



Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2025

Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council
Town Hall
Creed Street
Wolverton
MILTON KEYNES
MK12 5LY

Neighbourhood Plan website: www.FutureWolverton.org
Email: info@FutureWolverton.org

Town Council website: www.WolvertonAndGreenleysTownCouncil.gov.uk
Email: Office@WolvertonAndGreenleysTownCouncil.gov.uk

Plan prepared by Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee
on behalf of the Town Council, with support from:
The Prince's Foundation for Building Community and Milton Keynes Council



This document is available on the following websites:
www.FutureWolverton.org
www.WolvertonAndGreenleysTownCouncil.gov.uk
www.Milton-Keynes.gov.uk

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Wolverton

Victorian houses line the streets
Community parks where people meet
and mothers sit to have a chat
about their lives and this and that.

A Secret Garden tucked away
with concerts held on summers days.
Community Orchard to explore
that has a cheery dinosaur.

Great firework shows in cold November,
are something that we'll all remember.
And if you want to dance, act, sing
The Madcap it has everything.

The farmers' market's close to hand
We even have our own Brass band
who tutor absolutely free,
to budding musicians like you and me.

In Summer time It's In The Square
Our local artists perform there.
Musicians, singers and some chancers
and lovely buxom belly dancers.

There's more to do than in the hub
with tennis lessons, and cricket club
if all the towns were put to test
Our Wolverton would come out best.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Introduction

- 1.1 Wolverton has a rich history as the first purpose built railway town in the UK. However, like many industrial towns, Wolverton's town centre began to decline in the 1960s, and 50 years on now faces declining footfall, the rise in internet shopping and supermarket dominance.
- 1.2 The Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan encapsulates the ambitions of local residents who would like to reinvigorate the town centre as a viable place to shop and do business and an inviting place to visit and live.
- 1.3 The plan is a result of over three year's work by Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council supported by Future Wolverton, and has engaged local people, businesses and community and voluntary organisations. It builds upon comprehensive community engagement started over ten years ago. It has also drawn from the planning documents that have been developed over time to support the regeneration of the town.
- 1.4 We have been supported in the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan by the Local Planning Authority, Milton Keynes Council, who have helped us to develop a document which we hope will meet the community's aspirations for the town as well as delivering important policies for our plan area.



Picture 1: Former Methodist Church, 4 Church Street (top left); Market outside Agora (top right); Railway Works (bottom left); View of Agora looking east along Church Street (bottom right).

- 1.5 It has been beneficial to the plan making process that Milton Keynes Council is a Unitary Authority, and a range of departments have actively supported the development of the plan. As one of the few parts of England that has a fully parished urban area, Milton Keynes has a culture of enabling Parish Councils to take a community leadership role, and the Town Council have been grateful for this support.
- 1.6 We have also been extremely fortunate to have independent support from The Prince's Foundation for Building Community, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to offer advice and guidance to frontrunner Neighbourhood Plan areas. The support of the consultant team – which included urban designers and development consultants – was invaluable in ensuring a robust consultation process and the development of planning policies which will deliver real change.
- 1.7 The Neighbourhood Development Plan is simple in structure, opening with some background about Wolverton, followed by the vision and objectives of the plan. The issues and challenges facing Wolverton are then explored, before the plan turns to the delivery of the vision through the seven policies. The description of each policy is followed by a delivery section, and the overall plan ends with the monitoring arrangements that will be adopted to ensure delivery.
- 1.8 Some important documents (listed below) are all background evidence to the plan. Further information about their planning status and where they may be found is in Appendix 1:
- Plan for Wolverton – November 1988
 - Wolverton on the Right Track – June 1998
 - Market Towns Healthcheck Report – 2002/2003
 - Future Wolverton Vision – 2003
 - Wolverton Regeneration Strategy – September 2004
 - Refreshing the Vision – April 2010
 - Wolverton Public Realm Design Manual – June 2012
 - Wolverton Town Centre Benchmarking Report – December 2012
 - The Agora Development Brief – September 2013
- 1.9 There is a crucial relationship between the plan and the Agora Development Brief, which was adopted by Milton Keynes Council as a Supplementary Planning Document in September 2013. The exact nature of this relationship is explained later in the plan.
- 1.10 The plan could not have been developed without the commitment of the local community to attend meetings, answer questionnaires and generally

get engaged with the whole debate about the future of Wolverton town centre. This commitment is particularly impressive given the many years of work that the local community have done, prior to the Neighbourhood Plan process, developing the long-term vision for the town.

- 1.11 The Plan has had a number of iterations and has undergone extensive revision and re-drafting. We would like to thank local people for not losing faith in the long-term outcomes of the plan despite this lengthy and complex process.
- 1.12 We are confident that the final plan represents the communities long held vision for the town centre and aspirations for the railway works site, and look forward to working with a range of partners to realise the policies of the plan.

**Marie Osborne and Mike Galloway on behalf of
Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council
May 2015**

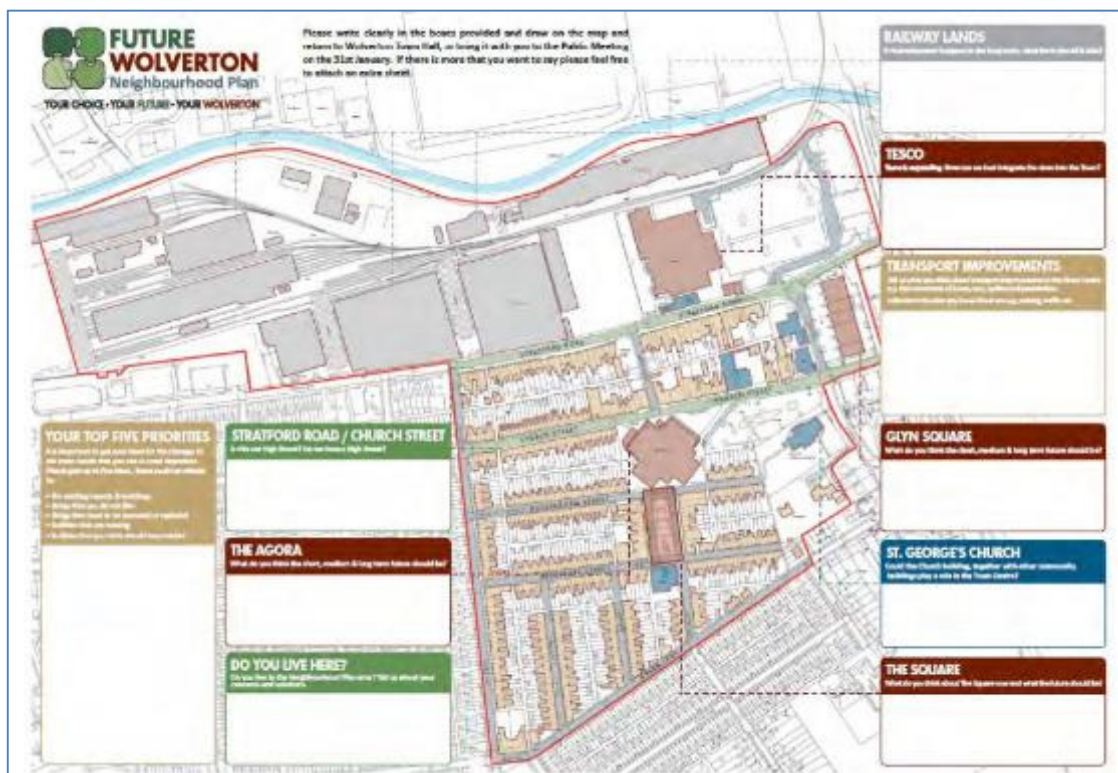


Figure 1: From the initial Neighbourhood Plan consultation leaflet issued in January 2012. A larger scale version of the leaflet is included in the Consultation Statement. The boundary was designated by Milton Keynes Council on 25th September 2012 and covers the main part of the town centre, part of the surrounding Wolverton Conservation Area and the Railway Works site.



Picture 2: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee

2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

- 2.1 The Wolverton community have long-sought a town centre which is reflective of the wider characteristics of the town. The following vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan attempts to capture the ambitions of the local community, highlighting those characteristics which make Wolverton a special place.

“The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that Wolverton’s centre, as the heart of the town, is a vibrant, attractive and distinctive neighbourhood with a variety of retail, commercial, cultural, and leisure uses that reflects the town’s rich and proud railway heritage and its diverse business and residential population.”

Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

- 2.2 In order to achieve the vision, the plan has six key objectives based on the engagement work and analysis of the consultation carried out during the Neighbourhood Plan process. These objectives have also been informed by consultation carried out over the last ten years.

Objective 1: Transport and Movement

- Improve ease of movement and accessibility to services and facilities within the town centre.
- Support a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport to and from Wolverton town centre, reducing the need to travel by car by improving access for walking, cycling and public transport.
- Support improvements to safety when walking and cycling in the town centre, particularly to the railway station and along Stratford Road.
- Encourage improved management of streets and parking and the ongoing use of the backways as preferred walking and cycling routes.

Objective 2: Heritage

- Conserve and enhance the town's heritage, particularly the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and the canal.
- Support the Milton Keynes Councils Heritage Hub project which recognises the industrial, transport and rural past of Wolverton.
- Encourage efficient use of brownfield land assets on the Railway Works site, ensuring that the important heritage and industrial character of these sites is protected, and Victorian/Edwardian buildings retained and re-used where viable.
- Support the Milton Keynes Museum expansion project, ensuring enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to the Museum from Wolverton Town Centre.
- Capitalise upon the unique heritage of Wolverton to develop the visitor economy.

Objective 3: Environment and Design

- Improve, protect and enhance the quality of the local environment through implementation of the Public Realm Design Manual and involving the local community in long-term management,
- Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open and green space within the town centre.
- Subject to viability testing, all new developments to be zero carbon, designed for climate change and served by a district heating network.

Objective 4: Housing

- Ensure affordable, sustainably constructed, decent homes are developed that complement and enhance the existing housing stock.
- Develop a range of housing stock within the town centre that meets the needs of existing and future local people.
- In new housing on the Railway Works site, a proportion of streets are designed so speeds are slow and car parking does not dominate the overall streetscape.

Objective 5: Economic Development

- Improve the vitality and viability of Wolverton town centre through a mix of retail and non-retail uses which better reflect the needs of the local community.
- Support existing town centre businesses to develop and thrive.
- Encourage creation of new businesses and employment opportunities.
- Increase the town centre population and so encourage an evening economy.

Objective 6: Social, Cultural and Leisure Facilities

- Support development that addresses the social, cultural and leisure needs of the local community.
- Build upon Wolverton's reputation as a cultural hub by improving accessibility to existing social, cultural and leisure services and facilities.
- Promote healthy living by supporting practical projects that impact positively on the lives of local people.
- Reduce fear of crime and prevent crime by supporting the local community to make a positive difference to their community.



Picture 3: Wolverton Park development by Places for People. The re-use of existing historic buildings on the site and the quality of the public realm and open spaces is an example of what might be achieved elsewhere in Wolverton

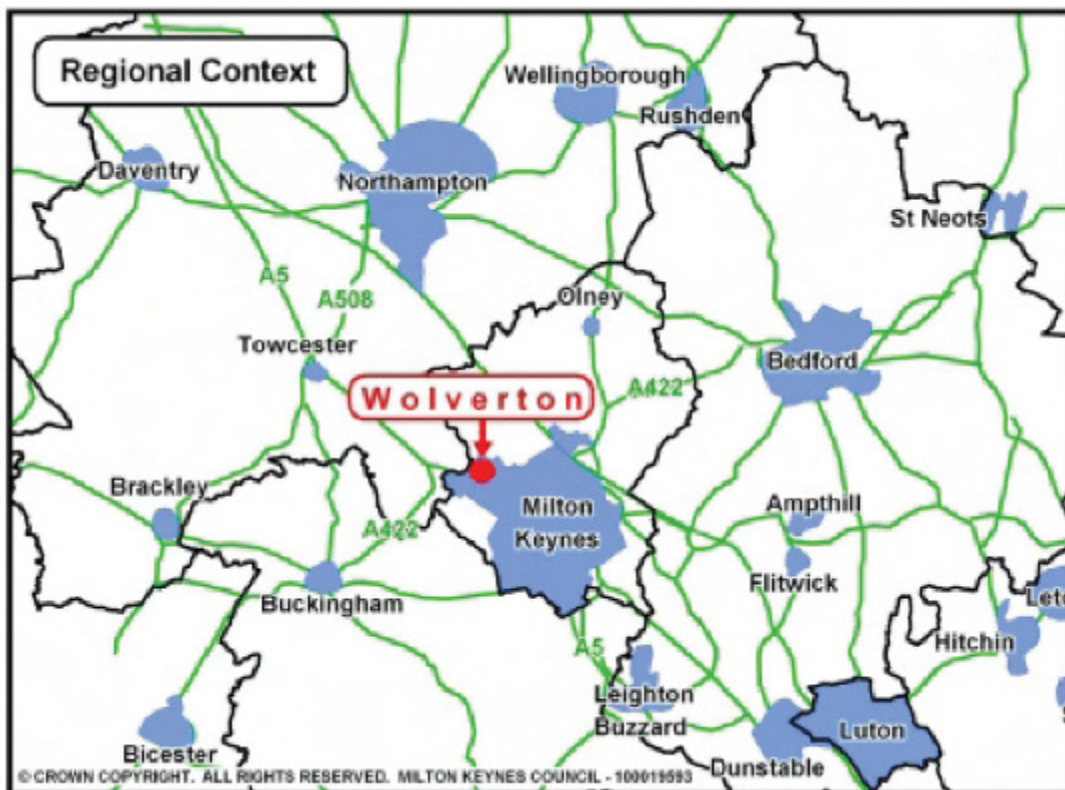


Figure 2: Regional context

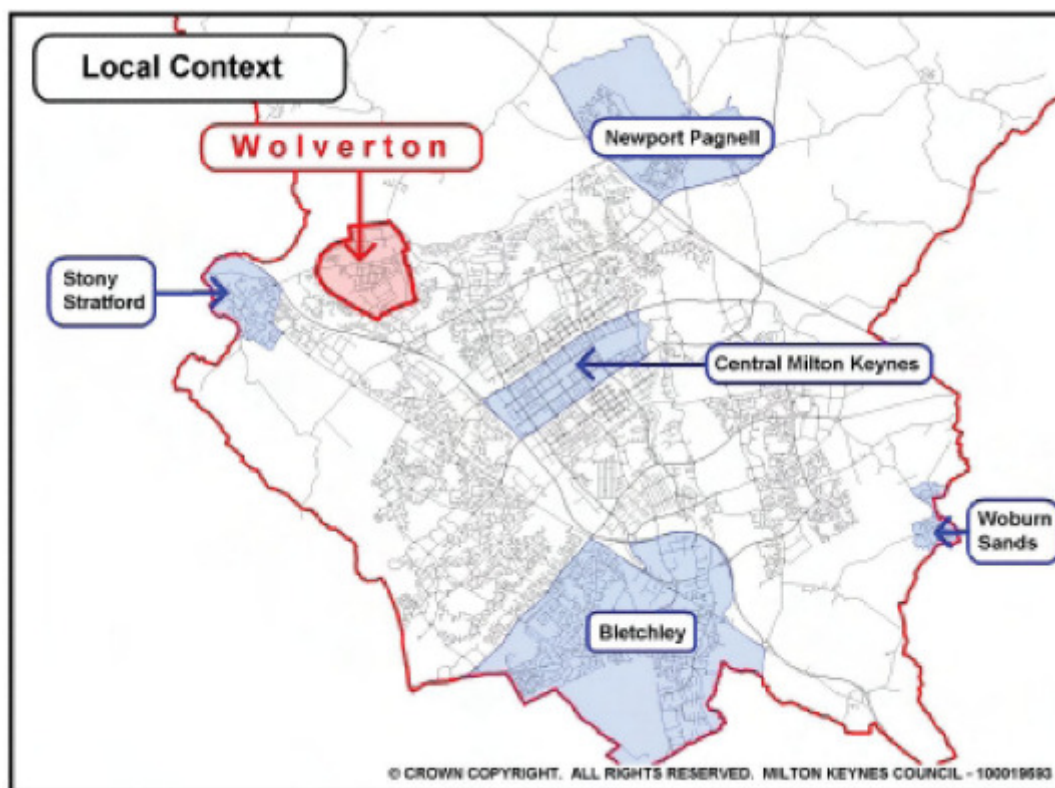


Figure 3: Local context

3. WHY A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR WOLVERTON?

Early History

- 3.1 Wolverton is a historic railway town developed from the 1830s onwards by the London & Birmingham and London & North Western Railway Company. It began life as a railway station (a stopping-off point between London and Birmingham) and an engine works, with the development of railway company terraced housing, a church, schools, a market hall and shops following on to meet the demands of a growing population.
- 3.2 The Railways Works was the principal employer in the town for over 100 years, and still employs around 300 people on a 15.2 hectare (36 acre) site to the north of the town centre. As the principal employer, the success of the Works very much affected the prosperity of the town, so when there were significant job losses and the Works threatened with closure in 1962, the town suffered significantly.



Picture 4: Picture of St George's Church

Milton Keynes New Town Development

- 3.3 Milton Keynes was designated as a New Town in 1967. In the 1974 Local Government re-organisation Wolverton became part of the new Borough of Milton Keynes. As the new town grew around it, Wolverton's fortunes declined, and by the early 1970s radical change was seen as the only way in revitalise the town.
- 3.4 As part of Milton Keynes Development Corporation's (MKDC) commitment to supporting the older towns, a controversial regeneration project – the Agora Shopping Centre – was developed using New Towns Act powers.

The development of the Agora involved the demolition of terraced housing and commercial/retail property in the heart of the town centre, an action which very much reflected the lack of regard given to heritage and conservation in the 1970s.

- 3.5 MKDC were also responsible for the development of Glyn Square, built on land which had been vacant for some time following the demolition of “the little streets” that once faced Creed Street.
- 3.6 Both of these developments were designed to improve the shopping and leisure facilities offered within the town centre, and initially provided a superficial boost to Wolverton’s fortunes. However, the Agora in particular quickly started to create more problems for Wolverton than it seemed to solve.

Decline of Wolverton Town Centre

- 3.7 The Agora opened in 1979 and, less than ten years later, concerns were being expressed as extracts from the 1988 “Plan for Wolverton”¹ show:

“The developments resulting from the 1975 proposals have been largely successful with the exception of the Agora which has received much unfavourable public comment”

“Despite the effectiveness of the 1975 Plan policies in maintaining the shopping area in quantitative terms, there has been a gradual deterioration in the attractiveness of Wolverton as a shopping centre. This problem has two aspects, the poor appearance of the physical environment within the shopping area and the poor range and types of shops within the centre.”

- 3.8 The “*unfavourable public comment*” referred to in the 1988 Plan focussed around a number of issues including difficulty of access, the poor internal environment of the building, the poor range of shops, the conflict between commercial and social uses, and anti-social behaviour of people leaving the premises in the evening.
- 3.9 In the same year as the 1988 “Plan for Wolverton” was published, Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) sold the Agora building into the private ownership of Ablethird Ltd. The freehold of the car park next to the Agora was subsequently transferred by MKDC to Milton Keynes Council with a 99 year peppercorn rent lease to the Agora owners.
- 3.10 Over time the company changed owners and ultimately the leisure activities ceased. The successful weekly indoor market was replaced with primarily low value, discount goods.

¹ Plan for Wolverton November 1988 – paragraphs 6.05, 6.06 and 6.12



Picture 5 Agora sign (left); Footway to east of Agora (middle); Glyn Square shops (right).

- 3.11 Ten years after the sale of the Agora into private ownership, a group of local businesses, community representatives and voluntary groups joined together to form the Wolverton Partnership and published “Wolverton on the Right Track” (1998) which set out short and long term proposals for the town centre. As a result of this report, funding was secured through the Government’s Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).
- 3.12 The majority of this funding was used to improve the public realm around the Agora and make better connections between The Square and Church Street. The Square was also remodelled with a new paving and lighting, a performance area, seating and improvements to the war memorial.
- 3.13 Whilst these improvements were welcomed by the local community, they did little to address the fundamental issues of the scale and design of the Agora building. A continued lack of investment in the fabric of the building and a retail strategy based mainly on the sale of discount goods continued the decline of the Agora.
- 3.14 This decline culminated in Ablethird and associated companies being put into Administration in December 2009. The administration process resulted in a thorough investigation of the practices of the companies, as a result of which three of the directors of the company were prosecuted and imprisoned for up to seven years for mortgage fraud.
- 3.15 The building was run by administrators until it was purchased by the current owners Leyland Holding Company Limited in July 2011 for £1,000,000².
- 3.16 The new owners were initially intent on making the building a going concern. However, they appeared to do little to make this happen, and in October of 2013 the building was put up for sale as a development opportunity. Offers in excess of £2.5m were sought, despite the site having been purchased two years before for £1 million.

² Land Registry Register of Title BM118326

- 3.17 Supported by a firm of chartered surveyors, a marketing exercise³ took place but lack of direction from the owners and the sad death of a key person representing Leyland Holding Company Limited resulted in the agent being de-instructed at the beginning of June 2014.
- 3.18 Between June and September 2014 little was known about the position of the owners, and the local management of the centre appeared to be increasingly rudderless. However, there continued to be some limited developer interest in the site, but with a “wait and see” approach apparently being adopted rather than a proactive attempt to purchase the site.
- 3.19 A change of political leadership at Milton Keynes Council in May 2014 led to a review of the strategy underpinning the Agora Redevelopment project, and on the 8th September 2014 the Cabinet considered a revised strategy for bringing forward the redevelopment.
- 3.20 In light of the improving land/property market, the Cabinet agreed that Milton Keynes Council would work with Milton Keynes Development Partnership⁴ to consider the business case for acquiring the Agora site.
- 3.21 Shortly before Christmas 2014 it became clear that two rival developers were close to securing an option to purchase the Agora. In January 2015 the Town Council were made aware that Brickhill Estates (a Milton Keynes based developer) had reached an agreement with Leyland Holding Company, which committed them to securing planning permission for a redevelopment of the Agora site by the beginning of September 2015.
- 3.22 In consultation with both the Town Council and Milton Keynes Council, the developer and their architects developed a mixed use scheme for the site, and in April an afternoon and evening of consultation was carried out by the architect team.
- 3.23 On the 24th April a planning application was submitted to Milton Keynes Council for the demolition of existing Agora building, re-instatement of Radcliffe Street, reconfiguration of existing car park (total car parking spaces 207) and construction of a new mixed-use development including 100 residential units, 8 x ground floor retail units with retail storage and associated hardstanding and landscaping work.
- 3.24 Prior to submitting the planning application the developer held a consultation event on their proposals, and in the middle of May a Public

³ Agora Marketing Brochure – futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/Sales_Particulars_Agora.pdf

⁴ Milton Keynes Development Partnership LLP (MKDP) is an independent legal entity wholly owned by Milton Keynes Council to facilitate Milton Keynes’ continued growth and economic success. mkdevelopmentpartnership.co.uk

Meeting took place to help local people understand the detail of the planning application and how they can comment.

Arrival of Tesco

- 3.25 The 1988 Plan for Wolverton⁵ proposed retail development on part of the Railway Works site.

