

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	6 th January 2015
Report of:	Director for Economic Growth and Prosperity
Subject/Title:	Alderley Park Development Framework Ref. CE 14/15-36
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Don Stockton, Housing and Jobs

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 As a major strategic employment site within Cheshire East, Alderley Park is of paramount importance to the local economy and plays a pivotal role in the wider North West science ecosystem. Indeed, its comprehensive infrastructure offering are strong differentiators from competitor science parks, and much of the facilities and assets on site are unique in Europe.
- 1.2 As set out in the Alderley Park Development Prospectus, endorsed by Cabinet on the 7th January 2014, the emerging vision for the site post the planned withdrawal of AstraZeneca's R&D staff, is for the site to become a life science park, transforming from a single occupier to a cluster of life science businesses which continue to complement and support life science facilities across the wider region.
- 1.3 The site's integral position within the wider North West life science ecosystem is demonstrated in its inclusion within the emerging Greater Manchester and Cheshire Life Science Strategy. The site's importance to the sub-regional economy has also been recognised in the commitment by MSP, AstraZeneca, and the Council to invest £5m each in the Alderley Park Investment Fund. These investments have subsequently been matched by a £20m contribution from central government through the Local Growth Fund, to promote the growth of life science businesses in the sub-region.
- 1.4 In March 2014 the site was sold to Manchester Science Partnerships (MSP). MSP has considerable experience in running science parks in the sub region and has been refining a business plan for Alderley Park. This envisages a proposed investment of some £107m over a 10 year period to improve the site, repurpose existing buildings to make them suitable for multi-occupancy; decommission redundant facilities, and invest in both maintenance and improvement of key service assets to retain the site's world class R&D capabilities.

- 1.5 As a major tenant on the site, AstraZeneca's decant programme is progressing and the new site owners, Manchester Science Partnerships are looking to begin the remodelling and repurposing of the site to make it suitable for multiple-occupiers as soon as possible. MSP need to act quickly to ensure the employment talent associated with AstraZeneca can be redeployed on site before former employees become dissipated and the opportunity to retain them at Alderley Park is lost. In order to facilitate this, they are looking to release some areas of the site for development to raise funds to support the establishment of the Life Science Park. There is therefore a need for guidance to assist those seeking planning permission for future development on the Alderley Park site.
- 1.6 This report therefore seeks to outline the purpose and content of the Alderley Park Development Framework (Consultation Draft), attached as Appendix 1, and seeks endorsement of the Framework as a consultation document.
- 1.7 The Framework builds on the vision for the site set out in the Development Prospectus and continues to focus on the site as an "independent, self-sustaining, world-class hub for life sciences, acting as an anchor for the sector in the North West"¹. The Framework seeks to ensure potential developers are clear of the Council's overriding ambitions for a Life Science Park on this site with other development being limited to that which supports the establishment of the Park.
- 1.8 It is intended that following a period of consultation, the document be reviewed and returned to Cabinet in Spring 2015 for final approval to be a material consideration in determining future planning applications.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to

1. approve the attached Development Framework as a consultation draft to be subjected to public consultation; and
2. agree to review the Development Framework document following public consultation (Spring 2015) alongside a summary of key points raised in representations, and to consider endorsing the final version of the document as a material consideration when determining future planning applications on the site.

