Forward Planning Officer
Strategic Planning Team
Cheshire East Council
Delamere House
Delamere Street
Crewe
CW1 2LL

BI Ref: E4979-0414

31 August 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

Cheshire East Local Plan Scoping Consultation
Consultation Response on behalf of EET in respect of new development allocations and critical oil pipeline Infrastructure

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This representation is submitted on behalf of **Essar Energy Transition (EET)** in response to Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

EET operates the Stanlow Refinery in neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester. The refinery is connected to a network of underground distribution pipelines that serve both the refinery and other key employment sites across the region. Sections of this pipeline network pass close to the administrative boundary of Cheshire East.

Those pipelines form part of the United Kingdom Oil Pipeline (UKOP) network, an oil products pipeline system commissioned in 1969 to connect the Stanlow and Thames Estuary refineries. The network represents nationally significant energy infrastructure and performs a critical role within the UK's energy supply chain.

EET is a major regional employer, supporting a highly skilled workforce and an extensive local supply chain comprising more than 80 businesses, including maintenance contractors, transport operators and specialist service providers. For over a century, the Stanlow Refinery has played a central role in the industrial development of the region and continues to be a strategically important asset, supporting manufacturing, transport and wider economic activity across the north-west.

Looking ahead, EET is committed to substantial investment at its Stanlow Manufacturing Complex throughout the Plan period as part of its wider energy transition strategy. Accompanying this representation is a separate document providing more detail. Those proposals align with national,

regional and local policy objectives and will support economic growth, inward investment, job creation and the delivery of the UK's net zero ambitions.

Stanlow will play a pivotal role in the production and distribution of low-carbon fuels, carbon capture and storage technologies, and the wider transition to a low-carbon economy but is fundamentally dependent upon the continued safe operation and servicing of the site through the pipeline network. The energy transition will preserve Stanlow's long-standing role as a vital industrial hub and major regional employer while making a significant contribution to the region's future economic prosperity.

As a major employer EET intends to play an active role in delivering the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the newly established Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority. Whilst that Authority's Spatial Development Strategy has yet to be finalised, it is noted that the Cheshire East Council plans to work closely with the Combined Authority and neighbouring councils to ensure a coordinated approach to planning.

So that EET can realise its transition ambitions, it is essential that the Council fully understands the operational requirements of both Stanlow Refinery and its associated pipeline network. The purpose of this representation is to ensure that the presence and strategic importance of the critical pipeline infrastructure is a key planning consideration.

EET understands that through its new Local Plan, Cheshire East Council will be required to use the Governments standardised calculation of need to meet its ambitious new housing delivery target. This will no doubt mean allocating more land for development.

There are significant safety considerations associated with introducing large concentrations of population and certain forms of development close to major accident hazard pipelines. EET would respectfully request that the pipeline network is identified and assessed as a **key constraint** during the evaluation of sites promoted through the Call for Sites process, or when determining land allocations for housing and other employment uses.

Crucially, operations at Stanlow are dependent upon the continued integrity and operation of the UK Oil Pipeline network. It is important therefore, that allocations, particularly those involving sensitive uses, do not adversely affect the operation of the pipeline network or its safeguarding corridor, as future growth and investment plans at the Stanlow Manufacturing Complex could be impacted.

Ensuring that this strategically important infrastructure is appropriately safeguarded from incompatible development through the new Cheshire East Local Plan will be fundamental to supporting both the UK's net zero objectives, a successful energy transition and economic growth plans for the sub region.

The Health and Safety Executive's Planning Advice Web App can be used by the Council to obtain Land Use Planning advice in relation to development proposals affecting the pipeline network. However, given that opportunities for stakeholder influence are greatest during the early stages of plan preparation, EET welcome the opportunity to engage directly with Cheshire East Council through the Scoping Consultation for its new Local Plan.

A meeting would be particularly valuable in helping to inform the emerging planning strategy and ensuring a shared understanding of the pipeline needs and their routes.

We look forward to continuing constructive dialogue with the Council as the Local Plan progresses and an early meeting would be welcomed.

Yours faithfully

Garry Dimeck BTP MRTPI
Chartered Town Planner, Senior Associate

Bell Ingram Design

Bell Ingram LLP, Durn, Isla Road, Perth PH2 7HF
T: 01738 621 121
[redacted]
bellingram.co.uk

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Encl: EET Transition Strategy & Economic Impact