“The proposed redevelopment of part of the [Railway Works] site, provides an opportunity to introduce into Wolverton, some new retail floorspace of a scale and quality appropriate to a District Centre. The development proposed includes a district supermarket of up to 4,180 square metres and a range of smaller ancillary shops and ancillary activities in a gross area of about 1,000 square metres. It is anticipated that this new development will provide a stimulus to the shopping environment of the District Centre in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and will therefore benefit the existing shops.”

- 3.26 Consequently, in 1992 a Tesco superstore was constructed to the north of Stratford Road, resulting in the demolition of original Railway Works buildings.
- 3.27 The opening of the Tesco store was expected to revive the town centre, but failed to benefit more established parts of the centre because of the physical separation and poor pedestrian links between the store and the existing shopping area.
- 3.28 Facing increased pressure on sales, some of the independent retailers in the town blamed Tesco for the demise of the traditional town centre. However, Wolverton town centre was also facing increased competition from Central Milton Keynes shopping as well as changing patterns of retail.
- 3.29 Since its initial construction, the Tesco store in Wolverton has increased in size from 3,000 sq m to 6,250 sq m, at the same time as increasing the range of goods sold. In 2009 Tesco were granted planning permission on appeal to redevelop the Wolverton store as a 13,945 sq m (gross) Tesco Extra.
- 3.30 A three year time extension to this permission was granted in May 2013, but in November 2013 Tesco announced that it would not be pursuing redevelopment of the store. However, the planning permission is still extant and could be implemented should Tesco choose to do so.

⁵ Plan for Wolverton November 1988 – paragraph 6.09

Conservation Area designation

- 3.31 In 2001 the heritage of Wolverton was recognised when the town centre and core area of Victorian terraces was designated a Conservation Area in recognition of its unique Victorian heritage. The character assessment which took place as part of the Conservation Area Review in 2008/2009 highlights a number of key features which help to define Wolverton's special interest. These include:
- Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century terraced housing arranged in a pattern of rectangular blocks creating continuous frontages and linear views.
 - Almost exclusive use of brick and slate, terracotta detailing and painted timber.
 - An “abrupt distinction” between the residential part of the town and the industrial railway works site by an imposing boundary wall which runs the length of Stratford Road.
 - Active shopping and commercial frontages, busy with traffic and people that contrast with the quieter residential streets and their distinctive, narrow, interconnecting backways.
- 3.32 Several of these features are explored and discussed further in the plan.
- 3.33 The Conservation Area designation led to further demands for something to be done about the Agora building and the town centre generally, and when the local community got the opportunity to create a 20 year vision for the town using the Market Towns Healthcheck, the redevelopment of the town centre became a key aspiration.

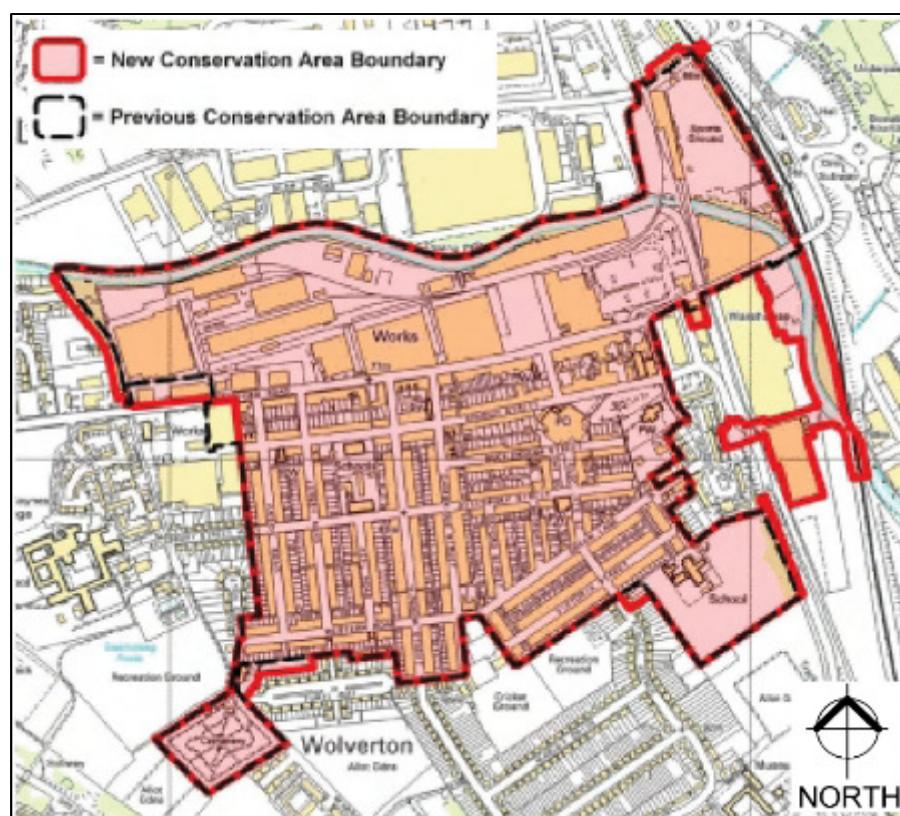


Figure 4: Wolverton Conservation Area – original boundary and as revised in 2008/2009 review

Market Towns Healthcheck process

- 3.34 For more than six months during 2002 over 500 people in Wolverton and the surrounding area discussed how the town should develop in the next twenty years. Working Groups met 31 times, involving 70 people, and there were a number of questionnaires to record people's views.
- 3.35 What emerged were common and overlapping areas of agreement and fundamental principles on which Wolverton's future should be built. These key elements were used to create the Future Wolverton Vision, a document which has been used to guide community led regeneration projects for over a decade.
- 3.36 A number of the aspirations set out in the vision involved redevelopment of key sites within the town centre, and helped support the case for public sector intervention.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

- 3.37 In 2003, Milton Keynes Council, English Partnerships, the Town Council and South East of England Development Agency commissioned the Wolverton Regeneration Strategy⁶, drawing on the work done in the Market Towns Healthcheck and the Future Wolverton Vision.

⁶ Wolverton Regeneration Strategy SPD – See Appendix 1

- 3.38 The purpose of the study was to identify projects and opportunities for regenerating Wolverton, and included an overarching strategy to develop an attractive, vibrant mixed use town centre.
- 3.39 In September 2004, the document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, securing the commitment by Milton Keynes Council to the demolition and redevelopment of the Agora and Glyn Square and wider regeneration of the town centre.
- 3.40 The 2005 Local Plan refers to the adopted Regeneration Strategy in paragraph 12.43 of the “Town Centres and shopping” section. Bringing forward proposals contained in the Strategy through the development of an Area Action Plan is also mentioned in the 2005 Local Plan.

Wolverton West End Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 3.41 At the same time as the Wolverton Regeneration Strategy was being prepared, Milton Keynes Council and the Town Council were also involved in developing a strategy⁷ for the West End of Wolverton, for land mainly owned by The Radcliffe School.
- 3.42 The purpose of the strategy was to bring forward housing development on land which the school no longer required and had permission to sell, to facilitate investment in the school buildings and facilities.
- 3.43 Although the SPG was adopted in September 2004, it was not until 2012 that work began on the housing development. By the end of 2014 over 300 homes will have been built on the site.
- 3.44 Whilst not in the neighbourhood plan area, this development is significant to Wolverton as it increased the number of people resident in the town, and created additional potential for the town centre to attract new customers.

The Railway Works site

- 3.45 Whilst focussing on regeneration of the town centre, the Regeneration Strategy also highlighted the development opportunity presented by the Railway Works site.
- 3.46 Established in the 1830s, the Railway Works has been in continual use since, most recently as a carriage repair works. At the height of its success in the early twentieth century, the works employed over 5,000 people, and it still survives today as one of the largest employers in Wolverton.
- 3.47 The site is now owned by Key Property Investments Ltd (a St Modwen joint venture company). It is currently let to and occupied by Knorr-Bremse

⁷ Wolverton West End Development Framework SPD – www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-applications-appeals-and-advice/wolverton-west-end-development-framework

Rail Systems Ltd who purchased the Railcare business and took over the head-lease that had been held by Alstom.

- 3.48 This lease is due to expire in 2018 and Knorr-Bremse have plans to consolidate their operations on one part of the site, releasing other parts for redevelopment.
- 3.49 In September 2014, St Modwen launched a masterplanning process for the site, followed by a more detailed consultation in December 2014. We understand they intend to submit an outline planning application for the whole site in the spring of 2015.

Area Action Plan

- 3.50 Following the adoption of the Wolverton Regeneration Strategy in 2004, Milton Keynes Council began preparing the Wolverton Area Action Plan (WAAP) to take forward the redevelopment of the sites identified in the strategy. Both the town centre and railway works site were included in the action plan area.
- 3.51 Work was carried out on the WAAP during most of 2006, including further engagement with the local community and major stakeholders. However, in 2007, following discussions with the Government Office for the South East (GOSE), the decision was taken to halt the process in order to progress Milton Keynes Council's Core Strategy.
- 3.52 Whilst the Milton Keynes Council remained committed to regenerating Wolverton through implantation of the Core Strategy, the process had largely stalled until the opportunity to become a Frontrunner Neighbourhood Plan presented itself in 2011.

Issues and challenges

Issues and challenges – Town Centre Retail

- 3.53 As Wolverton developed, three main shopping areas – Stratford Road, Church Street and The Square emerged. Whilst dispersed and fragmented, each of these shopping areas was well connected to the other by the grid pattern of streets that characterised the town. This is explained in the 1988 “Plan for Wolverton”⁸:

“The pattern of shopping provision in Wolverton has for many years been dispersed or fragmented in character. Whilst The Square provided a visual focus around which shops developed, this was strictly a centre for local shoppers; this has been supplemented by a larger number of corner shops providing additional facilities for local shoppers. For shoppers arriving by train or car the Stratford Road provided a more convenient

⁸ Plan for Wolverton – November 1988 – paragraph 6.02

location for shops, and this was reinforced by the adjacent old market hall in Creed Street. This duality of shopping areas in Wolverton was clearly displayed on the Wolverton Town Map, 1957.”

- 3.54 When Milton Keynes Development Corporation built the Agora and Glyn Square in mid to late 1970s, retail activity became concentrated in these new developments, resulting in a decline in the original shopping areas of the town. This decline resulted in some of the commercial premises being converted into housing and used for non-retail purposes.
- 3.55 In response to this decline, the 2005 Local Plan sought to protect the core retail function of the town centre by defining a primary shopping area. Within this area the shopping function of the town centre was protected by imposing restrictions on non-retail use.
- 3.56 The various changes to the retail areas over time mean that now Wolverton Town Centre is, in effect, made up of four different character areas:
- The Agora and Church Street
 - The Square
 - Stratford Road including Tesco
 - Glyn Square
- 3.57 As can be seen from the plan in Figure 5, none of the four retail areas physically connect well with one another. There is also little to distinguish the areas from one another by, for example, shops of a particular type being located in a particular location.
- 3.58 Wolverton has some fantastic shops which offer a uniquely different experience from the shopping centre in Central Milton Keynes and the other nearby towns. However, each of the areas faces specific challenges and issues which will need to be addressed if local businesses are to capitalise upon the opportunities that the Neighbourhood Plan presents.

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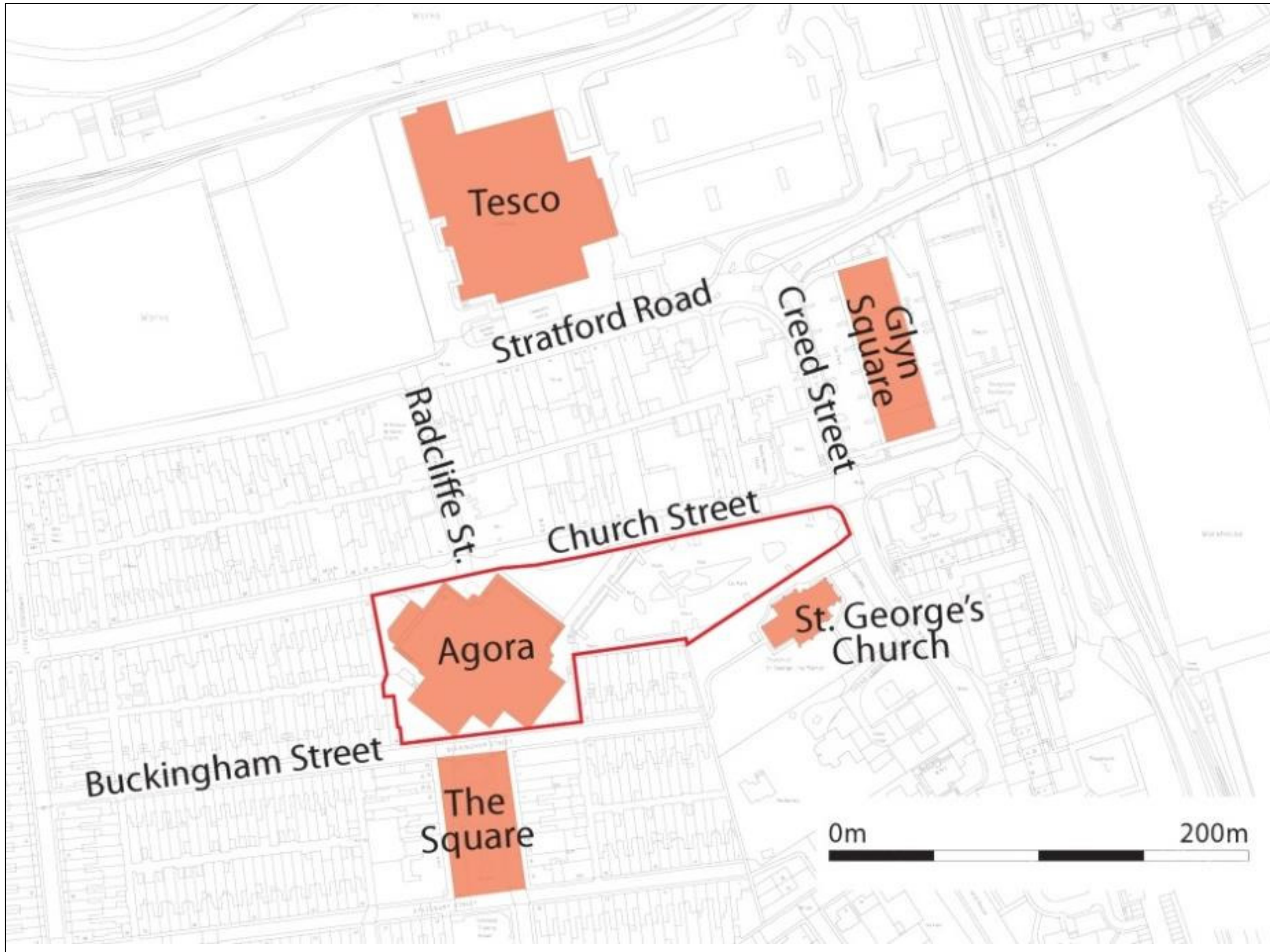


Figure 5: The four different character areas

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Character Area 1 – The Agora and Church Street

- 3.59 Church Street is a centrally located shopping street, with a number of long-standing and successful businesses. It is dominated by the Agora building, the design and scale of which is completely out of character with the Victorian commercial property that surrounds it.
- 3.60 The Agora car park creates an open expanse of ground on one side of Church Street which does little to animate the surrounding town centre, especially at the beginning and end of the day when it is virtually empty of cars.
- 3.61 A major factor in Church Street, are the buses. Relative to many other parts of Milton Keynes, Wolverton is well served by buses most of which tend to begin and end their routes in Church Street outside the Agora. This causes problems both in terms of the traffic flow and noise, with buses “laying over” until their next departure time.
- 3.62 There is an obvious conflict between wanting buses to serve the town and the benefit they can bring in terms of passengers using town centre shops, and the negative effect of noise and congestion.
- 3.63 The recent introduction of an Electric bus which links Wolverton and Central Milton Keynes is helping to alleviate some of these issues, but Wolverton still needs a solution to bus interchange facilities which better meets the needs of the town centre.



Picture 6: View of northern side of Church Street looking east; (top left); View of Agora from Radcliffe Street/Church Street junction (top right); View of Agora from Radcliffe Street/Green Lane junction, looking north (bottom left); Buses “laying over” on Church Street (bottom right).

Character Area 2 – The Square

- 3.64 The Square (which is actually Market Square on one side, Radcliffe Street on the other and Aylesbury Street and Buckingham Street at either end) is surrounded by shops with residential accommodation above.
- 3.65 It is well liked by local people and provides the venue for a range of community events and activities such as a summer music festival and a Christmas Lantern Festival. It was extensively re-modelled in the late 1990s using government Single Regeneration Budget funding.
- 3.66 Before the construction of the Agora, The Square was directly connected with Church Street and Stratford Road via Radcliffe Street, and was an important retail centre for the town.
- 3.67 Now, hidden behind The Agora, The Square has suffered from lack of footfall and there is a strong feeling from local people and businesses that it will be given a new lease of life once the Agora is redeveloped.



Picture 7: View of The Square, looking east (left); View of The Square looking north from Agora (right).

Character Area 3 – Stratford Road including Tesco

- 3.68 Stratford Road is known locally as the “front”. Most people who pass through Wolverton use Stratford Road and the shops have the opportunity to benefit from this custom. However there is a limited on-street parking which the businesses feel deters passers-by from stopping and shopping.
- 3.69 Tesco is at one end of Stratford Road, but as it is below street level, it does not encourage customers seeing and using the local shops at the same time as shopping at the store. However Tesco have responded positively to engagement from the Town Council and there are signs to town centre shops and parking is permitted for town centre use for up to three hours.
- 3.70 The plans to redevelop the store had involved re-siting it at street level with car parking below and this would have greatly improved links between the wider town centre and the store.

- 3.71 The challenge therefore remains to encourage more shoppers who use Tesco to venture into the town centre to use local shops.
- 3.72 The final issue facing Stratford Road is a red brick wall which was constructed in 1882 to divide the Railway Works from the town. The wall extends almost the length of the works site on the northern side of Stratford Road.
- 3.73 The wall is an important symbol of Wolverton's unique heritage but creates a "wind tunnel" effect, exacerbating traffic noise and making it an unattractive environment in which to shop.
- 3.74 Proposed redevelopment of parts of the Railway Works site on the other side of the wall are likely to have a profound effect on the future role and character of Stratford Road.



Picture 8: Views of Tesco car park below street level and pedestrian entrance-way on Stratford Road where there are steps and a ramp down to the store and car park (top left); View of Stratford Road looking east, towards Tesco showing "The Wall" (top right); "The Wall" – the Railway Work site boundary wall, Stratford Road (bottom left); View of Tesco Stratford Road entrance – a level above the store itself and The Old Bath House Community Centre (bottom right).

Character Area 4 – Glyn Square and Creed Street

- 3.75 Glyn Square, developed in the mid-1970s shortly before the Agora, is located on the eastern edge of Wolverton Town Centre, and is opposite the Town Hall & Library (previously school and then market hall) and St George's Institute (now King's Church Community Centre⁹, previously Creed Street Arts Centre/Madcap).
- 3.76 Accommodation at Glyn Square is a single storey retail shed with car parking facing onto Creed Street to the west of the site.
- 3.77 The design and layout of the retail building is not in keeping with the Victorian heritage of the town, and makes little contribution to this important gateway location. The warehouse style of the development hides some attractive buildings which are located to the rear.
- 3.78 Most local people value the shops on Glyn Square, but feel that a more attractive development at this important gateway into Wolverton Town Centre would be desirable. The problems with flow and movement of cars in and out of the car park has been consistently highlighted.
- 3.79 There are currently four units, two national retailers: ASDA (after their purchase of Netto) and Farmfoods; and two independent shops (a supermarket and car spares and service centre).



Picture 9: Views of Glyn Square shops

⁹ King's Church Hall and Community Centre, website: www.kccmk.co.uk

Issues and challenges – The Railway Works site

- 3.80 The Railway Works site represents the largest and most complex development opportunity for Wolverton.
- 3.81 Located between the Grand Union Canal and Stratford Road, the site extends from the west of the car dealerships on Stratford Road to the Tesco car park in the east.
- 3.82 It is physically separated from the town by a red brick wall which extends almost the length of the site. There are a number of access points into the site; the front entrance on Stratford Road, McConnell Drive by rail and by car and foot at its far western boundary.
- 3.83 The site contains some historically significant Victorian/Edwardian buildings and overall has survived with a degree of integrity for many years making it nationally significant for its industrial heritage.
- 3.84 The proximity of the site to the town centre creates opportunities for development and linkages between the town centre and the canal.
- 3.85 The establishment, through the Neighbourhood Plan, of the principles that might underpin future development of the site has become increasingly important since the owners of the site, St Modwen, published their initial ideas for regeneration of the site in September 2014.



Picture 10: Views within the Railway Works site

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4. ACHIEVING THE VISION: POLICIES

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies provide a mechanism to deliver the community vision and objectives, whilst responding to the issues and challenges facing Wolverton over the next ten years.

4.2 These challenges can be summarised as

- Redeveloping the Agora Shopping Centre site and car park in a way which revitalises Wolverton town centre and positively impacts on Church Street.
- Creating a new focus for retail and community activity in The Square and Stratford Road as part of a revitalised town centre.
- Clarifying and developing the relationship between Tesco and the rest of the town centre and developing physical links.
- Creating a scheme for the redevelopment of the parking and traffic management around Creed Street/Glyn Square as a gateway to the town centre.
- Ensuring that the future redevelopment of parts of the Railway Works site creates linkages with the town centre and opens up access to the Grand Union Canal.

4.3 Development Proposals that help to address these challenges and are in accordance with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported.

4.4 Statistical and other evidence which helps to give a flavour of the issues and challenges facing Wolverton can be found in a separate document which accompanies the plan. The link to this document is in Appendix 1.

4.5 Should a planning application be made for development in the town centre which is not dealt with by the Neighbourhood Plan policies, Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council will work with Milton Keynes Council to assess the proposal against the achievement of the overall objectives of the plan.

4.6 Policies W2, W4 and W6 do not apply to the Railway Works site, but should be taken into account when considering relevant planning applications within the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

4.7 Overall, we believe that the policies will “future proof” Wolverton against the challenges facing town centres in the 21st century, capitalising upon the characteristics of the town which make it unique, and promoting development of key sites which have long blighted future prosperity.

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5. THE AGORA SITE

Policy justification and description

Context

- 5.1 The principal reason behind the decision to develop a neighbourhood plan for the town centre was the long-standing community aspiration to redevelop the Agora shopping centre.
- 5.2 Previous community planning processes and strategic planning documents have continually prioritised redevelopment of the Agora, but prior to the neighbourhood plan process delivery had seemed out of reach.
- 5.3 A summary of the consultation evidence and national and local planning policy supporting the Agora site policy is included below, with further detail of the neighbourhood plan consultation process included in the Consultation Statement.

