
F	Conserve the Victorian character and distinct town identity
G	Enhance Gateways into the town centre
H	Develop linked public spaces and an enhanced public realm
I	Ensure that opportunities to enhance the environment and build-in biodiversity features are a characteristic of town centre redevelopments

Access and Movement

J	Create a linkage network within the town to facilitate movement and promote public transport, walking and cycling as viable modes of transport, improving accessibility throughout the town
K	Minimise the traffic impact of developments on the rest of the town
L	Improve the public transport offer within the town
M	Improve access to the Grand Union Canal

Design and Sustainability

N	Ensure that high quality design, which complements the character, scale and materials of the conservation area, is used throughout
O	Ensure that all developments make efficient use of resources and are of sustainable design and construction

3.0 Consistency with national, regional and local policy

It is important that this AAP is in conformity with the requirements of national, regional and local planning policy. With this in mind the objectives in the previous section have been informed by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, the Sub-regional Strategy for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands, the local Community Strategy and other policy documents, such as national Planning Policy Statements and the Milton Keynes Cultural Strategy. This will help to ensure a consistent approach to tackling the major planning issues both nationally and locally.

3.1 Summary of the Regional Spatial Strategy- The South East Plan- Requirements

http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/march_2006/exec_sum/executive_summary.pdf

http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/sep/index.html

The South East Plan sets out the requirements needed to improve the quality of life in the South East of England over the next 20 years. The South East Regional Assembly submitted the plan to the Government on March 31st 2006 after final approval at a full assembly meeting on 1st March 2006.

Its focus is on achieving a balance between the needs of housing, transport, employment and the economy, to ensure sustainable growth of the region up to 2026. To drive this forward its overall vision for the South East is of...

'sustained improvement in it's quality of life over the period to 2026, measured by the well being of its citizens, the vitality of it's economy, the wealth of its environment and the prudent use of natural resources'

For this to be achieved the Plan has a series of 21 objectives which are the core principles of what the plan is trying to achieve. These are:

- The need for a clear vision, supported by challenging targets, that reflects the quality of life considerations aligned with and tested against the objectives set out in the Integrated Regional Framework.
- The need to plan positively for a reasonable level of economic growth with consequent labour supply, and appropriate management of physical and social infrastructure implications
- The need for further measures to reduce economic disparities in the region
- The need to plan positively for a reasonable level of housing development
- The need to substantially increase the supply of appropriate affordable housing, and for a package of measures to deliver that goal
- The need for timely infrastructure provision that keeps pace with the development and greater reassurance on that issue through a dialogue with Government on how to plan for that development
- The need to develop clear investment priorities and improve key transport links

- The need to improve access via transport and other means, especially for disadvantaged groups
- The need to promote new initiatives to tackle skill deficits
- The need for radical thinking about health provision and access
- The need to place increased emphasis on natural resource management and efficiency
- The need to incorporate measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the plan
- The need to protect and improve the best of the region's natural environment both for its own sake and to underpin the social and economic development of the region
- The need to promote a sustainable balance between economic prosperity, environmental quality, social well-being and a high quality of life in the southeast
- At a sub-regional level, the need for a high priority to regenerate the coastal towns
- The need to decide whether any strategic development areas should be proposed
- The need to develop a strategy that creatively balances support for the regeneration and growth areas in the east with a positive response to the economic and housing pressures in the west of the region
- The need to develop the Plan in a manner which recognises uncertainty and incorporates appropriate phasing and flexibility
- The need to prepare and advocate much improved delivery and management arrangements to secure implementation of the Plan
- The need to set the plan in a clear inter-regional and European context
- The need to ensure high quality development

These objectives are consistent with the Integrated Regional Framework for the region, which sets out how the Governments objectives for sustainable development will be implemented in the South East, reflecting the desire to ensure growth in the region is sustainable

The plan identifies that in Milton Keynes, as well as accommodating growth in urban extensions, selective intensification within the existing urban area should also continue. Sites, such as those provided in Wolverton town centre, are in a position to help meet this requirement.

