

Alderley Park Development Framework Statement of Consultation

JANUARY 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Consultation sets out the details of publicity and consultation undertaken to prepare the Cheshire East Borough Council Alderley Park Development Framework to date, and outlines the further consultation proposed prior to finalisation and approval of that document.
- 1.2 Following AstraZeneca's announced planned withdrawal of their research and development function from the Alderley Park site, there is a need to ensure the site is appropriately repurposed if harmful impacts on the sub-regional economy are to be avoided. That repurposing is likely to generate proposals for development of parts of the site. The Alderley Park Development Framework is intended to provide planning guidance to assist potential developers in interpreting relevant planning policy when drawing up development proposals. It is intended that the Framework will be read alongside the adopted and emerging local plans, providing site specific planning guidance.
- 1.3 Given the timetable of AstraZeneca's withdrawal, there is a need to produce planning guidance to facilitate the appropriate and timely repurposing of the site. Whilst the Alderley Park Development Framework is not intended to have the full status of a Supplementary Planning Document it is still intended that a significant degree of consultation and publicity be undertaken to inform the Framework such that it can form a material consideration when determining future planning applications on the Alderley Park site.
- 1.4 Regulations 12 and 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the public participation requirements for producing formal Supplementary Planning Documents. These require that a 'Statement of Consultation' is made available alongside the Supplementary Planning Document for consideration. Whilst the Alderley Park Development Framework will not be adopted as a formal Supplementary Planning Document, this Statement of Consultation has nevertheless been prepared to outline the relevant consultation which has been and which will be carried out.
- 1.5 The Cheshire East Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted on 14th October 2010, sets out how Cheshire East Borough Council intends to involve all sectors of the community in the planning process. This includes stated intentions regarding consultation and opportunities

for public participation in the production of formal Supplementary Planning Documents.

2 Relevant consultation undertaken to date

2.1 The SCI outlines that ‘focused consultation with appropriate stakeholders may be undertaken’ during the pre-production evidence gathering stage. In the case of the Alderley Park Development Framework, the key relevant consultation and publicity undertaken to date is summarised below.

Consultation with key stakeholders through the Alderley Park Taskforce

2.2 In spring 2013, when AstraZeneca announced their intentions to withdraw their research and development function from the Alderley Park site by 2016, a taskforce comprising key stakeholders from the public sector, industry, and academia, was 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 also established a shared vision for the site, based on their extensive knowledge of the sector, the sub-regional economy and having regard to the studies they had commissioned. Aside from the Leader of Cheshire East Council, the Taskforce comprised:

- The Government’s Life Sciences Adviser
- The Vice President of AstraZeneca
- The Chair of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
- The Leader of Manchester City Council
- The Member of Parliament for Macclesfield
- The Chair of BioNow
- The President and Vice Chancellor, Manchester University (also a Non-Executive Board member of AstraZeneca)

2.3 The Alderley Park Development Framework (Consultation Draft) has been drawn up with the intention that it fully accords with and supports the realisation of the vision of this Taskforce.

Public consultation through the Local Plan Consultation process

2.4 As the vision of the Alderley Park Taskforce emerged, it was translated into an draft spatial planning policy in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy put out to public consultation in the **Cheshire East Pre-Submission Core Strategy** in November 2013. The form of that draft policy for the Alderley Park Site (Pre-Submission Core Strategy policy CS29) is set out in **Appendix A**. The consultation on the Cheshire East Pre-Submission Core Strategy took place between 5 November and 16 December 2013 and included the following:

- Stakeholders were invited by e-mail or letter to make representations, with full details of the consultation being available on Cheshire East's website. The e-mails were sent to 10,490 e-mail addresses and the letter was sent to 1,736 consultees, without an e-mail address. All stakeholders are

registered on Cheshire East's Consultation Portal. All Cheshire East Council Members and Town and Parish Councils in and adjoining Cheshire East were also sent e-mails and letters.

