

# Wolverton Works

## Q&A from November Public Meeting

January 2016

### 1. General

#### Proposals

***Can you explain the phases and why they have been timed in the way they have?***

The discount foodstore will be delivered first as the land where it will be developed is currently vacant. Preserving employment on site is the driving force behind these proposals and replacement business space has to be provided for Knorr-Bremse before the remainder of the site can be redeveloped with new housing. As such, redevelopment of the east of the site will take place in phase 2, with the new housing on the western half of the site forming phase 3.

***How do these proposals relate to the redevelopment of the Agora?***

The redevelopment of Wolverton Works and redevelopment of the Agora are being brought forward by different developers, at different times.

The application for Wolverton Works would not prevent, or negatively impact on the redevelopment of the Agora. Instead, the proposals have been developed, particularly at the eastern end, to complement and encourage links between, the town centre and Wolverton Works.

***Who owns the site? Who are KPI who own the land?***

The site is owned by Key Property Investments (KPI). This is a Joint Venture company owned by St. Modwen Properties PLC and Salhia Real Estate Co.

***Has there been interest in the site from other parties since St. Modwen owned it?***

No

***Who owns St. Modwen?***

St. Modwen is a Public Limited Company whose shares are traded on the London Stock Exchange.

#### Housing

***What are you proposing in terms of housing?***

Our application proposes up to 375 new homes. The exact number, as well as the sizes and designs of the new homes, will be the subject of a future 'Reserved Matters'\* application.

\*Meaning: an application which provides the detailed design

***Will there be any homes for the elderly?***

At this stage, the application does not propose any designated ‘specialist’ accommodation for older people. However the new homes will be in a range of sizes, including some smaller one and two bedroom properties suitable for older people looking to downsize.

There is nothing in the current planning application that would prevent future ‘Reserved Matters’ applications from including specialist homes for the elderly if demand was clearly evident at that time.

***Will there be any affordable housing? What kind of affordable housing will be provided?***

St. Modwen is currently in discussions with Milton Keynes Council regarding the amount of ‘affordable housing’\* to be provided.

*\*Meaning: specific planning term which could relate to social housing, affordable (discount) rent, key worker or shared ownership. NB housing which doesn’t come under this term would simply be market housing which is priced at an appropriate level for the local market.*

***What height will the flats be? How will the new homes relate to existing ones surrounding the site?***

It is proposed that the new homes across the site will be a mix of sizes and character areas to respond to the nature of the buildings around them. The buildings will range in heights, but generally from 2 to 4 storeys with the possibility of taller buildings in key, landmark locations. Further detail of this matter is provided in the Design Guide which is included in the planning application documents.

***When will the public consultation on phase 3 take place?***

As phases 1 and 2 need to come forward first, currently there is no anticipated start date for consultation. This will be dependent on market demand and resultant planning timescales.

**Employment**

***What is the future for Knorr-Bremse at the Wolverton Works? Are they intending to renew their lease past its current end date in 2018?***

St. Modwen has been in discussions with Knorr-Bremse throughout the development of regeneration plans for the site; these are being brought forward to address Knorr-Bremse’s future business needs at Wolverton Works.

***Will they have space to expand their business in the future?***

Discussions between St. Modwen and Knorr-Bremse are taking into account both the present and future needs of the company.

***What is St. Modwen's interest in keeping rail-related employment on site?***

The entire masterplan has been geared around ensuring ongoing access to the railway line to ensure railway business can continue on the site. St. Modwen's interest is in keeping a major, existing tenant on the site through these regeneration proposals.

***What would the new railway-related employment buildings look like?***

The detail of the commercial buildings will be dealt with through a 'Reserved Matters'\* planning application in due course.

*\*Meaning: a form of planning application which deals with the detailed design of a building that already has Outline Planning Permission.*

**Discount Food Store**

***How many parking spaces will be provided?***

Current proposals are only indicative; the exact number of spaces will be determined as part of the 'Reserved Matters' planning application and will be in response to the foodstore operator's needs and in accordance with the policy requirements of Milton Keynes Highways Department.

***Is there demand for another food store?***

There is demand for a new discount food store within Wolverton, which would serve those living in the town and surrounding area. Whilst a retailer has not yet been confirmed, St. Modwen is currently in discussions with several well-known national brands, reflecting the confidence they have in a new store in Wolverton.