The Plan also specifically identifies the importance of enhancing the role of public transport in Milton Keynes, emphasising the need to improve nodes and interchanges and reinforcing the high quality north/south public transport corridor, of which Wolverton plays a key part.

3.2 Implications of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Sub-Regional Strategy

As part of the Sustainable Communities Plans the MKSM Strategy was published in March 2005 providing guidance on development in the region up to 2021 and in the longer-term up to 2031.

The Strategy contains a number of objectives for the future of Milton Keynes:

- Sensitively planned urban extensions to provide new homes and workplaces and reinforce public transport, whilst respecting local context,
- Continued development and upgrading of the public transport system, and reducing dependence on car use
- Maintenance and provision of new and existing green infrastructure, including parks, greenspace and water spaces within the urban area; and
- The highest environmental standards in design and construction.

As well as these principles, the Strategy highlights the role of Local Development Documents (LDDs), such as this AAP, in identifying land for new development and ensuring that development that does come forward applies the principles of sustainable development.

The Strategy also highlights the specific role that Wolverton plays, and will continue to play, as a key location for employment related development, reiterating that LDDs, such as this AAP, should review the qualitative and quantitative aspects of supply and demand for employment land, ensuring it fits the requirements of the economy and if it is not needed for employment use, ensuring it is put to more efficient use.

3.3 Implications of the Community Strategy

Milton Keynes' Community Strategy was prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership to cover the period 2004 to 2034. It sets out a vision and objectives for the future of Milton Keynes looking at how quality of life in the city can be improved and how the opportunities that growth brings can be used to address areas of difficulty, including the regeneration needs of older towns, such as Wolverton.

The Community Strategy outlines four Action Plans that look to manage the growth of Milton Keynes. These are:

- Reinventing our city, places and people
- Delivering the best services
- Facilitating participative communities
- Managing change together

These four themes, and the actions within them, have been taken into consideration when devising policies and proposals in this AAP. In particular the Community Strategy makes a commitment to 'tackling our problem areas', which involves addressing and supporting economic and physical regeneration of towns and neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes that are in need of revitalisation. Achieving this is a key objective of this AAP, with redevelopment on key sites and associated development helping to stimulate the long-term revitalisation of Wolverton.

3.4 Key requirements from other National, Regional and Local Policy

As part of the sustainability appraisal, an early review of all key policy documents was undertaken to assess the requirements that the AAP need to cover. A summary list of the key requirements of these requirements has been produced for this report. These requirements have all been taken into account when developing the proposals and policies in this report.

- Promote sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities
- Reduce carbon emissions and contribute to tackling climate change
- Protect natural resources and wildlife habitats
- Promote vitality and vibrancy in town centres, whilst retaining their character
- Promote the use of previously developed land
- Develop housing that meets the needs of the existing community
- Provide appropriate sites for business use
- Improve opportunities for use of public transport, walking and cycling
- Protect and enhance the historic environment
- Provide accessible open space for leisure and recreation
- Maximise access to leisure opportunities
- Provide controls on outside advertising to protect the appearance of the urban environment
- Consider the role of tourism in protecting the built environment and supporting the economy
- Consider the impact of noise and pollution when developing mixed-use development
- Recognise the role the culture sector can play in the future of Wolverton
- Consider local solutions to local crime problems
- Consider the role of Wolverton in meeting the Economic Vision of Milton Keynes

Are there any LDDs we need to show conformity with?

4.0 Key findings from the Issues and Options Consultation

Maybe include something on the other options considered (i.e do nothing, keep all buildings, all residential, etc...)

4.1 Background

During the Issues and Options Consultation the local community and key stakeholders were asked to comment on the potential strategic options for taking forward development and regeneration of central Wolverton. There were approximately 150 responses to a questionnaire issued, which gauged opinion on the key issues the AAP is looking to address.

