

WOLVERTON AGORA REGENERATION WORKING GROUP

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

TUESDAY 25TH APRIL 2023

17:00 – 19:00

Minutes

| Attendees | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Cllr Robert Middleton (RM) | Milton Keynes City Council |
| Neil Murphy (NM) | TOWN |
| Tia Castellano (TC) | TOWN |
| Hilary Saunders (HS) | Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council |
| Allan Nall (AN) | D W Roberts |
| Andy Forbes (AF) | Kings Church |
| Stephen Norrish (SN) | Milton Keynes Christian Foundation |
| Marie Osborne (MO) | Future Wolverton |
| Karen Parisi (KP) | C P Locks |
| Adrian Moss (AM) | Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council |
| David Beattie (DB) | Future Wolverton |
| Maggie Pemberton (MP) | Wolverton Resident |
| Jackie (J) | Still Green |
| Amanda Creed (AC) | Invest Milton Keynes |

| Apologies | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Guy Rochez (GR) | TOWN |
| Ed Palmieri (EP) | Milton Keynes City Council |
| Laura Wadsworth (LW) | Milton Keynes City Council |
| Miles Walsh (MW) | St. George's Way Resident |
| Martine Harvey (MH) | Wolverton Resident |
| Kath Cook (KC) | Milton Keynes City Council |
| Francesca Vernon (FV) | St. George's Church |
| Taj Raja (TR) | Smart Move |
| Sheila Thornton (ST) | Still Green |
| Gillian Barrow Jones (GBJ) | St. George's Church |
| Adrian Moss (AM) | Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council |

1. Community Improvement District (MO)

- David and Mudaser from Locality also joined the meeting to assist MO on presenting the CID work.

- MO shared updates on the community conversation event that took place in February 2023 – please refer to slides circulated.
- **Key themes from event**
 - Coordinated action is needed to attract people to Wolverton.
 - More events need to be planned in the square and Foundation house in order to create community interaction.
 - Need more of a focus on engaging young people – potential to experiment with seed funding on this.
 - Financial institution is needed in Wolverton.
 - Emphasis on making Wolverton special whilst avoiding gentrification.
 - Marketing campaign is needed to make the area more attractive.
- **Conclusions from the event**
 - The varied skills of local people and enthusiasm for people to volunteer should be used.
 - There is a need to tackle issues around the look of the place .
 - Explore ways in which social media can play a role in promoting place.
 - Increase opportunities for face-to-face interaction.
- **CID Governance**
 - MO explained to the group that a general agreement to continuing working on the CID had to be made collectively in which the group agreed and had no objections to.
 - MO next step is to draft action plan.

ACTION: Working Group to review draft vision and objectives and share comments with MO.

 - MO summarised the Terms of reference paper.
 - MP to add Still Green as core member for the CID group and overall create additional seats to the membership of the CID work.
 - RM questioned the rationale behind the CID.
 - DM noted that the idea originally came from North America and based the idea around high streets and a community focus rather than just retail.
 - The pilot process is under a year which makes it short time frame.
 - Mudaser noted that they are undergoing a business audit of the area and looking into underrepresented groups.
 - MO noted that Wolverton will be featured in the CID report being written alongside Sheffield Hallam University.
 - There is also an expectation from Power To Change for Wolverton to be picked up within the Levelling up agenda.

- **Discussion**

- HS asked whether the CID is from government funding in which MO responded that it is not and is fully funded by Power To Change at present.
 - MO also explained that the Business Improvement (BID) process is less of a route for Wolverton due to the levy involved and Wolverton mainly consisting of small businesses that would not be eligible for this.
 - HS asked whether if there was possibility of no funding, what additional route to access funding would there be available?
 - MO responded that they would look at opportunities and vacancies on the high street that could help.
 - NM questioned 'What will Power To Change do with the results of the pilot? In which David responded – it will add to the evidence base and rationale for further work within this field.
 - NM also commented on the emphasis on drawing in 'Young people' in the process and it being relevant. However, not just a focusing on under 18's but young people who are in the position to be renting in Wolverton.
 - There is a large potential and advantage to be made of the hundreds of construction workers that will be commuting to the area and will need to make use of Wolverton resources through the CID.
 - Opportunity for benefits to be made not just from the outcome of the scheme but also the process.
 - AN noted that there needs to be a way for the town council to be involved and also be a key funder in which MO noted that it is up to the town council to make that decision.
 - RM and HS noted that they would take it away and discuss with town council.
- ACTION:** MO to contact Andrea (Town council) to make an agenda item to discuss CID and Town council involvement.
- NM noted a fuller review of heads of terms is needed – thinking of social capital generated from the working group and how to capitalise on it.
 - MO noted the need for a wider agenda/exit strategy.
 - SN mentioned 'flexibility' on what members join as time goes on and as change occurs – fluidity in the structure of governance.
 - RM noted to get in touch with him on any further thoughts on the CID work
- ACTION:** MO noted group to sign off on CID action plan in early June.
- Overall, a general agreement from the group with the process going forward with the CID.

2. General progress update (NM)

- NM noted that MKCC, TOWN and Wilmot Dixon are currently in a contract discussion which will unlikely be complete by the next meeting due to factors such as inflation and budget review which need to be reviewed.
 - NM also noted that the highways work with MK highways /AECOM on the one-way movement has been discounted due to the conclusion that it would trigger the need for further upgrades i.e roundabouts and would overall give marginal benefits with higher costs.
 - A design brief given has been given to AECOM/MK highways on the Church street improvements.
 - The concept design will be shared with the working group once it has been suitably drafted.
- **S73 application**
 - NM summarised application type and rationale for it.
 - The group was generally understanding and accepting of the amendments made with some concerns listed below.
 - HS noted the following concerns: Casement windows not being within keeping in conservation area.
 - NM responded that the chosen windows were due to the need to meet performance requirements, reduce overheating and costs;

ACTION: TOWN to respond to Town council’s query on constituted stone under windows on block C.

 - MP wanted clarification on the landscape detail changes in which NM responded there were no changes to trees except on the offsite works and was more of a refinement to planting details that were not originally stated.
 - RM noted if there would be any delays to the start of construction as a result of the amendments in which NM noted there would be no impact on this.

3. Future meeting and communications (RM/NM)

- Next meeting before school holidays – July.

4. AOB

- KP noted what progress is being made with the substation in which would affect her business.
- NM noted that the contractor will use it and replace it once the works are complete.
- MO noted MKCC need to support more Comms by sharing regular updates.
- MO noted if TOWN could contribute to Town council newsletter.
- **ACTION:** To submit progress update to Town council newsletter by 4th May.

- NM noted that the contractor will start on car park area/Agora area at the same time and will not take car park out until new car park is complete.
- AN questioned how definite is the WC on SGW in which NM responded that it is now fixed.