

Matter 3 – The Green Belt

Statement on behalf of

Vistry Group

St Albans City and District Council

Local Plan Examination

April 2025

Vistry Group

**Bovis
Homes**



**COUNTRYSIDE
Homes**



**Linden
HOMES**

Turley

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Client
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Our reference
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Matter Statement has been prepared by Turley, on behalf of Vistry Group (Vistry) pursuant to the St Albans City and District Draft Local Plan 2041, Examination. Vistry has a significant site interest in the Broad Allocation (B3) West Redbourn, in St Albans District and has made previous representations to the Regulation 19 Public Consultation, in 2024. A copy of these representations is attached to our Matter 2 Statement.
- 1.2 Vistry Group is one of the leading housebuilders in the country and delivers thousands of new homes every year for both the private and affordable market places. The Group was formed in 2020 and the integration of Countryside Partnerships into Vistry, in November 2022, has made Vistry the largest provider of affordable homes in the UK. The Group also includes Linden Homes and Bovis Homes.
- 1.3 This Statement strongly supports the emerging **Broad Location B3: West Redbourn** and the identification of this site for growth in the submitted Local Plan. Vistry does not have an interest in the whole site area of the identified allocation and so this Statement is concerned only with the southern section of the B3 Broad Location, within the control of Vistry, as shown on the red line plan at Appendix 1 of our Regulation 19 submissions.
- 1.4 The site controlled by Vistry at West Redbourn lies north of Gaddesden Lane and east of the M1 and is the subject of a live outline planning application (reference 5/2021/3631) the details of which, are set out in the introduction to our Matter 2 Statement.

2.0 RESPONSE TO MATTER 3 – GENERAL

- 2.1 Vistry is strongly supportive of the emerging Broad Location B3: West Redbourn, for housing growth in the submitted Local Plan.
- 2.2 In terms of general site characteristics, the B3 site area controlled by Vistry is cohesively located in terms of its relationship with Redbourn. The site is wholly contained within the permanent physical boundaries created by the M1 corridor to the west and the existing Redbourn settlement edge to the east. The site has no statutory or non-statutory landscape designation and is not a ‘valued landscape’, as defined by the NPPF.
- 2.3 The Council have previously identified that the southern site area controlled by Vistry makes a limited or no contribution towards any of the primary Green Belt purposes, and so will have minimal impact upon the five purposes of maintaining Green Belt in this specific location. The Vistry Site at Gaddesden Lane, has historically scored particularly well in Green Belt terms and exceptional circumstances therefore exist for the release of this site, as part of the wider B3 Broad Location, given its very low assessed impact on the five main purposes of Green Belt. Indeed, the Site qualifies as a ‘grey belt’ site under the definition set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF (see below).
- 2.4 Furthermore, given its cohesive relationship with the settlement and location between two very strong and permanent boundaries east and west, there will be no adverse wider visual impacts arising from the development proposed by Vistry. The site is very well connected and is accessible to a range of facilities, including primary employment opportunities, located both within Redbourn itself and at Maylands (Hemel Hempstead) located to the west, which is accessible from the site by non-car modes.

The Qualification of the West Redbourn Vistry Site as ‘Grey Belt’

- 2.5 The NPPF provides a broad clarification of the term ‘grey belt’ at Annex 2, wherein the ‘grey belt’ is defined as being:

‘For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.’

- 2.6 In the case of West Redbourn, the Site makes a very limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes as defined in paragraph 143 of the NPPF and importantly does not strongly perform against any individual Green Belt purpose. The Site is also sustainably located on the edge of an existing settlement, enclosed to the west by the M1 Motorway.

- 2.7 The B3 Broad Location at West Redbourn also makes very little or no contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another and contributes little to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore this site meets the basic premise of 'grey belt' as set out at Annex 2 of the NPPF.
- 2.8 In terms of other attributes, there are also no protected trees (TPO's) within the site. The development of the Vistry site at B3 can provide beneficial landscape and ecological enhancements, including a new amenity park, green corridors and allotment provision. There are also no designated heritage assets located directly within the site area.
- 2.9 The site is therefore in a highly sustainable location relative to Redbourn and is suitable for release from the Green Belt to help deliver the scale of new residential development proposed by Broad Location B3.

Site Location Plan

Vistry Controlled Land at Gaddesden Lane, within Broad Location B3: West Redbourn