Many of these responses included additional comments regarding the AAP area. Some were based on a concern over a particular issue, others suggested alternative options that could be taken considered or suggested additional areas that should be included within the AAP boundary.

There were also 13 written responses from other interested parties, including consultants and statutory consultees, providing additional issues for the Council to consider and making comments on how the AAP should be taken forward.

The options for development were laid out in five topic areas that were identified through previous rounds of consultation and local/national/sub-regional policy requirements, including the Wolverton Regeneration Strategy. Comments on the draft Vision were also sought to make sure our interpretation of the way the community wants to see Wolverton develop is a fair representation. The five topic areas were:

- The Urban and Built Environment;
- Culture, Leisure, Tourism and the Evening Economy;
- Transport and Movement;
- Housing and Mix of Uses and;
- Employment and the Economy

Within the options given it was considered there was not sufficient scope to set out a broad range of alternative strategic options, given that many of these issues had already been addressed through the Regeneration Strategy and the relatively small scale of the AAP area, which provides little alternative other than the choices put forward. The options selected looked to take forward the work of the regeneration strategy, giving the community choices of how the strategic options could be developed.

This section gives a summary of the responses received to the consultation and details of any additional comments that will be addressed through this Preferred Options Report.

4.2 The Urban and Built Environment

There was strong support for the strategic options put forward for addressing the urban and built environment.

- 65% strongly agreed with the retention, where possible, of existing Victorian structures, rather than their removal;
- 63% strongly agreed that the design of any new buildings should replicate the scale and appearance of Wolverton's built heritage;
- 76% strongly agreed that the Agora building should be replaced by a building more in keeping with its surrounding environment;
- 39% strongly agreed that Stratford Road should be enhanced with a High Street feel; and
- 40 % agreed that it would be ok to remove part of the Stratford Road wall to facilitate efficient development of the railway works, as long as there is a justifiable need

In addition to these responses, comments reinforced the need to reinstate the link between Church Street and the Square, which many respondents saw as the true heart of the town centre.

There was general concern about the overall appearance of the town centre in terms of its maintenance and destination appeal. This was particularly evident from the comments received regarding Stratford Road, which indicated that its unattractive appearance is uninviting to potential visitors, this included some concern over the state of the shop fronts in the area. It was suggested that more needed to be done regarding detailed design issues to ensure an attractive environment is created, particularly in Stratford Road, but also generally throughout the town. Comments also suggested that attempting to make Stratford Road a traditional High Street would not work due to the divisive nature of the highway, which is respondents saw as a relatively busy through route.

The need to encourage 'pastiche' of existing Wolverton buildings was questioned. It was suggested that development that respects the existing built form in terms of scale and materials but is of modern design, could be just as effective and help Wolverton move into the 21st century.

It was also suggested the importance of green principles should be more widely acknowledged in the AAP. The lack of a dedicated theme on green issues was criticised, as was that lack of environmental principles in the Vision.

The need to build on the Victorian principles that the town was founded on was also reiterated through comments received through the consultation.

4.3 Culture, Leisure, Tourism and the Evening Economy

Again, there was support for the two strategic options put forward in this topic.

- 42% agreed that culture and heritage will play an important role in defining Wolverton as a destination over the next 20 years; and
- 29% agreed that there is a need to increase the number of pubs, cafes and restaurants across the town centre.

The later point, although supported by the majority, was relatively under-supported in comparison to some of the other strategic options, with 22% also disagreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing with the option. Comments suggest this is down to the perceived poor standard of existing establishments and a fear that 'more of the same' will be bought forward. Comments also suggested that if there is to be an increase, particularly in pubs and restaurants that the emphasis should be on ensuring quality of provision and creating something new for Wolverton.

Reference was also made to the need to recognise the important role that St Georges Church plays, and will continue to play, in cultural activities in Wolverton. Comments suggested that the Church should be included within the AAP area to help develop its role within the town.

Additionally, comments regarding the Grand Union Canal highlighted the potentially important role that it could play as a focus for leisure activity. It was acknowledge that as one of the only green spaces near to the town centre, the canal should be incorporated as a key resource for the whole town.

