

**Minutes of the Special Full Council Meeting  
held at 10am on  
Thursday 4th February 2021 held virtually**



**Councillors present:** Cllrs Moss (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair), Aiyeola, Cook, Khan, Khatoon, Orimogunje, Robertson, Saunders,

**Also present:** Mandy Shipp-Assistant to the Clerk and 5 members of the public

**Absent:**

TC20/229	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> The following apologies were received and noted. Cllr Forbes – Working Cllr Riaz – Working Cllr Barby – Working Cllr Oladepo -Working Cllr Bamisile - Personal</p>
TC20/230	<p><b>Declarations of interest in any matter on the agenda</b> - There were no declarations made</p>
TC20/231	<p><b>Public questions:</b> It was <b>RESOLVED</b> per the standing orders ....“g) <i>in accordance with standing order (3(e) members if they are invited to do so by chair may make representations... in respect of the business on the agenda), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given</i>” to answer the public questions received in advance of the meeting by written response The questions with answers are as follows:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>What advice have members, who have already made personal or corporate submissions about this planning application, been given about the potential for conflict between their own expressed opinions and their ability to make a fair and impartial decision when acting in their role as a councillor</b> A1) <b>Councillors</b> are told as part of their induction that they are to represent the community, not their personal viewpoint Councillors are also reminded regularly to keep personal opinions and their representation of their Parish separate.</li> <li>2. <b>have councillors been reminded of the Good Councillor’s Guide (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. page 28) which says that “Personal interests become prejudicial interests if a member of the public (with knowledge of the relevant facts) might think that your judgement of the public interest could be prejudiced”?</b> A2) I haven’t reminded Councillors of the Good Councillors Guide 2nd Edition. It would be very remiss of me as Chair to remind Councillors of an outdated publication (2nd edition is way out of date). New Councillors are, however, signed up to appropriate training with NALC as soon as possible after joining where they will receive the latest current version.</li> </ol> </p>
TC20/232	<p><b>Minutes:</b> Approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to defer the approval of the minutes of the Full Council Meeting from 26<sup>th</sup> January until the next Full Council meeting due on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, as this would allow the councillors time to read through them due to the short notice of this Special Full Council Meeting.</p>
TC20/233	<p><b>The Agora Planning Application</b> – Councillors to formally agree response for MKC The Chair provided an update on why the former proposed comments were redacted from MKC as he felt that it was unfair to request councillors to approve a set of recommendations when Cllrs had received a significant presentation from the developer as the piece of business</p>

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before. It was **RESOLVED** that there were three main points for objecting to this application along with some other issues that had arisen that would be included as part of this document. It was reiterated that the development is welcomed, but the parking issue still remained a concern.

It was **NOTED** by Cllr Hussain that the letter received from TOWN 3<sup>rd</sup> February implied that because WGTC welcomed the development in the newsletter, we shouldn't therefore object to it, however, it was **NOTED** that the newsletter article was written in advance of the detailed plans being made available and Cllrs were representative of the resident's views.

It was **RESOLVED** to amend and agree to the following proposal.

Lakeisha Peacock

Planning Officer

Planning Department

4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Lakeisha

**Re WGTC agreed formal comments for planning Application 20/03293/FUL Land at The Agora Centre Church Street Wolverton**

*Redevelopment of the site of the Agora Centre, Wolverton and adjacent car park to provide 115 new homes (Use Class C3) and ancillary Cohousing Common House, nine ground floor commercial and community units comprising approximately 1,000 sqm (Use Classes E, F2(b) and Sui Generis); the reinstatement of Radcliffe Street between Church Street and Buckingham Street / The Square; together with associated areas of hard and soft landscaping, car and cycle parking, means of access and plant and equipment*

Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council (WGTC) welcomes the opportunity for redevelopment of the Agora site and the regeneration of the town centre by the new developer TOWN. There are some really positive moves within the plan and WGTC are pleased to note that this plan follows the vision as set out in the Wolverton Neighbourhood Plan policy W1:A (NHP 2015) to "Follow the historic grid street pattern and reinstate Radcliffe Street as a direct highway link" and to implement the much needed one-way system onto Church Street.

We understand and appreciate that there has been a large amount of time and planning that has been invested in getting the application to this point, and TOWN have engaged in the past with the parish of WGTC and with the Working Group (WG).

The Town Council corporate response should not be considered reflective of the views of the Councillors alone but also as a representative voice to the views of those who live and work within the parish.

WGTC must convey therefore that the application is fundamentally flawed due to the following concerns it raises, as a result WGTC are minded to **OBJECT** to this application on the three key issues as below;

1. **Parking** for residents and visitors to the town centre (a partially mitigating parking proposal was received 22nd January)
2. **Block F** and other issues including the views of the Grade II listed church St George The Martyr being obstructed.
3. **Conservation of the historic town** – The Public Realm and Wolverton Design Guide

There are other concerns which WGTC would like to see addressed and discussed further in this response, to ensure a resolution will suit all where practicable.