Consultation Outcomes

- 5.4 The majority of local people believe that redevelopment of the Agora site is crucial to the future regeneration of Wolverton town centre.
- 5.5 Comments received in the first stage of the neighbourhood plan consultation in January and February 2012 focused around a number of key problems that the Agora creates for the town:
 - It segregates The Square from Church Street and the other retail areas of the town.
 - It disrupts the Victorian grid street-pattern and causes problems with the movement of cars, people and cyclists.
 - It is out of keeping with the Victorian town and Conservation Area.
 - It has been poorly maintained for many years and contributes negatively to the public realm and image of the town.
 - It does little to attract shoppers into the town.
- 5.6 By the end of the first year of the Neighbourhood Plan process, 78% of those who responded to a Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire said that they wanted the Agora site redeveloped, with 71% supporting the reconnection of Radcliffe Street as a crucial element of any new town centre scheme. Full details of all the neighbourhood plan consultation processes and outcomes can be found in the accompanying Consultation Statement.
- 5.7 This recent neighbourhood plan evidence is supported by community consultation which took place ten years ago using the “Market Towns

Healthcheck”¹⁰ process. This community planning process imagined a town centre with *“the Agora gone and businesses relocated close by in buildings in character with the rest of the town”*.

- 5.8 In 2010 further consultation took place through the “Refreshing the Vision” process, with over 200 people involved in creating a new five year Action Plan for the town. Theme 1 of this Action Plan is to *“aspire to radical change where necessary”* with a specific action around creating a Development Brief for the Agora as a mechanism to secure redevelopment.

NPPF

- 5.9 We believe that the Agora site policy meets the objectives of, and complies with, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres (NPPF paragraph 23).
 - Requiring good design (NPPF paragraph 58), agreed with the community (NPPF paragraph 66).
 - Promoting healthy communities (NPPF paragraph 69).
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change (NPPF paragraph 93).
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield) land (NPPF paragraph 111).
 - Protecting and enhancing historic assets including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (NPPF paragraph 7).
- 5.10 The Basic Conditions Statement accompanying the plan looks at the compliance of the Agora site policy with the NPPF in more detail.

Core Strategy

- 5.11 Redevelopment of the Agora site also supports a number of Core Strategy policies including:
- Policy CS1 – Milton Keynes Development Strategy.
 - Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development.
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.
 - Policy CS10 – Housing.
 - Policy CS11 – A Well Connected Milton Keynes.
 - Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.
 - Policy CS13 – Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places.
 - Policy CS16 – Supporting Small Businesses.
 - Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.

¹⁰Market Towns Healthcheck – futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/FutureWolvertonMTHealthcheck.pdf

- Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities.
- Policy CS19 – The Historic and Natural Environment.
- Policy CS21 – Delivering Infrastructure.

5.12 Full detail of how the Agora policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

5.13 Our proposals are in compliance with the saved policy KS6 in the 2005 Local Plan which states that new development in the town must:

- Support the regeneration of Wolverton town centre.
- Preserve or enhance the character of the Wolverton Conservation Area.
- Promote mixed use development.

5.14 Redevelopment of the Agora supports saved policy TC13 of the Local Plan which relates to shopping and retail in Wolverton town centre with objectives to:

- Define the role of Wolverton town centre.
- Improve the attractiveness of the town centre.
- Ensure retail development in Wolverton does not prejudice Milton Keynes Council's wider regeneration objectives.

5.15 Full wording of these policies and more information about compliance is included in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy (SPG)

5.16 The Wolverton Regeneration Strategy was adopted by Milton Keynes Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2004.

5.17 The Agora site and Church Street is included as Project Site 2 in the strategy with the objective of providing a “high quality mixed use development on the site which respects the urban structure of the town and enhances the retail core”.

5.18 The recommendations in the strategy include:

- Reconnection of Radcliffe Street to allow direct vehicular and pedestrian movement between The Square and Stratford Road.
- Development which enhances connectivity.
- New retail and residential development on Church Street.
- High quality public realm.

Agora Development Brief Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD)

- 5.19 A detailed Development Brief for the Agora site was prepared by officers from Milton Keynes Council during 2013 as a result of the Milton Keynes Council Cabinet decision to consider compulsory purchase of the Agora.
- 5.20 Officers worked closely with the Town Council and Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee to ensure that the planning and design principles in the Development Brief were fully consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan policy.
- 5.21 The brief was adopted by Milton Keynes Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in September 2013, and so forms a material consideration in the determination of any planning application for the site.
- 5.22 The Neighbourhood Plan policy for the Agora site references the Planning and Design principles in the Agora Development Brief.

Other evidence – Benchmarking Survey

- 5.23 Shoppers feedback gathered during the Benchmarking Survey 2012¹¹ further supports redevelopment of the Agora, with a large number of comments about the need to demolish the Agora, reconnect Radcliffe Street and open up The Square.

¹¹ Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012 – futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/Benchmarking_Report_2012.pdf

Policy W1 – The Agora site

Redevelopment proposals for the Agora site will be actively supported where they are consistent with the objectives set out below. The planning and design principles in the Agora Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document (adopted September 2013) are consistent with this policy and referenced below.

Redevelopment proposals will:

- A. Follow the historic grid street pattern and reinstate Radcliffe Street as a direct highway link, which is pedestrian and cycle friendly, between The Square and Church Street. (Reconnection of the Grid)
- B. Provide an active retail frontage on the reinstated Radcliffe Street and Church Street with a mix of new ground floor units of modern standard, suitable for current retail, service and office requirements. (Scale and Orientation of New Development and Active Ground Floor Frontages)
- C. Include development fronting Church Street, with a priority of around the junction with Radcliffe Street. (Development along Church Street)
- D. Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces, particularly at the rear of buildings. (Public and Private Space)
- E. Incorporate public open space around the junction of Church Street and the new highway link to The Square, to improve the urban environment and support street markets and community events. (Street markets and community events)
- F. Retain views of St George's Church, in particular the spire, through breaks in development along Church Street. (Retention of Key Views)
- G. Be between two and four storeys in height with the taller buildings on the corners of the site and along the re-instated Radcliffe Street link between Church Street and The Square. (Building Heights)
- H. Where practicable ensure service yards do not conflict with private amenity space or private parking provision for residents or undermine the quality of the environment on principal frontages. (Servicing)
- I. Except in new residential development where parking should be designated to each unit, all parking should be accessible to town centre users, and include an element of on-street parking. Existing adopted highway access should be retained and enhanced where practicable. (Parking and Existing Adoptable Highway Access)
- J. Integrate the existing Electric Bus Charging Infrastructure located in Church Street. (Electric Bus Charging Point Infrastructure)

continued ...

Policy W1 – The Agora site – *continued*

- K. Improve cycling and walking links within the town centre, retaining existing pedestrian links such as that between St George’s Church and Church Street as practicable and viable. (Existing Adoptable Highway Access)
- L. Include a mix of new housing which complements the existing provision and meets the particular needs of older people (extra care housing) and younger people (supported housing). Housing provided on the site should also meet the Lifetime Homes Standard, and best practice guidance in ‘Safer Places’ and ‘Secured by Design’. Some dwellings should support home based working and all homes should have high speed broadband.
- M. Include a range of small to medium sized retail (50 to 1000 square metres) and office units and workshops suitable for current town centre businesses that may require relocation and new occupiers. (Allow for a range of land uses and unit sizes)
- N. Retain the existing London Plane trees and other trees where practicable replacing any trees lost as a result of development. (Landscaping)
- O. Include the introduction of water efficiency measures and new green infrastructure in the form of sustainable urban drainage systems which reduce flood risk and add ecological value and interest to the development.
- P. Street materials and street furniture should comply with the Public Realm Design Manual. (Public Realm materials and street furniture)
- Q. Be of good design in keeping with the Victorian architecture of the setting which preserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area. Poor quality pastiche is not acceptable. (High quality architecture)
- R. Ensure redevelopment is accessible to all users. (Access to All)
- S. Subject to viability testing, new development will be zero carbon and resilient to the impact of climate change and served by a district heating network where convenient connection is available.
- T. Ensure that the necessary on and off-site infrastructure, for example school places, and community facilities are provided to support and mitigate the impact of development.

Delivery of Policy W1 – The Agora site

Via Milton Keynes Council

- 5.24 The Neighbourhood Plan process has been successful in galvanising support for the redevelopment of the Agora from Milton Keynes Council.
- 5.25 In August 2012 – half way through the first year of the Neighbourhood Plan process – the Cabinet at Milton Keynes Council received an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and considered the option of Compulsory Purchase of the Agora site.
- 5.26 The Cabinet made two highly significant decisions which will support delivery of Policy W1:
- To prepare a Development Brief for the Agora site.
 - To commence negotiations with the owners of the Agora Centre to bring the site forward for redevelopment, and in the event that those negotiations fail, to consider a formal proposal to use Compulsory Purchase powers to acquire the site on a “back-to-back” basis with a development partner.
- 5.27 The stages of the process, as agreed by the Cabinet are in the table in Appendix 2. Stages 1 to 4 of this process have so far taken place.
- 5.28 The Draft Development Brief was subject to an “in-house” viability assessment by Milton Keynes Council which indicated that redevelopment of the site is commercially viable. Now formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Document the brief is a “material consideration” and can be used in the determination of future planning applications on the site.
- 5.29 Since adoption of the Development Brief Milton Keynes Council’s efforts have been focussed around negotiations with the Agora owners and the establishment of a developer procurement process.
- 5.30 It is fair to say that attempts to open up informal discussions with representatives of the Agora owners have proved challenging. Progress with the developer procurement process has also been affected by the requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan policy to be in place.
- 5.31 In September 2014, the Cabinet decided to review the strategy underpinning the Agora redevelopment project, and a decision was made to evaluate the case for Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Development Partnership acquiring the site to expedite redevelopment.
- 5.32 At the end of 2014 Milton Keynes Development Partnership began to consider the business case for freehold acquisition of the Agora site. This process has slowed since it became clear that the active developer interest would lead to a planning application.

- 5.33 The Cabinet are due to reconsider Milton Keynes Council's strategy for redevelopment of the Agora site in the autumn of 2015 following the determination of the current planning application.

Developer led solution

- 5.34 The decision to seek redevelopment of the Agora site by the Cabinet in 2012 independently generated developer interest, and a number of developers have expressed an interest and visited the site since the beginning of 2013.
- 5.35 The current developer-led planning application for the Agora site is likely to be determined in the summer of 2015. Whether or not this application is accepted by Milton Keynes Council, we believe that there is every possibility that a developer led solution will take place, partly due to the improving land/property market.

Community-led redevelopment

- 5.36 Another route for delivery is a community-led redevelopment process through the mechanism of a community land trust or similar structure. This might involve Milton Keynes Council “gifting” the freehold of the car park to the community, who would then be an equal partner in the redevelopment process.

Public subsidy

- 5.37 Delivery may also be achieved through central government subsidy, much like the development of Wolverton Park. However, the chances of the public sector funding such as regeneration project in an “age of austerity” are unlikely even if there is a change in Government in 2015.



Figure 6: Sketch drawing produced by Princes Foundation for Building Communities of a possible development option for the Agora site.

6. GENERAL TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Policy justification and description

Context

- 6.1 Whilst the redevelopment of the Agora site is crucial to the future of Wolverton, wider development in the town centre is also important for the realisation of the Neighbourhood Plan vision.
- 6.2 Wider development will help to support improvements to access and movement, the public realm and parking, all of which are a priority for the sustainability of the town centre.
- 6.3 A summary of the consultation evidence and national and local planning policy supporting general town centre development is included below.

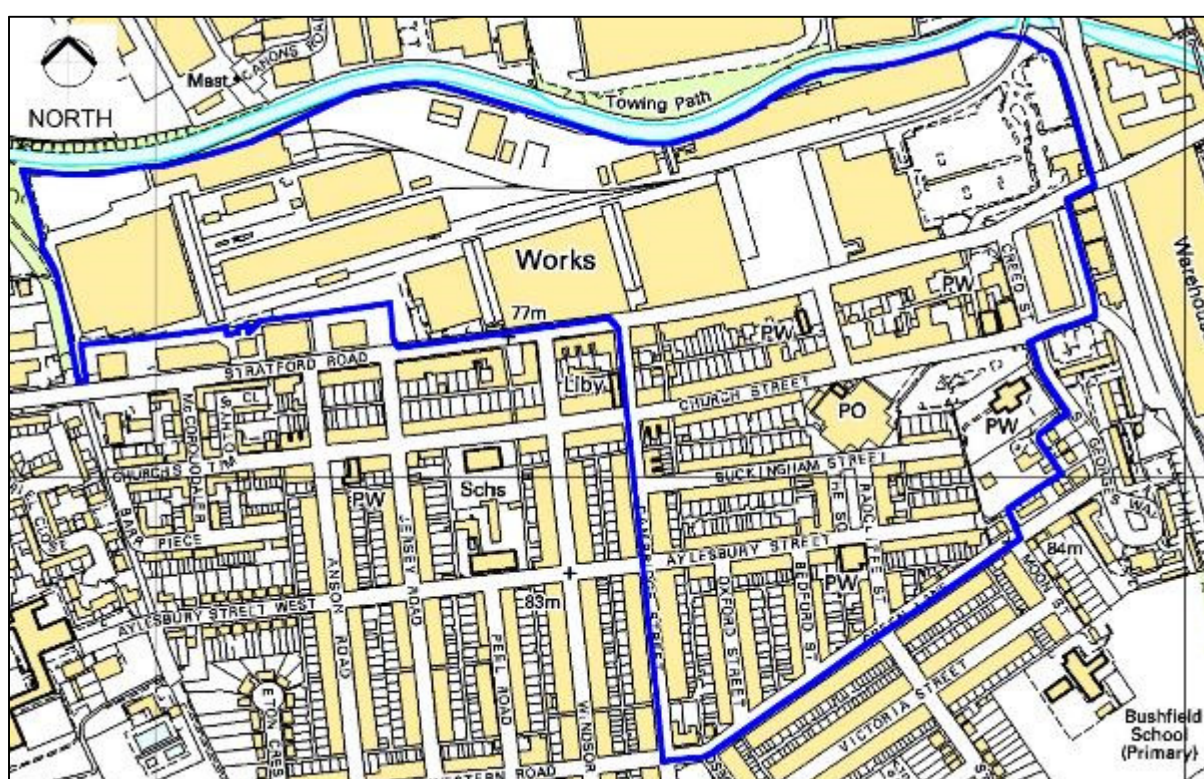


Figure 7: Designated Neighbourhood Plan area (in blue)

Consultation Outcomes

- 6.4 During the neighbourhood plan consultation process, the community gave a clear steer on the principles which should guide wider town centre development. These principles include:
 - Ensuring that new development does not obscure or detract from important heritage assets and listed buildings in the town centre.
 - Using new development as a mechanism to improve the public realm and movement of people/cars/buses and cyclists around the town centre.

- Encouraging the development of larger retail premises where they will attract a mix of retail or allow for the provision of services not already on offer in the town centre.
 - Encouraging a distinction in character between the four different retail areas of the town, to encourage movement and flow between them.
- 6.5 During the initial consultation process at the beginning of 2012 residents also highlighted day-to-day issues affecting the town centre including:
- Conflict between the movement of people, cars and buses, particularly on Church Street.
 - A “run down” feel on Stratford Road giving a poor impression of Wolverton to people passing through.
 - Concerns about the lack of connection between the different parts of the town centre.
 - Concerns that the proposed Tesco Extra would be too large for Wolverton, poorly integrated into the town centre and create traffic problems.
 - Poor pedestrian and cycle access to and from the town centre, particularly to the railway station.
 - Concerns about the long-term future of Glyn Square which (it was felt) was located at a key gateway into the town centre and was causing increasing traffic management and parking issues.
- 6.6 During the neighbourhood plan meeting held in July 2012 more detailed investigation was carried out on the conflict between people, buses and cars on Church Street and Radcliffe Street. This confirmed that pedestrians felt unsafe crossing Church Street due to the buses occupying most of the southern carriageway, and cars trying to travel in both directions on the northern carriageway. The lack of cycle routes through the town was highlighted as an issue, and there was a general call for a one-way system, bus lay-overs and a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- 6.7 This more detailed work resulted in a specific question about improvements to Church Street being included in the December 2012 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire.
- 6.8 76% of people responding to the questionnaire favoured a comprehensive street improvement scheme for Church Street, Radcliffe Street and Creed Street, including some use of one-way streets, dedicated bus bays, wider pavements and improved Gateways into the town.
- 6.9 70% of those who responded to the December 2012 consultation also favoured improvements to the pedestrian and cycle routes to the railway

station, including wider pavements at the Stratford Road double mini-roundabout.



Picture 11: Views of road from Stratford Road to Rail Station

- 6.10 The results of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation over the last three years, chime with the results of previous consultations carried out with the local community over the last ten years.
- 6.11 The Future Wolverton Vision developed in 2002 included aspirations that the Town Centre would have “a series of shopping areas, linking to each other, each with their distinct character”, and “well signed routes for easy movement around the Town”. There is also a specific mention in the vision about the need to improve the route from the town centre to the railway station, with the healthcheck report describing the route to the station for cyclists and pedestrians as *“not attractive (with) narrow pavements and a road bounded on both sides with high brick walls”*.
- 6.12 The Market Towns Healthcheck process also highlighted a number of shopping streets where there was conflict between pedestrians and cars and buses, the most dangerous being Stratford Road and Church Street between Creed Street and the junction with Radcliffe Street.
- 6.13 The “Refreshing the Vision” process in 2010 identified a number of themes for action including the quality of the environment, transport, the local economy, housing and social and community activities.
- 6.14 Transport came out as one of the topics that people felt most strongly about. There were clear concerns that cars and other motorised vehicles

dominate the town and that movement as a pedestrian or cyclist is difficult and – at times – dangerous. Key points raised included:

- Movement of cars, buses, people and bikes around Wolverton.
- Access to public transport – bus routes and siting of bus stops, cycle route to the railway station.
- Managing the streets – not enough space for the number of cars, lack of parking and poor enforcement of parking/traffic regulations.
- Concerns about safety when walking and cycling, particularly access to the station and Stratford Road generally.

6.15 A common view expressed during the Refreshing the Vision consultation was that the appearance of the town's shops was unattractive, especially in the evening when the shutters are down and the exterior goods displays are empty.

6.16 These concerns were reiterated once again in the Town Centre Benchmarking Survey which took place as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process at beginning of December 2012.



Figure 8: Town Centre Benchmarking Area – December 2012

- 6.17 The process involved the local community carrying out shopper surveys, footfall counts and collecting data about parking.
- 6.18 The results of the benchmarking revealed a number of specific characteristics of the retail within the town centre:
- 14% of people highlighted problems with walking around the town compared to 10% of people nationally.
 - 47% of people shopping in the town rated the physical appearance as poor.
 - 52% said the leisure and cultural offer was poor.
- 6.19 These results are consistent with the outcomes of the neighbourhood plan consultation, and indicate a number of priorities for change and development which are included in Policy W2.

NPPF

- 6.20 The proposals for the general town centre development included in the neighbourhood plan comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres. (NPPF paragraph 23)
 - Promoting sustainable transport. (NPPF paragraph 29)
 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes. (NPPF paragraph 47)
 - Promoting good design. (NPPF paragraph 56)
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change. (NPPF paragraph 93)
 - Protecting and enhancing historic assets including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. (NPPF paragraph 7)
- 6.21 The Basic Conditions Statement accompanying the plan looks in more detail at how the Town Centre Development policy complies with the NPPF.

Core Strategy

- 6.22 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals for developing and improving Wolverton town centre are supportive of:
- Policy CS1 – Milton Keynes Development Strategy.
 - Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development.
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.
 - Policy CS10 – Housing.
 - Policy CS11 – A Well Connected Milton Keynes.
 - Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.
 - Policy CS13 – Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places.
 - Policy CS16 – Supporting Small Businesses.

- Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.
 - Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities.
 - Policy CS19 – The Historic and Natural Environment.
- 6.23 Full detail of how the Town Centre Development policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

- 6.24 Policy TC11 of the Local Plan states that Wolverton is a District Centre serving the weekly shopping needs of residents within its defined catchment area in the northern half of Milton Keynes.
- 6.25 Policy TC13 details a number of priorities for improving the town centre including:
- improving pedestrian and cycle access
 - improving town centre signing and lighting
 - improving public transport accessibility
 - implementing traffic calming schemes
- 6.26 A particular focus of Policy W2 is to improve bus facilities and access to the railway station. It also complies with the Local Plan by including improvements to the public realm and pedestrian and cycle access.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

- 6.27 The Wolverton Regeneration Strategy SPD includes a number of strategies which support Policy W2, in particular:
- Creation of a key linkage network – the strategy says that Wolverton suffers from disjointed connections to some key destinations, and pedestrian priority, especially on Church Street, and a new cross town cycle route are recommended.
 - Public transport improvements – the strategy recommends improving bus terminus and waiting facilities in the town centre and the connections with the Railway station.
 - Civic quality and public realm – the strategy highlights the importance of a well- designed, high quality public realm which encourages a variety of activities to take place.

Other Evidence

- 6.28 All proposals within policy W2 correspond with the management proposals within the Conservation Area Review¹² which supports a de-cluttering approach in the public realm, and protection of original surfacing and street furniture.

¹² Wolverton Conservation Review April 2009 – See Appendix 1

- 6.29 The policy is also in compliance with the Wolverton Public Realm Design Manual¹³, adopted by Milton Keynes Council as technical guidance in 2012, which specifies the new surface materials and street furniture to be used and the potential for shared surfaces within the town centre which help to prioritise pedestrian and cycle access.

¹³ Wolverton Public Realm Design Manual – See Appendix 1

Policy W2 – General Town Centre Development

Development proposals that accord with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Town Council will work with Milton Keynes Council to assess the proposal against the achievement of the overall objectives of the plan.

With the exception of minor alterations and householder applications, all development and redevelopment within Wolverton Town Centre will as appropriate to scale and location and viability testing:

- A. Improve the movement of pedestrians and cyclists around the town centre, promote sustainable travel to the railway station, and improve bus interchange facilities.
- B. Improve the public realm, such as streets, pavements, signage, and street furniture as specified in the Public Realm Design Manual including measures to manage run-off.
- C. Enable the creation of new green infrastructure such as private gardens, open spaces and green roofs within the town centre, complying with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard.
- D. Include the introduction of water efficiency measures and sustainable urban drainage systems which reduce flood risk and add ecological value and interest to new development.
- E. Improve social, leisure and cultural facilities and promote the development of a visitor and night-time economy.
- F. Incorporate flats above shops to increase the town centre population and improve the viability of the local economy.
- G. Foster active frontages such as shop or office windows and doors, and/or entrances and windows to housing at the ground floor.
- H. Enhance views of the listed St George's Church and other key buildings such as The Wesleyan Chapel and St George's Institute (previously known as MADCAP, now the King's Church Community Centre).
- I. Provide parking on-street or in car parks to the rear of properties.
- J. Incorporate climate change measures, including where viable zero carbon development and served by district heating where convenient connection is available.

Development /redevelopment proposals in the following specific locations within Wolverton Town Centre will be supported:

- K. In The Square where they combine ground floor shop units to create larger premises in particular for café and office use.
- L. In Glyn Square where they are of a smaller scale which helps to deliver a more traditional street with active shop frontages, improves pedestrian crossing points at the junction of Creed Street and Stratford Road, and improves traffic flow and bus infrastructure where viable.

