

**Future Wolverton (formerly Wolverton Steering Group)  
Strategy and Action Plan**

**2011 – 2015**

## **Introduction**

Wolverton Steering Group was established in 2004 to act as the principal forum for local residents, businesses and voluntary and community organisations to meet with statutory agencies involved in the regeneration and development of Wolverton.

In October 2013, the Steering Group made the decision to change from being an unincorporated (informal) organisation to being registered as an Industrial and Provident Society.

An Industrial and Provident Society is a legal structure adopted by not for profit businesses and voluntary organisations. This legal structure allows us to trade for the benefit of the broader community of Wolverton, so we are also described as a Community Benefit Society.

For the purposes of this Strategy and Action Plan, “Wolverton” refers to an area including the town of Wolverton, its environs and hinterland.

## **Vision**

Future Wolverton’s objects are to establish Wolverton as a thriving and sustainable town within the city of Milton Keynes: a town with an active and involved community which celebrates its’ past and seeks to protect and enhance the unique heritage whilst developing new business, housing and community facilities to ensure future prosperity.

The objects draw heavily upon the “Future Wolverton Vision” developed by the local community during the Market Towns Healthcheck process in 2002/3, and the “Refreshing the Vision” process which reviewed this original vision and took place during 2010.

## **Action Plan**

During 2010 Wolverton Steering Group took the lead in “refreshing” the Future Wolverton Vision which was developed by the local community during the Market Towns Healthcheck process in 2002/3. The “Refreshing the Vision” process was led by local community representatives and involved a series of themed workshops and expert panels. The process enabled the priorities of the original vision to be reviewed and progress celebrated, and resulted in a new 5 year Action Plan being devised and agreed.

This action plan has 6 main themes:

- **Theme 1 - Spaces and Places** – making the most of what we have and aspiring to radical change where necessary
- **Theme 2 - Engaging new audiences** – reaching out in the right way
- **Theme 3 - Identity and design** – having a clear sense of who and what we are
- **Theme 4 - Connections and Linkages** – finding our place in Milton Keynes and beyond
- **Theme 5 - Communication and marketing** – getting the message across
- **Theme 6 - Volunteers, resources and leadership** – Who? What? How?

The main aspects that are covered by the current Action Plans can be summarised as:

Theme 1 – Spaces & places

- Co-ordinating the development of an Area Action Plan to support the redevelopment of key sites within the Town Centre
- Working with major land/ building owners to improve their existing offer and ensure that future development opportunities are implemented in partnership with the community
- Supporting a local housing needs survey and co-ordinating input into the Council's Housing strategy and any plans for major housing developments
- Reviewing services offered by Wolverton Library and education/training providers in the Town Centre
- Reviewing and improving the range and condition of sports and leisure facilities
- Supporting the improvement of green infrastructure and wildlife habitats

Theme 2 – Engaging new audiences

- Overseeing the development of an Annual Programme of Events and a Wolverton Heritage Week
- Supporting improvement to the creative cultural offer and opportunities available to help engage youth and ethnic minorities with Wolverton's heritage
- Supporting the development of events to promote Wolverton's diverse, ethnic food offer, for instance through a Wolverton Food Festival
- Supporting the promotion of Wolverton as a place to do business

Theme 3 – Identity and Design

- Co-ordinating urban design support so that the town's unique identity translates into coherent improvements to the public realm/street furniture and signage
- Overseeing the provision of advice on conservation issues and on combining conservation with energy efficiency and low carbon with maintaining the heritage of the area
- Supporting the improvement of the gateways into the Town

#### Theme 4 – Connections and linkages

- Co-ordinating the development of “Walkable Wolverton” through maps, signage, leaflets and new technologies
- Co-ordinating the improvement of the footpath/cycle lane network to surrounding urban and rural areas
- Overseeing improvements to bus and rail links

#### Theme 5 – Communication and Marketing

- Overseeing the development of a Wolverton Brand and Wolverton web portal
- Supporting the co-ordination and promotion of events and businesses
- Improving information available about local services and opportunities to young people, older people and the ethnic minority community

#### Theme 6 – Volunteers, Resources and leadership

- Identifying funding to support a range of action plan projects
- Encouraging networking and sharing of experience amongst existing groups
- Supporting the development of business advice and guidance

The full 5 year Action Plan is detailed below.