¹ Alderley Park Development Prospectus (2014), Alderley Park Taskforce.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 AstraZeneca's phased decant of the site in advance of their move to Cambridge in late 2016 is currently progressing at pace and is approximately six months ahead of schedule. The consolidation of their activity on site to a smaller footprint is freeing up areas of the site well in advance of the original timetable and the new owner, Manchester Science Partnerships (MSP) now has access to these areas of the site earlier than expected.
- 3.2 Whilst the early availability of space is positive and helpful for the development of new businesses on site, it brings forward the need for investment earlier than anticipated. It is critical that work is undertaken to remodel the site without delay so that talent and skills associated with AstraZeneca can be redeployed on site before becoming dissipated and to ensure that the world class facilities on site are maintained and do not become obsolete. As a result, MSP have expressed a need to bring forward Phase 1 of their investment strategy and deliver a significant capital investment to maintain and upgrade existing assets by the end of 2015.
- 3.3 As expressed in the Alderley Park Development Prospectus (2014), it was originally proposed that in parallel to the examination and adoption of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, a Masterplan/Development Brief be produced for the site, to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document or similar, in line with the new policy (CS29) post adoption of the Local Plan Strategy.
- 3.4 However, through discussions with MSP, it is evident that the above approach is no longer appropriate and will not be delivered quickly enough to align with AstraZeneca's decant timetable and the need to develop areas of the site in the short term.
- 3.5 As such, it has been determined that a Development Framework be presented to Cabinet for approval to provide guidance for developers. Under this model, the Framework would be a material consideration when determining any planning applications which may be submitted relating to the site whether pre or post adoption of the Local Plan Strategy. It is intended that the existing Planning Brief for the site, which dates back to 1999 and is now out of date, is formally withdrawn as a Supplementary Planning Document.

4 Wards Affected

- 4.1 The Alderley Park site is part located in the wards of Chelford and Prestbury.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Cllr George Walton (Chelford) and Cllr Paul Findlow (Prestbury)

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 The Framework is fully aligned with Policy CS29 in the Submission Draft of the Local Plan Strategy whilst still taking full account of current adopted local planning policy, as well as the NPPF. The Framework is also cognisant of the vision and parameters set out in the Alderley Park Development Prospectus, and is considered to be aligned to the Government's Strategy for UK Life Sciences.

6.2 The Framework is also complementary to the following corporate policies:

- 'Ambition for All: Sustainable Communities Strategy 2010-2025' – *Priority 2 Create conditions for business growth, harness emerging growth opportunities and create a climate attractive to business investment.*
- 'Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2013-2016' – *Outcome 2 Cheshire East has a strong and resilient local economy. Priority 1 – investment to support business growth.*

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

7.1 The location of Alderley Park, within the Prestbury and Chelford wards, means that a successful and sustainable future for the site is of benefit to the rural communities in the area in terms of job creation and retention.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council in endorsing this document for use in public consultation.

9.0 Legal Implications

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

9.2 The Council needs to be mindful of its duty to consult. There are four main circumstances in which a duty to consult will arise:

- a. Where consultation is required by statute;
- b. Where there has been a promise to consult;
- c. Where there is an established practice of consultation; and
- d. Where failure to consult would lead to "conspicuous unfairness".

- 9.4 In addition the public sector equality duty (“PSED”) applies to *all* decisions made by public authorities, whether those decisions have individual or general effect and requires that consultation be undertaken.
- 9.5 The following basic principles must be adhered to when consulting:
- a. Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - b. It must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
 - c. Adequate time must be given for this purpose; and
 - d. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 Not having any Framework in place could leave potential developers, investors and occupiers without a clear understanding of the planning framework and expectations of the Council as Local Planning Authority for this site. This could hinder the submission and smooth determination of planning applications potentially increasing developer’s costs leading to frustration with the local planning process. This could ultimately decrease the ability of MSP to provide suitable space for new start-up companies in an appropriate timescale and subsequent loss of skills and employment opportunities.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 Alderley Park is a major strategic employment site within the borough of key importance to the local economy and plays a pivotal role in the wider North West science ecosystem. Its comprehensive infrastructure means that it has a unique capability to support all phases of the drug development process.
- 11.2 The announcement in spring of last year of AstraZeneca’s planned withdrawal of the majority of their R&D activities from this site by 2016 was recognised at ministerial level as having potentially significant negative impacts on the sub-regional economy. It was also recognised that the key assets and unique attributes of the site must be maximised and its contribution to the economic wellbeing of Cheshire East and the sub-region saved. A Taskforce comprising key stakeholders from the public sector, industry, and academia, was rapidly established to consider how best to secure sustainable

high value employment and investment at this major employment site. The Taskforce commissioned studies to understand the implications of AstraZeneca's decision and to predict demand for floorspace for life science activities on the site going forward. They agreed a vision for the site focused on the site's transformation from a single user life science business, to an independent, self sustaining, world-class hub for life sciences, acting as an anchor for the sector in the North West.

