



# CHESHIRE SCIENCE CORRIDOR ENTERPRISE ZONE BUSINESS RATES DISCOUNT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## Introduction to the Business Rate Discount incentive

The Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone (EZ) is able to provide Business Rate Discounts (BRDs) to eligible occupiers on approved BRD sites in accordance with approved DCLG financial incentives. The DCLG approved BRD site boundaries are identified in Appendix A and includes the designated EZ sites at Alderley Park, Birchwood and a number of sites across Ellesmere Port including parts of Thornton Science Park and sites at Stanney Mill Road, Dutton Green, Cloister Way and the former DSM site (Helix).

The BRD incentive enables eligible businesses that occupy property within the BRD sites to a discretionary relief of up to 100% of the business rates payable, up to a limit of £55,000 per year and a maximum of £275,000 in any 5 year period, subject to meeting the criteria set out within this Eligibility Criteria Paper. To be eligible, businesses must enter the zone before **31st March 2021** and can then benefit from the discount (subject to the EU State Aid De Minimis threshold<sup>1</sup>) to 31st March 2026.

In order to qualify for the BRD incentive on EZ sites, businesses must meet the following:

- Sector criteria
- Growth test

Businesses which do not meet the criteria above may not be excluded from locating on the EZ sites (subject to conforming to planning) but will not benefit from the BRD incentive.

## Sector criteria

Science and innovation are key themes of the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as identified within its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and its Enterprise Zone (EZ) submission to Government. In order to maintain this theme and to promote the growth of these high growth and value sectors, businesses wishing to qualify for BRD must satisfy the following key sector criteria and be either:

- directly operating within science-based industries, or
- directly supporting the wider science based industry supply chain.

There is no formal Government definition of what constitutes a 'science' business, but it is anticipated that most eligible businesses will operate within the following 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes:

- Section C – Manufacturing
- Section D - Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply
- Section M - Professional, scientific and technical activities

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on the De Minimis EU State Aid regulation is available at:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/443742/BIS-15-148-stateaid-manual.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443742/BIS-15-148-stateaid-manual.pdf)

Businesses operating within other SIC codes may still be eligible for BRD relief if they can clearly demonstrate that their primary purpose is to support the science sector. For example through:

- Providing products or services in the direct supply chain of science based companies
- Providing service sector support activities to science based businesses (e.g. financial, insurance, legal, accountancy and management and consultancy activities)
- Education, training, research and development facilities to support learning, innovation, knowledge transfer and growth across the science sector

## **Growth criteria**

Businesses already located in the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area must also satisfy a 'growth test' to be eligible for the full BRD. If the business is new to the LEP area then it will be exempt from the below 'growth test'. The LEP area comprises the three boroughs of Cheshire West and Chester; Cheshire East; and Warrington.

The growth test is intended to mitigate the impacts of displacement and will require businesses to demonstrate/evidence their short-medium term growth potential. As a minimum, businesses are expected to be able to demonstrate/evidence their ability to achieve a minimum 20% increase in at least one of the following criteria (or a 20% increase across a combination of them) over a 5 year period to meet the objectives of the 'growth test':

- To occupy larger business premises
- To increase permanent employment
- To increase turnover/profits

Businesses already located within CSC EZ sites (see Appendix A for boundaries) will only be eligible for BRDs on any additional EZ floorspace taken up and subject to meeting the sector and growth criteria.

## **Application process**

Businesses seeking BRDs on approved EZ sites within the Cheshire Science Corridor must complete and submit the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief Application Form.

Applications will be assessed by the Enterprise Zone Team at the LEP in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority and the applicant will be notified of the outcome in writing. We will endeavour to respond within 7 working days of receipt of a fully completed application submission. The EZ Team is able to discuss potential eligibility and provide an initial view. Contact details are as follows:

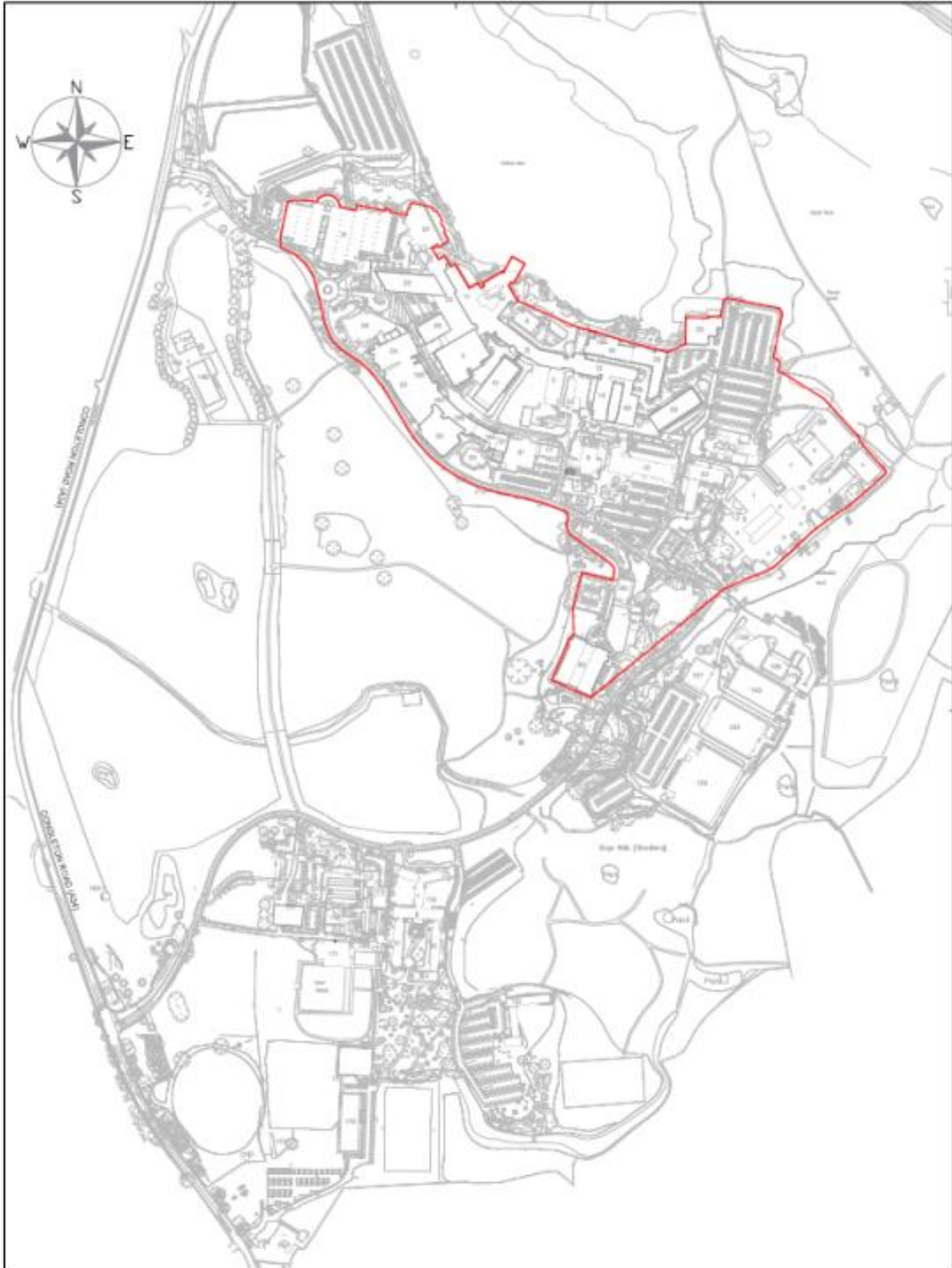
[john.adlen@871candwep.co.uk](mailto:john.adlen@871candwep.co.uk)

The decision to award a BRD is discretionary on a case by case basis. Requests for appeal should be made in writing to the LEP no later than one month after the date of the determination. Appeals will be considered by the relevant local authority in line with its own appeals process and a decision communicated to the EZ Board. This decision will be final with no right of further appeal.