**Theme 1 - Spaces and Places – Making the most of what we have and aspiring to radical change where necessary**

	Quick wins	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
<b>Town Centre (Stratford Rd, Church Street, The Square)</b>	Window shutters – project to enhance the look of the Town Centre by painting shop shutters and improving the look of empty shops	Consider options for re-introducing a shop front initiative to improve and enhance the character of the Town Centre	Investigate funding opportunities for improvement of shop fronts	Implementation of shop front improvement project
	Parking provision in the Town Centre considered as part of Traffic Review work	Review options for improvements to movement of traffic, pedestrians and cycles in the town centre	Consider longer term structural changes to layout road/pedestrian/cycle network in Town Centre	Plans for improvement to parking, road network and pedestrian and cycle flow in town centre in place (linked to Agora redevelopment plan)
		Develop/extend Town Trail and supporting information/interpretation		
		Proactive review of service offered by Wolverton Library and options for wider community involvement in service delivery		Investigation of options for developing adult education/training provision in the Town Centre
		Investigation of services required by older people in central Wolverton	Development of plan for new service provision for older people	

<b>Agora</b>	Work with MKC (freeholder), WGTC and SERCO to improve the condition and use of the Agora car park	Development of a working partnership with owners of Agora and other freeholders in the Town Centre with a view to making incremental changes to enhance the look and feel of the Town	Review of Agora Development Brief with a view to making progress on major change to the Town Centre	Agora redevelopment Plan in place with potential partners identified and funding options explored
<b>Highways</b>	<p>Wolverton Traffic Review – possible quick wins on buses on Church Street, one-way streets, traffic calming on Stratford Rd towards station, signage</p> <p>Meeting with MK Council Highways Dept and all interested parties to discuss implementation of highways work and conservation area issues</p>	<p>Piloting of different options on Residential Parking Schemes – to test out and see what works and doesn't work!</p> <p>Study of Backways – and as an internal network of “redways” within Wolverton</p> <p>Review feasibility of planting street trees at regular intervals on streets with no trees, to deliver shading and as a traffic calming measure</p>	<p>Introduction of Resident Parking Schemes across Wolverton</p> <p>Consult over areas of Wolverton where “home zone” style approach to traffic management might work – possibly linked to “Street by Street Project”</p> <p>Street tree planting programme up and running</p>	<p>Feasibility study to assess possible take up of Car Share/Car Clubs in Wolverton area</p> <p>Consider the possibility of a community parking site – away from residential streets - possibly on Wolverton Works side of Stratford Road</p>
<b>Health Centre</b>	Detailed design for new Health centre agreed Health Centre promotes establishment of Patient	Construction work begins on new Health Centre	New Health Centre fully open	

	Participation Forum (PPG)			
<b>Canal/Railway</b>	Towpath - British Waterways/MKC towpath improvements at Old Wolverton	Development of project to promote industrial heritage of the area and link key sites Iron Trunk Aqueduct, Grand Union Canal, Railway Walk, Secret Garden and Holy Trinity Church  Iron Trunk Aqueduct – centenary celebrations in 2011	Establish walkway link between Secret Garden and new pub/restaurant at Wolverton Park  Re-investigate the possibility of ramped access at the Iron Trunk Aqueduct/Ouse Valley Park to allow for wheelchair and cycle access	Ensure any new development of Wolverton Works site includes new access links to the Canal and Ouse Valley Park
<b>Community facilities</b>	Make links with the new Polish Community Centre at Millmead Hall  Young people running outreach café over the summer holiday with a view to developing the	Review options for provision of community space in Old Wolverton  Work with young people to consider options for Youth Cafe run by and for young people  Review plans for developing a central booking and caretaking facility for all public buildings in the Wolverton area	Development of new Community Centre and building for Living Archive as part of the Tesco development	Opening of new Community centre and building for Living Archive

<p><b>Cultural facilities</b></p>	<p>Work with MADCAP to consider the future of their successful Music Project and how it might be extended to meet the needs of young people.</p>	<p>Develop plans for a “Creative Community Campus” in the Town Centre involving MADCAP, St George’s Church, Independent Cinema MK, MK Christian Foundation &amp; Living Archive</p> <p>Opening of Radcliffe Exhibition at MK Museum</p>	<p>Living Archive to develop a collection strategy for Wolverton – possibly linked to their new building or to the library</p> <p>Opening of new telephone galley at MK Museum</p>	<p>Funding for “creative Campus” secured and development begins</p> <p>Opening of Children’s Museum, Toy Gallery and Play area at MK Museum</p>
<p><b>Sports facilities</b></p>	<p>Work with existing sports organisations to develop sessions for all age groups to plug gap in provision for young people</p> <p>Level out field at Victoria St/Stacey Ave park for football pitches</p>	<p>Review sports provision and gaps in the Wolverton area</p> <p>Look at options for Leisure Centre provision as part of development of the West End of Wolverton</p> <p>Work with local clubs to develop rugby &amp; football for girls</p>	<p>Develop plans for a Wolverton Leisure Centre located in Western Rd Recreation Ground - extending the existing facilities – football / basket ball / badminton / rugby etc. Indoor &amp; outdoor spaces - offering a mixture of structured and informal sessions.</p>	