***Why has this location been chosen?***

This part of Wolverton Works is currently vacant and free of buildings and a new store could be developed here soon after the granting of planning permission. It is also closer to the centre of town than the far western end of the site which previously had a planning application for a new food store refused for this reason. Planning policy supports town centre development for foodstores and therefore planning officers at Milton Keynes would not be supportive of the foodstore in a more western location.

***Will any public toilets be provided?***

This would be a matter for the operator of the food store but it is likely they will be.

***How will the design of this store differ from the 'underground' Tesco branch?***

The design of the new store will be different to Tesco. Direct access, via the existing road, would be provided to the foodstore and car park from Stratford Road. Open steps and ramped access would also be provided for pedestrians direct from Stratford Road.

There have also been a number of lessons learnt from the Tesco development in terms of making public spaces welcoming.

## **Infrastructure**

### ***What funding will be created by the proposals for investment locally?***

All planning applications are required to provide funding to go towards local infrastructure. This funding will be agreed between St. Modwen and Milton Keynes Council and governed by a 'Section 106' agreement.

### ***What impact will the proposals have on local schools and GPs?***

If the planning application were to be granted permission, funding would have to be agreed as a part of the Section 106 agreement to go towards local education and healthcare provision.

### ***Is there the potential for a new school/doctors' surgery to be provided on site as part of the redevelopment?***

Discussions with Milton Keynes Council about this are ongoing, although at the moment it is envisaged that funding would be provided to existing off-site facilities rather than providing new ones on site.

## **Other**

### ***Could any leisure or community facilities be provided on site?***

The heritage centre is intended to have communal uses as well as providing information about the history of Wolverton Works.

### ***Will the redevelopment of the site be zero carbon and sustainable?***

The development will include a number of sustainability features which will ensure it meets current Building Regulations standards for sustainability and Milton Keynes' policy requirements.

### ***Are there any issues around decontamination facing the site? How will these be addressed?***

Based on the site's industrial use, there will be matters to resolve in relation to cleaning up the site for redevelopment. All appropriate studies have been undertaken by environmental experts, in line with UK industry quality standards and procedures, to ascertain what contamination may remain in the ground and in the existing buildings. As part of the redevelopment, ground and building remediation will be undertaken, again following UK industry standards and procedures. This type of remediation work is very common on sites such as this and St. Modwen, as regeneration specialists, has a vast amount of experience in dealing with sites of this nature.

## **Transport and access**

### ***Could the site be connected to the Milton Keynes redway network? Will there be a safe crossing point for people crossing to the new food store from the community centre car park?***

These matters are under ongoing discussions with Milton Keynes' Highways Department.

***What impact will there be on Stratford Road?***

A detailed Transport Assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application for the site. This confirms that there would be no significant adverse effect on Stratford Road.

***Is the bridge on McConnell Drive tall enough for HGVs to pass underneath?***

Yes it is. The proposed access for HGVs visiting the site along McConnell Drive has been designed to work with an articulated lorry of 3.8m in height and 16.5m in length.

## **2. Heritage**

### **Buildings on site**

***Are subsidies available to St. Modwen to support the retention or conversion of some buildings? Has this been looked into?***

No subsidies of the scale necessary to support the retention of some of the existing buildings are available to St. Modwen.

***Will St. Modwen publicly share 1) the feasibility work they have undertaken on the existing buildings and 2) their figures around the viability of the development?***

1) The feasibility work undertaken was submitted as part of the planning application in the CGMS 'Viability Report July 2015'. It is publicly available for anyone with an interest in the site via the Milton Keynes Council website or by visiting the Saxon Gate offices. 2) The viability appraisal is a commercially sensitive document which will not be made public. It will however be independently assessed and scrutinised by a Council-appointed 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultant, to ensure the assumptions and conclusions are robust. This is common practise in relation to developments and viability reports.

***Has St. Modwen investigated medium or long term prospects for potential occupiers (such as the mooted Milton Keynes University)?***

The cost of redeveloping the site will be considerable and St. Modwen has to ensure that it can secure tenants to support this. A great deal of work has been undertaken to consider potential occupiers and what their requirements would be. No interest has been expressed from the kinds of institutional use suggested in the question.