Delivery of Policy W2 – General Town Centre Improvements

- 6.30 Whilst the redevelopment of the Agora site has the potential to transform Wolverton, wider development and change in the town centre will make a significant difference to the sustainability and vitality of the town centre.
- 6.31 The following projects support the delivery of this policy and the neighbourhood plan:
- Project 1:** A comprehensive street improvement scheme for Church Street, Radcliffe Street and Creed Street which involves making some streets one-way, introducing dedicated bus lay overs and reducing the dominant effect of cars by increasing the width of pavements.
- Project 2:** A public realm improvement scheme involving de-cluttering, improved pavement surfacing, coordinated street furniture and signage.
- Project 3:** Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes to the railway station, canal and Secret Garden by widening the current footway at the Stratford Road double mini-roundabout and along Stratford Road towards the railway station and improving bus interchange facilities at the railway station.
- Project 4:** Extension of redways (Milton Keynes network of segregated routes for cyclists and pedestrians) into the town centre.
- Project 5:** Improvements to the approach to the railway station, by installing heritage murals on existing walls on Stratford Road and opening up views to the canal and Wolverton Park.
- Project 6:** Establishing a town centre management organisation which can have a long-term role in the management of the town centre generally, including parking, improvement of the public realm, and supporting local businesses to thrive.
- 6.32 Work has already begun on the implementation of some of these projects, with concept designs produced for Church Street, Radcliffe Street and Creed Street improvement scheme. This would allow the one-way priority to be subject to a trial period, which might help to address the concerns of some local businesses who are worried about the loss of business which may result.
- 6.33 Initial design work has also been carried out for Creed Street, and some consultation has taken place with representatives of the various shop owners. This work could be re-started if further funds became available.
- 6.34 A study has also been carried out looking at the redway connections to Wolverton, and the potential for extending them into the town centre. This work could also be taken forward subject to funding and support from Milton Keynes Council.

- 6.35 The tables in Section 12 summarise the progress made towards the delivery of all the projects, with possible sources of funding highlighted (where known) together with an outline work programme. There is also an indicative time-line given, which is subject to change but gives a basis for action by the local community and a mechanism to lever in support from Milton Keynes Council.
- 6.36 Ensuring that the priorities of the Neighbourhood Plan are reflected by the policies and strategies of Milton Keynes Council will be crucial to the implementation of these projects, as will securing external funding from a range of national and local sources.



Figure 9: Indicative proposal to improve movement in the town centre

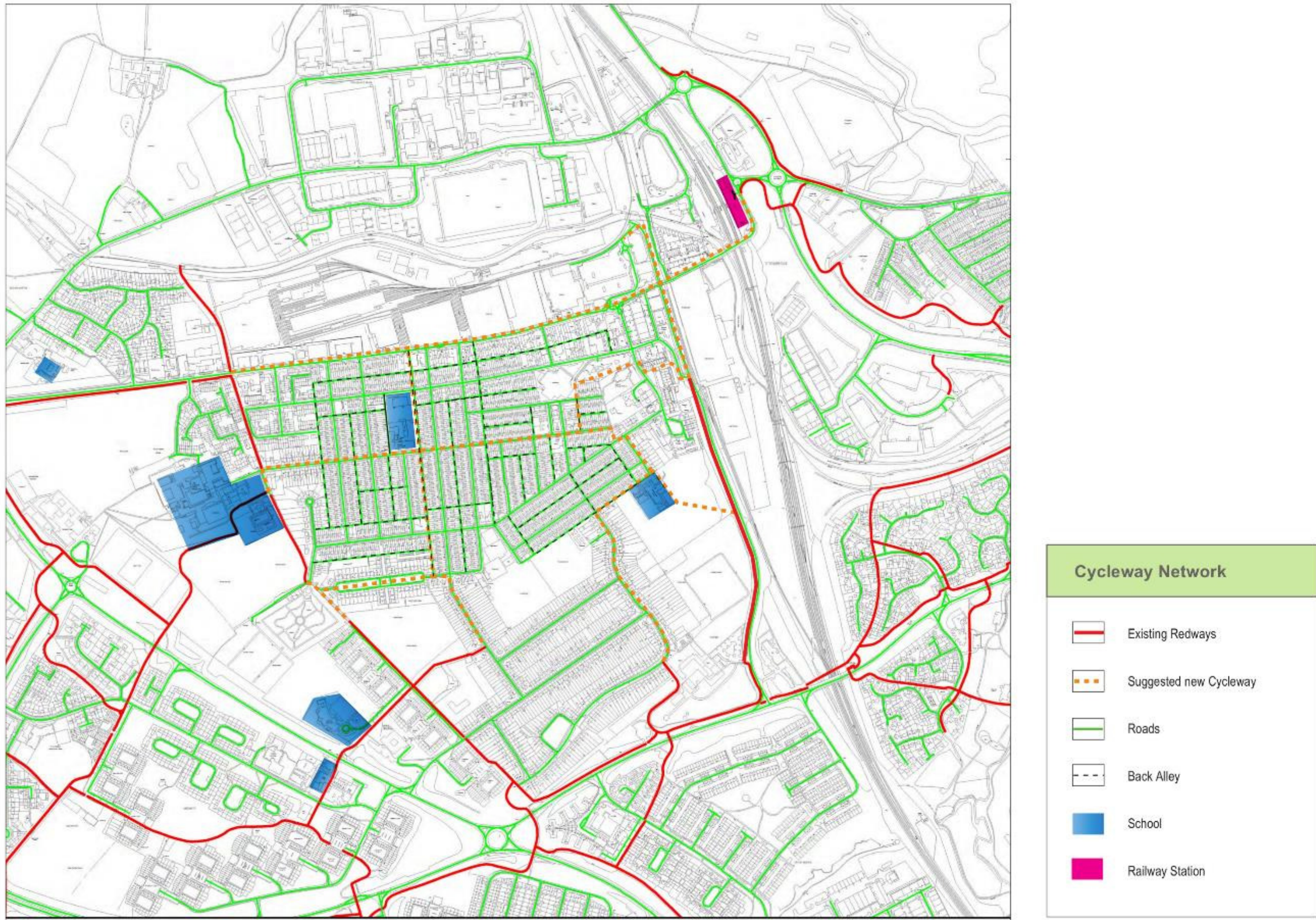


Figure 10: Possible extensions of redway network into the town centre

7. THE RAILWAY WORKS SITE

Policy justification and description

Context

- 7.1 The decision to include the Railway Works site in the Neighbourhood Plan area was made because of the impact that the redevelopment of the site could have on the retail offer, services and facilities within Wolverton town centre.
- 7.2 The site has an identity and consistency of appearance stemming from its historic function as a Railway Works site, and the fact that it has survived relatively unchanged for so many years makes it nationally significant in terms of industrial heritage.
- 7.3 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that planning policy is in place for the site should a planning application be submitted, protecting the Victorian and Edwardian industrial buildings located on the site and ensuring links between the site and the rest of the town.
- 7.4 A summary of the consultation evidence and national and local planning policy supporting the Railways Works policy is included below, with further detail of the neighbourhood plan consultation process included in the consultation statement.

Consultation Outcomes

- 7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan consultation has shown that local people support retaining employment use on the land, but that if redevelopment of some parts of the site takes place it should be for *“something other than lots and lots of new housing”*. The consultation which took place in January 2012 revealed a number of consistent themes:
- That any redevelopment should include a mix of uses, including light industry and small business units.
 - That access to the Grand Union Canal from the town centre should be improved and be made a key ambition of any redevelopment so as to encourage recreation and tourism.
 - That if housing is provided on the site it should make use of the existing heritage buildings (as on Wolverton Park), and improve the range and style of housing available in the town.
- 7.6 The Neighbourhood Plan Survey in December 2012 revealed some further important principles that local people believe should underpin any redevelopment plans:
- 77% of people believed that the historic grid layout of the rest of Wolverton should be reflected in any redevelopment of the Railway Works site. This includes re-aligning the road to the

Western side of Tesco to form a direct link of Radcliffe Street into the site.

- 76% of people wanted to open up views and access to the site through the Railway Works wall which runs most of the length of Stratford Road.
- 89% of people believe that the historic railway buildings on the site should be re-used as part of any redevelopment.
- 73% believe that heritage uses should be promoted as part of the redevelopment of the site.

- 7.7 This evidence chimes with the aspirations expressed through the Future Wolverton Vision developed in 2003 which envisaged “development, including new housing, employment, heritage and leisure facilities, in the redundant railway buildings and land alongside the canal”. The vision statement also mentions “a major attraction, not a conventional museum but a series of features that are part of the new life in the old rail buildings situated alongside the canal”.

NPPF

- 7.8 The community’s aspirations for the Railway Works site comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres. (NPPF paragraph 23)
 - Promoting sustainable transport. (NPPF paragraph 29)
 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality housing. (NPPF paragraph 47)
 - Promoting good design. (NPPF paragraph 56)
 - Promoting Healthy Communities. (NPPF paragraph 69)
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change. (NPPF paragraph 93)
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. (NPPF paragraph 111)
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. (NPPF paragraph 126)
- 7.9 The Basic Conditions Statement accompanying the plan looks in more detail at how the Railway Works policy complies with the NPPF.

Core Strategy

- 7.10 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals for the Railway Works site support the following strategic policies:
- Policy CS1 – Milton Keynes Development Strategy.
 - Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development.
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.

- Policy CS10 – Housing.
- Policy CS11 – A Well Connected Milton Keynes.
- Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.
- Policy CS13 – Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places
- Policy CS14 – Community Energy Networks and Large-scale Renewable Energy Schemes
- Policy CS16 – Supporting Small Businesses.
- Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.
- Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities.
- Policy CS19 – The Historic and Natural Environment

7.11 Full detail of how the Railway Works policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

- 7.12 Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005 designates and protects the Railway Works site for employment use. This means Business (offices, industrial processes, research and development of a 'light' industrial nature), General Industry, and Storage and Distribution (classified as Planning Use classes B1, B2 and B8). The Milton Keynes Local Plan also allows such sites as possible locations for car showrooms.
- 7.13 However, Local Plan Policy E1 does give some flexibility as it states that employment use should be retained: "unless there would be no conflict with existing or potential neighbouring uses and:
- a) The proposal would result in a significant reduction in the detrimental environmental impact of an existing use; or
 - b) The proposed use is one that cannot be satisfactorily accommodated other than in an employment area; or
 - c) The proposed use will not significantly reduce the provision of local employment opportunities".
- 7.14 Redevelopment of part of the site for non-employment uses, with employment use retained on the other part, is therefore likely to be in line with this policy. However, it should be noted that suitable uses in principle may not be palatable in detail from a conservation perspective.
- 7.15 The aspirations in the Railway Works policy are also line with the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005 Policy KS6 which states that any new development should preserve or enhance the character of the Wolverton Conservation Area and improve public access to the Grand Union canal.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

- 7.16 The regeneration strategy adopted in 2004 recommends that should a part of the Railway Works site become a potential development opportunity a range of uses could be considered including:
- Workshops to attract a centre of engineering excellence.
 - A heritage museum that could promote the railway heritage of the town.
 - Residential, retail and community uses.
- 7.17 The strategy goes on to emphasize the importance of integrating the development into the town, and the possibility of constructing a marina on the site.

Conservation Area Review

- 7.18 The 2009 Conservation Area review contains a useful assessment of the character of the Railway Works site, describing the way in which the Works buildings are “separated by the high perimeter wall from the town’s residential quarter, providing a striking contrast to the town.”
- 7.19 The Review highlights the specific characteristics of the site which are also referenced in Policy W3 including:
- Long east/west linear views
 - The strong industrial character of the buildings
 - The cultural value of some of the structures and buildings
 - The proximity to the canal



Picture 12: Views inside Railway Works site



Figure 11: Current extent of Railway Works site

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Policy W3 – The Railway Works site

Proposals for the site should be in accordance with Milton Keynes development plan policies regarding retention of employment uses.

Subject to the planning status of any proposals for the site and the results of investigative work carried out by Milton Keynes Council, a Development Framework may be prepared in partnership between Milton Keynes Council, the Town Council, the local community and the landowner.

Proposals brought forward prior to a Development Framework being prepared will show compliance with the principles below and show how the particular proposals will contribute to a masterplanning approach to the site.

Proposals for redevelopment and regeneration of the site will:

Improve linkages and movement by:

- A. Providing new pedestrian and vehicular routes within those parts of the site that are publicly accessible, reinforcing the character of the area which has a strong east/west orientation.
- B. Ensuring that the new pedestrian and vehicular routes within those parts of the site that are publicly accessible make as direct links as possible with Stratford Road and the town centre, consistent with principle E below, and complement the grid layout of the residential part of Wolverton.
- C. Ensuring priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements and creating links as direct as possible with existing bus stops.
- D. Providing access for heavy vehicles serving the railway works by a new access taken to the north of Tesco from the end of McConnell Drive unless no less advantageous alternative arrangement in terms of traffic circulation and highway safety can be demonstrated to be a necessity.

Conserve the unique heritage of the site by:

- E. Any proposed openings through the wall along Stratford Road should be kept to a minimum in size and number and carefully detailed to retain as much of the wall's integrity and role as a symbol of Wolverton's origins as a railway town as possible. Where any part of the wall has to be removed, ensuring it is replaced by structural features which reflect the industrial heritage of Wolverton.
- F. Conserving and enhancing the historic buildings on the site, informed by further investigative work which may take place as part of a development framework for the site.

Contribute to public amenity by:

- G. Contributing to the net gain of public and green spaces in the town centre by providing on-site high quality green infrastructure and public spaces including sustainable urban drainage landscaping schemes.

continued ...

Policy W3 – The Railway Works site – *continued*

- H. Exploiting the asset that is the Grand Union Canal by maximising opportunities to access the canal from the town centre, encouraging recreation and tourism.

Provide new development that:

- I. Re-uses historic buildings and provides sites for new homes. Consideration should be given to a proportion of streets being designed so that speeds are slow (10mph) so as to meet the needs of children and pedestrians in particular, and where car parking is designed into the overall streetscape so as to not dominate it. A proportion of the new homes should subject to viability also meet the Lifetime Homes standard. Secured by Design and Safer Places best practice should be applied to the design of all the new housing.
- J. Contributes to the overall mix of employment uses in Wolverton, incorporating light industrial use and leisure use where viable and in respect of leisure uses subject to the sequential test set out in paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- K. Subject to viability, gives a particular emphasis to sustainability through the use of zero carbon solutions, designed for climate change and district heating.
- L. Actively encourages the incorporation of a local energy network, such as a link to the Waste Recovery Park at Old Wolverton where practicable and viable to do so.

Deliver new infrastructure

- M. Subject to viability on and off-site infrastructure will be provided to support and mitigate the impact of development, in particular school places and health care provision for all new residents.
- N. Water efficiency measures should be introduced into any new development, including the introduction of sustainable urban drainage systems which reduce flood risk and add ecological value and interest to the development. Opportunities should be taken to reduce any water flows currently discharging to the surface water network.

Delivery of Policy W3

- 7.20 The Town Council would prefer that implementation of this policy takes place through the preparation of a comprehensive masterplanning process involving all stakeholders including Milton Keynes Council, the town council, the local community and the occupier of the railway works site Knorr Bremse.
- 7.21 The purpose of this process would be to identify the unique character of the site and constraints to development, whilst carrying out more detailed work on the significance of each of the historic buildings and the contribution that they make to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.22 At the beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan process, St Modwen had indicated that a masterplanning process was likely to take place from 2015 onwards. This reflected the fact that the lease for the railway works site was due to come to an end in 2017/18, and the new occupiers were likely to want to consolidate their operations.
- 7.23 In September 2014 St Modwen launched their initial regeneration ideas for the site via a leaflet that was delivered door-to-door throughout Wolverton. This leaflet indicated that the redevelopment of the site would retain the Railway Works and provide new buildings, offer a site for a discount supermarket alongside the Town Centre and residential land to the west end of the site.
- 7.24 A series of meetings with stakeholders including the Town Council followed, and a detailed consultation process took place in December 2014 3,500 consultation newsletters were distributed to residents and businesses, online consultation was undertaken and 120 people attended a public exhibition. St Modwen are proposing that delivery of the redevelopment of the site takes place through the preparation of a planning application for the whole of the site. This outline planning application is due to be submitted in the spring of 2015.
- 7.25 The Town Council understands that the development of the site will be phased, with the discount supermarket being developed first, followed by the new buildings for Knorr Bremse and finally the residential land at the west end of the site.
- 7.26 Pre-application discussions have been ongoing between Milton Keynes Council and St Modwen, and both parties have commissioned independent studies to assess the condition of the historic buildings on site and assess the heritage value of individual buildings.
- 7.27 It is likely that one of the biggest areas of community concern will be the retention and re-use of the historic buildings on site, and this is also likely to be the biggest area of controversy with the landowner St Modwen.

- 7.28 We expect the community to be extremely interested in participating in decisions about the redevelopment of the site, and able to positively contribute to the development of a comprehensive masterplan.

8. TOWN CENTRE DIVERSITY

Policy justification and description

Context

- 8.1 Although there are a large number of independent retail businesses within the town centre, as well as a number of medium and large national brands, there is a general dissatisfaction from residents and visitors with the diversity of the retail offer and overall shopping experience.
- 8.2 Many local people express a desire to shop locally, but there appears to be a mismatch between the sort of shopping experience they want and what is on offer in the town centre.
- 8.3 Already classified in the Local Plan as a District Centre, the population¹⁴ of Wolverton, Wolverton Ward and the shopping catchment area is 9,100, 16,900 and 87,000 respectively.
- 8.4 Wolverton Station has seen an increasing footfall as the local population has grown and is being used more as a commuter base. The latest publicly available figures¹⁵ estimate that footfall was 362,408 for the year 2012/13, a healthy and steady growth from 265,478 in 2009/10.
- 8.5 All these figures illustrate that Wolverton has the capacity to meet the shopping needs of an increasing large local population and an area that includes much of North and West Milton Keynes, parts of South Northamptonshire and North Buckinghamshire.
- 8.6 Although Retail Capacity studies have been undertaken for Milton Keynes including Wolverton, such studies only assess the need and best location for additional retail floorspace rather than focussing on the type of retail needed to ensure a diverse town centre.
- 8.7 The Town Centre Diversity policy addresses community concerns about the retail offer in Wolverton, at the same time as meeting national and local planning policy. It is based upon robust evidence and builds upon existing Local Plan policies.

Consultation Outcomes

- 8.8 Comments received during the consultation process on the Neighbourhood Plan included a large number of retail related concerns specifically:

¹⁴ Source: 2014 figures from Milton Keynes Council Population Bulletin 2013/14 (Wolverton including Old Wolverton and Wolverton Mill). Wolverton Ward based on ward boundaries that applied prior to May 2014, the Ward boundaries have now changed.

¹⁵ Source: Office for Rail Regulation at www.rail-reg.gov.uk and Wolverton Station Travel Plan January 2013

- The need for a greater range of shops to attract people into the town.
 - Concern over the number of hot food takeaways and food and drink businesses in the town centre.
 - Worries that the Agora redevelopment may result in a further large food retailer coming to the town.
- 8.9 Many of the comments on the range of shops were in response to the large number of takeaways, hairdressers and beauty parlours in the town centre. To quote one consultee: *“at the moment all you get in Wolverton is a gents haircut and a fried chicken”*, a comment backed-up by anecdotal evidence from many of the long-standing shop owners in Wolverton who are concerned about the loss of the town centre “shopping function”.
- 8.10 The Benchmarking Survey of the Town Centre carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee at the end of 2012 provided statistical information which supports qualitative comments about retail diversity, in particular:
- 29% of shops in Wolverton town centre are convenience (low cost every-day items) compared to a national average of 23%.
 - Wolverton only has two key attractors (nationally, well known brands) compared to a national average of six and a South East towns average of nine.
 - 52% of people rated the variety and range of shops in Wolverton as poor compared to 36% nationally.
- 8.11 The concerns and issues raised during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation resonate with the outcomes of the Market Town’s Healthcheck process in 2003, when gaps were identified in the range of shops in the town including a bakers and clothes shops. Evidence gathered at this time showed that most residents travel to Central Milton Keynes or other centres for these goods.
- 8.12 The Future Wolverton Vision developed as a result of the Healthcheck process includes an aspiration for Wolverton to be a *“A Great Place to Shop”* with a *“rich mix of shops ...reflecting the town’s cosmopolitan population”*.
- 8.13 During the Refreshing the Vision process in 2010, the feedback from local people was that Wolverton needed to attract and retain the right type of shops in order to offer something for people who have come to shop at Tesco’s. The opportunity to encourage people to stay in the town centre for longer rather than just “passing through” was highlighted, with a greater range of shops and services seen as the best way to achieve this.

- 8.14 Policy W4 aims to address the challenge of how to create the right mix of the right shops to draw a greater number of people into the town centre.

NPPF

- 8.15 The Town Centre Diversity policy complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres (NPPF paragraph 23).
 - Promoting sustainable transport (NPPF paragraph 29 and 40 which specifically highlights improving the quality of parking provision).
 - Promoting Healthy Communities (NPPF paragraph 70).
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (NPPF paragraph 126).
- 8.16 Policy W4, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 23, explicitly defines both primary and secondary frontages. It is hoped that this more specific definition will help achieve a mixture of suitable uses within the town centres and a variety of A1 uses in each primary frontage, as well as increasing the protection for those parts of the town centre that are more residential in nature.
- 8.17 The Town Council believes it is appropriate to use the Neighbourhood Plan as the mechanism for defining these frontages for a number of reasons:
- The Local Plan 2005 is significantly “out of date”.
 - A proliferation of A3 and A5 uses have been permitted because of the lack of protection afforded to secondary frontages within Table TC1 of the Local Plan.
 - The Neighbourhood Plan policy does not alter the town centre boundary as defined by the 2005 Local Plan (whilst noting that a case could be made for a limited change to the boundary).
 - Whilst the Plan:MK process has begun, it is unlikely to be adopted until 2016 at the earliest.
 - Policy W4 is firmly rooted in up to date evidence that builds upon what is in the Local Plan and Core Strategy and reflects current local circumstances.

Core Strategy

- 8.18 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals for supporting town centre diversity comply with the following strategic policies:
- Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development.
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.
 - Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.

- Policy CS16 – Supporting Small Businesses.
- Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.

8.19 Full detail of how the Town Centre Diversity policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

- 8.20 Wolverton is defined by policy TC11 of the Local Plan as a District Centre accommodating the weekly shopping of people within the northern catchment area of Milton Keynes. As a long-established town centre, it is also recognised in the Local Plan as a shopping destination for the largely static residential population. There is a presumption in favour of controlled expansion and diversification which is consistent with wider regeneration objectives.
- 8.21 The 2005 Local Plan defines the town centre as the area including parts of Stratford Road, Tesco, Radcliffe Street, parts of Church Street, The Agora, The Square, Creed Street and Glyn Square as shown in Figure 12.
- 8.22 Policy W4 does not propose an overall change to the town centre boundary, although there may be a case to extend it towards the Station.
- 8.23 The Local Plan defines the Primary Shopping Area as Church St (8-64), The Agora (only those units with frontages on Church Street including car park), and Stratford Road (1A to 21). The remainder of the town centre, by default, is considered to be secondary shopping areas. This includes areas that are primarily residential in character.
- 8.24 Local Plan Policy TC18 (which is not specific to Wolverton) along with Table TC1 aims to protect the Primary Shopping Area from changes to non-retail uses on the ground floor. No such protections are given to the secondary shopping area as the extract from Table TC1 of the Local Plan shows.

