

ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN - CHERRY ORCHARD BRICK WORKS, ROCHFORD (Min.26/03)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval for the Cherry Orchard Brick Works site and adjacent land to be allocated in the First Deposit Replacement Local Plan for the provision of a new hospital, specifically a Diagnostic and Treatment Centre.
- 1.2 The possible site options for the new Centre have previously been considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Members will recall that provisional agreement has been given in principle to the allocation of the brick works and adjacent land in the Replacement Local Plan for this purpose.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Southend Hospital Trust is preparing a new strategic plan for healthcare provision in South East Essex. A key element of the plan is a proposal to use the existing hospital site for emergency, high-tech medicine and that a suitable site be found for a new large-scale Outpatient Diagnostic and Treatment Centre. A site of about 6 hectares (15 acres) would be required for such a facility.
- 2.2 The Rochford District Replacement Local Plan has been approved for public consultation, but an outstanding issue relates to the future use, if any, of the Cherry Orchard Brick Works site in Rochford, which has not operated as a Brick Works for a number of years.
- 2.3 The Brick Works is a major built facility in the Green Belt and the original consent does include a condition requiring the site to be restored if brick making ends.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding the requirement for restoration, an allocation of the site for new built development can be justifiably considered, given that there is a clear need for new healthcare facilities in a location with good road access to Rochford and Southend's residents and the lack of other ideal sites where such development might be accommodated.

3 LOCAL PLAN ISSUES

- 3.1 The Trust would require a 6 hectare site and the Brick Works extends to only about 4 hectares. However, there is a triangle of land to the East that extends

to a further 2 hectares (see Appendix 1) and a suitable allocation could be provided if this was also taken into account.

- 3.2 There is no doubt that a 6 hectare site for a new Hospital is a significant incursion into the Green belt. On the other hand, as has been said, the proposed scheme is of critical importance to future healthcare provision in South East Essex.
- 3.3 Clearly, the considerations in respect of the development of a Green Field, Green Belt site differ somewhat from those in respect of a previously developed site, such as the Brick Works, although the key consideration is still an assessment of whether there are very special circumstances demonstrated.
- 3.4 The provision of a new Hospital facility on the site proposed does have significant importance for the local area and the well being of the population and major new hospital development has been approved elsewhere in the country. It is considered that the allocation of the Brick Works site in the replacement Local Plan for the provision of a new Diagnostic and Treatment hospital facility is justifiable on these grounds. Therefore, in accordance with the discussion at Environment Overview and Scrutiny, it is recommended that the allocation of the brick works site and adjacent land should now be finalised for inclusion in the Replacement Local Plan.
- 3.5 It is proposed that paragraph 10.35 of the Replacement Plan be amended and that a new policy be added to the Draft Plan as follows:

The Southend Hospital Trust is preparing a new strategic plan for healthcare provision in south-east Essex. A key element of the plan is the intention to use the existing hospital site for emergency, high-tech medicine and that a site be found for the construction of a new large-scale Outpatient Diagnostic and Treatment Centre. A site of about 6 hectares (15 acres) would be required for the new centre. Such a site has been identified in Rochford at the now redundant Cherry Orchard Brick Works site, together with an area of scrub land to the east. This site is within the Green Belt, but it is considered that the very real need for a major new treatment centre to serve the needs of the area more than justifies the allocation of the site for this purpose. The allocation of this site and the safeguarding of existing health care sites are covered by the following policies:

Policy UT6 – Diagnostic and Treatment Centre
The Cherry Orchard Brick Works site, Rochford, and adjacent land, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for the provision of a new Diagnostic and Treatment Centre.

- 3.6 It should be noted that, if agreed, these final revisions to the First Deposit Local Plan can be made very quickly, and it is anticipated that the plan will be placed on deposit in mid-June.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The existing site comprises major built development in the Green Belt, although the consent for the Brick Works included a condition requiring site restoration.
- 4.2 A well designed, high quality hospital building will be visible in the landscape, but with suitable landscaping should be no more damaging than the existing buildings.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That a 6 hectare site comprising the Cherry Orchard Brick Works site and adjacent land be shown on the First Deposit Rochford District Local Plan proposals map for the provision of a Diagnostic and Treatment Hospital, and that a new policy as outlined in the report be incorporated in Chapter 10 of the plan. (HPS)

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Background Papers: None

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