

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	7 th January 2014
Report of:	Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Subject/Title:	Alderley Park Development Prospectus
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Don Stockton, Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks to outline the purpose and content of the Development Prospectus, attached as Appendix 1, and seeks endorsement of the Prospectus by Cheshire East Council.
- 1.2 The Development Prospectus has been produced to outline the intended 'direction of travel' in terms of future policy for the Alderley Park Site. That future policy is within the emerging Core Strategy which has recently been out to consultation. It is intended to provide guidance for potential investors, given that the site is being marketed before the Council's emerging policy for the site can be confirmed, via the adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 The report outlines how the contents of the Development Prospectus are entirely aligned with emerging planning policy for the site.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to receive and endorse the Alderley Park Development Prospectus as attached at Appendix 1 to assist with the marketing of the site.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Following AstraZeneca's announcement of their intention to withdraw their Research and Development (R&D) business from Alderley Park by 2016, the Alderley Park Task Force was established to try and ensure a successful and sustainable future for the site.
- 3.2 The Task Force identified that a Development Prospectus would be a useful vehicle to articulate the emerging vision for the future of the site.
- 3.3 The Prospectus is seen as an important high level document setting out the Council's aspirations for the site and the direction of travel of the emerging Development Plan policy, in a form which is readily digestible

by potential investors. It is seen as a document which should assist in securing a sustainable future for the site by assisting Government, potential funders, prospective investors and other major stakeholders to understand the Council's intended direction of travel regarding the development of the site, post the withdrawal of AstraZeneca's R&D activity.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 The site is located part within Chelford Ward, part within Prestbury Ward. However, ensuring a sustainable future for this site has potential implications for a wider area.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Councillor George Walton (Chelford), and Councillor Paul Findlow (Prestbury).

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The Prospectus takes full account of the emerging Council policy for this site as set out in the Pre-Submission Draft of the Core Strategy and is fully aligned with that draft policy.
- 6.2 That policy, and the contents of the Prospectus, are considered to be aligned to the Government's stated intention that the UK becomes a global hub for life sciences, capable of attracting and nurturing world-leading talent.
- 6.3 This proposal also accords with, and is complementary to the following:

*Ambition for All: Sustainable Communities Strategy 2010-2025: Priority 2
Create conditions for business growth*

- Harness emerging growth opportunities;
- Create a climate attractive to business investment.

Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2011-2013

Objective 2: Grow and develop a sustainable Cheshire East:

- Foster economic growth and regeneration through providing the right environment for businesses to grow.

Cheshire East Economic Development Strategy

- Ensure that Cheshire East maintains and enhances its role as a 'knowledge economy';

- Facilitate economic growth through progressing schemes that will create jobs and improve the attractiveness of the area as a place to invest, live and visit;
- Macclesfield and its hinterland sustain their current position as one of the most successful parts of the regional economy.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council in endorsing this document.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from Cabinet approving the recommendation as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Failure to publish the Development Prospectus would miss an important opportunity to articulate the Council's ambitions in a manner that is coherent to potential investors, funders and other key stakeholders. This could reduce confidence in the Council's intention to support development on this site, in line with emerging policy, to the potential detriment of the economic wellbeing of the Borough.

- 9.2 Risks to the successful realisation of the vision for the site include:

- Site purchaser does not support Task Force vision;
- Low demand for life science activity on the site;
- Subsequent planning permissions for development being refused.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Following AstraZeneca's announcement of the planned withdrawal of their R&D operations from Alderley Park by 2016, a task force was established to consider how best to secure sustainable high value employment and investment on this major employment site. The Alderley Park Task Force, chaired jointly by the Vice President of AstraZeneca and the Government's Life Sciences Business Advisor, comprises representatives of key stakeholder groups including Cheshire East Council (represented by Councillor Michael Jones, Leader), Cheshire and Warrington LEP, Manchester City Council and the University of Manchester.

