

Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan, submitted November 2015

Regulation 16 publicity stage – Summary of Responses

Respondent	Organisation	On behalf of	Comments
Alice Peasgood			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora
Amanda Dudman			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora Highlight the need for better engagement with the Town Council and local residents in the future development on the railway works site by the private owners
Angie Cleary			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora and the wider area. Wolverton is a great place to live and the plans are an exciting prospect!
Stewart Patience	Anglian Water		<p>Policies W1, W2 and W3 refer to the inclusion of both water efficiency measures and sustainable drainage methods as forming part of any redevelopment at the Agora site, within the town centre generally, and in the redevelopment of the Railway Works site.</p> <p>Anglian Water welcomes policies for new developments covered by the Neighbourhood Plan of water efficiency measures and SUDs.</p> <p>Development on the sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan (Policies W1, W2 and W3) will have an impact on Cotton Valley Water Recycling Centre (WRC).</p> <p>The used water flows would also have an impact on the existing used water network. The used water infrastructure requirements will be dependent on the location, size and phasing of the development. Therefore Anglian Water would wish to comment further on these issues as part of the planning application process for these sites. All sites will require a local connection to the existing sewerage network which may include network upgrades. Upgrades will be funded through the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 and will not be required to form part of CIL charges.</p>
Briony Standley and Stephen Neal			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora
Donna Loftus			The problem of the Agora is now urgent. There are negative impacts on the social and economic geography of Wolverton, and the building has been so poorly maintained in recent years it is now verging on the dilapidated. And it sits in prime location, at the centre of the town. It is holding Wolverton back.

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			<p>Traffic speed and road safety is a matter of serious concern and is particularly difficult for old people. Traffic and crossing is particularly difficult by Glyn Square and on Church Street.</p>
Elsie Bryant			<p>I wholeheartedly support the Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan as published and hope that it will lead to Wolverton being joined by a development partner who is able to deliver a town centre befitting the town, that compliments the heritage of Wolverton, brings regeneration, facilities and an enjoyable shopping experience for residents and visitors alike, in the spirit with which the plan has been written.</p> <p>Expressed thanks to all the people involved in the plan including those who participated at the many public meetings to reach this stage.</p>
Karen Goss	Emberton Parish Council		<p>Consultation noted. No comment</p>
Martin Small	English Heritage		<p>English Heritage welcomes and supports the recognition of the town’s important railway heritage in the Vision and Objectives; reference to the Wolverton Conservation Area; and recognition of the historical significance of the railway works.</p> <p>We have previously set out the historical and architectural significance of the Agora building but, given that the Agora’s legacy to Wolverton and the significance of the conservation area is mixed, interesting historically but problematic in terms of allowing good place making, we accept the case for redevelopment. We were, and still are, therefore broadly content with Policy W1.</p> <p>We welcome the community’s principle that new development in the town centre should not obscure or detract from important heritage assets and listed buildings in the town centre.</p> <p>We also welcome the substantial local support for the retention and re-use of the historic buildings on the Railway Works site, ideally with heritage uses and are pleased to see this reflected in principles I and F of Policy W3.</p> <p>However, we are disappointed that Policy W3 still proposes opening up views and access into and out of the site through the wall on Stratford Road. We have previously expressed the view that this requirement is self-contradictory: the express purpose of the wall along Stratford Road was to separate the works from the town. Indeed, the “abrupt distinction” between the two is one of the key features that helps to define Wolverton’s special interest as identified in the Conservation Area Review 2009 (as noted in paragraph 7.16). Its integrity cannot be retained if it is opened up. This would not “conserve the unique heritage of the site”.</p>

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			<p>Depending on the number and nature of proposed openings, these could amount to substantial harm or less than substantial harm under paragraph 138 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In these circumstances either paragraph 133 or 134 would apply, both of which require public benefits to outweigh the harm (substantial public benefits for substantial harm).</p> <p>As it stands, we do not consider that requirement E has sufficient regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and revised wording is proposed to address this concern.</p>
Amy Jones	GL Hearn	St Modwen	<p>The Site is currently leased to Knorr-Bremse who operates across the Railway Works site. Knorr-Bremse propose to consolidate within the Site which currently contains a number of older buildings not suitable for current business needs. The consolidation will release additional land for development. Given the industrial history of the Site, remediation will be an important consideration. The surplus land that will be created by the consolidation is proposed for a mix of residential, community and retail development. The residential uses are proposed to be located in the western portion of the Site with the retail element located centrally within the Site, along Stratford Road.</p> <p>We are seeking to secure outline planning permission for the development of the Site which can be delivered in a phased manner, in line with the commercial requirements of Knorr-Bremse.</p> <p>In addition to the various meetings we have had with the Town Council and Future Wolverton, we have previously made representations to draft versions of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan in December 2013 and in August 2014</p> <p>We support the key vision of the Neighbourhood Plan. As noted in our previous representations towards the Neighbourhood Plan we have entered a formal pre-application process with Milton Keynes Council. As part of this work a formal public consultation event occurred in November 2014. The headline responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% of respondents supported the regeneration of the Railway Works site <p>In respect of the draft comprehensive masterplan presented at the event, the following percentage of respondents felt that the proposals were either 'excellent' or 'good':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage proposals (extensive demolition) – 84% • New business premises for Knorr-Bremse – 81% • New homes – 62% • Discount foodstore – 58% <p>Paragraph 7.24 of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan should be updated to reflect these results. It should also be noted that this presents a different perspective from that presented in Paragraphs 7.5-7.7 which reflects more</p>