4.4 Transport and Movement

Again there was strong support for the options put forward to deal with Transport and Movement related issues.

- 34% agreed that if public transport provision were to be improved, they'd use it;
- 41% agreed that there is a need to increase the level and quality of car parking in the town centre; and
- 32% strongly agreed that improved pedestrian routes would encourage walking around the town centre.

The need to de-emphasise the importance of the car within Wolverton was one of the main comments that was fed back through comments. The lack of adequate quality parking provision and the dangerous nature of parts of Wolverton's highway network were highlighted as particular areas of concern.

The problems associated with incorporating use of the car into a predominantly Victorian, pre-car environment was also picked up, with comments suggesting that more needs to be done to properly integrate car usage into the urban environment, particularly in residential areas.

The importance of the train station was also highlighted though comments. It was suggested that it is a major asset for Wolverton to have and should be more widely integrated into what is happening in the town centre.

4.5 Housing and Mix of Uses

There was a mixed response to the questions raised about housing and the associated mix of uses.

- 40% agreed that there is a need to increase housing provision in the town centre to support the development of a wider range of uses;
- 46% agreed that any new housing should be similar in size, style and affordability to the existing; and
- 37% disagreed that all public services and facilities were adequately provided in Wolverton.

The main concern that people had with an increase in housing was whether local services, that in some cases respondents already considered to be stretched, could cope with an increase in demand, that a larger population would bring. In particular this concerned education and health facilities.

There was also concern about whether the particular housing requirements of Wolverton would be met. This included comments highlighting the need to consider accommodation for the elderly and the need for affordable housing for younger members of the community.

Density and how any new housing would be integrated with the rest of the town were the two main design issues that comments raised.

It was also pointed out that the Council should not be too prescriptive over the type of homes that are to be developed as this would overly restrict development and may prevent the market from being able to bring forward the sites.

4.6 Employment and the Economy

Once again there was support for the options put forward under employment and the economy.

- 44% agreed that there is a need to support large-scale job opportunities in Wolverton;
- 49% agreed that there is a need to increase the retail offer of Wolverton;
- 40% agreed that there is a need to focus retail development, rather than spread it around Wolverton; and
- 42% strongly agreed that the existing retailers and employers in Wolverton should be protected by ensuring that new development is fully integrated into the town centre.

One of the key messages to come out of the comments on retail was that Wolverton needs a focused retail centre, and that Church Street and the Square are the place to provide it. Comments also suggested that there is a need to encourage a wider range of 'traditional' town centre shops that would

give Wolverton a distinctive retail offer, rather than the town being reliant upon serviced based businesses, such as takeaways and estate agents.

Some comments made the point that small, rather than large-scale, business opportunities might be more suitable to Wolverton as they would help to reinforce the 'community feel' of the town.

Additionally, the role that Wolverton currently plays as a good location for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), due to relatively low rents, was highlighted as one of the positive features of the town that should be recognised and supported.

