



7th March 2025

Call for Sites Update 2025 – Croxton Garden Village

Introduction

These representations have been prepared by Vistry Group in response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Call for Sites Update: March 2025.

Vistry Group hold a legal interest in the land at Croxton by way of an Option Agreement as shown in red on the attached plan (Appendix 1). Since the submission of the previous representations, which were prepared by Roebuck Land and Planning Ltd. on behalf of the landowner, Vistry has prepared a Vision Document (Appendix 2), which outlines our proposal for a new garden village at Croxton. This vision includes plans for approximately 1,500 homes, a primary school, a village centre with community facilities, a mobility hub, and significant green spaces.

Vistry Group formed in January 2020 following the successful acquisition of Linden Homes, Galliford Try and Bovis Homes Group PLC. In 2022 Vistry Group acquired Countryside Properties Ltd. Vistry Group are the UK's leading provider of affordable mixed tenure homes and has a strong reputation for design-led housebuilding with associated uses which stand the test of time. We do this through our unique approach to building homes, by working with a range of partners, both public and private, who know what homes are needed most and where. This strategy maximises the number of homes, including quality affordable homes, that we can build every year.

At Vistry Group, our purpose as a responsible developer is to work in partnership to deliver sustainable homes, communities and social value, leaving a lasting legacy of places that people love.

Croxton Garden Village Proposal

Croxton is situated around 13 miles west of Cambridge, between Cambourne (4 miles to the east) and St Neots (4 miles west). The A428 currently borders the north of the village and Croxton Park lies to the south.

A new garden village at Croxton will provide around 1,500 homes together with a village centre and community facilities such as a primary school, mobility hub and small retail outlets. The Concept Masterplan offers an initial vision of how the village could be developed, carefully considering the historic character of Croxton Park.

The realigned A248 will pass just north of the Croxton Garden Village site, creating a new physical barrier within the landscape.

In addition, to the west of the proposed garden village at Land North East of Weald Farm, Cambridge Road, Eynesbury there is a live planning application (ref: 24/00295/FUL) for the installation and operation of a renewable energy generation and storage station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with battery storage containers, inverter/transformer units, control house, substations, onsite grid connection equipment, storage containers, site access, access gates, internal access tracks, security measures, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement (Site Location Plan included at Appendix 3). If approved, the photovoltaic solar arrays and associated infrastructure will create a buffer, effectively enclosing the garden village within the surrounding landscape.

Vistry have undertaken a number of technical studies, all of which have not identified any constraints that would prevent the development, as outlined in the Vision Document.

The A428 corridor is one of the main transport routes east -west and with the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements will improve journeys and support long term growth in the region. It also aligns with East West Rail link between Cambridge and Oxford potentially creating a future location for a new station.

Future Growth in Greater Cambridge

The Cambridge Delivery Group (CDG) was created in 2023 as part of the Cambridge 2040 initiative and the new Government continues to recognise the value and economic strengths of Cambridge. In this regard, the new Housing Minister, Matthew Pennycook, stated in August 2024, stated that the Government was ambitious for Cambridge. However, he noted that it is constrained economically by a lack of housing and so the Government wants to see significant growth.

The Minister stated that there was a need to assess where the previous government had got to, and then to re-engage with local leaders and communities in a discussion about how to facilitate positive and sustainable growth in Cambridge. In a letter to Peter Freeman, Chair of Homes England, dated 30 October 2024, the Housing Minister set out the new Government's perspective on Cambridge in the following statement:

'Cambridge is one of the UK's most important economic assets, a global centre of innovation home to the largest life sciences cluster in Europe. With strong intellectual roots, the unique innovation ecosystem that has emerged in Greater Cambridge over the past fifty years has been a phenomenal success – life science firms in Cambridge already contribute nearly £3 billion annually to the UK economy. However, Cambridge faces significant barriers to sustainable growth and there are increasing pressures for local residents and communities, such as expensive housing and traffic congestion. Further growth is against a backdrop of constraints on water supply and sewerage, the transport network and increasing risks of flooding. Maintaining the success of Cambridge cannot be taken for granted'.

The Housing Minister confirmed that he and the Prime Minister are determined to help overcome these constraints and for central government to work with local partners to support sustainable growth in Cambridge and its environs. He further stated that the success of Greater Cambridge is a national priority for the Government. The Cambridge Growth Company has been established to therefore advise on and drive forward the Government's ambitions for the area, working closely with local partners, to make the most of their local insights and knowledge. Pursuant to this vision, the Minister has therefore asked Peter Freeman to lead the Cambridge Growth Company in progressing a business plan to oversee the following priorities:

- Development acceleration: enabling and accelerating developments which align with the government's ambitions for Cambridge and unlock development on stalled sites.
- Developing the evidence base: to support development of an infrastructure-first growth plan and a long-term delivery vehicle: work with experts to assess infrastructure requirements, including transport, and lay the foundations for a long-term delivery vehicle.
- Cross-government engagement: identify solutions to complex constraints and support cross-government engagement to unblock existing development and provide the right incentives for successful development in the long-term.

As a result of recent amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework, the local housing need figure for Greater Cambridge has increased as a result of the new standard method for calculating housing need, meaning more dwellings will be required for Greater Cambridge than the current Local Plan requirement.

As such, Vistry Group believe that to meet the Government's growth aspirations in a sustainable way, further allocations will be required within the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan which should consider the need for allocations close to the city and allow for a proportion of housing and growth at existing villages. Sustainable development in rural areas plays a crucial role in ensuring the vitality of villages and in supporting existing rural services and facilities.

As set out in the Vision Document, the proposals broadly align with the above objectives, particularly the first bullet point above, noting that the A428 diversion works are well underway, which places Croxton in a new context, where active travel can be prioritised (linking with a future rail-enabled Cambourne).

Vistry Group recognise the site at Croxton as a suitable location for future growth and can confirm the site is deliverable and available as an allocation within the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Appendix 1 Option Plan

Appendix 2 20250305- Croxton Garden Village Vision Document Rev E

Appendix 3 Site Plan - 24/00295/FUL Land North East of Weald Farm, Cambridge Road, Eynesbury