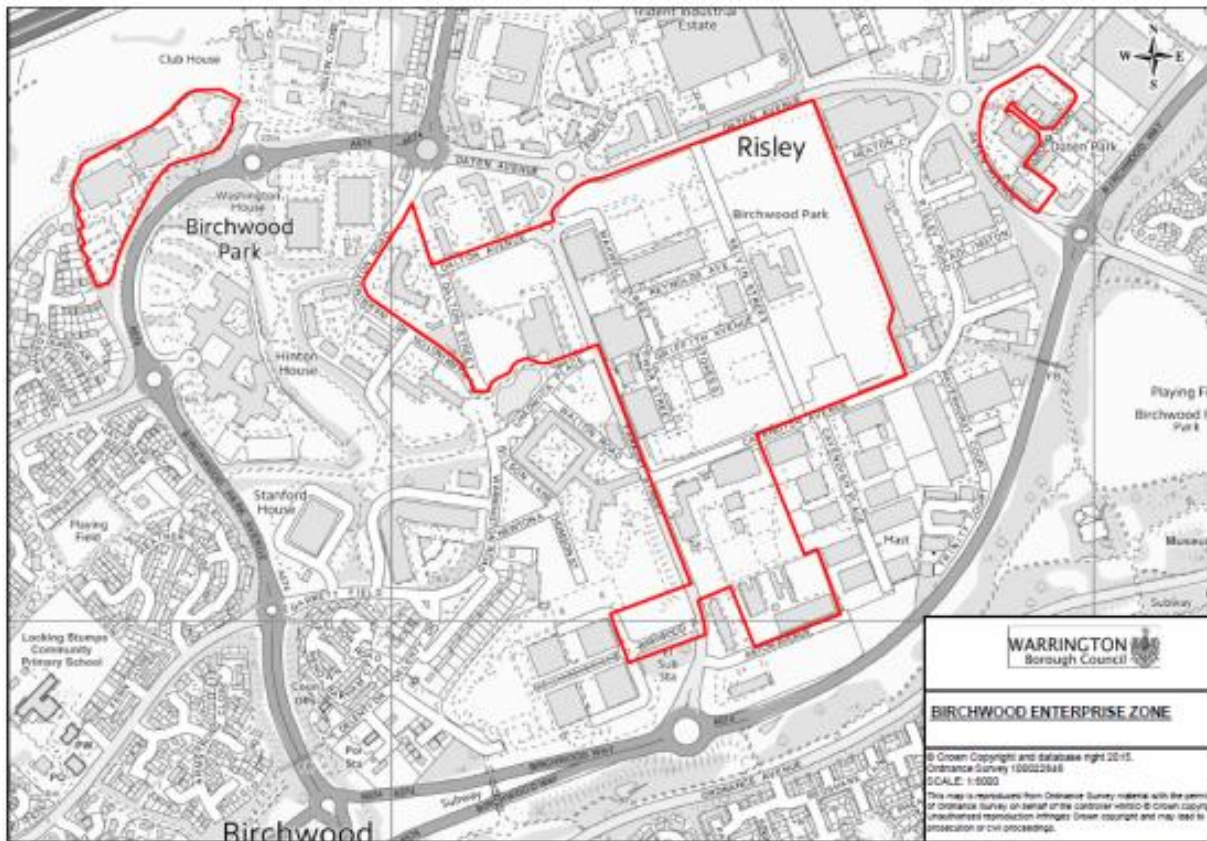
The award of BRDs will be made on an annual basis and the businesses will be required to confirm continued eligibility each year. The business premises must be occupied in accordance with section 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