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			<p>historic opinion.</p> <p>We continue to raise concerns with some of the current wording in the emerging objectives and Policies, in particular Policy W3 and its supportive text. We consider that as currently proposed this element of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan would be contrary to the proposals currently under consideration in our pre-application process. The Neighbourhood Plan currently seeks to impose restrictions that are not accordance with national or local policy and would jeopardise the sustainable redevelopment of the Railway Works Site.</p> <p>We are keen to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan fully accords with national and local policy and supports the sustainable redevelopment of the Railway Works. However, we cannot support the Neighbourhood Plan in its current form. In this context our representations are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2 seeks to generally protect heritage and goes beyond the requirements of national policy by seeking specifically that any Victorian or Edwardian buildings within the Railways Works Site are retained and re-used where viable. No analysis or justification for this is provided. In support of our application proposals for the Site we have prepared a Heritage Viability report which examines the viability of this possibility or re-using some of the buildings within the Site. • Objective 3 notes that subject to viability all new developments should be zero carbon. This represents an onerous and untested requirement. The testing should be done as part of this emerging plan process rather than for each new development. <p>Policy W3 – The Railway Works Development Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy states that subject to the planning status of any proposals a Development Framework may be prepared. This is a complex site and the delivery of new development is subject to a number of sensitivities and commercial requirements. The proposed outline planning application will set out a number of design parameters and will include a Design Guide document. The local community will continue to be consulted on these comprehensive documents and plans. We maintain that we do not consider a Development Framework is appropriate or a requirement to deliver a suitable development on this site. <p>Grid Layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We assume that the reference to the existing grid layout in Wolverton for the purposes of informing the future development of the Railway Works site means that there is a preference for new routes into the Railway Works site to have regard to the existing north/south orientated streets where feasible. <p>McConnell Drive</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we support in principle the future use of the noted access points, these have not yet been modelled. Further investigation of these access points, as part of the planning application process, is required before a commitment can be made as to how the access for the development will be proposed. We request that requirement for the delivery of specific access points is stated as a “preference” only in the Neighbourhood Plan. <p>Re-use of historic buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy makes reference to conserving and enhancing historic buildings, to be informed by further investigative work, and seeks to ensure that some historic buildings on site are re-used. This will be a balanced judgement based on a number of factors not just feasibility of re-use. The viability study will be made available prior to the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan. The forthcoming planning application will seek permission for the demolition of all buildings on Site, this is supported by the community as set out above in our reporting of the results of the community consultation and in particular our approach to on-site heritage assets. It may not always be appropriate to provide “structural features” where the wall is lost. This is one design mitigation option of several available. We support the principle of opening up some views into the site and we note that breaks in the wall will likely be required for pedestrian, cyclist and/or vehicular access which would not be in accordance with this draft policy. <p>Employment Mix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy states that the site must contribute to the overall employment mix, including light industrial and leisure uses where viable. This has not been tested and is inappropriate. It goes beyond existing policy to protect employment uses and sets to set a new requirement to consider leisure uses (which are a ‘town centre use’ as defined by the NPPF) on this Site. <p>Lifetime Home Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We note this aspiration however this is not a current Policy or Building Regulation requirement, and would go beyond the currently adopted planning policy which will further challenge the viability of the development proposals. Current adopted planning policy already seeks to secure appropriate standards of design in development proposals. We do not support this additional requirement and request that it is removed from the Policy. <p>Zero Carbon Requirement and Connection to a Local Energy Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed requirements would go beyond the currently adopted standards and would likely impose significant additional cost to any redevelopment of the Site and would have serious implications for the viability of any such development. We note the recognised difficulties in delivering zero carbon development, particularly on brownfield sites, the Neighbourhood Plan makes no reference to a