- The Pre-Submission Core Strategy was accessible through Cheshire East Council's Consultation Portal. Copies were also made available at all of the libraries in the Borough and at the Council's Customer Service Centres in Crewe and Macclesfield, Cheshire East Council's offices in Sandbach and the Planning Help Desk, Municipal Buildings, Crewe. Comments forms were also made available to take away at the above venues. Further copies were provided to all Cheshire East Council Members, all Town and Parish Councils, all MPs that cover the Cheshire East area, along with Natural England, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales.
- A press release which resulted in a number of articles being published in the press, as well as local radio coverage of the consultation and a number of articles placed on various local websites.

2.5 As a result of this extensive public consultation process on the Pre-Submission Core Strategy consultation 8,585 comments were received. Of these 74 comments are recorded on the consultation portal in relation to the proposed wording of draft policy CS29 relating to the allocation of Alderley Park as an Opportunity Site.

2.6 Key issues raised related to:

- General support for retention of Life Science facility on the site;
- More mixed response to concept of mixed redevelopment on the site but some support in a number of representations for the concept of limited housing supporting life sciences;
- Concern regarding any scope for development on currently undeveloped areas of the site;
- Concerns regarding impact on the character of Nether Alderley;
- Concern regarding negative impact on infrastructure, doctors, schools, traffic and parking congestion;
- Some objections to any or significant housing development (some representations raised no objections to housing provided it was limited to previously developed parts of the site);
- Less commonly, some objectors suggested more of the site should be given over to housing and less to employment given the brownfield nature of this site and the pressure for housing on other sites (greenfield) in the Green Belt elsewhere;
- Requests for reference to housing development to be made more explicit in the policy;
- Requests for leisure facilities for the whole community, enhancements to nature conservation and provision for a quality hotel.

2.7 All representations were taken into account and, having regard to representations, policy CS29 was further refined to the form outlined in the **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version** set out at **Appendix B**. As can be seen when comparing the two versions of this policy, key changes include more explicit

reference to housing for clarity, and reference to proposals not being prejudicial to the longer term growth of life sciences. These changes resulted from reconsideration of the policy in light of the representations which had been received at that stage.

2.8 The Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version was also published for a six-week period prior to submission, during which time people were able to put forward representations that they wished to be considered by the Planning Inspector as part of the Local Plan Strategy examination process. The consultation on the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version took place between 14 March 2014 and 25 April 2014 and included the following:

- The document was made available to view on the Council's website together with supporting documentation. Copies were also made available at all of the libraries in the Borough and at the Council's Customer Service Centres in Crewe and Macclesfield, Cheshire East Council's offices in Sandbach and the Planning Help Desk, Municipal Buildings, Crewe. Further copies were provided to all Cheshire East Council Members, all Town and Parish Councils, all MPs that cover the Cheshire East area, along with Natural England, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales.
- A Statutory Notice was published in the local press.
- The Report on Consultation for this document sets out that notification of the formal 6 week period for representations was sent to all those registered on the Council's Consultation Portal including emails sent to 10,490 e-mail addresses and letters to 2370 consultees.

2.9 As a result of this further consultation exercise 3,402 representations were received.

2.10 Key issues raised in this consultation exercise in relation to CS29 relate to:

- Significant level of support for development of Alderley Park as a world class science park
- Some objections to any development other than for life science activities;
- Some suggestions alternative employment uses would be preferable to housing;
- Some suggestion any residential development on this site would be contrary to the NPPF and this is not a sustainable location for housing;
- Some questioning whether high value uses such as residential are genuinely required to sustain a life science park when there has been no need for such uses in the past;
- Some suggestions that life science activities on this site should not be limited to human health science activities (the policy does not in fact seek to do this as it allows for 'complementary uses' which would include other appropriate life science activities);
- Questioning the extent of the defined previously developed land particularly with reference to sports pitches;

- Some objection to any reference to development outside previously developed land even in instances where Very Special Circumstances have been demonstrated;
- Concerns over pressure on infrastructure such as local primary school;
- Concerns regarding impact of housing on character of Nether Alderley;
- Request specific reference to need to preserve setting of Nether Alderley Conservation Area.