The following are seen to be the key issues for **OBJECTING** to this application:

1. **Parking**

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- **WGTC OBJECT** to this proposal as it fails to provide Wolverton town centre and residents with sufficient parking. It falls far below and fails to meet the adopted parking standards, and is therefore contrary to MK parking standards SPD 2016 and policy CT2:A(v) of the adopted local plan, Plan:MK

According to the SPD Wolverton is classed within 'zone 2' and the parking provision for the proposed 115 residential homes breakdown should be;

1 allocated space for 1&2 bed homes plus 0.33 unallocated  
2 allocated parking spaces for the 3&4bed homes plus 0.33 unallocated.

The calculation is below;  
11 x 4 bed x 2+0.33 = 25.63  
21 x 3 bed x 2+0.33 = 48.93  
54 x 2 bed x 1+0.33 = 71.82  
29 x 1 bed x 1+0.33 = 38.57  
**Total 184.95**

The developer is supplying 88 spaces, but only 80 of these are available to residents for parking as it includes 8 electric spaces for charging only which reduces this to 80 available spaces that permits are sold for, this is unclear.

**This is a deficit of 105 spaces**

The proposal as it is, would not provide sufficient parking for residents and their visitors and is contrary to the SPD

- The parking for the proposed retail units would be limited and the lack of provision would have an impact on the existing retail which is contrary to NHP 2015 policy W1: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)"*
- The scheme is over reliant on the residents not driving or owning cars and using alternative modes of transport such as bus, cycle and rail. Although supported by CT10 in that this proposal would be classed as having mitigating circumstances, the concern is that the town (Wolverton) is already heavily congested with cars and the issues with parking would be further compounded. The English Partnership Car Parking: "what works where", supports this argument.
- The proposal fails to provide adequate details in the permit strategy that demonstrates they can police and enforce the conditions of the tenancy agreement that would safeguard overspill into the adjacent streets; it's not deliverable and will rely on the honesty and shared values of the tenants. If there is no method of guaranteeing that their strategy is enforceable the developer should not be allowed to provide less than the required provision set out in the MK policy standards.
- There are no safeguards in place to prevent tenants on the development parking in adjoining streets.
- **Loss of existing car parking spaces from Agora Car park**
  - We are losing 120 Agora carpark spaces for the gain of 16 short stay. Although TOWN's Transport Assessment suggests these spaces were 'customer only', in practice they have long been regarded as 'public' carparking spaces and have continued to be used after the closure of the Agora centre. TOWN's arguments that there are six town centre carparks in Wolverton are extremely misleading. The parking provision at Wolverton Station, Tesco, Lidl and St Georges Way (**currently**) are not public spaces, most necessitating crossing the busy Stratford Road to access the town centre. Ouse Valley Park not convenient for the centre being both on the wrong side of a busy road and up/down a hill. It is also not public as it belongs to Parks Trust. The scheme is over reliant on the use of parking at other sites, which are not publicly owned or are too far from the town centre, this is contrary to policy HN1:3

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- The loss of Agora parking spaces would have a detrimental impact on the Town Centre Parking for its current users such as the mosque, St Georges Church and the King's Community Centre (KCC). Town Centre retailers are suffering from the current pandemic and the loss of so much public parking would deal them a further blow by reducing the attractiveness of the town centre as a shopping destination.
- **The need for town centre visitors' parking has only been partially addressed by the St Georges Way Parking proposal, welcome though this is.**

## 2. Block F: Height, Mass and other issues

- WGTC **OBJECT** to this proposal due to building F's height and mass and the issues that it causes for further demand for onsite parking. This block dominates the whole site AND the entrance to Wolverton from Creed St / McConnell Drive and is contrary to policy D3 of the local Plan and contrary to the NHP 2015 policy W1 "*F. Retain views of St George's Church, in particular the spire, through breaks in development along Church Street. (Retention of Key Views)*"  
It could be argued that there are still some views of the building, but the proposed is completely out of context with the area and the open views that we would hope to see, particularly as the gateway to the town.
- There is also a difference in the number of flats in the design and access statement as 14 versus the floor plans which show 11 properties. Either figure adds to the demand for residential parking beyond the 104 homes that were in the public exhibition plans shown in 2019.
- Concern for local buildings/businesses such as KCC, particularly in regard to the how this would affect their music licence and the residents who move in and how it would impact them, as there could not be a legally binding agreement for new residents to accept noise intrusion.

## 3. Heritage Conservation– Public Realm and Wolverton Design Guide

- WGTC **OBJECT** to the proposal not following the design which is in keeping with the conservation of the Victorian town specifically in that it would be contrary to **Policy W1: Q NHP 2015. 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).** The roof designs are boxy in appearance and would be a conspicuous intrusion into the historic rooftop vistas of the Conservation Area (CA). Consequently, the character and appearance of the CA would not be preserved or enhanced, and this could further lead to more residents submitting applications to install dormers to the rear of their properties which would fit with this development, rather than the terraced roofs that are seen to be a historic feature of the town. The development should echo the Victorian feel of the town,
- There is no sign of traditional windows and doors included within the design - This is within the conservation area and any development by local residents would be expected to comply: window shape and size and colour should match in with designs which are already in place; we would request sash windows with a strong horizontal division for continuity within the Conservation Area, as is required of existing properties.
- **NHP 2015 policy W1: P.** "*Street materials and street furniture should comply with the Public Realm Design Manual. (Public Realm materials and street furniture)*"
- WGTC request that the street furniture should follow the current adopted design guide – the current plans as shown do not fit with this.