Primary Area:	
Church Street (8-64) The Agora (only those units with frontages on Church Street, including the car park) Stratford Road (1a – 21 inclusive)	Change of use involving the loss of A1 retail will not normally be acceptable Change of use from one non-retail to another non-retail will not normally be acceptable Change of use from non-retail to A1 will be encouraged
Secondary Area:	
Remainder of the Town Centre	No restriction on the proportion of units in non-retail use

Table 1: Extract from Table TC1 in Milton Keynes 2005 Local Plan

- 8.25 The Local Plan policy sets some restrictions on changes of use to non-retail within the primary shopping area. However, permitted development rights mean that some uses may take place without the need for a planning application.
- 8.26 Read on its own Local Plan policy TC18 (ii) provides that “*a continuous frontage of 3 or more units in non-retail*” within the Primary Shopping Area is not acceptable. However, the part of Table TC1 that deals with Wolverton provides that “*change of use involving the loss of A1 retail will not normally be acceptable*”. The policy therefore seeks to prevent any change from A1 retail within the Primary Shopping Area.
- 8.27 Policy W4 sets more evidence-based, realistic and achievable targets for achieving a mix of sustainable uses within the town centre. It builds upon the Local Plan policies aiming to reflect changes in retail since the local plan policy was developed since 2002-4, and adopted in 2005.

Government Policy on Town Centres and Retail

- 8.28 Government policy for town centres was changed with the introduction of Planning Policy Statement 4 in 2009 and again with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPG) in March 2012 and then National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). The current policy and guidance in the NPPF and NPPG details the sort of regular review actions that ought to be undertaken by the local planning authority of each shopping area.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

- 8.29 One of the key objectives of the Wolverton Regeneration Strategy is to develop an attractive, vibrant mixed-use town centre. Recommendations in the strategy focus on “enhancing the town’s retail mix and offering greater choice and variety” which it is hoped will “increase its appeal to the wider catchment and community”. The strategy can therefore be said to be supportive of the aims within Policy W4.

Other evidence – Use Class based policies

- 8.30 There are an increasing number of local councils who have adopted guidance which uses percentage based town centre mix policies to maintain town centre diversity. There are also many examples of where Use Class specific guidance has been introduced, where, as in the case of Wolverton, there is an over dominance of hot food takeaways.
- 8.31 Examples include St Helens Hot Food Takeaway SPD (June 2011); Salford Hot Food takeaway SPD (January 2014); Waltham Forest SPD – Hot Food Takeaway Shops (March 2009) and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Planning for Health SPD (September 2013).
- 8.32 The St Helens SPD highlights the increased numbers of customers around A5 uses, particularly in the late evening when trading activity tends

to reach its peak, and the problems that this can create in terms of disturbance, noise and anti-social behaviour. It also considers the impact that the “clustering” of hot food takeaways creates, leading to “dead frontages” during daytime hours, and the displacement of other retail shops.

- 8.33 The St Helens Hot Food Takeaway SPD seeks to prevent the proportion of non-A1 use in primary frontages falling below 75%. Waltham Forest SPD sets a limit of 30% for non-retail uses in Primary Frontages and a 50% balance between retail and non-retail uses in Secondary frontages. Dudley Council will only grant permission for A5 use in protected frontages where no more than 5% of the units will consist of A5 uses.
- 8.34 Whilst these examples are all SPDs, they show that an aspiration for a percentage based frontage policy along the lines of the policy W4 is not unusual. Whilst some of the SPDs have been developed to address the health implications of an over-supply of takeaway food, all of them refer to the overall benefits that come from protecting the primary retail area.

Wolverton evidence

- 8.35 In formulating Policy W4 detailed survey work and evidence gathering has taken place in Wolverton Town Centre. This has included:
- Establishing the pedestrian flow to different areas of the town centre.
 - Collating information about Zone A rental levels.
 - Assessing the baseline position of the use classes of all retail and commercial premises within Wolverton.
- 8.36 Taken together, this evidence supports the changes made to the primary and secondary frontages and the introduction of protection to ensure a range of retail uses.

Pedestrian flow

- 8.37 The Town Centre Benchmarking Survey in 2012 involved local volunteers counting footfall within the specific locations in the town centre. Footfall in The Square was significantly lower than on Church Street, Stratford Road and Glyn Square.
- 8.38 Footfall data was collected just prior to submission of the Neighbourhood Plan in October 2014. This data showed the highest footfall on both parts of Church Street, Glyn Square and the lower numbered part of Stratford Road. The lowest counts were on the second part of Stratford Road and Creed Street. Full details are given below in Table 2.

Frontage	Non-market day	Market day
Church Street (lower numbered part, from Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	212	385
Church Street (44 - 64)	172	82
Stratford Road (lower numbered part, from Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	120	130
Stratford Road (24 - 36)	30	24
The Square	108	117
Creed Street	62	74
Glyn Square	216	193

Table 2: Pedestrian Flow – October 2014

Zone A Retail Rental levels

- 8.39 Changes in prime retail rents are one indicator of the vitality and viability of a town centre.
- 8.40 Information gathered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan work in 2013, showed that Stratford Road was achieving rental values of £15 per square foot, compared with £8-10 per square foot in The Square.
- 8.41 Two agents, one based in Wolverton with specific experience of retail lettings, and one, with more commercial experience, based in Central Milton Keynes have provided indicative figures which show an increase to zone A rental values since 2013.
- 8.42 The values obtained are shown in Table 3 below.

Frontage	Retail rental values	
	Agent 1	Agent 2
Church Street (lower numbered part, from Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	£20 per sq ft	£25 per sq ft
Church Street (44 – 64)	£10 - 15 per sq ft	£25 per sq ft
Stratford Road (lower numbered part, from Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	£15 - 20 per sq ft	£25 per sq ft
Stratford Road (24 - 36)	£10 - 15 per sq ft	£25 per sq ft
The Square	£10 per sq ft	£10 per sq ft
Glyn Square (Note the rental values here reflect the overall unit, not just zone A.)	£10 per sq ft	£10 - £12.50 per sq ft

Table 3: Data from agents – October 2014

Baseline Use Class Survey work

- 8.43 Survey work to establish baseline data on use classes in Wolverton was first undertaken as part of the Town Centre Benchmarking Survey in December 2012.
- 8.44 This baseline data was updated at the end of June 2014 prior to the pre-submission consultation process in the summer of 2014, and again in October 2014. This most recent evidence of the use classes in each frontage is summarised in Table W4 - 1 below.

Frontage	Existing Use Class (number)								Total
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	Sui Generis	D1 & D2	C3	
Church Street (lower numbered part, from number 8 to Radcliffe Street, northern side)	5	1	2	1	2	1	1		13
Church Street (44 - 64)	5	2	1			2			10
Agora (Church Street frontages including to car park)	8					2			10
Stratford Road (1 - 21)	12	3	1	1	3	1		2	23
Stratford Road (northern side Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	3		1				1		5
Stratford Road (22 - 48) (All properties with frontages between Radcliffe Street and Cambridge Street)	6	1	1		7	1	2	9	27
Radcliffe Street (frontages between Stratford Road and Church Street including side elevations to properties on Stratford Road and Church Street)	1		1						2
The Square (all sides) 25 Buckingham Street; 3 – 21 Radcliffe Street; 2 – 26 The Square; Agora frontage facing The Square; Foundation House (Aylesbury Street)	17	3			2	1	1		24
Glyn Square Units 1 -5 Glyn Square	5								5
Creed Street (Town Hall; Library; Kings Church Community Centre)							3		3
Glyn Square (rear) (Those premises on eastern side of the rear access road to 1-5 Glyn Square)	2					2			4

Table 4: Number of properties per Use Class per frontage – October 2014

Frontage	Existing Use Class (percentage)							
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	Sui Generis	D1 & D2	C3
Church Street (lower numbered part, from number 8 to Radcliffe Street, northern side)	38	8	15	8	15	8		8
Church Street (44 - 64)	50	20	10			20		
Agora (Church Street frontages including to car park)	80					20		
Stratford Road (1 - 21)	52	13	4	4	13	4		9
Stratford Road (northern side Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	60		20					20
Stratford Road (22 - 48) (All properties with frontages between Radcliffe Street and Cambridge Street)	22	4	4	0	26	4	7	33
Radcliffe Street (frontages between Stratford Road and Church Street including side elevations to properties on Stratford Road and Church Street)	50		50					
The Square (all sides) 25 Buckingham Street; 3 – 21 Radcliffe Street; 2 – 26 The Square; Agora frontage facing The Square; Foundation House (Aylesbury Street)	71	13			8	4		4
Glyn Square Units 1 -5 Glyn Square	100							
Creed Street (Town Hall; Library; Kings Church Community Centre)								100
Glyn Square (rear) (Those premises on eastern side of the rear access road to 1-5 Glyn Square)	50					50		

*Table 5: Percentage of properties per Use Class per frontage – October 2014
(Note percentages are rounded to nearest whole number)*

- 8.45 The percentages of uses for each town centre frontage that are included in Policy W4 reflect the current position of uses within each frontage, the potential for future change, and the need for flexibility. Overall they are designed to protect and improve the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.
- 8.46 Table 6 below describes the reasons for the different percentages in each frontage. The Town Council recognises that there is an element of judgement being made in deriving these percentages, but has ensured that overall the policy is more flexible than the 2005 Local Plan.
- 8.47 The percentages used do allow for some change away from A1 retail in specific frontages, but in others, particularly where there is already considered to be "saturation", the policy seeks to prevent further change.
- 8.48 The percentages also depend on what surrounds the individual premises as Policy W4 requires that non retail uses do not form a continuous frontage of more than two units, a common feature in other such policies. This means that policy W4 is less flexible than the existing Local Plan policy which is set at more than three rather than two.
- 8.49 The policy provides for changes to non-retail use where such a change would enhance and diversify the mix of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in the town centre.

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Frontage	Current % Retail (A1) Use	Proposed Minimum Retail (A1) Use	Reasons
Church Street (lower numbered part, from number 8 to Radcliffe Street, northern side)	38%	60%	The current Local Plan requires 100% retail (A1). The proposed retail use is set to 60% which whilst higher than that is currently being achieved is a more realistic aspiration than 100%. There are 13 premises within the frontage, only five are currently in retail A1 use, with two takeaway outlets and two restaurants. Increasing retail A1 use will reinforce the important shopping function of Church Street reflected by the footfall and zone A rental levels.
Church Street (44 - 64)	50%	60%	The current Local Plan requires 100% retail (A1). The proposed retail use is set to 60% which whilst slightly higher than that is currently being achieved is a more realistic aspiration than 100%. There are ten premises within the frontage, with four currently and one most recently in retail A1 use. Increasing retail A1 use will reinforce the important shopping function of Church Street reflected by the footfall and zone A rental levels.
Agora (Church Street frontages including to car park)	80%	60%	The current Local Plan requires 100% retail (A1). The proposed retail use is set to 60% which whilst lower than is currently being achieved, recognises the varied uses attracted by the low rents and flexible terms. This frontage includes the Co-operative food store and Post Office. As a result of the condition of the building, the Agora now operates as a tertiary retail location with generally low cost, small lock-up style units, often on short-term unsecured tenancies or licenses.
Stratford Road (1 - 21)	52%	70%	The current Local Plan requires 100% retail (A1). The proposed retail use is set to 70% which whilst higher than that is currently being achieved is a more realistic aspiration than 100%. There are 23 premises within the frontage, with 11 currently and one most recently in retail A1 use. Increasing retail A1 use will reinforce the important shopping function reflected by the footfall and zone A rental levels. This section of Stratford Road has the potential to attract more people shopping at Tesco, to make linked trips to other parts of the town centre. Until the planning consent for Tesco in 1992, what is now Tesco was part of the Railway Works site and edge of centre. An appeal decision by a Planning Inspector ¹⁶ upheld a refusal of change of use from retail (A1) within this frontage. The inspector also noted that the grant of planning permission away from retail (A1) use would create a precedent for other non-retail proposals. The resultant cumulative effect could cause further harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
Stratford Road (northern side Creed Street to Radcliffe Street)	60%	70%	The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages. Reflecting the key attractor status of the Tesco store and footfall, it is therefore proposed this becomes a primary frontage. The proposed retail use is set to 70% which whilst higher than that is currently being achieved it reflects the other existing uses and potential for improved provision possible at street level such as was envisaged in the extant Tesco planning consent (see paragraph 3.29 above).

¹⁶ See copy of decision in background evidence papers

Frontage	Current % Retail (A1) Use	Proposed Minimum Retail (A1) Use	Reasons
Stratford Road (22 - 48) (All properties with frontages between Radcliffe Street and Cambridge Street)	22%	35%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>In parts this frontage is largely residential. The commercial uses are mainly to the eastern end, closer to the rest of the town centre, but do extend to the western end of the frontage.</p> <p>There are a total of 27 premises within the frontage, with 9 being residential (33%). There are 7 (26%) hot food takeaway (A5) and 6 (22%) retail (A1).</p> <p>If the retail properties are ignored then the use is 39% hot food takeaway (A5) and 33% retail (A1).</p> <p>This frontage is very accessible to through traffic with the potential to attract passing trade to stop and shop. The Town Council wish to reduce the dominating effect of the number of hot food takeaway (A5) uses within this frontage, which provide a poor impression of Wolverton's town centre. Therefore they number of retail (A1) uses ought to increase. Note that there is no intention that any consent will be given for conversion from residential.</p>
Radcliffe Street (frontages between Stratford Road and Church Street including side elevations to properties on Stratford Road and Church Street)	50%	60%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>Radcliffe Street is a key street within the town centre and opportunities exist to increase retail (A1) use.</p>
The Square (all sides) 25 Buckingham Street; 3 – 21 Radcliffe Street ; 2 – 26 The Square; Agora frontage facing The Square; Foundation House (Aylesbury Street)	71%	60%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>There are 24 premises within the frontage, with 17 currently in retail (A1) use. Retaining retail (A1) use around 60% will reinforce the contribution The Square makes to the overall shopping mix in the town centre, whilst allowing for changes of use as envisaged in Policy W2. It also recognises that it is surrounded by residential properties.</p>
Glyn Square Units 1 -5 Glyn Square	100%	100%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>Reflecting the key attractor status of the national brands ASDA and Farmfoods as well as the nearby Tesco store it is therefore proposed this becomes a primary frontage.</p> <p>The proposed retail use is set to 100% which is the current use and reflects the protection envisaged by the current Local Plan policy for primary frontages. The footfall here is the second highest within the town centre and significantly above other frontages which are currently classified as primary.</p>
Creed Street (Town Hall; Library; Kings Church Community Centre)	0%	0%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>As this frontage is opposite and effectively "the other side of the street" from Glyn Square shops it ought to be treated as a secondary frontage but without any specific protection of retail (A1) use.</p>
Glyn Square (rear) (Those premises on eastern side of the rear access road to 1-5 Glyn Square)	50%	60%	<p>The current Local Plan defines this by default as a Secondary frontage, along with the rest of the town centre as a whole. The Local Plan does not give any retail (A1) protection to secondary frontages.</p> <p>It is considered appropriate to specify this frontage as secondary so there is some degree of control on changes of use.</p>

Table 6: Justification of minimum retail (A1) use for each frontage

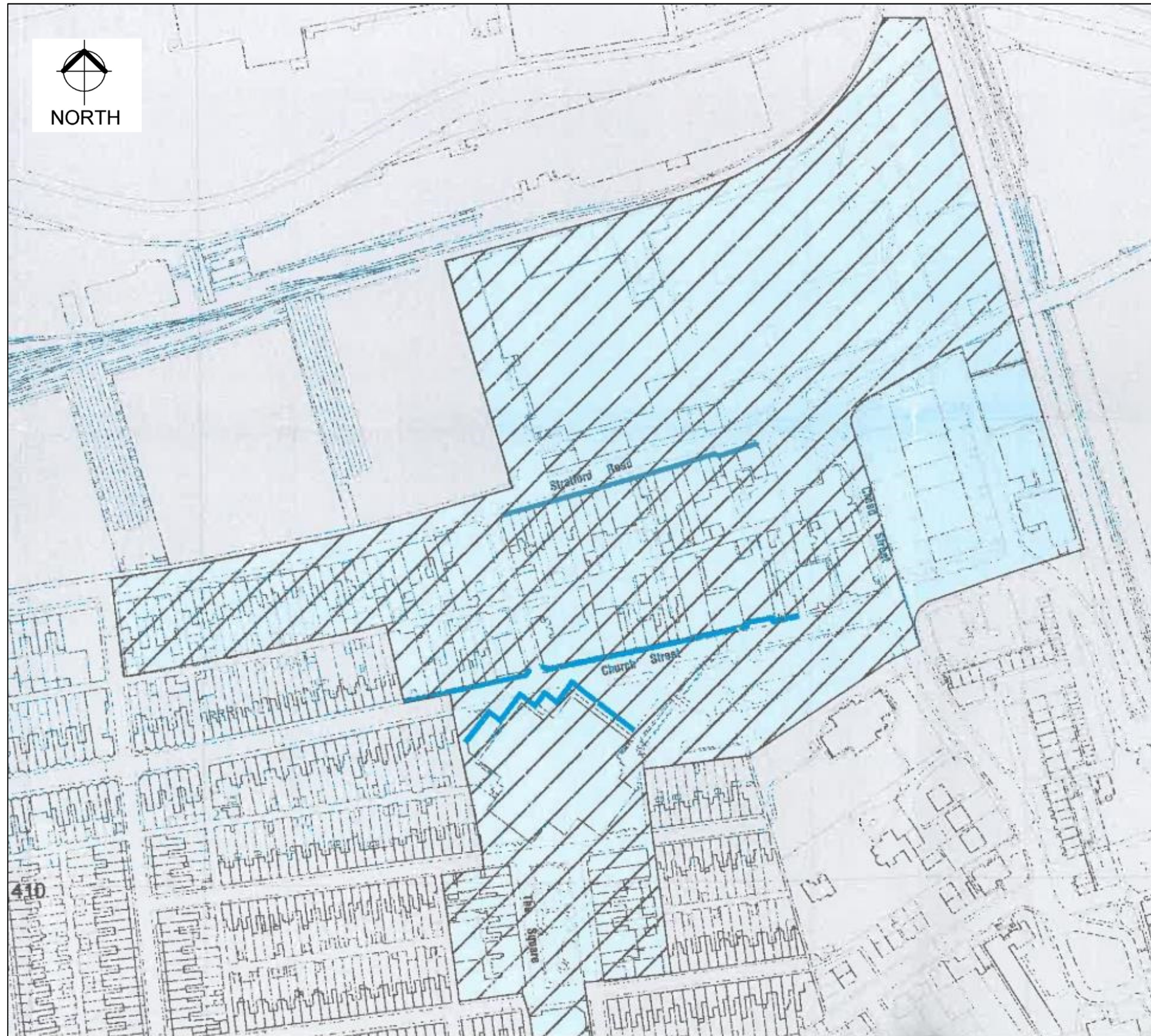


Figure 12: Extract from Proposals Map in Milton Keynes 2005 Local Plan Wolverton Town Centre and primary frontages as currently defined. The primary frontages are defined in Local Plan Table TC1 (see paragraph 8.24 above), all frontages within the whole of the defined town centre area not specifically defined as primary, are by default secondary frontages.

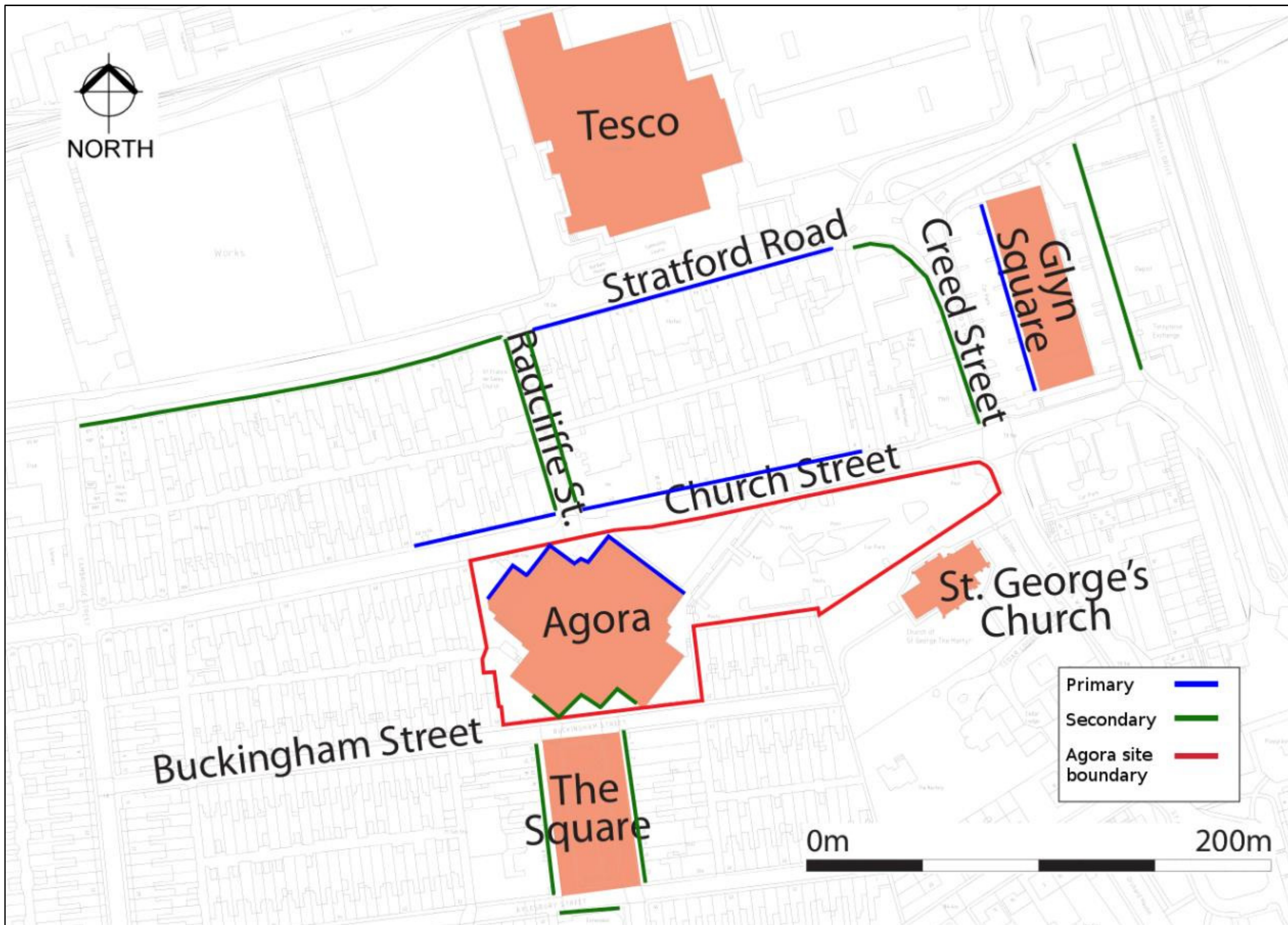


Figure 13: Indicative map of proposed Primary and Secondary frontages from adoption of Neighbourhood Plan (actual frontages are detailed in Table W4 - 1)

Policy W4 – Town Centre Diversity – Ground Floor Uses

Proposals which protect, enhance and promote a diverse range of uses will be supported, to secure the success of Wolverton town centre.