2.11 Representations submitted in respect of emerging policy CS29 have been taken into account in formulating the Alderley Park Development Framework Consultation Draft and have helped shape the draft document. In particular:

- Concerns expressed regarding development on open sports pitches have led to the Framework setting out that no built development either for life sciences or housing should be allowed on the cricket pitch on Congleton Road;
- Concerns regarding the inclusion of sports pitches within the defined previously developed land have led to specific clarification for developers that, even though the sports pitches are, on this particular site, considered to fall within the definition of previously developed land, building on the pitches will be considered to represent inappropriate development in Green Belt terms. As such new buildings on any pitches could only be considered acceptable if convincing very special circumstances were demonstrated;
- Concerns that housing should in no way restrict employment growth nor result in expansion of the previously developed land, has led to the Framework seeking to ensure the core life science area around Mereside is reserved for Life Science focused activities;
- In light of requests for enhancement of nature conservation and leisure facilities, the Framework seeks to clearly encourage this.

3 Consultation on Alderley Park Development Framework (Consultation Draft)

3.1 On 6th January 2015 Cheshire East Council Cabinet approved the Alderley Park Development Framework (Consultation Draft) as a draft document to be subjected to public consultation. The Cabinet agreed the draft document should be made available in a range of formats in public buildings and online for a period of 6 weeks, and that the consultation period should be advertised in the press in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

3.2 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out that for formal Supplementary Planning Documents the following will be undertaken by way of consultation prior to adoption:

- Hard copies of the draft document and associated documentation will be made available for inspection at Council offices at Westfields Sandbach,

Town Hall Macclesfield and Delamere House Crewe as well as at Cheshire East Libraries;

- The draft document and associated documents will be published on the Council's website and consultation portal;
- Public notices will be placed in newspapers and on the Council's website;
- A press release will be issued;
- Letters or emails will be sent to those on the LDF database.

3.3 In addition, the SCI sets out that further consultation activities may be carried out in the form of exhibitions, presentations, questionnaires/surveys, focus groups or workshops and theme based fora.

3.4 Although the Alderley Park Development Framework is not to be adopted as a formal Supplementary Planning Document, it is intended that public consultation will be carried out to a similar level as follows:

- Hard copies of the draft document and associated documentation will be made available for inspection at Council offices at Westfields Sandbach, Town Hall Macclesfield, and Delamere House Crewe, as well as at Cheshire East Libraries;
- Hard copies will be sent to Nether Alderley and Over Alderley Parish Councils and the adjoining parish councils;
- The draft document and associated documents will be published on the Council's website and consultation portal;
- A drop in exhibition/question and answer session will be held in Nether Alderley Parish Hall with invitations to attend sent to the following parish councils: Nether Alderley, Prestbury, Over Alderley, Alderley Edge, Chorley, Chelford, Siddington, Henbury as well as to immediate site neighbours by letter and local site notices;
- Emails will be sent to those on the LDF database with an email address, which currently amounts to over 11,000 addresses;
- Letters will be sent to any key organisations on the LDF database without registered email addresses;
- Notices will be placed in the Macclesfield Express, the Wilmslow Express and on the Council's website;
- A press release will be issued to the Macclesfield Express and Wilmslow Express.

3.5 Anyone wishing to make representations will be encouraged to submit them electronically via the consultation portal. Representations submitted in writing by letter will also be accepted. The full 6 week period will be allowed for consultation.

- 3.6 All representations submitted in relation to this consultation within the specified period will be carefully considered by officers. The consultation draft version of the Framework will then be reconsidered in light of those representations.
- 3.7 Officers will then revise the Framework as considered appropriate, having regard to public representations, planning policy and other material considerations and will seek approval of the final version of the document from Cheshire East Cabinet. A summary of key issues raised as a result of consultation will be reported alongside the final proposed version of the document for consideration by Cabinet. Once approved by Cabinet in its final form, the document will be published and will be used as a material consideration when determining planning applications relating to the site.