### Other issues:

#### 1. Increase in proposed number of homes

- The original plan from TOWN encompassed around 105 homes, however, there has been an increase of properties designated for the site from 105 to 115 on this new proposal.
- Plan:MK wrongly indicates 140 homes for this site - this figure has been challenged and is incorrect on Plan:MK but has never been amended to the correct figure of 104 as agreed for the former application, that was submitted by Brickhills. Plan:MK still also refers to the former application of 2015: 15/00913/FUL and cannot be considered.

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- This increase further compounds the issue of parking by increasing demand and reducing area available.

## 2. Car parking charges

- WGTC notes the proposals for rentals for different types of cars for residents and appreciate that electric cars are being encouraged.
- WGTC do not wish to see car parking fees for the town centre visitors to park.
- Clarification on the proposed length and hours of parking is needed.

## 3. Lack of Electric Vehicle infrastructure

- The proposal fails to provide sufficient electric parking charging points, as set out on the Milton Keynes Transport Vision and Strategy LTP3 (2011-2031) and policy CT10:ii
- The proposal should encourage chargers and electric cars as this is likely to be the future of travel and fits with MKC future 2050 projects and the move towards a carbon efficient society

## 4. Retail uses

- Conditions to be imposed to ensure that they remain as commercial units, Class E and cannot be used for residential use and that the developers fulfils the plan to achieve the designated retail space
- Rents and maintenance charges to be reasonable to encourage full usage.

### WGTC Proposals to make the scheme acceptable.

1. St George's Way needs to be redefined for car parking for the Town Centre to ease the pressure and make the whole process more acceptable. This proposal recently received from MKC for St Georges Way Parking is welcomed.
2. Height scale and massing of Block F reduced or scrapped – concerns that it is overbearing and not fitting for a gateway to the town. Omitting Block F would also go some way to alleviating the parking issues by retaining two dozen existing spaces and reducing demand by reducing the number of homes.
3. Public toilets are highly desired by WGTC to make the scheme acceptable. They do not appear to be included within the plan, but these are required to make the scheme acceptable, and need to be close to the bus stop and as set out in the Agora Development Brief 4.2.46 *"a desire to have public toilets included within a new development. These should be included if possible, although careful management needs to take place to ensure that they don't undermine the quality of the town centre"* As one of the busiest bus stops, the need for this facility is of great importance and should be a priority in this development.
4. Allow the creation of a pedestrian entrance to St Georges Church along the rear wall to allow easier access to the building on foot.

### WGTC welcomes the following:

- ❖ One way system on part of Church Street
- ❖ Reconnecting Radcliffe street
- ❖ New Bus Stop provision
- ❖ Affordable and social rented properties as well as the Community housing (Block C) for older people.

### Conditions and suggestions which WGTC would request as part of this application.

1. Join up the red way from McConnell Drive – this has been considered in the St Georges way parking scheme proposal received 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021.
2. Public Toilet – Confirm if this will be part of the public hub.

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<p><b>TC20/234</b></p>	<p>3. Noted that there will be an unadopted road on Radcliffe St – This needs ongoing management by someone and there is a concern that, once development is complete, there may be issues with maintenance and responsibility.</p> <p>4. Concern of loss of light for the houses on Buckingham Street</p> <p>5. S106 contributions are less than previously expected. The town council recognises the concern that local people have about the pressure on local public services. We believe that any redevelopment of the Agora site needs to deliver the section 106 contributions as well as the affordable housing required by Milton Keynes Council. See policy W1: T. of NHP 2015 “<i>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</i>”</p> <p>6. If Block F wasn't part of this plan, enabling another 20-22 car parking spaces, WGTC would withdraw our main objection.</p> <p>Should this be application be referred to the Development Control Committee/Panel for determination a councillor from WGTC would be willing to attend.</p> <p>For and on behalf of Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit separate comments to MKC over the lack of notice provided for this large development.</p> <p><b>Lack of notice for the planning application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application only became live on the MKC portal on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 and contained, at the time 137 documents, some of which were of large scale or many pages. It is felt that the application was poorly timed and has created a sense of distrust among local residents and businesses. They felt that there has been a complete lack of notice and consultation provided to them on these plans, for a development of this scale.</li> <li>• Although an extension was granted until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, (requested by WGTC due to the concerns over being able to respond in time), it is felt to have been badly conveyed, with little time for residents to read through the large amount of documentation during the Christmas period to provide comments</li> </ul> <p>10.38 Cllr LA arrived Cllr Khan left at 11:14</p>
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The meeting was closed at 11:20

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