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			<p>definition of zero carbon development. We see no justification for these proposed standards or requirement for connection to a local energy network.</p> <p>Water efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water efficiency measures including opportunity to remove or significantly reduce any water flow currently discharging to the surface water network go beyond any request from the Canal and Rivers Authority and are unreasonable and unjustified. <p>'Town Centre' Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be made clear in Policy W3 that the Railway Works site does not form part of the defined Town Centre.
Rio D'Souza	Highways Agency/ Highways England		<p>The Agency encourages policies and proposals which incorporate measures to reduce traffic generation at source and encourage more sustainable travel behaviour.</p> <p>The Railway Works site represents a significant development opportunity in the area and could potentially generate additional traffic on the wider road network including the Strategic Road Network, in particular the A5. In terms of its proximity to the A5, the site is situated approximately 4km away from the A5/A422 Old Stratford roundabout and 3.5km away from the A5 Abbey Hill roundabout.</p> <p>The railway works site appears to be suitably located to maximise the use of sustainable transport modes and provide jobs for local people in what appears to be a reasonably well-connected site.</p> <p>The proposed mix of land uses on the site could offer some potential for trip internalisation, however there continues to be a need for sufficient public transport connections beyond Wolverton, whether by bus or train.</p> <p>The Agency welcomes the emphasis placed upon the encouragement of sustainable transport modes and linkages to the surrounding area and considers the relevant principles in Policy W3 as appropriate to guide development proposals coming forward on the site. Consideration could also be given to potential opportunities to improve walking and cycling linkages with Wolverton railway station which is located to the east of the development site.</p> <p>An outline scoping opinion submitted by the developer St Modwen in September 2014 for a mix of land uses on the 15 hectare site identifies the potential for 250-300 dwellings, with B1 office space, B2 general industrial space and a discount food store. Primary vehicular access is anticipated to be via Stratford Road, and railway works operations will continue on the site but over a reduced site area. I recognise that the level of additional traffic arising from the site could much depend on the scale of development taken forward, and at this early</p>

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			<p>stage it is not possible to be certain of this. However, in regards to the potential trip generation of the site, there may be increases in traffic experienced on the Strategic Road Network including at the A5/A422 Old Stratford Roundabout and the A5 Abbey Hill Roundabout. There is also the possibility that employment opportunities may attract vehicles from outside of Milton Keynes, therefore increases in traffic on the wider Strategic Road Network may also be experienced.</p> <p>The Agency will engage with the developer and with Milton Keynes Council through the planning application process on this development site and will look to see that the principles set out in the Neighbourhood Plan are adhered to in the developer's proposals. The Agency will also seek reassurance that the existing public transport network will be sufficient to meet the needs of future residents and employees on the site, particular for those who are travelling to/from the wider Milton Keynes area.</p>
James Holder			Support for the plan
Martin Wakley			Support for the plan
Paul Sedgwick			Support for the plan. It will be good for Wolverton and follows the aspirations of the community.
Rachel Wild			<p>Support for the plan. Was initially unsure about the plans for the Agora, but now fully support the plan for redevelopment. Hope that the new development could incorporate some space for leisure opportunities. Would particularly like to see the link between Radcliffe Street and the Square opened up.</p> <p>Other points for the Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more parking, or parking permits limited to one per household, or in bays. • more housing, especially smaller flats. • support for independent businesses. • facilities like a bank, a bakery or leisure spaces for young people.
Richard and Sarah Scott			<p>Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora</p> <p>Would like to see the opportunity for small bars and restaurants to open in either the new development or on The Square with the potential to have alfresco dining in The Square in the summer. The redevelopment presents a real opportunity for Wolverton to have a focal point that would attract visitors to the area and improve the local economy.</p>
Sam Morris			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora

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Cllr Sara Agintas			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora
Simon Bennett			Support for the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposals to redevelop the Agora. It must be replaced but with sustainable, appropriate development.
Stephen Bryant			Support for the proposals to redevelop the Agora
Stephen Bryant			<p>I wholeheartedly support the Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan as published and hope that it will lead to Wolverton being joined by a development partner who is able to deliver a town centre befitting the town, that compliments the heritage of Wolverton, brings regeneration, facilities and an enjoyable shopping experience for residents and visitors alike, in the spirit with which the plan has been written.</p> <p>Expressed thanks to all the people involved in the plan including those who participated at the many public meetings to reach this stage.</p>
Jane Bryant			Support for the plan and believe very strongly that replacing the Agora with a mixture of services, shops, workshops and accommodation will enhance Wolverton and open up the town instead of separating one side from the other.