<b>Housing</b>	Housing Needs Survey carried out to investigate unmet housing issues in the area	Discussions with MKC about the future of Council housing stock, especially Orchard House and The Gables  Discussions with major land owners, i.e. St Modwen, about future housing development	Discussions about housing options for Central Wolverton as part of a reconsideration of the Agora Development Brief	
<b>Parks, green spaces and play areas</b>	Improvements to play facilities at Victoria St/Stacey Avenue Park	Look at provision of Basket ball hoops in local parks throughout the area  Look at options for provision of Skate Park/MUGA  Review potential for enhancing open spaces that do not have existing plans  Discussions with MKC & MKPT about habitat creation e.g. wildflower meadows	More basketball hoops installed in locations across the area  Plans for Skate Park/MUGA progressed including identification of site and potential funding Wolverton  Project plans developed for habitat creation and funding secured	Skate Park/MUGA constructed and opened for use  Habitat creation projects carried out in locations across the Wolverton area

**Theme 2 – Engaging new audiences – Reaching out in the right way**

	Quick wins	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
<b>Visitors</b>	<p>Publicise events website to organisations within the Wolverton area to increase listings on it</p> <p>Promote events website to local people through newsletter</p> <p>Produce annual programme of events in Wolverton which can be displayed on Town Council notice boards</p>	<p>Supporting Wolverton’s Heritage organisations to have a strong presence during the National Heritage Open Days in May and September 2012</p> <p>MK Museum to introduce a “Wolverton Day” with free entry to residents of the area</p>	<p>Wolverton Heritage Week with a theme of “Beyond the Railway” – looking at Old Wolverton, Bancroft etc</p>	<p>Promotion of Wolverton’s heritage offer to wider MK</p> <p>Consider provision of Hotel accommodation as part of the St Modwen development of the Works site</p>
<b>Schools</b>	<p>Promoting the Radcliffe Community Programme to arts and heritage organisations throughout the area</p> <p>Workshop for local schools with heritage organisations to promote materials already available and get feedback on what teachers need</p>	<p>Co-ordinating the involvement of community activity in &amp; with schools and faith communities through an event such as the Wolverton Heritage Day</p>	<p>Develop variety of new Wolverton themed information (available on-line) for schools and teachers</p>	<p>Roll-out work in Wolverton schools to other schools throughout MK</p>

<p><b>Young people</b></p>	<p>Taster sessions, both sports &amp; arts delivered by MaD &amp; Sports Development</p>	<p>Arts &amp; heritage organisations locally offering ½ term experiences to young people</p> <p>Involve young people in staging their own event for young people throughout the area</p>	<p>Case studies of young people “written-up” and published in local newsletter and press - to show how young people have ‘developed’ through their creative Wolverton experiences</p>	
<p><b>Business</b></p>	<p>Case studies of local businesses in the Newsletter as promotion of what they offer</p> <p>Business Breakfast hosted by Verandah Talk to discuss shutter painting programme and signage issues</p> <p>Feasibility study to identify premises for an enterprise hub in Wolverton including a survey of local needs</p>	<p>Series of events to showcase the diverse range of shops/businesses/enterprises in the area – for instance a Wolverton Food Festival highlighting the range of specialist/ethnic foods available</p> <p>Securing funding/support to open an Enterprise Hub</p>	<p>An weekend event showcasing Wolverton as a place to do business – current successful businesses marketing the Town to others</p> <p>Development of support services offered by Enterprise Hub</p> <p>Discussions with Tesco on development of an Indoor Market on Stratford Rd</p>	

### Theme 3 - Identity and design – Having a clear sense of who and what we are

	Quick wins	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
<b>Professional urban design support</b>	Celebrate architectural significance of existing buildings through a Buildings trail/guide	Review of Wolverton Design Guide	Funding secured to “buy in” professional Urban Design support to look at all aspects of town and identity and develop a coherent design plan	Urban designers support work with St Modwen to consider community ambitions for development of Works site
<b>Gateways</b>	<p>Britain in Bloom improvements to planting at Gateways</p> <p>Local people/businesses to “adopt” and look after public displays near their premises</p>	<p>Review of ideas to-date on Gateways to the Town and agreement on simple improvements to the public realm at each “entrance” which could happen in the short-term</p> <p>Station development to include a serious look at the landscaping and other gateway issues associated with the site</p>	McConnell Drive Gateway Project begins using section 106 from Tesco development	Plans in place for improvements to two other key gateways into the Town (Station and Gloucester Road linked to Station development and Health centre development)
<b>Public realm</b>	Signage & Street Furniture Review – gathering of MKC, Town Council, WSAH,	Programme of maintenance of existing street furniture		