Primary and Secondary Frontages

The over dominance of any particular use will be avoided by:

- A. Retaining all shops and shop floorspace (A1 use) at ground floor level within the primary and secondary frontages, in accordance with the town centre use mix requirements for the specified frontages set out within Table W4 - 1.
- B. Ensuring that within any defined primary frontage, non-retail uses do not create a continuous frontage of more than two units. Subject to this limit, where there is an identified need, support will be given to proposals for non-retail use which would enhance and diversify the mix of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in the town centre.

Town Centre generally (as defined in 2005 Local Plan):

Adverse impact of town centre uses on neighbouring premises will be managed by:

- C. Setting a maximum limit for non-retail uses within the primary and secondary frontages in accordance with the town centre use mix requirements for the specified frontages set out in Table W4 - 1.
- D. Improving the provision of off street long-stay (more than 4 hours) parking in the town centre, where appropriate and feasible.
- E. Continuing Local Plan policy TC18, which ensures that planning permission will only be granted for an amusement centre if it is located in a secondary shopping area not sharing a site boundary with or directly opposite housing, schools, churches, hospitals and hotels.

Retail services

Retail services in the town centre will be promoted by:

- F. Providing protection for the secondary frontages in accordance with the town centre mix requirements for the specified frontages set out within Table W4 - 1 and Table W4 - 2.
- G. Ensuring that superstores (2,500 sq m or above) that incorporate town centre uses such as banking, building societies, post office, pharmaceuticals, dry cleaners, opticians or health services, will only be supported if they can demonstrate that the new service will not have an unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Delivery of Policy W4

- 8.50 The policy will be implemented through the development management processes of the Local Planning Authority, and discussions have already begun to pave the way to implementation.
- 8.51 Future planning applications within Wolverton Town Centre will be determined using the “Wolverton Town Centre Frontages – Ground Floor Uses” Table W4 - 1 and Table W4 - 2 below.
- 8.52 These tables specify the minimum retail use and maximum non retail use for each specific frontage in Wolverton Town centre, and is based upon the following:
- The current uses on each frontage in the town centre.
 - The existing policy set out on frontages within the Local Plan.
 - Evidence from other Use Class specific policies as previously outlined.
 - Community aspirations for a more balanced and vibrant town centre.
- 8.53 The policy seeks to positively manage ground floor non-retail uses in particular, use classes A3, A4, A5, D1, D2 and Sui Generis.
- 8.54 The policy is not intended, however, to restrict a wider range of community uses within the town centre which we believe have a vital role to play in addressing the decline of the town centre.
- 8.55 The Portas Review¹⁷ An independent review into the future of our high streets talks about the need to re-imagine town centres “*as destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning ... The new high streets won’t just be about selling goods. The mix will include shops but could also include housing, offices, sport, schools or other social, commercial and cultural enterprises and meeting places.*”
- 8.56 Due to the inherent restrictive nature of the Use Classes Order, such uses may not fall within Use Class A1, but may fall in another specific use class or be Sui Generis. As a result, and drawing on aspirations within the Portas report, Policy W4 specifies a range of non-retail uses which could be supported on the basis they would diversify the mix within the town centre.
- 8.57 Overall, policy W4 is attempting to “future-proof” Wolverton against changes in retailing over the next decade, including the trend towards online shopping, which are fundamentally affecting the future of the local high street. By enabling changes which protect the shopping function of

¹⁷ The Portas Review – www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-portas-review-the-future-of-our-high-streets

the town centre and allow for appropriate non retail use, the policy is ensuring that Wolverton Town Centre has a future as a distinct, local shopping and service destination, offering an experience which cannot be replicated online.

Frontage	Primary or Secondary	Minimum Retail Use (A1)	Maximum Non Retail Use
Church Street (8-42 including New Victoria)	Primary	60%	40%
Church Street (44-64)	Primary	60%	40%
The Agora (only those units with frontages on Church Street, including the car park)	Primary	60%	40%
Stratford Road (All premises between Creed Street and Radcliffe Street, southern side, currently numbered 1-21)	Primary	70%	30%
Stratford Road (All premises between Creed Street and Radcliffe Street, northern side, including Tesco and Costa)	Primary	70%	30%
Stratford Road (22 to 48) (All properties with frontages between Radcliffe Street and Cambridge Street)	Secondary	35%	65%
Radcliffe Street (frontages between Stratford Road and Church Street including side elevations to properties on Stratford Road and Church Street)	Secondary	60%	40%
“The Square” 25 Buckingham Street; 3 – 21 Radcliffe Street ; 2 – 26 The Square; Agora frontage facing The Square; Foundation House (Aylesbury Street)	Secondary	60%	40%
Glyn Square Units 1 -5 Glyn Square	Primary	100%	0%
Creed Street Town Hall; Library; King’s Church Community Centre (previously Madcap/Creed Street Arts Centre)	Secondary	0%	100%
Glyn Square (rear) Those premises on eastern side of the rear access road to 1-5 Glyn Square	Secondary	60%	40%
Agora internal units and any frontages other than those to Church Street and The Square	Secondary	60%	40%
Rest of Town Centre The rest of the town centre is not designated as either primary or secondary frontages.			

Table W4 - 1: Wolverton Town Centre Frontages – Ground Floor Uses Individual frontages to apply from adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan

Frontage	Maximum Percentage
Church Street (8-42 including New Victoria)	35%
Church Street (44-64)	30%
The Agora (only those units with frontages on Church Street, including the car park)	15%
Stratford Road (All premises between Creed Street and Radcliffe Street, southern side, currently numbered 1-21)	25%
Stratford Road (All premises between Creed Street and Radcliffe Street, northern side, including Tesco and Costa)	25%
Stratford Road (24 to 36)	30%
Radcliffe Street (frontages between Stratford Road and Church Street including side elevations to properties on Stratford Road and Church Street)	30%
“The Square” 25 Buckingham Street; 3 – 21 Radcliffe Street ; 2 – 26 The Square; Agora frontage facing The Square; Foundation House (Aylesbury Street)	25%
Units 1 – 5 Glyn Square	0%
Creed Street Town Hall; Library; Kings Church Community Centre (previously Madcap/Creed Street Arts Centre)	100%
Glyn Square (rear) Those premises on eastern side of the rear access road to 1-5 Glyn Square	15%
Agora internal units and any frontages other than those to Church Street and The Square	15%
Elsewhere within town centre (excluding any existing permitted uses)	0%

*Table W4 - 2: Wolverton Town Centre Frontages – Ground Floor Uses
Maximum percentage of premises in each specified frontages that may be permitted in use classes A3, A4, A5, D1, D2 and Sui Generis*

Notes to Table W4 - 1 and Table W4 - 2:

Where premises are currently used as A1, A2 or B1 there is a presumption to continue with that use. An application for conversion to A1 use, or to some A2 or B1 uses, is likely to be acceptable subject to no detrimental impact on nearby premises. Conversion to A3/A5 is not acceptable.

An application to convert to residential whilst preserving any original shop fronts is likely to be supported.

Minimum Retail Use: Consent will not normally be granted for development which results in the number of ground floor premises in retail use falling below the specified percentage per frontage.

9. SUPPORTING STREET MARKETS

Policy justification and description

Context

- 9.1 Markets can make an important contribution to the variety and attraction of shopping in a town centre and the character of the local area, as well as being a key driver of the local economy and supporting entrepreneurship.
- 9.2 Wolverton's history as a "market town" is well documented; with the old Market Hall (now owned by the Town Council and used as the Town Hall, offices and Library) being the site for a thriving market until the late 1960's attracting people in on special buses which ran on a Friday from all the outlying villages.
- 9.3 Social media has been a rich source of comment on the old market with the following comment typical of many:
- "There were several meat stalls, Browns from Northampton and Greens from Stony Stratford, Botterills, Barleys and Homans had fruit and veg, Lawsons a general stall, and Turners had plants and flowers. Outside there was a shoe stall and at least two fresh fish stalls and a seed merchant. Lots of people walked up from Bradwell and Haversham and my Auntie used to come from Deanshanger."*
- 9.4 Once the Agora was built, the market was re-sited into the building, and operated fairly successfully with a large number of stall holders who were attracted to the indoor venue. At one time there were several markets a week, including a specialist antiques and Bric-a -Brac market.
- 9.5 The building was sold into private ownership in 1988 then sold to new owners in 1992 who decided to stop the market, and it was several years before they reversed this decision and set up a market outside the building. By this time many of the traders had found other outlets and customers were no longer in the habit of coming to Wolverton for the market.
- 9.6 The Agora continue to operate a market every Friday outside the building on a piece of land which borders Church Street and is in their ownership. The market does have a number of fresh produce stalls, but overall the goods are low quality, and do little to attract shoppers.
- 9.7 Wolverton's Farmers Market has been operating for over nine years, and is the only community-run farmers market in Milton Keynes. Located on the Town Hall car park, the market operates twice a month, and since its inception has provided a venue through which some locally based groups have sold products in a low-cost supportive environment.

- 9.8 The weekly “Country Market” which takes place every Friday at the Old Bath House and Community Centre on Stratford Road, is another important outlet for local people to sell products locally, and together with the weekly flower market which also takes place on a Friday, is important in attracting people into the town to shop.
- 9.9 The neighbourhood plan policy seeks to support the creation of a range of markets in Wolverton town centre. For the purposes of this policy, a market is defined as those with more than five pitches available for use. The policy within the Neighbourhood Plan will support the creation of a number of different market types:
- Street markets – any regular market taking place outside on a highway.
 - Specialist food markets – markets other than farmers markets selling specialty food.
 - Farmers markets – a market where farmers and other producers sell their products direct to the consumer.
 - Covered market – any market with a dedicated permanent roof covering.
 - Specialist market – other markets specialising in particular goods and not falling into one of the other categories.
- 9.10 Evidence of community support for the market policy and compliance with local and national policies now follows.

Consultation Outcomes

- 9.11 There is a strong feeling from the Wolverton community, expressed through the Neighbourhood Plan and previous consultations, that Wolverton has the potential to support a range of markets.
- 9.12 During the consultation process a number of potential locations for a semi-permanent market were discussed, and in some cases ruled out on sustainability grounds. Full details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the plan.
- 9.13 The new Radcliffe Street link (created as a result of the Agora redevelopment) is the preferred location for the future, but there was widespread support during the neighbourhood plan consultation process for The Square as the site for a street market in the short to medium term.
- 9.14 The Town Benchmarking survey gave some useful evidence to show that the current Agora-run Friday market is not realising its potential:
- There is an average number of 10 traders at the Wolverton Market compared to 19 nationally

- Footfall on a market day is an average of 75 people per 10 minutes compared to 136 nationally
- 9.15 Anecdotal evidence from the shoppers survey showed a desire for a “decent market” with a “range of good stalls”.
- 9.16 During the Market Towns Healthcheck process in 2003, the community recalled the thriving Friday market which used to take place in the town “with a variety of stalls from fresh produce and meat through to plants, clothing”. In 2003 only 3 or 4 stalls were left trading at the Agora-run market, but the report records that “older people still come in to Wolverton from the outlying rural areas on a Friday to shop”. The influence of the market in Central Milton Keynes is mentioned, and evidence recorded that some local people now go elsewhere for the market experience due to the poor quality of the offer in Wolverton.

NPPF

- 9.17 The Supporting Street Markets policy complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres. (NPPF paragraph 23 specifically mentions retaining and enhancing existing street markets).
 - Promoting sustainable transport. (NPPF paragraph 37)
 - Promoting healthy communities. (NPPF paragraph 70)
- 9.18 The Basic Conditions Statement accompanying the plan looks in more detail at how the Supporting Street Markets policy complies with the NPPF.

Core Strategy

- 9.19 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals for Supporting Markets comply with the following strategic policies:
- Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change
 - Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods
 - Policy CS13 – Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places
 - Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities
 - Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities
- 9.20 Full detail of how this policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

- 9.21 There is no specific reference in the Local Plan to supporting street markets, although the objectives of the policies relating to Wolverton Town Centre (TC11 – TC13) focus around defining the role and improving the attractiveness of the town centre.
- 9.22 Originally a “market town”, attracting people from the surrounding towns and villages, the development of a vibrant market in The Square will support Wolverton’s role as a District Centre, and the wider regeneration objectives contained within the Local Plan.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

- 9.23 The Regeneration Strategy adopted in 2004 sets the planning context for the “establishment of a mix of uses to develop and attractive and vibrant town centre.”
- 9.24 It specifically focusses on the potential of The Square to become a better and more useable space, with active community uses.

Other evidence – Food MK

- 9.25 The Food MK Project took place between May and September 2006, and was funded by The Countryside Agency (now part of Natural England) and carried out by Wolverton Food Train. Wolverton Food Train is a social enterprise established to run community food projects in and around Milton Keynes. It currently operates the twice-monthly farmers market in Wolverton.
- 9.26 The Food MK Project highlighted the contribution that street and covered markets can make to the vibrancy of neighbourhood centres and local food supply, and made a series of recommendations around support for street markets, including enabling new sites for street markets to be created throughout Milton Keynes.

Policy W5 – Supporting Street Markets

A site for a street market in The Square will be supported by:

- A. Improvements to the existing highway, signage, public open space and public realm to create a suitable space for a market to take place. Such changes should seek to raise awareness of the heritage of The Square, through for instance appropriate interpretation signage and public art.
- B. Improving physical links between public transport interchange and The Square, supported by appropriate pedestrian signage.
- C. Enabling the provision of semi-permanent pop up shops or kiosks to give a range of retail facilities and support the ongoing viability of the market.
- D. Providing appropriate storage within the town centre to store stalls and other equipment needed to support markets.
- E. Providing appropriate litter and recycling facilities.
- F. Providing public toilets for visitors and traders.
- G. Providing off street long stay (more than four hours) parking to support market trade.
- H. Providing short-term parking for market traders which will allow them to unload and re-load at the beginning and end of the market session.



Picture 13: Outdoor market providing fresh produce in the town centre

Delivery of Policy W5

- 9.27 Delivery of the street markets policy will take place through a combination of community led action and local authority support.
- 9.28 Wolverton Town Team, a group of local businesses that formed as a result of Wolverton’s application to be a “Portas Pilot”, have secured some seed funding to establish a regular fresh produce market in The Square in Wolverton.
- 9.29 Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council have also committed support to the establishment of a market, including use of market stalls owned by the Council and liaison with Milton Keynes Council regarding use of Milton Keynes Council’s land in The Square.
- 9.30 Improvements to the highway, public realm and physical links with public transport interchange facilities are likely to require greater funding and support from Milton Keynes Council, and local influence will be needed to ensure they are included in any capital programmes or strategic plans for the area.

10. SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING SMALL, LOCAL TRADE

Policy justification and description

Context

- 10.1 Small shops run by independent traders are already helping to sustain Wolverton town centre, and have largely managed to survive the recent recession probably because they offer a more specialist, local service.
- 10.2 Viability work carried out by The Princes Foundation in 2012 indicated that Wolverton does not have enough larger units of modern standard to meet the requirements of some medium-sized national brands who may wish to have a presence in this town.
- 10.3 Whilst it is hoped that major redevelopment in the town centre will realise these larger floorplate retail units, many residents have also expressed concern that small, independent shops are supported to survive the changes to the town centre that major development will bring.
- 10.4 This policy enables the provision of small, affordable start-up shops within Wolverton town centre. These units could take the form of a self-contained retail unit, which may stand alone in the style of a market stall or barrow, or which may be part of a retail development. The units can be fully secured by the tenant and are likely to share some services (such as toilets) with other such occupiers. For the purposes of the policy a small shop is considered to be up to 50 square metres and should be designated for retail use (Use Class A1).
- 10.5 Affordable rents are considered to be those 10-20% lower than the market rate and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis using the following criteria:
 - Average rents in premises immediately adjacent.
 - Rateable values within the immediate street.
- 10.6 Other mechanisms for ensuring affordability will also comply with this policy such as:
 - Payment of rents on a monthly basis.
 - Short-lease terms.
 - Turnover rents.
- 10.7 A developer who is required or wishes to deliver small shop units will need to submit an assessment of affordability as part of their planning application which should provide information on how the 'affordable' criteria is being met. This statement should indicate how affordability will be secured in the long-term.
- 10.8 Evidence of how this policy supports community needs and local and national planning policy is included below.

Consultation Outcomes

- 10.9 Overall the Neighbourhood Plan process has indicated a community desire to retain independent and small retailers and provide opportunities for new businesses to develop on the high street.
- 10.10 During the initial consultation in January and February 2012, there was a strong feeling that Wolverton needed to “continue being different” and that providing sufficient small shop space for “local entrepreneurs with good ideas” was key to the future sustainability of the town.
- 10.11 The results of the first pre-submission consultation in July 2013, showed a strong desire to protect small, independent shops. Concern was expressed that national brands would “price out” “local quirky businesses” and that what the town needed was “small traders offering something different” to bring people to the town.
- 10.12 During the Market Towns Healthcheck process in 2003, local people were keen to keep small retailers in the town and concerned by the impact of Tesco and Central Milton Keynes on local trade. Despite the issues facing smaller traders, the report records a small number of what appeared to be more enterprising retailers who were considerably more positive as they offered specialist or niche retailing.
- 10.13 During the Refreshing the Vision process a number of ideas were put forward for attracting and retaining small businesses to Wolverton, and there was a strong desire expressed for a greater range of small retailers offering specialist goods.

NPPF

- 10.14 The Supporting and promoting small and independent shops policy complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring town centre vitality. (NPPF paragraph 23)
 - Promoting sustainable transport. (NPPF paragraph 37)
 - Promoting healthy communities. (NPPF paragraph 70)
- 10.15 The Basic Conditions Statement accompanying the plan looks in more detail at how the Supporting and promoting independent shops policy complies with the NPPF.

Core Strategy

- 10.16 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals for supporting small shops comply with the following strategic policies:
- Policy CS4 – Retail and Leisure Development.
 - Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.
 - Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.

- Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.
- Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities.

10.17 Further detail of this compliance is given in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

10.18 Policy TC11 of the Local Plan allows for the provision of future retail development if:

- “ii) the extent to which such development would further the aims of regeneration (see Policy KS6)”.

Note: In considering future retail development, Policy TC (ii) and (iii) can continue to be used, as these criteria are considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. Criterion (i) is not in conformity with paragraph 23 and 26 of the NPPF.

10.19 We believe that the small shops policy furthers the aims of regenerating Wolverton, by providing start-up space for businesses, which once supported in this way, can expand and develop, providing employment opportunities and new services for local people.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

10.20 The Regeneration Strategy adopted in 2004 sets the planning context for the “*establishment of a mix of uses to develop and attractive and vibrant town centre*”. It specifically mentions the demand for start-up space that was demonstrated in 2003/4, and the potential for improving the quality and quantity of retail in the town.

Other Evidence – Survey of existing retail and town centre use class by size

10.21 As part of the process of developing this policy, a survey was carried out of existing town centre Use Class by size.

10.22 This survey shows that (as of July 2014) there are only nine small shops in the town centre (Neighbourhood Plan area) below 50 sq m in A1 use, with the majority of A1 shop units falling in the 50 sq m to 280 sq m bracket.

10.23 This evidence gives reassurance that the application of the policy will not lead to over dominance of small start-up retail space.

10.24 The survey also shows that there are only seven medium and large shops, which supports research carried out by The Princes Foundation which showed a lack of larger floorplate units appropriate for medium-sized national brands looking to relocate in Wolverton.

Use Class (of current use)	Small			Medium		Large
	Up to 50	Over 50, up to 100	Over 100 up to 280	Over 280 up to 1,000	Over 1,000 up to 2,500	Over 2,500
A1	9	22	14	6	0	1
A2	2	3	5	1	0	0
A3/A5	3	7	7	3	0	0
Sui Generis	2	1	2	0	0	1
Total	16	33	28	10	0	2

Table 7: Analysis of size by Use Class in square metres (July 2014)

Notes:

Use Class based on that which applies to the current or most recent use.

Shops below 280 sq m are not subject to Sunday trading restrictions.

Over 2,500 sq m is a superstore and is the default level in NPPF paragraph 26 above which an impact assessment is required for development outside town centres.

Size data is gross floorspace taken from Valuation Office records as used for Business Rates.

No details included for Use Class A4 (pub/restaurant) as data is not generally available for such uses.

Individual units within the Agora are not included, the whole building is treated as a single entity – shown as Sue Generis. (As building was approved through a New Towns Act consent.)

**Other Evidence – London Borough of Camden Planning Guidance
Town Centres, Retail & Employment CPG5**

- 10.25 In devising policy W6 we have considered a range of policies adopted by planning authorities elsewhere to support small, start-up businesses.
- 10.26 One of the most useful policies which we considered was the Town Centre, Retail and Employment policy from the London Borough of Camden. This policy, together with their Development Plan policy DP10, helps to clarify what constitutes an “affordable” rent for small businesses/retailers.
- 10.27 The definition used within our policy – affordable premises and those considered to have retail rents significantly below market rates – is drawn from DP10, as is the mechanism for assessing affordability.
- 10.28 In the Camden policy a small shop is defined as 100 square metres. For the purposes of policy W6 we have chosen to define a small shop as up to 50 sq m, as this more accurately reflects the type of accommodation we expect business start-ups to occupy in Wolverton town centre.

Policy W6 – Supporting and promoting small, local trade

This policy enables the provision of small units (which could include lockable units) of up to 50 square metres (gross):

Opportunities will be sought through:

- A planning consent/section 106 planning obligation linked to any major redevelopment.
- The conversion of existing larger retail units.

A. Provision through major development

In the case of provision through a major development, the following requirements shall apply:

- For schemes involving over 1,000 square metres of development the provision of small shops will be required subject to viability, with the number of units relative to the size and scale of the development.
- Once provided in a new development, a condition (or legal agreement if appropriate) should be put in place so that planning permission would be required for any proposal to combine smaller units into larger units.

B. Conversion of existing larger units

Planning applications for conversion of existing retail premises into small affordable shops/lockable units should include:

- A detailed internal floor-plan identifying the floorspace for small premises.
- The maximum size of each unit within the proposed development.

Delivery of Policy W6

- 10.29 As the policy outlines, delivery of small shops will take place either directly by a developer as part of a planning consent linked to any major redevelopment project in the town centre or through the conversion of existing, larger retail premises into smaller affordable units.
- 10.30 Other ways of delivering small shop units were considered as part of the plan making process, including provision direct by the public sector or through the re-branding and refurbishment of the Agora as a location for start-up retail businesses.
- 10.31 Public sector provision of small shops/business incubator units was rejected on sustainability grounds, with risks that a publicly funded scheme would not be financially sustainable in the long-term.
- 10.32 Although the Agora is currently providing premises for many start-up retailers, a lack of vision and investment by the owners makes delivery of small shop space within the building unlikely, especially in the long-term, with the future of the site in question.
- 10.33 Evidence of what has already happened in the town shows that delivery through both conversion of existing premises and major redevelopment are both realistic options.
- 10.34 When the Agora was threatened with closure in 2011 some businesses explored relocating to shared premises on the “high street”. This arrangement enabled both businesses to be retained in the town whilst making efficient use of a shop unit which was too large for their needs and budget.
- 10.35 When the Tesco store was developed in 1992, several small shops fronting Stratford Road were included as part of the development. These shops have since provided an opportunity for several businesses to start-up, with one of the businesses subsequently re-locating to larger premises opposite the store.
- 10.36 Whilst demand for small shop units in Wolverton currently matches supply, this policy is about ensuring that once the regeneration of the town centre takes place, there is still a place for start-up businesses in the town.