***Couldn't more of the existing buildings be retained, for example more of the façades as has been done on McQuocadale Drive?***

St. Modwen is already proposing to retain an element of the lifting shop for the heritage centre. Enclosed is a document which explains why it is not viable or practical to retain more of the existing buildings if the development is to go ahead.

## **Heritage centre**

### ***What will this centre be?***

It is too early to say what this centre will be like but the aspiration is that it will allow artefacts and information about Wolverton Works to be presented in a dedicated heritage and community centre located in a partially converted building, forming a key focal point within the redeveloped site

### ***Who would be responsible for the operation of the heritage centre?***

It is too early in the process to be able to say who would manage the heritage centre or how this be operated. Discussions will take place with potential interested operators at the appropriate time. However St. Modwen are keen to ensure that this facility does not conflict with Milton Keynes Museum and will continue discussions with them.

### ***How will the viability and financial sustainability of the centre be handled?***

Decisions about ongoing funding will take place once an operator has been secured.

### ***Who will be responsible for the salvaging of artefacts from the existing buildings for use in the centre?***

The inspection of the site and reclamation of heritage artefacts is ongoing at the moment. This process is being closely managed by St. Modwen and Knorr-Bremse.

### ***Where would the Bloomer engine go?***

There is the potential that this could be included as part of the heritage centre but no discussions have been had with its owners to date about that specific opportunity.

### ***Whose idea was the heritage centre?***

As part of stakeholder and public consultation, St. Modwen had a number of discussions on the general idea of the heritage centre with many parties including Milton Keynes Museum. St. Modwen is aware however that, quite separately, individuals in the town had developed their own detailed plans as to how they wanted to take the heritage centre forward personally.

St. Modwen has not been seeking to develop any details for the heritage centre at this stage as its delivery is several years away due to the phasing programme.

## **Stratford Road wall**

### ***What will happen to the wall around the site?***

It is proposed that the existing perimeter wall of Wolverton Works is left largely intact, given its prominence and character. There is also a need to keep the wall in place around the parts of the site which will still be used for employment.

However, elements of the wall will be removed around the eastern part of the site to allow access to, and visibility of, the new foodstore.

### 3. Other

#### Canal

##### ***Will there be views of the canal through the development?***

The development has been proposed to allow breaks in the built form to enable views across to the canal. A new path is also proposed to run along the back of the site in parallel to the canal which everyone will have access to.

##### ***What will be done to mark the heritage of the canal?***

Educational heritage display boards will be placed along the Stratford Road wall to provide information about the heritage of the site, including the canal. Public spaces will also be characterised by railway features with artefacts used for public art, street lighting, signs, benches etc. There is also the potential for internal street names to reflect the railway heritage of the site.

##### ***Could a footbridge over the canal be provided?***

There is already a bridge over the canal close to the western edge of the site. There is no support from the Canal & River Trust, who own the canal, to fund, support the delivery of, or manage a bridge in this location. Huge level differences between this site and the canal edge would also make the physical logistics of a bridge here, particularly expensive and difficult.

##### ***Will there be any changes to the access to the canal?***

The land which would be required to access the canal is not within the ownership of St. Modwen. No changes to how the towpath is accessed are proposed within this planning application.

##### ***Why is a marina not being proposed as a part of the redevelopment of the site?***

The land which would be required for this is not within the ownership of St. Modwen.

#### Royal Train

The Royal Train is currently based at Wolverton Works and St. Modwen is fully aware of the existing agreements relating to its upkeep and maintenance.

#### General

***Why can't St. Modwen be more like Places for People, who produced a development that goes with the grain of Wolverton's historic buildings?***

The Wolverton Park scheme was heavily subsidised. Despite this subsidy, the developers still struggled to find occupiers for the residential and commercial properties due to the type of space provided and the associated rents and purchase prices.

***Why isn't St. Modwen linking with local voluntary and community sector to see how they could be part of the development?***

The public consultation undertaken in 2014 was open to everyone to come and talk through any ideas for the site; there has been ongoing community engagement since then.

As this is an outline planning application, there is still much more detailed work to be done to work out how the buildings will look and how they will be used so there would be many more opportunities to have these types of discussions with interested parties.

***Where will future residents work?***

Future residents will be very much like other Wolverton residents in that they may work locally around the town or they may use the very close train station or easy to access buses to travel to Milton Keynes or beyond to get to work.