

Planning Policy  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
The Portal  
Wellington Road  
Ellesmere Port  
CH65 0BA

15 March 2024

Dear Policy Team

**LOCAL PLAN CALL FOR SITES – MARCH 2024**

**ADDRESS: BEESTON RECLAMATION YARD AND ADJACENT MOD LAND, WHITCHURCH ROAD, CW6 9GW**

I write on the behalf of Vistry Group and the landowners of the site above (the 'Site') to request that the site be taken forward as a potential mixed-use allocation in the Emerging Local Plan. This letter has been prepared to support the online Call for Sites submission form submitted via the Council's Planning Policy consultation webpage.

The site consists of two main parcels:

1. The existing operational Beeston Reclamation Yard (Parcel A); and
2. The Former MOD site (Parcel B) directly to the south and adjoining the Parcel A site.

These two parcels are proposed to be combined to provide scope for a critical mass of development which would offer significant benefits to the local community and nearby settlements. The combined site area would be circa 11.6 hectares (28.66 acres) and the attached- red edge plan in **Appendix 1** shows the indicative site boundary.

A brief summary of the current site uses for each parcel would be set out below. Thereafter, the vision for the Site and associated development benefits would be listed.

In conclusion, we will provide an overview of the deliverability of the site aspiration and value of having Vistry Group on board as delivery partner.

Parcel A - Beeston Reclamation Yard

The parcel consists of a reasonably level site, which is sited directly to the south of the Crewe to Chester Mainline Railway Line and at a similar level to the railway track. It contains a number of buildings, including a showroom/ office area, single residential dwelling and another concrete building. There are also various smaller structures and materials storage areas across this parcel. The reclamation yard is an operational business and clearly a brownfield site.

This parcel is accessed from Whitchurch Road (A49) and this existing access would provide the primary access for the combined site.

Parcel B - Former MOD Fuel Storage Site

In the early 1940's this parcel was developed as an oil depot by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This included extensive engineering works, the installation of ten or eleven large storage tanks partially sunk into the ground, as well as associated supporting infrastructure including pipework, concrete tank entrances, and other associated works. Therefore, the site is clearly previously developed land.

The site has remained derelict for the last half a century and three of the tanks have been removed within this period. At least seven of the tanks remain on site. They are substantial structures with significant void spaces and in different states of disrepair. These tanks and the associated redundant infrastructure is need of removal and remediation to ensure that they would not pose future health and safety risks.

At a distance this parcel may have the appearance of a greenfield site but that is the result of the tanks specifically having been camouflaged for security reasons. As site visit to the site would make it evident to the reader that this is still very much a derelict previously developed site. A site visit could be arranged if deemed necessary to substantiate our position that this is in fact still very much a previously developed brownfield site. The photos below provide some visual context of the size and nature of structures that remain on site.





A Phase 1 and 2 Contamination and Investigation was carried out on this parcel in 2015 and the Executive summary is included in **Appendix 2**. The report found no Indicators of significant soil contamination by fuel residues as a result of the historic use.

#### Vision for the proposed allocation and associated development benefits

There is a strong and long-established desire in the local community for the reopening of a train station on the Network Rail land adjoining the site. That was the location of the Beeston and Tarporley station which closed some 57 years ago.

The ambition and support for re-establishing a station in this location is well known to the landowners and is evidenced by the following:

1. The formation and continued campaigning of the Beeston and Tarporley Station Reopening Group;
2. The findings and strategic support as set out in the feasibility study and outline business case completed by Arup in 2022;
3. Network Rail correspondence on previous development proposals on the Beston Reclamation parcel;
4. Confirmation from the Department of Transport (DfT) in October 2023 that it has granted permission for the Beeston and Tarporley station to reconnect to the rail network.

Any project of this nature requires strong local and political buy in, which already exist as set out above. It also requires:

- substantial financial investment;
- collaboration with interested landowners; and
- a delivery partner or partners to facilitate the delivery of the project to provide the required impetus and confidence that the project will be delivered.

The adjoining landowners to the railway land have taken on board comments previously received and is looking to work with the relevant interested parties, including Network Rail to help deliver the desired new station. In doing so, they have assembled a big enough site which could generate a surplus land value that could then provide a very substantial contribution to the cost of the new station (seven figure value) as well as additional land requirements for the new station. For example parking facilities for the station.

Apart from providing additional land and financial contributions towards the station facilities, the following significant development benefits are proposed:

- Regeneration of previously developed land;
- Site access and highway improvement works, including for the proposed new station;
- 10% BNG improvements; either on site or combination of on-site and off-site;
- At least 50% of dwellings to be either affordable and/ or extra care housing; and
- Medical centre facility

The landowners have approached Vistry Group to deliver the adjacent site, which would then contribute to the delivery of the new station. This should provide comfort to the Council that the site is deliverable.

### Vistry Group Partnerships Approach

Vistry is a leading UK housebuilding and regeneration group. We are listed on the London Stock Exchange and are a member of the FTSE 250. We operate through three strong businesses: Countryside Partnerships, Linden Homes and Bovis Homes.

Our hybrid business model, which spans complementary markets and cycles, gives us a unique set of competitive advantages. With significant cash reserve and an extremely low gearing ratio, our balance sheet is presently unmatched and provides partners with the confidence in dealing with one of the most financially robust businesses in the sector.

We make an important contribution to meeting the demand for new homes in the private and affordable homes sectors, regenerating neighbourhoods and working with our clients to improve the UK's built environment, delivering positive, lasting change for the communities we work in.

Our priority is to build high quality, sustainable homes, with a culture and commitment to health and safety principles and to delivery a consistent customer journey and high standards of customer service.

Case studies of delivery within the region include:

XXX

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]