# APPENDIX A: APPROVED BUSINESS RATE DISCOUNT BOUNDARIES FOR THE CHESHIRE SCIENCE CORRIDOR ENTERPRISE ZONE SITES

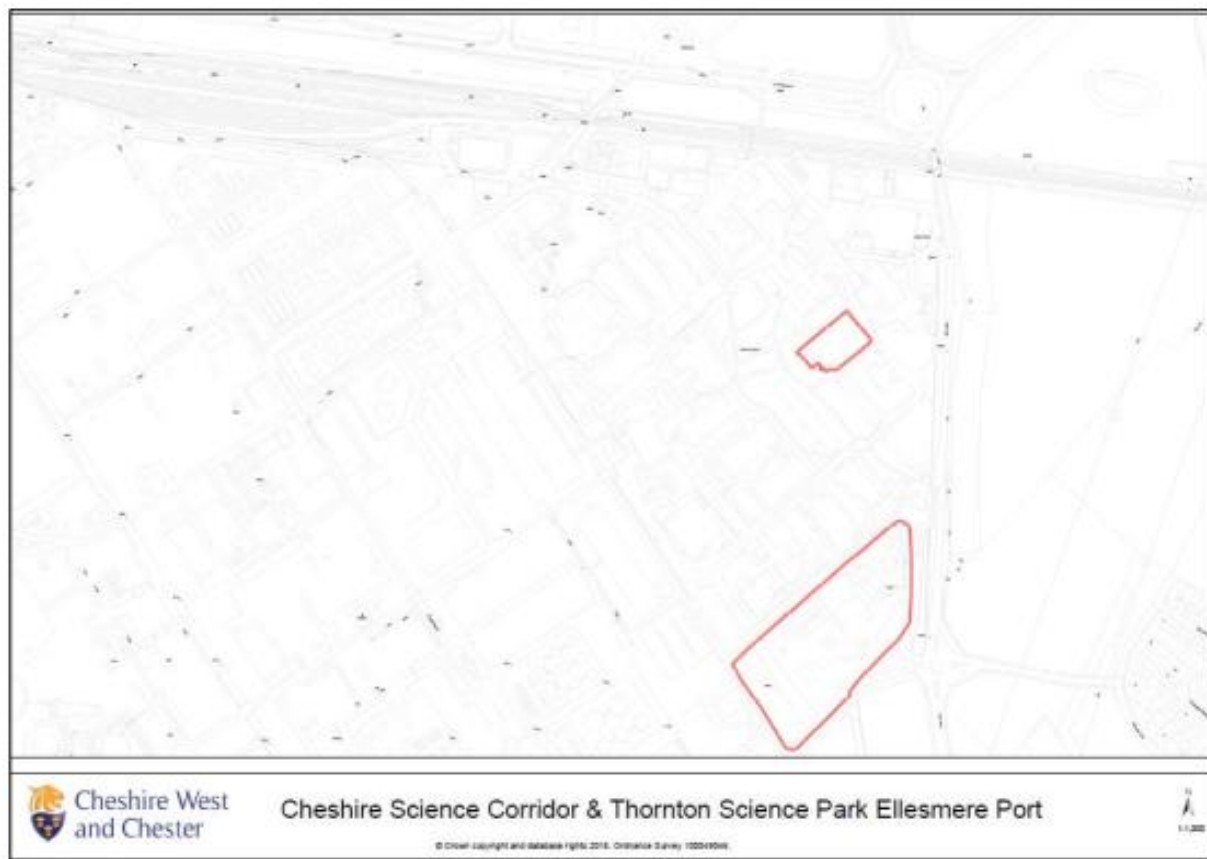
## Alderley Park (Cheshire East Council)