Delivering affordability

- 10.37 It is intended that to meet the requirements of Policy W6 Part A, 25% of the floorspace on schemes over 1000 square metres, subject to viability, should be small shops.

- 10.38 Subject to viability, a proportion of the small shops provided through Policy W6 should have affordable rents to support start-up businesses and encourage local entrepreneurship.
- 10.39 The delivery of an affordable rents approach is a potentially complex process, with several mechanisms for proving compliance, such as rents that are 10-20% lower than surrounding premises, short-lease agreements, rents based on turnover and payment of rent on a monthly basis.
- 10.40 A developer or owner who is required or wishes to deliver small shop units may submit an assessment of affordability as part of their planning application which could provide information on how the 'affordable' criteria is being met.
- 10.41 This could then be assessed by the Local Planning Authority as part of the overall planning application.
- 10.42 In order to secure affordability in the long-term planning permission could be granted on the basis of a legal agreement which will need to include the following:
- identification of the designated small premises and affordable floorspace
 - a guarantee that the small premises and the discounted rents or alternative method of achieving affordability remain in perpetuity or over an agreed period of time
- 10.43 Whilst the developer or owner may retain an interest in the premises in the long-term, this legal agreement may pass responsibility for the ongoing management or ownership of the premises to a community based organisation such as the Town Council or Future Wolverton.
- 10.44 Local management of the start-up premises will enable the needs of the occupiers to be monitored, and businesses that are becoming too large due to successful growth to be found alternative accommodation elsewhere in the town.

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11. SHOPFRONTS DESIGN, ADVERTISING AND SECURITY

Policy justification and description

Context

- 11.1 With the exception of the Agora, Glyn Square and Tesco, properties in Wolverton Town Centre are mainly of Victorian construction.
- 11.2 The Wolverton Conservation Area Review (2009) describes how the Victorian commercial premises uniformly face the street with rear yards leading onto the backways. The backways act as service roads and provide access to the shop units.
- 11.3 Some shop units have storage barns, workshops or garages adjacent to the backways. Many of these rear extensions have been converted into residential accommodation, although some remain in active commercial use. The first floors of many of the shops are also converted into residential accommodation.
- 11.4 Although a large number of original, timber shopfronts still exist, many of the traditional commercial buildings have suffered in recent years from a turnover of property owners and tenants.
- 11.5 This is despite the efforts of Wolverton Society for Arts & Heritage who ran a successful shopfronts improvement scheme which significantly improved the look of many shopfronts in the town centre through hand-painted traditional signage.
- 11.6 The addition of modern shopfronts, which often appear heavy and clumsy and use inappropriate materials, has resulted in many shopfronts which pay little or no regard to the architecture of the buildings and the character of the conservation area.
- 11.7 The retention and re-use of shopfronts in Wolverton therefore has a vital role to play in contributing to the character and interest of the Wolverton Conservation Area. A high standard of shopfronts and advertisements creates an enjoyable environment for visitors and shoppers, which is good for the vitality of the town centre and commercial success.
- 11.8 The Shopfronts policy provides guidelines which are intended to retain the character and quality of traditional shopfronts. The policy encourages a diversity of approach which promotes good design helping to ensure that Wolverton has a high quality shopping environment.
- 11.9 Evidence of community support for the policy together with information about how it complies with local and national planning policy is included below.

Consultation Outcomes

- 11.10 The Neighbourhood Plan consultation process highlighted concern from local people that the distinctiveness of shops within the Conservation Area was being lost as a result of the unsympathetic changes being made to shop frontages
- 11.11 The Benchmarking Survey of the town centre showed that 76% of shoppers rated the physical appearance of the Town poor. Typical comments included; *"improve the look of the shops"* and *"Give the Town a face-lift by giving shops attractive shopfronts"*.
- 11.12 This evidence resonates with the Market Towns Healthcheck process carried out in 2003 which highlighted the need for restoration and renovation of the shopfronts, and specifically mentioned the security shutters on a number of shop premises that detracted from the otherwise attractive shopfronts. There was reference in the healthcheck report to a number of specific shopfronts which needed considerable renovation.
- 11.13 During the Refreshing the Vision process a commonly held view was that the appearance of the town's shops was unattractive, *"letting Wolverton down and giving the wrong impression of the place"*. Suggestions for improving the look of the shops included involving young people, Wolverton artists and conservation interests in painting metal shutters. A grants scheme to support shop owners to make improvements was also suggested.

NPPF

- 11.14 The Shopfronts policy complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by:
- Ensuring vitality of town centres (NPPF paragraph 23).
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (NPPF paragraph 126).
 - Requiring Good Design (NPPF paragraph 58).
 - Paragraph 67 of the NPPF mentions the impact that "poorly placed advertisements can have ... on the appearance of the built and natural environment".
 - Promoting sustainable transport (NPPF paragraph 23).
- 11.15 NPPF paragraph 126 specifically mentions the preservation of heritage assets (such as the Victorian commercial properties) most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

Core Strategy

- 11.16 In terms of the adopted Core Strategy, the proposals regarding shopfronts comply with the following strategic policies:

- Policy CS8 – Other Areas of Change.
- Policy CS12 – Developing Successful Neighbourhoods.
- Policy CS13 – Ensuring High quality well designed places.
- Policy CS17 – Improving access to local services and facilities.
- Policy CS18 – Healthier and Safer Communities.

11.17 Full detail of how the Agora policy complies with the Core Strategy can be found in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Local Plan 2005

11.18 Policy HE6 of the Local Plan requires that any development proposals within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should *“preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area”*.

11.19 Overall the Local Plan highlights the importance of *“buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest”* which *“adds to the quality of our lives, by ... sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness that is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns”*.

Wolverton Regeneration Strategy

11.20 The Regeneration Strategy adopted in 2004, focuses on the role that building design can play in improving legibility and identity of a place.

11.21 The strategy points to “good detailing and quality of materials” contributing to this sense of identity, and a presumption in favour of retention and conversion of older buildings.

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Policy W7 – Shopfronts Design, Advertising and Security**A. Shopfront Design**

The design of a shopfront will take into account the wider relationship with the surrounding built environment. Proposals for shopfront design (including refurbishing existing shopfronts) will

- 1 Be appropriate in proportion, materials and details to maintain and reflect the style and characteristics of the Conservation Area and neighbouring properties.
- 2 Enhance the buildings character and compliment adjacent shop fronts where these are of good quality design.
- 3 Retain original ornamental mouldings and architectural details – cornices, fascias, pilasters, mullions, and stallrisers – which provide visual interest.
- 4 Avoid large undivided areas of glass in favour of vertically subdivided areas based on the character of the existing building and local/Victorian/Edwardian architectural styles.
- 5 Recess the entrance door back from the edge of the pavement, and have an appropriate style of door serving upper floors if this is part of the original shopfront.
- 6 Avoid canopies and blinds where they obscure architectural features, and where in numbers they can have a disruptive effect on the street scene.

B. Signage and Advertisement

Signage and advertisements will be

- 1 Respectful of the character of the building and Conservation area.
- 2 Located at fascia level.
- 3 Respectful of the architectural features of the building including first floor windows and shop front details.
- 4 Designed using a style of materials and lettering appropriate to the character of the building, whilst accommodating the branding needs of the business.

Be lit through discrete external lighting. Any hanging and projecting signs should be located at fascia level and should not harm the appearance of the rest of the shop front. Brackets and arms should suit the character of the building. Projecting signs need to respect the walking space.

C. Security

Security shutters should be:

- 1 Link or lattice type and contained inside the shop so that the shop front and contents are still visible after the shop is closed.
- 2 The colour of the shutters should not detract from the character of the building or the area.
- 3 Security glazing is an alternative which can be unobtrusive and effective.

Delivery of Policy W7

- 11.22 Once the planning policy on shop fronts is in place, advice and guidance for shop owners can also be jointly prepared by the Conservation team at Milton Keynes Council and the Town Council.
- 11.23 This advice and guidance will include further support on appropriate advertising and security measures.
- 11.24 An information campaign can then be launched to ensure that all owners of commercial premises in the town centre are aware of their responsibilities.
- 11.25 Once adopted, any changes to a shop front which requires planning consent will be determined on the basis of this policy. As part of this process, the shop owners will be able to secure advice from the Conservation Officer and Planning Officer.
- 11.26 Community action to support delivery of this policy is likely to include securing grant funding and other support from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Grants are likely to act as an incentive to shop owners to undertake repair and renovation.
- 11.27 During the plan making process, options other than planning policy were explored as a route to securing improvements to historic shop fronts. Further information about the alternative ways of delivering this policy are included in the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 11.28 The conclusion to these discussions was that the most sustainable way to halt decline was to put stronger protection in place through planning policy.

12. DELIVERING THE PLAN

- 12.1 Wolverton has a strong track record of working in partnership with a range of organisations to deliver community aspirations and attract external funding.
- 12.2 This “can-do” approach has been demonstrated during the three year Neighbourhood Plan process, with significant work taking place alongside development of the plan to bring forward delivery.
- 12.3 The delivery work undertaken alongside development of the Neighbourhood Plan has included:
- The preparation, consultation and adoption of the Agora Development Brief.
 - An application to be a “Portas Pilot”, addressing issues to do with the long term viability of Wolverton Town Centre.
 - Design work on highways improvements to Church Street/Creed Street/Radcliffe Street.
 - An application to be a pilot for the Sustrans “Pocket Places” scheme – Wolverton was chosen as a possible pilot, but required significant match-funding which was not available.
 - An application for “Town Team” funding to kick-start the development of a sustainable business organisation in the town.
 - A major funding bid to the SEMLEP’s Growing Places Fund for a community-led solution to the Agora redevelopment.
 - Ongoing development of the Town Team and the associated work programme.
- 12.4 Delivery work also took place prior to Wolverton’s application to be a frontrunner project which has been extremely valuable in supporting the Neighbourhood Plan, including:
- Design and concept work carried out by Urban Design at Milton Keynes Council following the community-led “Refreshing the Vision” process. This looked at issues of access and movement and the public realm in particular.
 - The preparation and development of the Wolverton Public Realm Design Manual.
- 12.5 This rest of this section summarises the delivery mechanisms for each of the policies, the progress made to-date and the likely forward work programme. The section ends with the monitoring information we will be gathering to assess our progress towards delivery.

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Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
<p>W1 – The Agora Site</p>	<p>Redevelopment of the Agora site and car park Redevelopment of the Agora site and car park</p>	<p>Option 1 – Milton Keynes Council led solution As of September 2014, Milton Keynes Council, working in conjunction with Milton Keynes Development Partnership, will explore the business case for the freehold acquisition of the Agora site, including the option of compulsory purchase. Milton Keynes Council officers will continue to prepare proposals for a developer procurement process.</p>	<p>August 2012 – MK Council Cabinet signals a willingness to consider compulsory acquisition of the Agora Shopping Centre through a back-to-back arrangement with a development partner. Agora Development Brief prepared and consultation takes place. September 2013 – Development Brief adopted. Project considered by Capital Programme Review Panel resulted in an allocation of £2 million being made for the purposes of compulsory purchase and compensation. September 2014- Cabinet receive an update on the project in September 2014 and revises the strategy in light of the improving land/property market. October 2014 – Milton Keynes Development Partnership consider the business case for freehold acquisition of the Agora site. Officers continue to prepare proposals for a developer procurement process.</p>	<p>Milton Keynes Development Partnership to evaluate and consider the business case for acquisition of the Agora site. Officers at MK Council to prepare a developer procurement process in line with the original strategy set out in the Cabinet report of August 2012. It is anticipated that the outcome of the MKDP evaluation will be reported to Cabinet in early 2015. A number of potential outcomes could ensue. If, on balance, MKDP conclude that there is a strong business case for MKC/MKDP freehold acquisition [so without a compulsory purchase process] Cabinet could approve acquisition by MKDP or MKC. In this scenario it is anticipated that direct negotiations would then take place between MKDP/MKC and the current owners with a</p>

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
				<p>view to MKDP/MKC acquisition of the site.</p> <p>If, on balance, MKDP conclude that there is not a strong business case for MKC/MKDP freehold acquisition, Cabinet would then need to decide whether or not to continue with a developer procurement process [as per the strategy approved by Cabinet in August 2012] or simply pursue compulsory purchase.</p> <p>If a developer procurement process takes place the chosen development partner would be expected to acquire the Agora site through negotiation with the current owner.</p> <p>If successful they would then acquire the car-park freehold from MKC thus completing the land assembly process.</p> <p>This would pave the way for a planning application and, subject to planning permission, redevelopment of the site.</p>

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
				If unsuccessful Cabinet would need to formally ratify MKC use of CP powers to acquire the site, provided it had a simultaneous 'back-to-back' arrangement in place with a development partner.
W1 – The Agora Site		Option 2 – Market/Developer led solution The Agora site is purchased on the open market by a developer, who brings forward a proposal for redevelopment which is in compliance with the Agora Development Brief and emerging Neighbourhood Plan.	The Agora site was put up for sale in October 2013. A number of developers have expressed an interest and viewed the site. The agent marketing the site was “de-instructed” in June 2014. The Agora owners reached an agreement with a developer in December 2014 to purchase the site subject to achieving planning permission for their scheme. A planning application was submitted by the developer in April 2015.	The Agora owners may still sell the site privately if the current developer fails to achieve planning permission. .
W1 – The Agora Site		Option 3 – Public subsidy Central government subsidy becomes available to help purchase the site, and realise a redevelopment scheme.	No current streams of public funding exist.	The General Election in 2015 may result in new funding opportunities arising from central government.
W1 – The Agora Site		Option 4 – Community-led redevelopment	A bid was made to the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership’s Growing Places Fund	Future Wolverton continue to explore funding opportunities and support for a community-

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
			in February 2013 for funding for the community to lead the redevelopment process. Discussions are ongoing with the new administration at Milton Keynes Council about the possibility of this option.	led redevelopment process which would enable the community to maintain a long-term stake in the development.
Policy W2 Town Centre Development	Development of the wider town centre which improves connectivity and movement, improves the public realm and conserve and enhances the Conservation Area	See separate Table 9: Delivery of Policy W2 Projects below.		
Policy W3 – The Railway Works site	Mixed use development of parts of the Railway Works	Option 1 – Preparation of a comprehensive development framework by Milton Keynes Council	St Modwen held discussions with the Town Council and Future Wolverton Board in advance of the launch of the consultation process. Pre-application discussions have also been held with Milton Keynes Council.	Milton Keynes Council may still decide to pursue a development framework for the Railway Works site.
		Option 2 – Redevelopment of parts of the site through the preparation of a planning application by St Modwen.	St Modwen have indicated that they intend to submit an outline planning application for the whole site in the late Spring of 2015. .	.
		Option 3 – St Modwen and	St Modwen have indicated that they	The Town Council and Milton

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
		Knorr Bremse bring forward a number of planning application for different parts of the site	will be submitting one outline planning application for the whole site.	Keynes Council would not be in favour of a piecemeal approach to the site.
Policy W4 – Town Centre Diversity	Introduction of controls on use classes and frontages within the town centre	Delivery of this policy will happen through the development management processes of the Local Planning Authority.	Development Management have been consulted during the development of the policy, and advice has also been sought from an independent retail consultant.	On adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, specific processes will need to be agreed by the LPA to ensure delivery of the policy. Discussions have begun on the detail of implementation.
Policy W5 – Street Markets	Establishment of a street market in The Square	Wolverton Town Team, in partnership with Future Wolverton and Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council plan and implement the development of a street market. Milton Keynes Council support use of The Square (in their ownership) for a market.	Wolverton Town Team have seed funding for a “Street Market Project” and Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council have committed to practical support for the project.	Target for market to be established in the Spring of 2015. Future physical change to The Square, public realm and highway to be included by Milton Keynes Council in future capital/strategic plans
Policy W6 – Supporting small and local traders	Ongoing provision of small, affordable shop units in the town centre	Option 1 – Conversion of existing larger retail premises into smaller affordable units.	Development Management have been consulted during the development of the policy, and advice has also been sought from an independent retail consultant. The policy specifies a number of ways in which the affordability criteria can met, including short lease agreements, monthly rents, and turn-over rents.	On adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, specific processes will need to be developed by the LPA to ensure delivery of the policy.

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy	Aim	Delivery mechanism	Progress to –date	Future work required
		Option 2 – By a developer as part of a planning consent linked to any major redevelopment project in the town centre.	Development Management at Milton Keynes Council have been consulted during the development of the policy, and advice has also been sought from an independent retail consultant.	On adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, specific processes will need to be developed by the LPA to ensure delivery of the policy.
Policy W7 – Shopfronts	Conservation and preservation of historic shopfronts in Wolverton Town Centre	Delivery of this policy will happen through the development management processes of the Local Planning Authority.	Development Management and Conservation at Milton Keynes Council have been consulted during the development of the policy, and advice has also been sought from an independent retail planning consultant.	On adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, specific processes will need to be developed by the LPA to ensure delivery of the policy.

Table 8: Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Delivery of Policy W2 – Projects

Project 1		
A comprehensive street improvement scheme for the retail part of Church Street Radcliffe Street (between Church Street and Stratford Road) and Creed Street which involves making some streets one-way, introducing dedicated bus lay overs and reducing the dominant effect of cars by increasing the width of pavements.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Design work carried out by Milton Keynes Council to look at the options for Church Street, Radcliffe Street and Creed Street. Limited consultation has taken place with residents and business owners	Further consultation needed with businesses and residents	Summer 2015
	Potential to implement a trial one-way priority on Church Street and Radcliffe Street	Autumn 2015
	Securing funding via Milton Keynes Council and possible grant funding via community applications to support implementation of pavement and street improvements	2016-2017
	Implementation of the scheme	2017-2018

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies**Delivery of Policy W2 – Projects**

Project 2		
A public realm improvement scheme involving de-cluttering, improved pavement surfacing, co-ordinated street furniture and signage.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Public Realm Design Manual adopted as technical guidance in 2012. Wolverton Town Team to fund additional town centre signage Wolverton & Greenleys in Bloom continue to coordinate a de-cluttering process with the support of Milton Keynes Council On-going repairs and maintenance by Milton Keynes Council and its contractors to use Public Realm Design Manual S106 funding of £200,000 secured if Tesco expansion goes ahead (now unlikely).	Funding and support secured for a comprehensive scheme of improving the public realm in the town centre	On-going
	Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund “Townscape Heritage Initiative” to be investigated	Application to be submitted Autumn 2015
	Other sources of funding to be explored	On-going
	Implementation of public realm improvements	2016-2018

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Delivery of Policy W2 – Projects

Project 3		
Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes to the railway station, canal and Secret Garden by widening the foot-cycle path at the Stratford Road double mini-roundabout and along Stratford Road and improving bus interchange facilities at the railway station.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Wolverton Station Travel Plan prepared and completed in January 2012. Design work carried out by Milton Keynes Council considering improved pedestrian access at the Creed Street/Stratford Road junction Plans prepared by Tesco for the Creed Street/Stratford Road junction as part of the renewal of their planning application.	Station Travel Plan implementation on-going	2012-2017
	Funding and support to be secured for improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes along Stratford Road.	2016-2017
	Further design work needed on the Creed Street/Stratford Road junction	2017

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Delivery of Policy W2 – Projects

Project 4		
Extension of the Milton Keynes redway network for cyclists and pedestrians into the town centre.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Design work carried out by Milton Keynes Council Urban Design section	Further design work needed.	2015-2016
	Potential to secure funding for a pilot scheme for priority backways to the town centre	2015 - onwards
	Funding secured potentially through Local Transport Plan	2020
	Work implemented	2023

Project 5		
Boundary improvements on the approach to/from the railway station by installing heritage murals on existing walls on Stratford Road and opening up views of Wolverton Park and the canal from the bridge over the Works railway line.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Little progress made to-date	Scoping of options/design work	2015 onwards
	Cost assessment	2015 onwards
	Funding applications	2015 onwards
	Implementation	2016 onwards

Summary of Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Policies**Delivery of Policy W2 – Projects**

Project 6		
Establishment of a Town Centre Management organisation which can have a long-term role in the management of parking, improvement of the public realm in the town centre, and supporting local businesses to thrive.		
Progress to date	Work to do	Timeline
Application made by Neighbourhood Planning Steering committee to be a “Portas Pilot” and reinvigorate the town centre Portas application unsuccessful but Wolverton Town Team established and funding secured Action for Market Towns Benchmarking Survey takes place to provide a baseline of data on the viability and vitality of the town centre	Wolverton Town Team develops and expands its role in the town.	2013 onwards and continuing
	AMT Benchmarking survey repeated annually to provide a baseline of data.	2016 onwards
	Funding secured to implement a range of projects to support the local business community.	2015 onwards and continuing
	Potential for long-term community stake in management of the “new” town centre if the Agora site redevelopment goes ahead.	Subject to negotiation

Table 9: Delivery of Policy W2 Projects

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13. MONITORING

- 13.1 Given the potential complexity of the policies and projects in the Neighbourhood Plan, monitoring progress towards achievement of the plan is likely to be an on-going challenge.
- 13.2 However, using monitoring factors developed during the preparation of the sustainability appraisal, we hope to be able to quantify some of the achievements of the plan, whilst ensuring that other mechanisms exist to capture change on a more community level.
- 13.3 Wolverton is fortunate in having an artistic creative community, and we would hope to record progress towards achieving the plan through creative processes as well as collection of data. Efforts will be made to record and evaluate changes to the community through film, photography and artistic projects.
- 13.4 Full details of the proposed monitoring targets are in Table 10 below.