	<p>Businesses to look at signage issues across the Town centre and beyond and a agree programme of removal/renewal/enhancement</p> <p>A Town Centre “Blitz” to tidy-up “grot spots”</p> <p>“Murmur”- series of notices around the town inviting people to ring a number and hear a clip/voice/noise as part of sound archive of Wolverton – linked to existing Town Trail</p>	<p>Make Wolverton a cycle &amp; pedestrian focused Town – with provision of bike racks, street markings/signage for priority to cyclists &amp; pedestrians</p> <p>Planting of more street trees and tree adoption programme by local people</p>		
<b>Streets</b>		<p>“Street by Street Project” begins – to promote friendly competition/collaboration between streets (possibly linked to existing projects like BiB)</p>	<p>Urban Design support for Street by Street Project – competition to come up with a street identity and bid for design support</p>	<p>2/3 streets transformed through the “Street by Street Project” - unique identity created by use of street furniture, signage, art, sculpture, play equipment on streets!</p>

<b>Backways</b>		Role of Backways in Wolverton considered linked to Residential Parking Schemes and provision of pedestrian/cycle network	Piloting of a number of approaches to backway improvement/enhancement (linked to “Street by Street Project)	
<b>Buildings</b>	<p>Conservation Committee established as a forum for dialogue between MKC and local people on Conservation issues. Committee to offer “open surgery times” to local residents considering a planning application for informal advice.</p> <p>Showcase energy options for a Victorian House in a Conservation Area</p>	<p>Conservation Committee to consider how to balance desire for conservation with desire to reduce the carbon footprint of existing housing.</p> <p>Undertake feasibility study of potential renewable energy options, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replacing existing gas boilers with biomass boilers in public buildings (e.g. Town Hall/Library, Foundation House, etc.)</li> <li>• retrofitting a district heating scheme</li> <li>• wind turbine(s) in</li> </ul>	<p>Conservation Committee to develop and publish and a range of information for local residents on specific topics including development of green energy options for older buildings.</p> <p>Secure funding for the development of “Model Home” as a showcase for how to make a Victorian home energy efficient</p>	<p>Secure financial support to deliver a grants scheme which will enable improvements to properties throughout the Conservation area.</p> <p>Ensure any new development on the Works site incorporates Combined Heat &amp; Power and District heating schemes</p>

		<p>vicinity of town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anaerobic digestion of green waste at the Urb Farm to produce bio-gas for new building</li></ul> <p>Feasibility study of street-scale energy efficiency measures</p> <p>Assess feasibility of green roofs on public buildings (e.g. Foundation House)</p> <p>Advice/support service for residents and potential small-scale developers on compliance with Conservation Area</p>		
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#### Theme 4 - Connections and linkages – Finding our place in Milton Keynes and beyond

	Quick wins	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
<b>Links to countryside</b>	Promotion of “Walkable Wolverton” by publication of leaflets on local walks/links with countryside – also available as mobile phone downloads	New local maps and signposting linked to Wolverton Heritage Week	Improvements to pavements/backways which lead to the surrounding Countryside as part of MKC programme	Extension of redways into and out of Wolverton  Bridge over the canal at The Secret Garden  Work with St Modwen/MKC Urban Design to ensure good links across the canal as part of any development of the Railway Works site
<b>Access to public transport</b>	Station Travel Plan – feasibility work begins linked to new station development (looking at all issues to do with signage/public transport interchange at station)  Installation of new signage at MK Museum giving visitors directions to Wolverton Station/buses	Review of bus stops throughout the area and bus facilities at the Agora with a view to developing plans for a proper bus interchange  Integrated Travel map – connecting bus routes / walks / train / cycle path to places of interest / shops / etc.	Development of plans for a new public transport hub in central Wolverton  Wolverton Community Transport feasibility work – a fleet of electric buses in and around Wolverton?	Web site to hook up with al signs / maps / info in the area  Improvements to Stratford Rd to Station for people and bikes  Funding secured for new public transport hub in central Wolverton – possibly linked to Town Centre redevelopment?