Extract from Cheshire East Local Plan Pre-Submission Core Strategy, November 2013

Site CS 29: Alderley Park Opportunity Site

15.376 Alderley Park is an existing employment site located to the south east of Nether Alderley, occupied by the worldwide pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Whilst the site currently provides 2,900 jobs, (81) the majority of which are highly skilled research and development posts, AstraZeneca has announced plans to scale down its facility at Alderley Park. There is therefore a need to reconsider the future of this strategic employment site.

15.377 As a previously-developed site within the Green Belt, it is not proposed to alter the existing Green Belt boundary at Alderley Park.

Site CS 29

Alderley Park Opportunity Site

The Council will support the redevelopment of the Alderley Park site subject to all of the following criteria being met:

1. Uses should be for Science for Life activities (82). Other uses will be supported where it has been demonstrated that they are either:
 - i. necessary for the delivery of Science for Life activities; (83) or
 - ii. complementary to Science for Life activities, and are in accordance with the Site Masterplan / Planning Brief.(84)
2. Development is restricted to the Previously Developed Land (PDL)(85) on the site unless:
 - i. very special circumstances are demonstrated to justify use of other land on this site outside the PDL; and
 - ii. the equivalent amount of PDL on the site is restored to greenfield status, to an equivalent or better quality than that other land.
3. Development would not have a greater impact on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than existing development;
4. Development is of a quality which respects the heritage and landscape assets on this site and accords with the principles set out in the Site Masterplan/Planning Brief

(81) AstraZeneca (www.astrazeneca.co.uk/astrazeneca-in-uk/our-uk-sites), September 2013

(82) The life sciences industry is defined by the application of Biology, covering medical devices, medical diagnostics and pharmaceuticals, through to synthetic and industrial biotechnology. (Strategy for UK Life Sciences, March 2012, Department for Business Innovation and Skills).

(83) In the context of this policy this is envisaged as comprising limited high value uses which would release funds used to subsidise the development of Science for Life activities

(84) It is intended that a Masterplan, Planning Brief or similar document be developed and adopted as an Supplementary Planning Document or similar, to provide guidance on the development and design principles for this site, and to define the heritage and landscape assets.

(85) The PDL has been defined by the Council as shown on the plan accompanying this policy