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Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
Objective 3	Annual completion of new homes in Wolverton town centre	0 units	6,000 to 9,000 sq m residential developed as part of Agora site redevelopment (81 – 121 units) (Source: Agora Development Brief, Milton Keynes Council, April 2013) 250-300 new dwellings of up to four storeys with approximately 750 related car parking spaces (Source Environmental Scoping Report For St Modwen Development Ltd Railway Works, Wolverton September 2014)	Opportunity to live in an affordable, sustainably constructed home
	Number of new homes developed which meet specified local needs	0 units	1,500 to 2,500 sq m age specific accommodation developed (Source: Agora Development Brief, Milton Keynes Council, April 2013)	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Affordability of new homes (relative to other parts of Milton Keynes)	The average price for a three bedroom house in Wolverton Ward is £161,100, compared to £187,600 across the Milton Keynes. This indicates values locally at around 14% lower. (Source: Home Track: Local Housing Analytics System September 2012-2013)	To aim to maintain an affordability differential.	
	New development in the town centre with renewable energy technologies included	0 units	Planning consents	
	New development that meets zero carbon standards	0 units	Planning consents	
	New development served by a district heating	0 units	Planning consents	
Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5	Percentage of people who use the town centre and access services	Currently 11% of people using the town centre access services ¹⁸ (Source: Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Gradually, to increase the number of people accessing services to the national average (Current national average 16%: Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Improve accessibility to services and facilities

¹⁸ Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Number of new town centre businesses and organisations providing new services and facilities	Town Hall operates advice services run by the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK.	Town Hall to extend range of services offered.	
		Foundation House offers services from Swan Credit Union, Brook Advisory Service and Connexions.	Foundation House to extend services to young people.	
		Old Bath House & Community Centre has Registrar services & lunch clubs.	Old Bath House to maintain current services and attract new users.	
		Kings Church Community Centre now providing some community services and facilities.	Kings Church to develop the range of services and facilities offered.	
		No professional services (such as solicitors or accountants within town centre).	At least one professional service within the town centre.	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Attendance at cultural, leisure and social activities in the town centre (Note: Much of the leisure provision in Wolverton - including the new Wolverton Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre - is within walking distance of the town centre although not within the plan area itself.)	Currently 3% of people using the town centre for leisure ¹⁹ purposes (Source: Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Gradually, to increase the number of people using the town centre for leisure purposes to the national average (Current national average 11%: Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	
	Amount of publicly accessible open space in Wolverton town centre which can support community events and activities		Increased land available once Agora site redeveloped, by 0.28 hectares (Source: Agora Development Brief, Milton Keynes Council, April 2013)	

¹⁹ Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasium or area for indoor and outdoor sports and recreations

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
Objectives 2, 3	Hectares of brownfield land redeveloped within the plan area (Agora site and Railway Works site)	0 hectares	1.17 ha (0.62 Agora site and 0.55 adjacent car park) (Source: Agora Development Brief, Milton Keynes Council, April 2013) 15 ha on Railway Works site (Discount Foodstore and car parking) (Source Environmental Scoping Report for St Modwen Developments Ltd September 2014)	Encourage urban renaissance and efficient use of land and Wolverton's environmental assets through brownfield sites
	Improvements to existing environmental assets at St George's Churchyard and trees within the town centre	Milton Keynes Council Street Asset Register and Town Council Asset Register	To achieve a good satisfaction rating from town centre users. (Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey)	
	Introduction of new environmental assets such as increased public open space and new assets such as street trees and landscaping areas	Milton Keynes Council Street Asset Register and Town Council Asset Register	To achieve a good satisfaction rating from town centre users. (Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey)	
	Numbers of hectares of new open space created as part of new development	0.54 hectares of land currently publicly accessible	Increased land available for open space once the Railway Works site is available.	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Number of planning applications granted for development with green roofs or green walls.	0 planning applications	At least 1 application which includes a green roof	
Objectives 1, 5	Travel to work: Use of sustainable modes of transport to and from work by Wolverton residents	26% of Wolverton residents travel to work on sustainable modes of transport. See Base evidence for more detailed figures. Source: Office for National Statistics Census 2011 Table QS701ew)	Increase the number of people travelling to work by more sustainable methods, whilst also increasing users from outside (which is likely to increase the number accessing by car)	Support a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport to and from Wolverton town centre, reducing the need to travel by car by improving access for walking, cycling and public transport.
	Travel to town centre: town centre users modes of travel to and from the town centre	Travel to town centre Car: 35% Cycle: 3% Bus: 15% Walking: 46% (Source: Wolverton Town Centre AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Increase the number of people travelling to the town centre by more sustainable methods, whilst also increasing users from outside (which is likely to increase the number accessing by car)	
	Number of people cycling to the railway station from Wolverton town centre	14% of people gave poor cycle routes and cycle parking as the reason for not cycling to the railway station (Source: Wolverton Station Travel Plan January 2012)	No specific number has been specified for the above, progress to be monitored and reviewed through regular benchmarking.	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
Objectives 2, 3	Assessment of the condition of all heritage assets in the plan area.	One heritage building currently undergoing refurbishment (the old Wesleyan Chapel, Church Street). No other conservation work is being carried out on other heritage assets or listed buildings.	Two listed buildings (Creed Street Arts Centre and St George's Church) are improved.	Conserve and enhance the town's heritage, particularly the Conservation Area, listed buildings and the canal
	Conservation of heritage assets and listed buildings within in the town centre.		Surveys carried out of the condition of all heritage assets in the plan area, and an action plan devised to remedy any issues. Heritage assets within the town centre undergo improvement through a process of support and encouragement.	
		Survey currently taking place looking at the heritage value of historic buildings and structures on the Railway Works site.	Redevelopment of parts of the site results in re-use of buildings and structures which have heritage value.	
	Increase the number of original shop fronts conserved in the town centre	Some repair and renovation work carried out on limited number of shopfronts.	10 original shop fronts conserved.	
	Grants available to support conservation of original shop fronts and new security measures	None	Grants made available to 10 shop owners to support preservation of historic shop fronts	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Implementation of improvements to streets pavements and the public realm using the Public Realm Design Manual	Milton Keynes Council Street Asset Register and Town Council Asset Register	Comprehensive street improvement scheme implemented for Church Street/Radcliffe Street	
	Improved access to the Grand Union canal	Access generally poor and badly signed	Improvements to current access and signage to the Canal. Asset of the canal exploited through the redevelopment of the Railway Works site	
Objectives 5, 6, 4	Reduce number of vacant commercial units in the town centre	13% of retail units in the town centre are currently vacant compared to a national average of 8% (Source: Wolverton Town AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Reduce vacant units to the national average for small towns	Improve vitality and viability of Wolverton town centre
	Improve the balance of the retail offer in the town centre	71% of retail is comparison and 23% convenience (Source: Wolverton Town AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Increase comparison retail and reduce convenience retail to the national average	
	Increase the number of new retail/commercial units in the town centre	None	5 new retail/commercial units.	

Monitoring Targets

Neighbourhood Plan Objective(s)	Monitoring factors	Baseline (as of November 2014)	Target for 2023	SA/SEA Objective
	Increase the reported profitability of town centre businesses	56% of town centre businesses reported a decrease in profitability from the previous year (Source: Wolverton Town AMT Benchmarking Survey 2012)	Reduce to the national average the % of businesses who report a decrease in profitability	
	Increase the number of start-up businesses in the town centre	As a result of the condition of the building, the Agora now operates as a tertiary retail location and provides some start up units at low rents and flexible terms.	Business hub and space to support new start-up units provided as part of the Agora site redevelopment.	
	Increase the number of people living in the town centre to improve the overall vitality and viability.	Currently around 400 dwellings in town centre plan area	Increase by at least 80 units as expected as part of the Agora redevelopment	
	Increase the number of market pitches available in Wolverton town centre	Average of 10- traders per market (Source: AMT Benchmarking Report 2012)	20 traders per market.	

Table 10: Monitoring Targets

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14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 When the opportunity to become a frontrunner Neighbourhood Plan area was first discussed by the Wolverton community in January 2012, a major concern was that it would become “yet another plan that sits on the shelf gathering dust.”
- 14.2 During the course of the Neighbourhood Planning process the Wolverton community has demonstrated, once again, a huge determination to use the opportunity presented to develop a plan as a real mechanism for delivery.
- 14.3 The Town Council look forward to working closely with our partners to deliver redevelopment and change to Wolverton town centre.

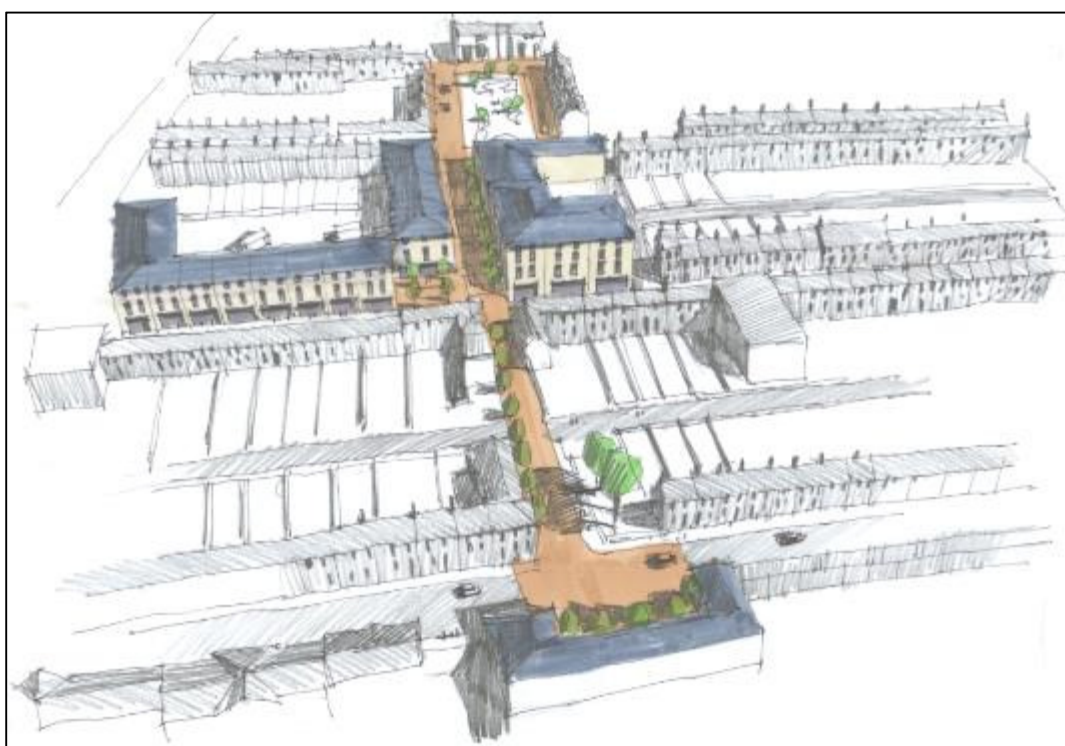


Figure 14: Sketch produced by Princes Foundation showing a re-development scheme.

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Appendix 1**Background Evidence**

Document	Planning status	Date of completion/ adoption	Online link or location
Plan for Wolverton	Adopted by Milton Keynes Borough Council and Milton Keynes Development Corporation	November 1988	Currently only available as hard copy at Milton Keynes Council Central Library in Local Reference section
Wolverton on the Right Track	Community planning process – No formal planning status	June 1998	Currently only available as hard copy at Milton Keynes Council Central Library in Local Reference section
Market Towns Healthcheck Report	Community planning process – No formal planning status	2002/3	futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/FutureWolvertonMThealthcheck.pdf
“Future Wolverton” Vision	Community planning process – No formal planning status	2002/3	futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/FutureWolvertonVision.pdf
Wolverton Regeneration Strategy	Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Milton Keynes Council	September 2004	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-applications-appeals-and-advice/wolverton-regeneration-strategy

Appendix 1

Document	Planning status	Date of completion/ adoption	Online link or location
Local Plan	Adopted by Milton Keynes Council as statutory Local Plan covering the period to 2011. Now partly replaced by Core Strategy. Details at link on current status of the Local Plan.	December 2005	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan
Wolverton Area Action Plan	Was being prepared to be a Development Plan Document, aiming to be adopted in 2008, but action on plan was halted under “advice” from the Government for the South East (GOSE) as a result of their experiences with the then new planning system, to progress their Core Strategies as quickly as possible.	May 2005 onwards until halted in May 2007	Report to Cabinet – Preferred Options: cmis.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Binary.aspx?Document=17949 Delegated decision report to withdraw plan: cmis.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Binary.aspx?Document=20105

Appendix 1

Document	Planning status	Date of completion/ adoption	Online link or location
Conservation Area Review	<p>The aim of the review was to re-appraise the special historic character of those parts of the town that lie within the conservation area and whether any amendments to the existing boundaries are required. The review helped to clarify how the conservation area works and considered proposals to expand the area slightly.</p> <p>The Conservation Area Appraisal document is adopted as the basis for the management of the Conservation Area in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990.</p>	Adopted June 2008, published April 2009	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-archaeology/conservation-area-reviews
Refreshing the Vision	Community planning process – No formal planning status	April 2010	futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/RefreshingtheVisionFinalReport.pdf
Residential Development Design Guide	Adopted by Milton Keynes Council as a Supplementary Planning Document	April 2012	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-applications-appeals-and-advice/new-residential-development-design-guide-supplementary-planning-guidance-spd-adopted-april-2012

Appendix 1

Document	Planning status	Date of completion/ adoption	Online link or location
Wolverton Public Realm Design Manual	Adopted by Milton Keynes Council as Technical Guidance	June 2012	cmis.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Binary.aspx?Document=35450
Benchmarking Report	Action for Market Towns tool to assess strengths and weaknesses of the town centre – no formal planning status	December 2012	futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/Benchmarking_Report_2012.pdf
Core Strategy	Adopted by Milton Keynes Council as the Core Strategy is a Local Plan and provides strategic planning policy up to the year 2026	July 2013	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/adopted-core-strategy
The Agora Development Brief	Adopted by Milton Keynes Council as a Supplementary Planning Document	September 2013	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/assets/attach/15424/Agora%20Development%20Brief%20Adopted%20version%20Sept%202013.pdf
Other background evidence			futurewolverton.org/wp-content/documents/BackgroundEvidenceNovember2014.pdf
MKC Heritage, Museums and Archives Strategy Delivery Plan 2014 – 2023		2014	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/assets/attach/19597/Heritage%20Strategy%20NEW%20v4%20FULL.pdf

Appendix 2**Agora redevelopment process agreed by Milton Keynes Council Cabinet – August 2012**

Stage 1	Cabinet signals its willingness in principle to consider the compulsory acquisition of the Agora Shopping Centre (if redevelopment cannot be achieved on a voluntary basis) through a back-to-back arrangement with a Development Partner.			
Stage 2	Project management arrangements set up to reflect the partner arrangement between MKC (including representatives from Planning, Property Services, Legal and Finance), Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council, Wolverton Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and a Ward Member(s)			
Stage 3	Proposed uses for the redevelopment scheme are decided, and checked with external agents to ensure economic viability			
Stage 4	Development Brief for the site prepared. Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan continues alongside this process, with Development Brief providing additional detail. Public consultation held on the proposals.			
Stage 5	Tender information and brief prepared for procurement process, setting out what we want from the Development Partner.			
Stage 6	Procurement process to assess potential partners, including the development proposals. Development Partner chosen			
Stage 7	Development Partner prepares Planning Application for redevelopment proposals, in close consultation with Project Team guided by the agreed Development Brief. Application submitted and considered by Development Control Committee.			
Stage 8	Development Partner pursues acquisition of Agora Shopping Centre (if planning permission is granted) through negotiation with owner(s).			
Stage 9	If negotiations with owner(s) are unsuccessful, Milton Keynes Council proceeds with the Compulsory Purchase procedure following Cabinet approval	OR	Stage 11	If negotiations with owner(s) are successful, Development Partner acquires site and development commences.
Stage 10	Site is acquired by Milton Keynes Council through Compulsory Purchase, and immediately passed to the Development Partner under the back-to-back arrangement, and development commences			

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- **Affordable Housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. (NPPG)
- **Area Action Plans:** a Development Plan Document that guides areas where significant change is likely to happen.
- **Article 4 direction:** a direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order. An Article 4 direction is in place in most of the older part of Wolverton.
- **Biodiversity:** the variety of life in all forms (such as wildlife, plants, etc).
- **Brownfield Land:** Land which has been previously developed.
- **Built environment:** all the structures people have built when considered as separate from the natural environment.
- **Carbon emissions/CO₂:** common terms for carbon dioxide, the main “greenhouse gas” linked to global warming.
- **Carbon footprint:** a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.
- **Carbon offset:** increased carbon dioxide emissions from a new development are balanced by savings in carbon dioxide elsewhere, by making payments into a carbon offset fund.
- **Carbon zero/Carbon neutral:** no net increase in carbon dioxide emissions resulting from the energy used in occupying buildings, including space heating, hot water, cooking, lights and appliances.
- **Co-location:** where services and facilities share a location in order to deliver services (for example adult education being provided in schools or libraries).
- **Community Energy Networks:** a system by which electricity is generated locally and the waste heat is distributed to local homes and buildings through a network, meaning energy is provided more efficiently.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy:** a charge that Local Planning Authorities can choose to levy on new development in their area, used to fund strategic infrastructure projects to support and enable growth.
- **Comparison goods:** Items not defined as convenience shopping which not obtained on a frequent basis. These including clothing, shoes, furniture, household appliances, tools, medical goods, games and toys, books, stationery, jewellery and other personal effects.
- **Convenience goods:** Broadly defined as everyday essential items including food, drinks,

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tobacco, newspapers, magazines, cleaning materials, toilet articles and confectionery.

- **Cornice:** A horizontal molded projection that crowns or completes a building or wall.
- **Criteria-based policies:** policies that contain several 'tests', which development proposals are assessed against.
- **Culture:** as defined in the Cultural Strategy: 'Culture' is a term that means different things to different people. Cultural participation is where people of all backgrounds come together with shared interests and passions. Together with the environment in which cultural activities, whether paid for or free to use (eg parks and open spaces) take place, culture includes all the things that define our lives, connect us and our communities and represent the values we pass on to other generations.
- **Density:** a measurement of how intensively land is occupied by built development.
- **Design code:** a document that sets out the detailed design principles for a particular development.
- **Development brief:** a document that sets out detailed development principles for a development site.
- **Development Framework:** a document that sets out the key strategic principles for the development of a whole area.
- **Development plan:** This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **Development Plan Document (DPD)** a document which is part of the Development Plan.
- **District Centre:** District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library. Within the Borough Bletchley, Wolverton, Kingston and Westcroft are defined as district centres.
- **Dwelling:** a residential property, such as a house or a flat.
- **Economic development:** Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).
- **Edge of centre:** For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any

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likely significant effects on the environment.

- **Facia:** long, thin board that covers the area where a wall joins a roof.
- **Frontage:** See “Primary and secondary frontages”.
- **Greenfield Land:** land which has not been previously developed.
- **Green Infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Grid roads:** urban clearways with some of which have laybys for bus-stops, with no direct building frontages and no at-grade pedestrian crossings. Some are dual carriageways, and the remainder normally have land reserved for future dualing. They have substantial landscaping for biodiversity, sound screening and CO2/emissions absorption.
- **Ha:** hectare.
- **HCA:** Homes and Community Agency,
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Housing completions:** the number of new houses that are built and ready for occupation.
- **Inclusive design:** Designing the built environment, including buildings and their surrounding spaces, to ensure that they can be accessed and used by everyone.
- **Local Transport Plans:** are statutory documents introduced through the Transport Act 2000 and amended through the Local Transport Act 2008. They set out the authority's local transport strategies and policies, and an implementation programme. Authorities may include the local transport strategies and policies, and the implementation plans in a single document, or in separate documents. The 2008 legislation means that local transport authorities may replace their Plans as they see fit whereas previously they had a life of 5 years.
- **Local Development Framework:** this is the name previously used from 2004 to describe the collection of documents that set out the planning policies for an area. It included Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Local Development Scheme. As a result of changes from the Localism Act from April 2012 the terminology has changed to describe key planning documents as 'Local Plans' instead of Local Development Framework.
- **Local Enterprise Partnership:** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area. Jointly led by local authorities and businesses. Milton Keynes is part of the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP).

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- **Local Plans:** The collection of planning documents for the future development of a local area. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act. The Milton Keynes Local Plan adopted in 2005 was the main planning policy document for the Borough of Milton Keynes until replaced by the Core Strategy adopted in July 2013. Parts of the 2005 local plan have been saved and are still valid.
- **Local planning authority (LPA):** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. For the Borough of Milton Keynes the LPA is Milton Keynes Council.
- **Main town centre uses:** Defined in the NPPG as: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
- **Masterplan:** a masterplan comprises three dimensional images and text describing how an area will be developed. Its scope can range from strategic planning at a regional scale to small scale groups of buildings. Most commonly, it is a plan that describes and maps an overall development concept, including present and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. It is based upon an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development.
- **Milton Keynes Development Corporation:** the organisation responsible for the early development of Milton Keynes. It was wound up in 1992 but a number of its functions continued in other forms.
- **Milton Keynes Partnership:** the organisation formerly responsible for delivering the growth of Milton Keynes. It was responsible for making decisions on planning applications in certain parts (the Urban Development Area) of Milton Keynes. It was wound up in 2013.
- **Milton Keynes Development Partnership:** MKDP is an independent entity wholly owned by Milton Keynes Council. Its purpose is to facilitate Milton Keynes growth and the implementation of the vision of Milton Keynes future as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and Core Strategy.
- **Milton Keynes Tariff:** an initiative that ensures for every property built within the defined Urban Development Area, the developer will pay £18,500 per residential dwelling and £260,000 per hectare of employment space which will be used to help fund community facilities and infrastructure.
- **MK:** Milton Keynes.

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- **MKC:** Milton Keynes Council.
 - **Modal shift:** used to describe the change in the way people travel, from one mode (e.g. the car), to another mode (e.g. public transport).
 - **Mullion:** A mullion is a vertical element that forms a division between units of a window, door, or screen, or is used decoratively. When dividing adjacent window units, its primary purpose is to provide structural support to an arch or lintel above the window opening.
 - **Neighbourhood Plans:** a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. They become part of the Development Plan for the area and will be used in the determination of relevant planning applications in areas covered by a Neighbourhood Plan. Plans are subject to examination and referendum before they can be brought into effect.
 - **Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.
- Out of centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area. (NPPG)
- **Out of town:** A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area. (NPPG)
 - **People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.
- **Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission.
 - **Planning obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. A legal contract is made between the local planning authority and named parties stating the terms of planning obligations imposed by the local planning authority.
 - **Pilaster:** an architectural element in classical architecture used to give the appearance of a supporting column and to articulate an extent of wall, with only an ornamental function.
 - **Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage). (NPPG)
 - **Primary and secondary frontages:** Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of

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- uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses. (NPPG)
- **Public realm:** space that is meant to be used by the public in general, whether it is publicly or privately owned.
 - **SA:** Sustainability Appraisal.
 - **Secondary frontage:** See “Primary and secondary frontages”.
 - **Section 106/S106 Agreement:** see Planning Obligation.
 - **Stallriser:** the panel below the sill of a shop window.
 - **Strategic Environmental Assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
 - **Supermarket:** Self-service store selling mainly food, with a gross retail floorspace of less than 2500 square metres, often with its own car parking.
 - **Superstore:** Self-service store selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with more than 2500 square metres gross retail floorspace with car parking.
 - **Supplementary planning documents (SPD):** Documents which add further detail to the policies in a Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
 - **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):** a previous form of planning documents now replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents.
 - **Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.
 - **Town Centre:** Town centre: Area defined on the local planning authority’s proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres. Within the Borough of Milton Keynes, the Retail Hierarchy in Core Strategy Policy CS4 ‘Retail and Leisure Development’ defines Bletchley, Kingston, Westcroft and Wolverton as District Centres, the second level in Milton Keynes; and Newport Pagnell, Olney Stony Stratford and Woburn Sands as town centres, the third level of centre.
 - **Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic

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process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

- **Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.
- **Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.
- **Urban Grain:** The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement.
- **Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment:** the process by which social, environmental and economic issues are integrated into the production of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The process is iterative and takes place alongside the production of the documents, informing any decisions made.
- **Urban Structure:** the framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one another.
- **Zone A rents:** the rental value for the first six metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window.

