

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

DATE: 2nd June, 2008

Supermarket Proposals

Plans for new retail development in Oswestry have moved a step further with the news that proposals for a second site - the Richard Burbidge site – will be available to view this week

The Oswestry Borough Council's Forward Planning Officer, Tim Morris, has been closely involved in the discussions with developers and owners of the sites being put forward. He said, "The Council's own, independent, Retail Study has established that there is a clear need for further retail development in Oswestry – for both food and non-food stores. There is also scope to reduce trade leakage to Wrexham and Shrewsbury, particularly for food shopping. This is something we cannot ignore if Oswestry is to maintain and strengthen its trading position."

Mr. Morris added, "The public exhibitions will help the developers of the Smithfield and Burbidge sites to fine-tune their proposals prior to submitting planning applications. A third possible site is also likely to come forward, and we expect the owners of this site to hold their own exhibition before submitting their application."

Edwina Smart, Development Control Manager at the Borough Council said, "It may be well into June or July before we formally receive the planning applications. As soon as they are submitted, details will be viewable at the Council Offices and on the Council's website. People will then have the chance to make their views known."

Mrs Smart added, "We will arrange briefing sessions for our own Councillors and, possibly, for local groups and organisations. We will make our decisions on all three applications at the same time, at a special meeting of the Development Control Committee. Members of the public and other interested organisations will be able to attend and listen to the debate, and time will be allocated for a limited number of people or organisations to actually speak at the meeting."

David Parker, the Council's Forward Planning Manager, said, "The Council will decide which of the three proposals will best meet the established need for new floorspace in the town, without harming the existing town centre. However, we can only approve one of the three proposed schemes."

Mr. Parker added that the decision will be based on an assessment of what are called "material considerations". These will include the likely impact of the proposals on the existing town centre; their proximity to and links with existing shops; the ability to gain safe access to and from the sites by car and by other means of transport; the impact of

traffic generated - both in the vicinity of the site and in the town generally; the design of the buildings, their landscaping and sustainability; and the impact of the proposals on the character of the area and the amenity of any adjoining residential properties.

The Smithfield site is owned by the Town Council. Members of the Town Council who normally sit on the Development Control Committee would have a prejudicial interest and therefore cannot take part in the decision. The Borough Council intends to ensure that there are sufficient substitutes available to take on this role.

Mr. Parker said that the special meeting is unlikely to happen before September or October. "This is a major decision for the future of the town, and we will do all that we can to make sure that the decision is made in full knowledge of all of the facts, and of the views of local people."

END

For further information contact Dave Parker on 01691 677266 or e-mail david.parker@oswestry-bc.gov.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. Oswestry Borough Council provides a wide range of services to the thousands of people who live, work in and visit the borough of Oswestry. *Following an Audit Commission inspection in 2004, and a positive direction of travel assessment in 2006, the council is categorised as a 'good' council.*