

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

16 May 2012

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision

**1 GLAXO SMITH KLINE (GSK) SITE, POWDERMILL LANE, LEIGH – PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Sevenoaks District Council is seeking views on a Supplementary Site Allocations document which forms part of their Development Plan. This consultation identifies 9 sites, of which the former GSK at Leigh is one. The proposal is to allocate the site as residential-led mixed use (100 units), retaining an element of offices, warehousing and general industrial use (1128 sq. m.).

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Sevenoaks District Council adopted their Core Strategy in February 2011. Between May and September 2011 they consulted upon “Development Management Policies Options”. This current consultation, “**Allocations and Development Management DPD – Supplementary Site Allocations Consultation**” is a further consultation considered necessary to ensure that the pre-submission publication version is a “sound” plan and to ensure that those impacted upon as a result of the proposal have adequate time to make representations.

1.1.2 Sevenoaks District Council closed the consultation on 10<sup>th</sup> May and is looking to carry out pre-submission consultation in the autumn of this year. They are aiming to submit in January 2013 to the Secretary of State. **Annex 1** contains a copy of the officer- level comments sent to Sevenoaks in response to this consultation. The map and schedule from the Allocations and Development Management DPD – Supplementary Site Allocations Consultation Site Details and Design Guidance for the GSK site is contained in **Annex 2**.

**1.2 Allocations and Development Management DPD (ADM DPD) – Supplementary Site Allocations Consultation**

1.2.1 This document identifies nine sites to achieve the objectives set out in the Core Strategy, defines the area covered by Core Strategy policies and includes the

Development Management Policies to determine applications in accordance with the Core Strategy objectives.

- 1.2.2 The Council conducted an 'options' consultation in spring 2010 on initial draft site allocations. This current supplementary consultation is intended to introduce details of the new sites proposed for inclusion in the ADM DPD and to document changes in the type of allocation where the allocated land use is different to that identified during the original round of consultation.
- 1.2.3 The Consultation includes 1 new site that was not previously included in the earlier "Options Consultation" and 8 sites where an alternative use is proposed. Of the 8 sites with proposed new uses, the former GSK site at Leigh is of particular interest to the Borough Council due to the proximity of the site to the Borough boundary and the impact of the proposed change of use on traffic flows in the vicinity.
- 1.2.4 Section 2.8 of the ADM DPD deals with the GSK site noting that it was previously designated as a 'Major Developed Site' in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan and carried forward into the Core Strategy adopted in 2011. However, following the recent cessation of the pharmaceutical operations at the site by GSK, Sevenoaks District Council commissioned consultants to consider the potential reuse of the site for employment uses. This concluded that complete take up of the site was unlikely due to the site's remote location and poor transport network and that residential development with retention of a smaller portion of the site for employment use would be more viable and deliverable.
- 1.2.5 The proposals in the ADM DPD are therefore to designate the site as residential led mixed use development, retaining the modern laboratory block in employment use and redeveloping on the footprint of the remaining buildings for residential. Accessibility improvements to improve the sustainability of the site will be required.

### **1.3 GSK Powder Mills, Leigh**

- 1.3.1 Although located outside of this Borough, the GSK site at Powder Mills, Leigh is accessed via Leigh Road B2027 which is within this Borough. There has been industrial activity on the site since the early 1800s. GSK recently closed their operations and the site is currently vacant. Redevelopment of the site would be residential led with approximately 100 units and 1128 sq. m. of office, warehousing and general industrial uses. Both north and west existing access points to Powder Mills Lane are to be maintained along with the public footpaths through the site. Some remediation to a small number of localised areas of contamination will be required and part of the site is covered by Flood Zone 3B. No development should take place within this part of the site. The historic nature of the site is of regional significance and archaeological interest is to be preserved.

- 1.3.2 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council was consulted in 2003 under Article 10 on an application at this site when GSK sought to increase their operations and increase the number of staff from 233 to approximately 375. At the time, the Borough Council raised no policy objections to the proposal but was concerned about the impacts of the development on the local area, particularly the volume and frequency of traffic movement along Powdermill Lane/ Leigh Road and the impact this would have on the local residents.
- 1.3.3 As the proposed use set out in the ADM DPD would result in fewer vehicular movements in general and less commercial traffic the approach to the site is one that should be supported in principle. However, as set out in the schedule, a key condition must be that both access routes into the site are retained.
- 1.3.4 Back in 2003, we also asked that the issue of securing a cycle link between the site and Tonbridge Sports Ground be raised as part of the implementation of the planning permission. While there is a footpath linking these two areas, the Council would welcome the opportunity to seek improvements to the link as part as the allocation and development of the site in due course. This would, of course, contribute to the point in the ADM DPD Appendix 1 schedule about any redevelopment of the site being contingent on the inclusion of accessibility improvements.
- 1.3.5 The deadline for comments to this consultation was Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May and **Annex 2** is a copy of the response letter that was sent to Sevenoaks District Council. Any additional comments will be forwarded following this meeting.

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 None.

## **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.5.1 None

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 No identified risks.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

## **1.8 Policy Considerations**

- 1.8.1 Not applicable

## **1.9 Recommendations**

- 1.9.1 That the Board endorse the comments previously made by officers.

Background papers:

contact: Jill Peet

Nil

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	Report seeking endorsement for comments regarding potential development outside of this Borough
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	As above.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*