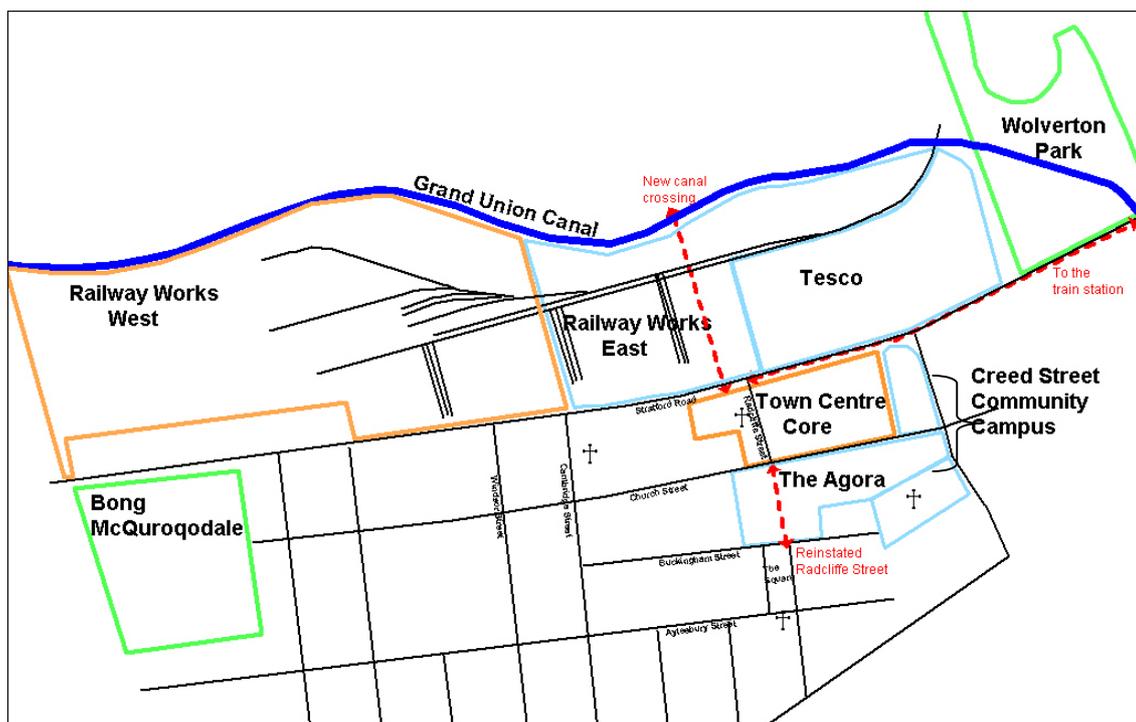
5.0 Strategic Proposals

5.1 The Proposals Map

The strategic proposals map provides a spatial interpretation of how MKC sees the AAP objectives being met. It identifies the key areas of change as well as proposed new and improved linkages, existing areas of change and key landmarks and features.

Insert diagram showing:

- Key areas of change;
- Potential areas of change;
- Key new linkages;
- Areas of enhance linkages;
- Existing areas of change (such as Wolverton Park) and;
- Key landmark buildings/features



5.2 Other key developments

As well as the key and potential areas of change, there are also other developments that are key to the regeneration of the town centre, but are not included within the AAP as they are already at an advanced stage of development. The impact of these developments needs to be taken into consideration when preparing the AAP to make sure their impact is built into the proposals brought forward, ensuring a fully comprehensive plan is brought forward.

The developments already being brought forward outside the AAP area are:

Wolverton Park- the location of this development is shown on the Strategic Proposals map due to its proximity to the town centre. It's a development of approximately 300 dwellings that includes restoration of the former Royal Train Shed and the Triangle building. It also sees improvements to the canal towpath and the development of new community space in the Reading Room building. The scheme includes some improvement to the footpath between Creed Street and the Train Station.

Bong McCorquodale- planning permission has been granted for 131 residential properties. The scheme also includes 6 workshop units and 4 commercial units.

Wolverton Train Station- has planning permission for the redevelopment of the station building along with tourist/public information outlets and an element of retail. Some Government funding has been made available towards the total cost of this development, with additional funding currently being sought.

Former EMEB site- the site in Old Wolverton has planning permission for approximately 90 dwellings with associated office development.

Wolverton West End- planning permission has already been granted for a new Health and Social centre and a new indoor swimming pool for school and community use, with access off Great Monk Street. A significant element of residential and commercial development is also envisaged coming forward inline with the Development Framework prepared for the site in 2004.

5.3 Site-specific proposals

This section of the document sets out how the Council see these key areas of change being brought forward over the plan period.