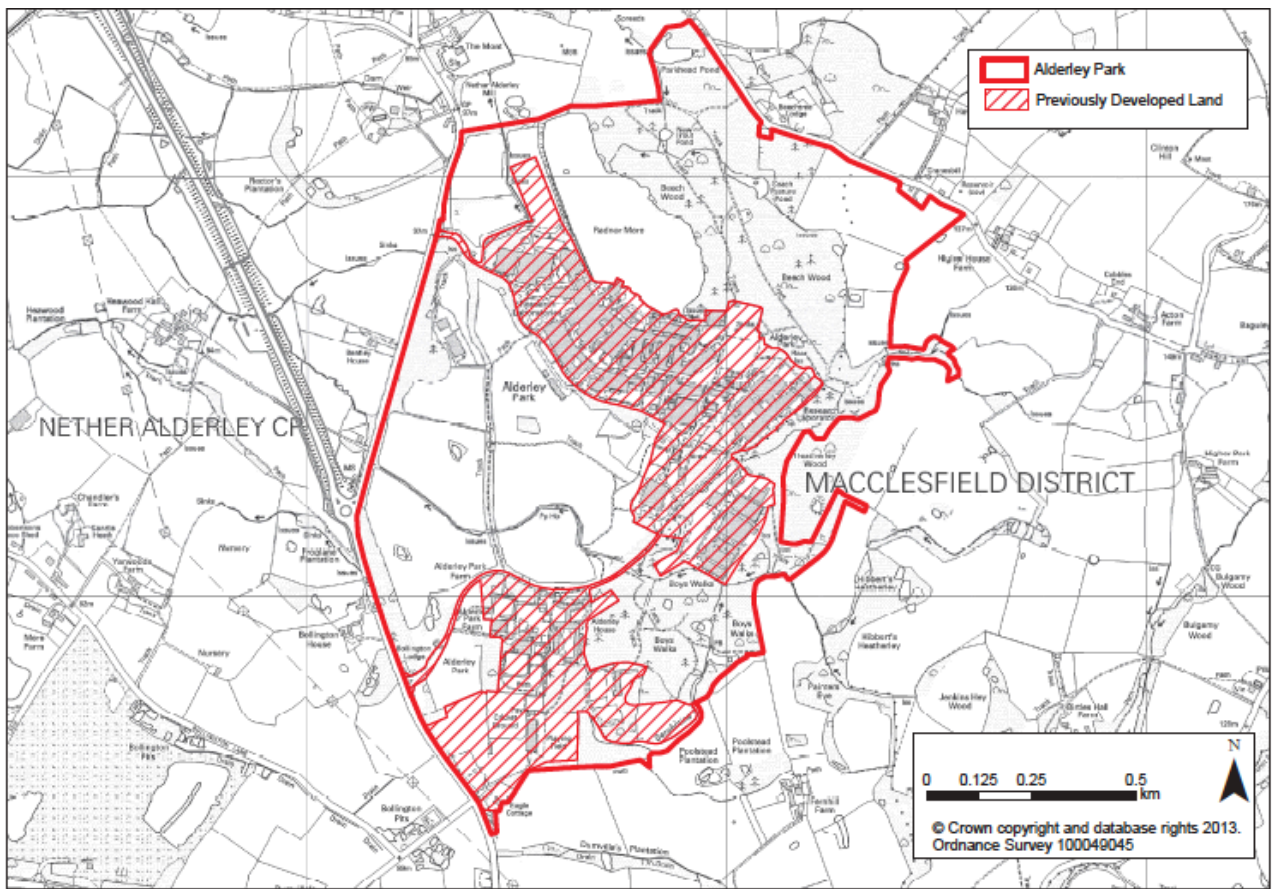


Figure 15.50 Alderley Park Opportunity Site

Extract from Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy- Submission Version, March 2014

Site CS 29: Alderley Park Opportunity Site

15.396 Alderley Park is an existing employment site located to the south east of Nether Alderley, occupied by the worldwide pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Whilst the site currently provides approximately 2,900 jobs(96), the majority of which are highly skilled research and development posts, AstraZeneca has announced plans to scale down its facility at Alderley Park. There is therefore a need to reconsider the future of this strategic employment site.

15.397 As a previously-developed site within the Green Belt, it is not proposed to alter the existing Green Belt boundary at Alderley Park.

Site CS 29

Alderley Park Opportunity Site

The Council will support development on this site to create a life science(97) park with a focus on human health science research and development, technologies, and processes, where criteria 1-5 below are met:

1. Development shall be:
 - i. For human health science research and development, technologies and processes; or
 - ii. For residential or other high value land uses demonstrated to be necessary for the delivery of the life science park(98) and not prejudicial to its longer term growth; or
 - iii. For uses complimentary to the life science park and not prejudicial to its establishment or growth.
2. Development shall be in accordance with the site Masterplan / Planning Brief(99)
3. Construction of new buildings for uses in criterion 1 above shall be restricted to the Previously Developed Land (PDL)(100) on the site unless:
 - i. very special circumstances are demonstrated to justify use of other land on this site outside the PDL; and
 - ii. the equivalent amount of PDL on the site is restored to greenfield status, to an equivalent or better quality than that other land.
4. Development would not have a greater impact on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than existing development.
5. Development shall preserve or enhance the significance of Listed Buildings and other Heritage and Landscape assets on and around this site.

96 AstraZeneca (www.astrazeneca.co.uk/astrazeneca-in-uk/our-uk-sites), September 2013

97 The life sciences industry is defined by the application of Biology, covering medical devices, medical diagnostics and pharmaceuticals, through to synthetic and industrial biotechnology. (Strategy for UK Life Sciences, March 2012, Department for Business Innovation and Skills).

98 In the context of this policy 'demonstrated to be necessary' is envisaged as releasing funds to subsidise and thus enable the delivery of the life science park.