- 11.3 That vision was set out in the Alderley Park Development Prospectus (endorsed by Cabinet on the 7th January 2014), which was used to help those bidding for the site to understand the vision of the Taskforce. In March 2014 Manchester Science Park (now Manchester Science Partnerships) successfully bid for the site. A key consideration in determining their success was the company's commitment to the Life Science Hub concept and their emphasis on retaining a science focus for the site.
- 11.4 The emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, via policy CS29, seeks to align the planning framework with the vision for the site set out by the Taskforce. Policy CS29 supports the repurposing of the site to a multi-user Life Science hub but also recognises the likely need to allow some other uses on site given the degree of existing floorspace exceeding anticipated future demand for Life Science activities. It also anticipates and supports the concept of high value residential development on parts of the site if this is demonstrated to be necessary to support the establishment of the Life Science Hub. Policy CS29 further envisages the production of a site Masterplan/Planning Brief to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document or similar to give further guidance to developers, investors and potential site occupiers regarding submission of future planning applications for development on this site.
- 11.5 In preparation for their withdrawal of R&D activities from the site by late 2016, AstraZeneca are currently in the process of decanting their activity from the site and handing over space to the new owners. This process is progressing at pace and is understood to be currently 6 months ahead of schedule. Whilst this presents MSP with a positive opportunity to bring forward and accelerate the delivery of new jobs in the areas that AstraZeneca have already vacated, it inevitably brings forward the need for investment earlier than anticipated to ensure that the world class facilities are maintained, and the site is remodelled to be suitable for multi-occupancy. In line with this, it is understood that MSP need to be on site with their first phase of capital investment by the end of 2015, to ensure that the vacated space is remodelled in a timely manner and is not left vacant. Not only will this prevent the decline of the facilities, but it will also ensure that there is enough high quality space to offer to those former AstraZeneca staff not moving to

Cambridge, so as to prevent their loss to employment opportunities elsewhere.

- 11.6 Given the decision to suspend the examination into the Local Plan Strategy, and the progress being made on the Alderley Park site, to await adoption of the Strategy before developing and adopting a Masterplan/Development Brief to align with CS29 would not enable production of planning guidance in time to fit with MSP's current timetable for remodelling of the site.
- 11.7 Although there is an existing Planning Brief for this site, adopted by Macclesfield Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1999, this is predicated on the assumption that AstraZeneca would continue to occupy and develop this site. This has therefore effectively become outdated by virtue of recent events.
- 11.8 It is, therefore, intended that this Development Framework, which outlines the Council's expectations for development proposals having regard to the current as well as emerging planning policy, is approved to guide any developer or investor considering development on the Alderley Park site and to aid smooth submission and processing of future planning applications.
- 11.9 As a major, longstanding site within the Nether Alderley locality, the site's future is likely to be of significant interest to the local community. It is important to ensure the views of local people and indeed statutory and other key technical consultees are sought and views taken into account before the document is progressed to be used in determining planning applications. It is proposed that the Draft Framework be presented for public consultation over a 6 week period commencing in January 2015. The document will be made available in a range of formats in public buildings and online, and will be advertised in the press in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 11.9 Following the consultation, the Framework will be re-submitted to Cabinet for final approval and endorsement for Development Management purposes in Spring 2015. The following indicative timeline is proposed:

Development of draft Framework and Masterplan	Autumn 2014
Cabinet approval for public consultation	6 th January 2015
Public consultation period	Jan – Feb 2015
Final Cabinet approval of Framework	Spring 2015
Outline planning application submitted	Spring/Summer 2015

12.0 Access to Information

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

Name: Adrian Fisher
Designation: Head of Strategic and Economic Planning
Tel No: 01270 686641
Email: Adrian.fisher@cheshireeast.gov.uk