For each site the justification for its inclusion in the plan is given, along with how any particular site related issues would be addressed. The principles of development will also be established, including any particular design requirements that the Council would like to see come forward. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to the alternative options that have

been considered. The mechanism for delivery of the proposals will also be suggested. ***(need to decide if this needs to go in a separate section)***

To be followed by site specific proposals- Urban Design input

6.0 Policy Directions

To shape development, the AAP will include a series of policies setting out the Councils proposed approach to assessing individual development proposals. This will help ensure the objectives of the plan, set out earlier in the report, are met. At the present time the policies are in the development stage. The policy directions are included in this document to show the general reasons for and draft content of individual policy areas.

The policy directions are set out under the five topic areas originally identified during the Issues and Options Consultation.

6.1 The Urban and Built Environment

Policy direction 1- Defining the town centre

Why

- Required by PPS6
- To encourage the provision of town centre uses as a cohesive unit where the benefits of public transport and single trip visits can be exploited.

How

The current town centre boundary, as defined in the adopted Local Plan, will be expanded to cover an element of the redundant railway works land. This will enable the retail offer of the town to be expanded along the frontage of Stratford Road.

Policy Direction 2- A coherent and functional town centre

Why

- Wolverton has a distinctive Victorian character that sets it apart from the majority of Milton Keynes. It also has several sites in and around the town centre that provide potential opportunities for change and regeneration. In bringing these sites forward, it is important that the character of the town is maintained and enhanced.
- It is also important that these developments are cohesive and work together to improve the overall appeal and functionality of Wolverton.
- To ensure suitable development on these sites, strategic proposals for development have been set out in section 5 of this document. The following policies promote and reinforce the principles of these proposals (and pick up the principles of development relating to other key parts of the AAP area).

How

Add site related policies, reiterating the principles of development on each site and the role each is expected to play. These will be laid out with key principles to be secured through conditions and/or legal agreements and reiterate the characteristics of the site the Council seeks to promote on:

- The railway works east
- The Agora and car park
- Creed Street
- Tesco
- Retail core (Primary and Secondary Frontages) will be regenerated through:
 - Encourage reinvestment in and refurbishment of existing shops
 - Residential or office space on upper floors
 - Encourage use of shop fronts and signage, which are in keeping with the Victorian character of the town (see later policy)
- **(Canalside? Should this just go within the railway works section?)**

Policy direction 3- Housing provision

Why

- Wolverton is part of the Milton Keynes Growth Area where around 49,000 new homes have been identified for delivery between 2006-2026 .
- Providing additional housing will help improve the vitality and viability of the town centre by increasing out of hour demand for town centre functions.

Insert results of the the housing needs survey

How

Policy will ensure that the range and mix of housing provided that meets the needs of the community and helps to create balanced and mixed communities.

Existing Local Plan policies on the provision of affordable housing and density will remain and be developed through the core strategy. Policy will have regard to specific site based issues.

There will be statements about the style of housing provided to encourage development that conforms to the general design principles that inform the whole of the AAP area.

Approximate housing capacity that could be provided on each site will be set out in the policy.

Policy direction 4- Encouraging economic growth

Why

- Town centres should have an employment focus.
- The decline in traditional manufacturing means Wolverton needs to find a new economic focus.
- The location of Wolverton within a growth area means Milton Keynes is looking for employment sites to support growth in housing numbers.
- There is a need to stimulate investment in Wolverton.
- **What does the employment land survey tell us?**

How

Where will employment land be encouraged?

What type of employment land will it be?

What will be the principles of office development be (e.g. links to public transport, design, functioning of the centre etc...)?

Will need to relate to site proposals.

Will need to address the issue of displaced tenants

Policy direction 5- Waterside development

Why

- The canal is seen as an under utilised resource close to the town centre and it is important to ensure that it plays an active role in the future of the town.
- Waterside development can be prestigious and the canal presents an opportunity to provide Wolverton with a key new recognisable feature.
- The canal is a key landscape feature near the town centre and in the wider context plays an important role as a wildlife corridor and leisure attraction.

How

A canalside policy will set out requirements of development including the need to provide an active front to the canal and use of high quality, distinctive design. The policy will also reiterate the importance of links and access to the canal and will reinforce the principles set out in the railway works strategic proposal.