- 99 It is intended that a Masterplan, Planning Brief or similar document be developed and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document or similar, to provide guidance on the development and design principles for this site and to define the heritage and landscape assets and complimentary uses.
- 100 The PDL has been defined by the Council as shown on the plan accompanying this policy

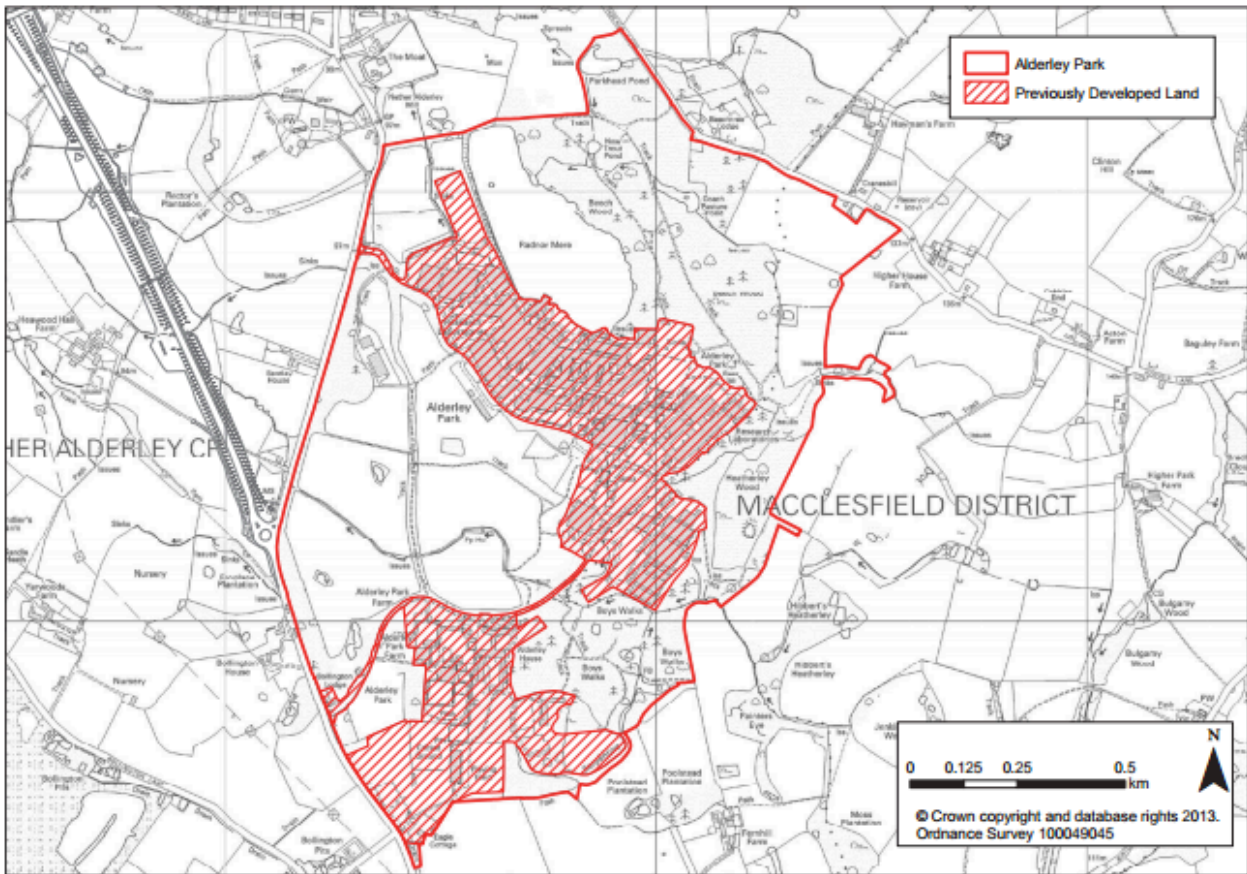


Figure 15.50 Alderley Park Opportunity Site