		Review, development and promotion of School Travel Plans	Map boards to be sited in a number of places round the town – Tesco's / community centre/ station / Wolverton Sq / Greenleys local centre / Health centre / pool	
<b>Links with Greenleys &amp; other parts of hinterland</b>	Signposting to Greenleys and surrounding areas reviewed as part of Signage & Street Furniture Review	Work with Greenleys residents to develop distinctive signage scheme for the area  Repair and maintenance of redway links between Wolverton, Greenleys, Wolverton Mill, Old Wolverton  Underpasses - Extend partnership of students & artists to underpasses throughout the area		

**Theme 5 - Communication and marketing – Getting the message across**

	Quick win	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
A Brand for Wolverton	Development of specific “Brand” for Wolverton with support from PfP (workshop of all local organisations)	Secure funding for and develop a portal for Wolverton www. Ilovewolverton.com  Wolverton promoted as a creative place through gateway signage – “Wolverton the creative centre of MK”  Welcome Pack produced using brand developed and promoting website	Review Town Council Newsletter production with a view to offering more community support	
Bring artists and cultural groups together	Wolverton Mingle – regular gathering at MADCAP for local artists/cultural organisations to share information and network  “What’s On Board” in Town Hall to highlight artistic, cultural & heritage events	“Virtual forum” created as part of mingle events		

Telling young people what is going on!	Local school actively promoting young people who are involved in community activities	Marketing local events and opportunities to young people through text, websites, leaflets , facebook		
Bringing business together	Launch of the new Wolverton Business and Enterprise Alliance to represent the interests of the wide range of business interests within the Wolverton area	On-line business directory available through Wolverton portal		
Developing links between education and business		Regular forum for schools and business to meet and share opportunities to work together for Wolverton		
Promoting business	Promotion of Amazing Waste Project  Survey to understand local shopping habits	News signs throughout the Town Centre telling visitors and residents which shops are where!  A Wolverton Loyalty Card scheme to promote local shopping together with a guide on “How to make the most of your local shops”	Event to showcase Wolverton as a place to do business – “Business Weekend”	

**Theme 6 - Volunteers, resources & leadership – Who? What? How?**

	Quick wins	Short term (2011/12)	Medium term (3 years)	Long term (5 years)
Pooling resources	MKCVO to clarify their “offer” to local groups in terms of support/advice on finding funding	<p>Funding identified/secured to pump prime good ideas/projects in the Action Plan</p> <p>Creative Campus to look at feasibility of joint fundraising bids to maximize Wolverton’s cultural offer.</p> <p>Agreement with MK Council and other partners on priorities for use of section 106 planning gain from Tesco re-development</p> <p>Regular gathering of community organisations to look at funding opportunities and ensure co-ordination</p>	<p>Agreement as to how the Carbon Offset from the Tesco development should be used, possibly through scheme which supports the use of green energy by public buildings</p>	

Supporting volunteering	Radcliffe Community Programme developing opportunities for learning by young people and the wider community	<p>Training offered to all groups/volunteers locally on navigating rules/regulations – bespoke course designed to meet local needs</p> <p>Training on managing buildings (especially those within a Conservation Area)</p>		
Learning from one another	Regular networking between existing groups running festivals and events in the town to share ideas and offer mutual support	Development of Mentoring Scheme for young people & other community volunteers - possibly linked to Radcliffe's Community Programme	Wolverton Advice Circle established to support individual ideas & help establish new groups & initiatives	
Learning from others		Development of a Directory of informal and formal learning opportunities in the Wolverton area	Tailored advice and support for businesses in the area	

## **Monitoring and evaluating progress**

Evaluating progress against the Action Plan will form the basis of the bi-monthly meetings of the Board of Future Wolverton.

Each meeting will consider two Action Plan themes in detail, and seek to understand the progress made, where further work is needed and if there are any blockages to progress.

A public meeting will be held at least once a year so that progress can be shared with the wider community and questions answered.

The whole Action Plan will be reviewed annually and changes made to keep the document relevant and up-to-date with the priorities of the local community.

## **Conclusion**

The “Refreshing the Vision” process in 2010 enabled the priorities of the original community vision for Wolverton to be reviewed and progress celebrated, and has resulted in this new 5 year Action Plan which Future Wolverton is now working on.

Major challenges lie ahead for Wolverton, most especially in terms of the redevelopment of the Agora Shopping Centre and the long-term use of the Railway Works site, but Future Wolverton is focussed on grasping opportunities which arise and effective partnership working

For more information about any aspect of Future Wolverton’s work please contact us on [info@futurewolverton.org](mailto:info@futurewolverton.org)