6.2 Character and image

Policy direction 6- Improving the retail offer

Why

- Within the expansion of Milton Keynes, Wolverton is seen as playing an enhanced role as an attractive alternative to CMK.
- The retail capacity study for Milton Keynes has indicated that capacity should be found for additional retail floorspace (? Need to check what the impact of the retail capacity study is).
- Wolverton's retail offer is currently felt to be disjointed and poorly linked, detracting from the appeal of the town.
- The town centre currently lacks the quality and range of retail units that will attract quality retailers to the town.
- Within the town centre there is a need to protect the primary shopping frontages from inappropriate change. There is also a need to ensure that the shopping core is supported by complimentary uses in the form of secondary retail frontages, which will help to maintain vitality and viability throughout the town centre.

How

- There will be a policy **that** outlines the location of the Primary and Secondary Retail Frontages. It is proposed that these frontages will be **??????**, which is an alteration from the existing Local Plan Policy. It is felt that by altering the primary retail frontage, the traditional role of Church Street and the Square as the heart of the town, can be restored. Within the Primary Retail frontage change of use from retail (give use classes) will not be permitted, to enhance the viability of the centre.
- Provision of additional **(how much??)** retail floorspace will be provided on Stratford Road as an extension of the existing offer. This will be located to complement the existing retail core and also to help encourage activity and movement to the redeveloped railway works site.
- A policy on the Secondary Retail Frontage will encourage retail and other activities complimentary to the Primary Retail Frontages. This policy will look to:
 - Protect the amenity of the retail area;
 - Support vitality and viability through encouraging active frontages;
 - Prevent the over concentration of similar uses by encouraging diversity; and
 - Ensure the use would not have a negative impact in terms of retaining the streets secondary retail function

Policy direction 7- Ensuring an attractive destination

Why

- There is an under provision of quality open space in Wolverton Town Centre
- Wolverton's built industrial heritage is one of its key features and can play a key role in enhancing destination appeal. High quality public realm can play an important part in defining the sense of place and enhancing the historic characteristics of Wolverton's built form.
- The canal is a hidden 'green feature' of the town centre and needs to be given a more enhanced role in the town centre.
- There is a need to ensure a co-ordinated approach to landscaping and street furniture to secure a coherent appearance and improve attractiveness as a destination.

How

Policy will encourage the use of landscaping in town centre areas where public realm improvements are required. These areas will include:

Stratford Road **will need urban design input to on this**
Church Street
The reinstated Church Street/Square link

A policy will set out a coherent approach to the use of street, furniture and public art, and will address the issue of management and maintenance. (this is something we'll have to develop- maybe the town council will have a role to play??)

There will be a general policy requiring development to ensure town centre biodiversity is not damaged and that where possible its enhancement is integrated into development.

6.3 Access and movement

Policy Direction 8- Improving connections and movement

Why

- There is a need to reduce the dominance of the car as congestion, air pollution and noise can detract from the attractiveness of the town centre.
- There is a need to generally promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and Wolverton is seen as playing an important role in on the

north/south public transport corridor being promoted through the MK2031 Growth Consultation.

- A more legible town centre will encourage pedestrian movement and activity in the town centre
- In places the Victorian nature of the built environment causes problems incorporating the use of the car
- **What else does the Transport Study tell us.**

How

Policy will outline what changes will be made to the highway and pedestrian network to make it safer and more useable. This should include any particular issues that are raised by the Transport and Parking study. It should also look at how they will be delivered (e.g. through developer contributions, LTP money or highways maintenance money).

A policy could be introduced that refers to development contributing to the successful implementation of a movement (pedestrian and cycle) network, which will be included as an appendix. This should reflect how the routes should be developed for safety (e.g. active frontages, reflect desire lines etc...). This should reiterate the importance of the key connections between the town centre and the canal and the train station and indicate how any particular improvements could be funded.

