

MEETING NOTE

WOLVERTON AGORA TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP – MEETING 2.

14th May 2018

ATTENDEES:

Cllr Rob Middleton (Chair)	Milton Keynes Council and Ward Member for Wolverton
Ed Palmieri	Milton Keynes Council
Andy Forbes	Kings Church
Marie Osborne	Future Wolverton
Taj Raja	Wolverton business owner and Central Mosque attendee
Allan Nall	Wolverton Business Association
Jonny Anstead	TOWN
Neil Murphy	TOWN

General

The meeting was quorate in spite of Town Council’s not being able to attend.

Apologies received from Mike Edwards (Future Wolverton).

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

TOWN project update

NM explained that further work had been undertaken, though the team not fully mobilised ahead of entering into legal agreements to purchase the site.

NM reported progress on legal purchase:

- Leyland have regularised agreements with tenants to allow for speedy vacation
- Detailed structure of purchase / leaseback agreed with MKC, allowing MKC appropriate abilities to ensure that the scheme is delivered

NM reported that TOWN was exploring potential for early demolition of the Agora, but that it was not likely to be possible to demolish early – as a replacement planning permission must be in place prior to demolition since the site is located in a conservation area. Several members indicated likely community support for an exception in this case and encouraged TOWN to explore this further with MKC.

Matters arising

RM explained that MKC had looked into the public parking situation at Tesco and Lidl:

- Tesco: did not implement planning consent requiring public use. It used earlier consent which didn’t have this condition. As a result it is within its rights to put up signs indicating the car park is for customers only. He noted Tesco also intended to reduce the size of its car park for a new McDonalds.

- Lidl: there is no requirement to allow public parking under the planning consent. However Lidl has indicated it recognises the need to support town centre parking and is considering various options. RM feels positive about this owing to St Modwen being likely to look at larger picture owing to their future development intentions. AN noted his astonished that no requirement had been imposed by MKC for public parking and RM indicated that where this is not strictly necessary, it is not possible to impose such conditions owing to national planning guidance.

MKC car parking study

EP reported that MKC had assessed the potential of neighbouring sites in its ownership to accommodate increased car parking.

He explained that St Georges Way currently accommodates approximately 50 parking spaces, and that the council's engineers had shown that it was possible to increase this to approximately 125 spaces – a net increase of around 70 spaces.

EP indicated that this would require further legal advice and consultation further with housing colleagues. Some spaces are occupied by residential tenants; some may have been sold off. There would also need to be consultation with tenants and consideration of how the changes would be paid for (NM commented that it would be seen in context of wider s106). EP felt that the changes may improve the situation for existing residents, as well as being good for the town centre.

MO noted that residents of St George's Way parked as close to their homes as possible and that in proposing any changes we should try and make this easier for them. She also emphasised that any changes would need to improve the situation for residents of St George's Way, particularly where parking spaces are close to homes on the northern side of the estate.

MO also noted the need to consider limits on parking times including charging to help with capital costs; especially in view of proximity to Wolverton railway station, as long-stay commuter use is not appropriate for town centre parking.

AN suggested that it would be important to delineate between public and residents parking then easier to control. MO agreed and suggested two car park entrances to make this clearer.

AF suggested there would be justification for some paid parking. He noted that day time users of King's Church premises were critical to its viability and to its offering dance classes (per MKC's requirement). Many of King's Church's users require 3 hours parking, but its large main renters (which pay the bills) & some of the dance groups, and celebrations/community parties are all day, and or late into the night.

RM suggested it would be useful to have a more detailed breakdown of Kings' parking requirements ahead of the next meeting.

AN suggested categorising parking users under three categories: public short term (up to 3 hrs), workers (all day) and residents. Any charging and/or permit regimes could and should be designed to ensure parking is available for the right users at the right times of day.

AN asked whether more parking could be provided close to the station. MO pointed out that there was generally spare capacity at the station – and that people parking in the town to access the station were doing so to avoid parking charges.

RM asked how many workers rely on the Agora parking. AF explained that lots of businesses have private parking; others use bays at front. Not clear how many workers rely on the car park. AF offered to talk to local business to understand their parking requirements for staff

TOWN review of traffic patterns and street parking

NM explained that TOWN's engineers had looked at Church Street and adjacent streets to explore bus stopping and standing arrangements, public realm improvements, potential for a one-way treatment to Church Street (between Creed St and Radcliffe St) and on Radcliffe St, and additional parking.

- They thought the potential for additional parking on St George's way was slightly lower than MKC's initial estimate;
- Analysis had confirmed that a one way treatment was feasible and MKC highways officers had reviewed an initial plan that showed how it might be achieved in principle (subject to aspects of technical design detail being addressed). This could achieve an additional 17 spaces on Church St and/or existing Radcliffe St depending on whether bus stands are relocated to Radcliffe St. It could also allow public realm improvements including new planting on Church St.
- Taken with additional public parking to be provided on Buckingham St and 'new' Radcliffe St as part of the Agora redevelopment, a level of spaces close to that currently provided by the Agora car park may be achievable (see table below)

Town centre parking options	Proposed	Existing	Change
Agora car park	0	120	-120
Church Street (W)	45	28	17
'New' Radcliffe Street (S)	13	0	13
Buckingham Street	10	0	10
St Georges Way	65-70	0	68
Totals	133-138	148	-12

AN strongly argued that a northern bus terminus for Wolverton on Radcliffe St north would be worse than at present as it would be too narrow even when one-way, and make a worse experience for pedestrians and bus users. NM said TOWN's engineers thought it could work with end-on queuing arrangements but that the point was taken and TOWN would not push this if there was opposition.

MO questioned whether Radcliffe St north could be a bus-only route. AN thought not on the basis that the alternative route to Stratford Rd was unsatisfactory.

Agreed TOWN to investigate Radcliffe St north further and to also consider retaining bus stands on Church Street and accommodating additional parking on Radcliffe Street assuming a one-way system.

AF: presented own working about current parking levels and potential net change. He said that the 120 spaces in the Agora car park claimed as 'marked' are regularly exceeded and up to 166 cars parked have been noted.

Also photos of existing Agora car park usage. He offered to distribute to members and handed out hard copies. AF also noted concerns raised by RC Church on Radcliffe Street and tabled a letter from them.

AN noted existing BT infrastructure on Church Street.

Public transport

AN: works carried out by MKC improving bus facilities at Newport Pagnell. 2 x northern bus terminals; new shelter, block paving, road markings, 3.5m layby, 2 x bus space at one time. Hoped that Wolverton might one day become as good on this as Newport Pagnell.

RM: to put TOWN in contact with relevant officers to look at funding possibilities for improved bus facilities.

AOB

MO raised the possibility of residents' parking restrictions on Buckingham St, noting that there would be strong feelings about this that we should consider and be prepared for.

AN noted that in other areas there is shared residents and 2 hr visitor parking.

Next meeting

Next meeting to be held on date tbc before the school summer holidays.

Ends.