- 10.2 The Task Force aims to secure a sustainable future of the site which:

- Ensures that full advantage is taken of the opportunities the facilities on site offer;
- Retains highly skilled professional employment in the region;

- Supports existing supply chains and related businesses to minimise negative impacts from the scaling back of operations by AstraZeneca; and
 - Ensures that future development on the site is of an appropriate high quality, encouraging investment and employment opportunities in a manner which maximise benefits for the North West region as a whole.
- 10.3 The existing use of the site for pharmaceutical research and development falls within the wider sector of the life science industry. This is a high-tech, innovative and highly diverse industry, spanning pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, analytics, diagnostics, contract research, contract manufacturing, medical devices and healthcare plus specialist support and supplier companies.
- 10.4 Having regard to the existing world class facilities on site and the ongoing evolution of the life sciences/biomedical sector, the emerging vision for the future of the site is for it to become a life science park, transforming from a single occupier to a cluster of life science businesses which complement and support existing and planned science facilities across the wider region. There continues to be a high level of market interest from companies wishing to locate to the BioHub already established on site. BioHub gives small companies in the life science sector access to the world class facilities on the site, whilst remaining entirely independent. All stakeholders agree that a successful future of BioHub will be paramount for the overall sustainability of the site and in delivering the future vision.
- 10.5 In order that a clear statement of intent for the site may be provided in a readily digestible format, the Task Force agreed that a Development Prospectus be produced.
- 10.6 The aims of the Development Prospectus are to:
- Summarise the unique opportunities the site offers;
 - Set out a clear vision for the site;
 - Demonstrate to bidders the commitment of major stakeholders to the vision;
 - Map out the intended planning process for the adoption of the relevant policy in the Core Strategy and more detailed guidance in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document;
 - Set out some high level principles indicating how the site's development might be realised in spatial terms.
- 10.7 The Development Prospectus is needed to indicate the 'direction of travel'. The existing planning policy position (set out in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan of 2004) is out of date and relies on the assumption that AstraZeneca would continue to occupy the site. Allied with this, the emerging policy position in the Pre Submission Core Strategy is unlikely to be confirmed until late 2014.

- 10.8 The Development Prospectus reiterates the vision for the site, as set out in draft policy CS29 (Alderley Park Opportunity Site) of the emerging Core Strategy of the Local Plan. That draft policy is attached as Appendix 2.
- 10.9 The draft policy supports the development of a life science cluster at Alderley Park but, acknowledges that the demand may not exist to support a life science centre of a scale comparable with the existing quantum of development on site. As such, the policy supports other uses where they are either demonstrated to be 'necessary' for the delivery of life science activities, or where they are 'complementary' to that core use. In addition, the policy requires that those uses accord with a Planning Brief/Site Masterplan, which it is intended to produce and adopt as Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the policy.
- 10.10 The Prospectus in no way seeks to predetermine or undermine the Local Plan process. Comments received in relation to policy CS29 as a result of the recent consultation on the Pre-Submission Core Strategy, will be considered in the normal way and the policy may be refined as a result.
- 10.11 The draft policy is not explicit regarding the quantum of different uses on site. It is envisaged that the SPD will define this more clearly. The Core Strategy policy and the associated SPD will together set out a clear and detailed picture of what development will be acceptable on this site in terms of siting, quantum, land use and design.
- 10.12 The Task Force has commissioned a study to assess the likely demand for life science floorspace on this site. As set out in the Prospectus, that study indicates an anticipated demand for in the order of 65,000 sq metres net lettable area in the period to 2030.
- 10.13 The Prospectus steers away from identifying any specific quantum of development space to be identified for other land uses. Instead it makes it clear that establishing a life science cluster is the priority and with regard to other uses, it makes it clear they will only be allowed if meeting the tests set out in emerging development plan policy.
- 10.14 The potential opportunities are broad at this stage. 'Necessary' land uses are envisaged to be limited high value uses (such as residential development), where it can be demonstrated that they can raise essential finance to enable life science businesses. 'Complementary' land uses could include such uses as:
- Company Headquarters, or other business space;
 - General industry & storage and distribution where the business involved in supplying, producing or storing goods relate to life sciences and the scale, nature and location of the operation does not detract from the prestigious character of the site;
 - Leisure;

- Small scale ancillary retail / food and drink uses, limited to a size which would be viable serving only the needs of the other occupiers on site;
- Residential and non-residential institutions where the use is related to healthcare or learning institutions.

It is envisaged that a more definitive list be included in the Supplementary Planning Document.

- 10.15 It is important to note that, in addition to seeking to control land use within the site, in view of the its location within the Green Belt, the draft policy also seeks to ensure the area of developed land is not increased and protects the visual amenity of the Green Belt. It also sets out that development must respect the site's many heritage and landscape assets. The Prospectus makes these expectations clear.
- 10.16 The Development Prospectus has been considered by all members of the Task Force, and it is hoped will be fully endorsed by them all.
- 10.17 Cabinet are therefore asked to support and endorse the Prospectus attached.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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