A further policy on emphasising the importance of public transport can include any particular requirements in terms of improving the network (such as a link outside Tesco(?)).

Need to devise an approach to car parking in the town centre. This could include something on how parking will be better integrated into the urban environment.

6.4 Design and sustainability

Policy direction 9- Maintaining and enhancing character

Why

- Wolverton was designated as a conservation area in 2002 and as such there is a need to protect the character of the town.
- The built heritage of Wolverton makes it distinctive and adds to its destination appeal.
- The public value the value the character of the town highly and would like to see it preserved for future generations.

- The character of Wolverton is one of its strengths and this needs to be built on.

How

- Policy setting out how development proposals will need to show how the historic context of Wolverton has been addressed. E.g. how do proposals contribute to reinforcing the role of listed buildings and their settings and reinforce the traditional layout of the town. This could be linked to a set of Urban Design Guidelines to be included as an appendix.
- Policy setting out which are the key buildings and how they will need to be considered by development proposals. These buildings will include the listed buildings within the AAP area and any additional buildings that are identified through an audit of the built environment. **Which we still need to do**
- Policy setting out the key design feature of Wolverton that will have to be respected (e.g. scale and materials). Could add here about the requirements of D4 and how they will be integrated into development.
- Possible comment on conversion rather than demolition where possible???
- Policy on the design of shop fronts, which will require use of materials and style that contribute to and enhance the Victorian nature of the town.

Policy direction 10- Developer contributions

A policy will be included which sets out any specific developer contributions that the Council will be seeking. These should relate back to the requirements set out in the site-specific policies.

Maybe give each policy a number (e.g. WTC 1) and show how each policy helps contribute towards the plan objectives

Add a table/summary of which Local Plan polices will be over-ridden

7.0 Viability and delivery

Additional information required

It is important to know that proposals being put forward are realistic and viable. It is also important to understand how development will be delivered and how it will be driven forward. This section of the report summarises how key aspects of the plan will be delivered, looking at who is responsible for development and how it will be funded. It also provides information as to how the viability of these schemes has been tested.

7.1 The Agora

The Agora building is in private ownership, with the car park leased by the owners from MKC on a long-term lease. Primarily, the deliverability of the proposed scheme is dependent on the owner seeking redevelopment of the site.

It is also dependent on the Council agreeing to the partial development of the car park.

To test the viability of the scheme, the landowners, and their development partners, have appraised the viability of the scheme, based on the principles set out in this report, to assess if they are achievable.

As the Agora is a town centre site, currently in active commercial use, it provides significant challenges for the private sector to deliver a financially viable scheme without assistance from the public sector in the form of grant funding, (which is currently being pursued with English Partnerships).

The delivery is therefore dependent on the adoption of a partnership approach between the owners of the Agora, MKC and English Partnerships.

7.2 Tesco

The proposals associated with the Tesco redevelopment mainly focus on its ability to link more effectively with the existing town centre and the other development sites emerging around it. The delivery of the proposals will be delivered through developer contributions, forthcoming as a result of the Tesco redevelopment.

7.3 Railway Works East

The whole of the railway works site is currently privately owned and leased to Alstom who operate on only the western part of the site, leaving 4 hectares to the east ready for immediate redevelopment.

This development will be taken forward by the private sector. It is envisaged that as a result of the proposals put forward in this report, MKC and the land owners will work together to develop a joint masterplan for the development of

the site, which will give more detail of the expected types and quantum of development.

If the railway works west were to become available, it is envisaged that a similar approach would be adopted to bring forward development on the site. If the site were to become available earlier than expected, a joint approach to delivery, with the railway works west, would be adopted to ensure comprehensive development.

Add a piece about the need for additional work on contamination, noise etc... to assess viability of the proposals??

7.4 Creed Street

Work to enhance Creed Street as a Community Hub is being driven through a partnership between the individual landowners and MKC. An original bid for funding was unsuccessful but the group are looking at further funding options which could be used to deliver the proposals.

How has the viability of this been tested??