**Birchwood (Warrington Borough Council)**



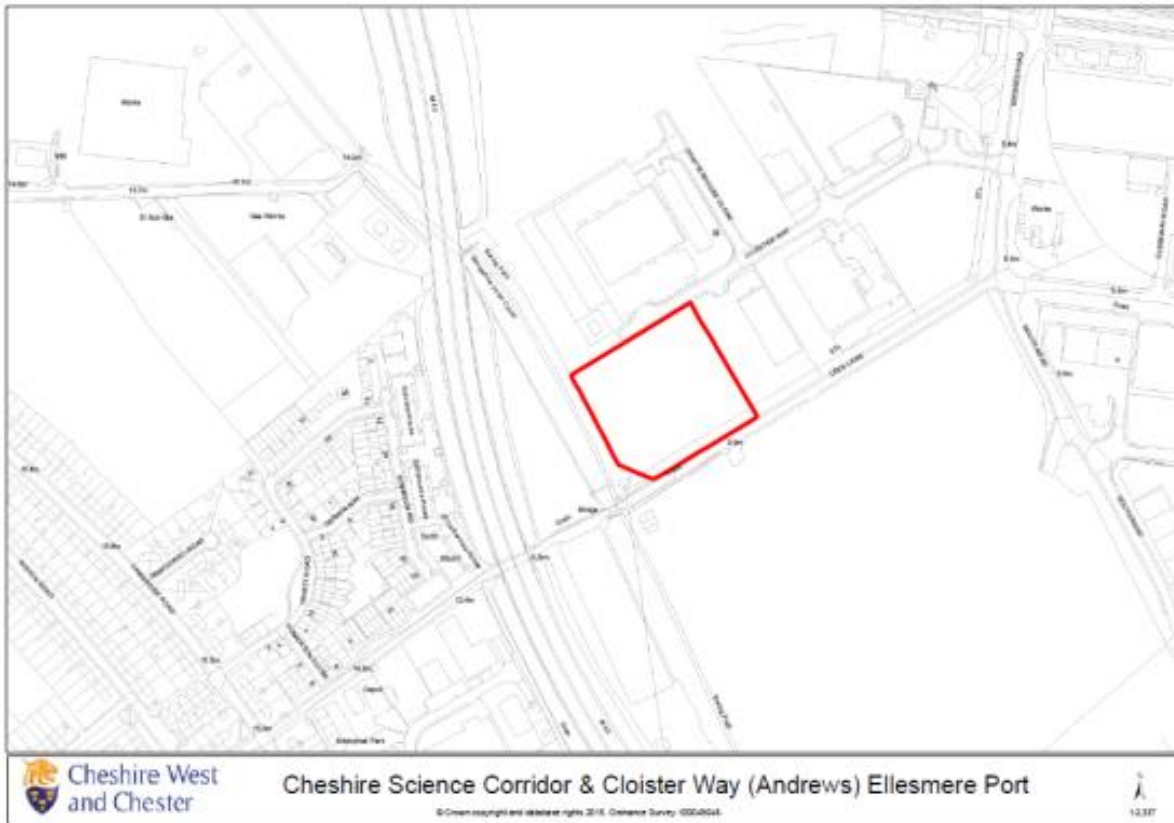
**Thornton Science Park (Cheshire West and Chester Council)**



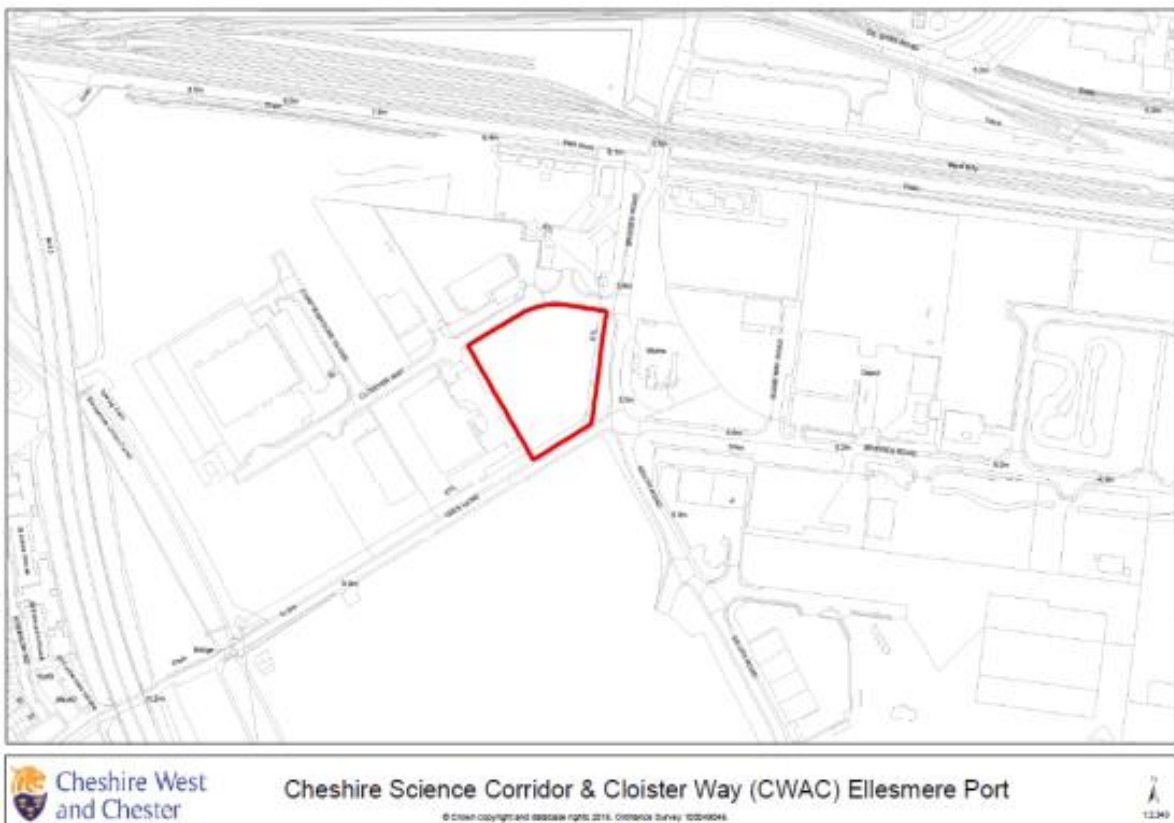


## Ellesmere Port Sites (Cheshire West and Chester Council)

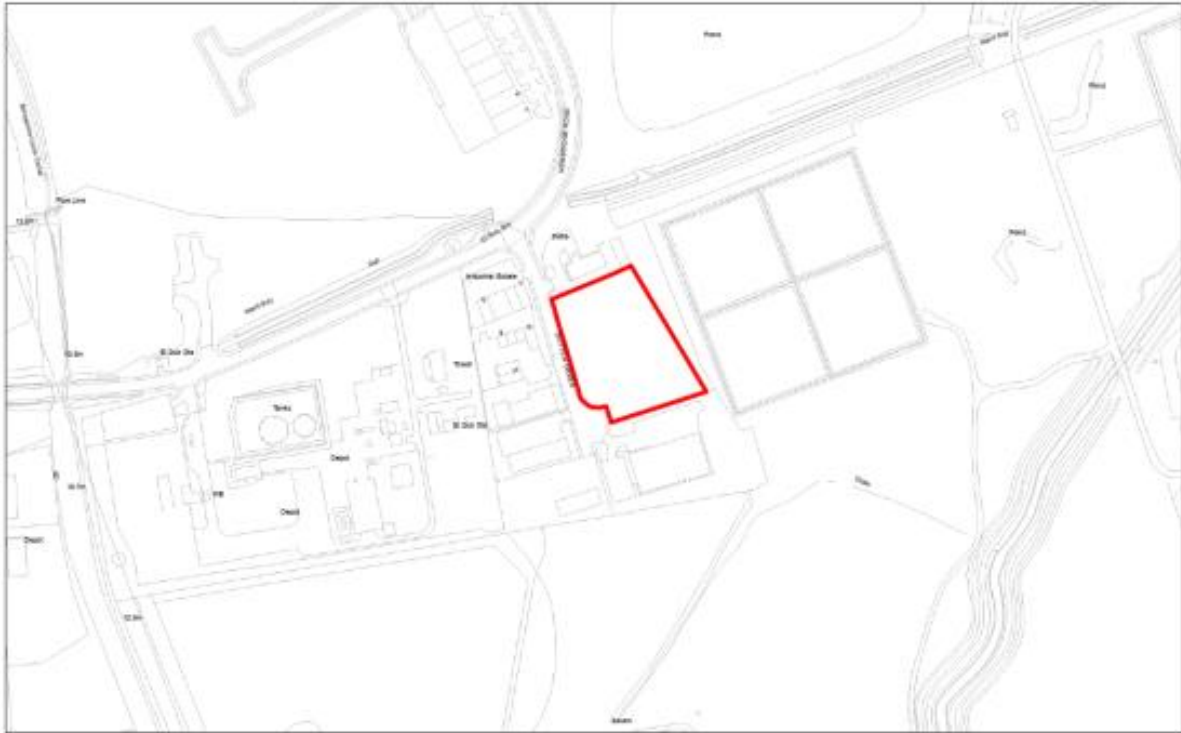
### Cloister Way (Andrews)



### Cloister Way (CWaC)



## Dutton Green



### Cheshire Science Corridor & Dutton Green Ellesmere Port

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## Helix Business Park



### Cheshire Science Corridor & Former DSM Land Ellesmere Port

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