

Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd

INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK NORTH (ILPN)

Intermodal Logistics Park North (ILPN) Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI)

Project reference TR510001

Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP)

October 2025

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
Regulation 14**

This document forms a part of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) for the Intermodal Logistics Park North (ILPN) project.

A PEIR presents environmental information to assist consultees to form an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development and provide feedback.

This PEIR has been prepared by the project promoter, Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd. The Proposed Development is described in Chapter 3 of the PEIR and is the subject of a public consultation.

Details of how to respond to the public consultation are provided at the end of Chapter 1 of the PEIR and on the project website:

<https://www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north/>

This feedback will be taken into account by Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd in the preparation of its application for a Development Consent Order for the project.

◆ Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT

Introduction

- 1.1 Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd. ('the Applicant') is promoting proposals for a new strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) and associated development on land to the east of Newton-le-Willows, in the jurisdictions of St Helens Borough Council, Wigan Council and Warrington Borough Council. The Proposed Development is termed Intermodal Logistics Park North Rail Freight Interchange (ILPN RFI).
- 1.2 The Proposed Development is for a new SRFI. An SRFI is a large multi-purpose freight interchange and distribution centre linked into both the rail and trunk road systems. SRFIs reduce the cost of moving freight by rail and encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail. The essential components of an SRFI development include direct connections to the rail network which connect to ports at which freight is imported and exported, and high-quality strategic road connections to the region or regions that the interchange will serve.
- 1.3 The DCO Site is located on the eastern extent of Newton-le-Willows. The majority of the land contained within the Main Site is bound to the north by the Chat Moss Line (Liverpool-Manchester railway line), to the west by the M6 motorway and to the southeast by Winwick Lane (A579). A description of the Main Site is provided subsequently as this is where the majority of landscaping will be implemented. Landscaping across the remainder of the DCO Site will follow the same overarching principles and approach. In the case of the Northern Mitigation Area, which is located to the north of Chat Moss Line and comprises an area of primarily habitat creation and enhancement, management will be undertaken in accordance with a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP).

Purpose of the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

- 1.4 This draft of the outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) has been prepared for the Construction and Operational Phases of ILPN RFI.
- 1.5 The purpose of this oLEMP is to set out the objectives for the existing and proposed landscape and ecological elements at the Site, along with management prescriptions to ensure the successful establishment and future maintenance of the elements.
- 1.6 A description of the Proposed Development is provided in PEIR Chapter 3. This oLEMP is specifically concerned with Figure 3.4 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan which shows the likely location and extent of the landscape and ecological proposals and is based on the draft Works Plans and design parameters (PEIR Chapter 3).

- 1.7 If the DCO is granted, the oLEMP will be developed into a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for each phase of development once a Principal Contractor for that phase is appointed. The LEMP will be in substantial accordance with this oLEMP, and will be a requirement of the DCO for submission and approval by St Helens Borough Council, Wigan Council and Warrington Borough Council, prior to construction.

Associated Documents

- 1.8 This document provides specific management prescriptions in relation to the landscape elements and ecological enhancements of the Proposed Development. General environmental mitigation and management measures can be found in the following associated documents:
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) [to be produced for final DCO submission]; and
 - Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP).

Evolution of Design and Commitment to Delivery

- 1.9 The design of ILPN RFI has followed an iterative process informed by baseline surveys, consultation, and design workshops. Key ecological and landscape features have been retained where feasible, and opportunities for enhancement and habitat creation have been integrated into the masterplan.
- 1.10 In DCO projects, design commitments are secured through a suite of certified documents that guide both the assessment and delivery of the proposed development. For ILPN RFI, the Design Approach Document (DAD) will capture the iterative development of the design, setting out the principles, objectives, and rationale that inform the masterplan, landscape, and built form strategies.
- 1.11 Alongside this, the Parameters Plan defines the spatial and quantitative limits within which development must come forward — including building heights, development zones, landscape buffers, and infrastructure corridors.
- 1.12 These documents, including this Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP), are secured via Requirements in the DCO, ensuring that the scheme is delivered in accordance with the approved design framework.
- 1.13 Post-consent, further design details are typically subject to approval by the relevant local planning authorities, ensuring design quality is maintained through to implementation.

Proposed Structure of the Document

1.14 The proposed structure of the oLEMP is set out below. This will be updated with any further refinements having regard to comments received during statutory consultation and the updated version will be submitted with the DCO Application.

- Section 1.0: Introduction
- Section 2.0: Site Context and Baseline Overview
- Section 3.0: Proposed Development
- Section 4.0: Design Approach and Design Principles
- Section 5.0: Roles and Responsibilities
- Section 6.0: Management and Maintenance
- Section 7.0: Monitoring and Review

1.15 Appendices typically comprise the following documents, however this list of supporting documents will be refined prior to submission of the DCO:

- Appendix A – Illustrative Landscape Masterplan
- Appendix B – PRoW Diversion and Access Strategy Plan
- Appendix C – Habitat Management Prescriptions
- Appendix D – Monitoring Schedule and KPIs
- Appendix E – Tree and Vegetation Survey Summary
- Appendix F – Indicative Planting Palettes
- Appendix G – Cross-sections / Visual Mitigation Diagrams
- Appendix H – Stakeholder Engagement Record
- Appendix I – Soils and Materials Handling Strategy

Alignment with National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) Principles

1.16 The oLEMP is aligned with the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN), the Environment Act 2021 requirements for delivering a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain, and Natural England’s guidance on habitat creation, connectivity, and long-term stewardship. It also responds positively to the National Infrastructure Commission’s Design Principles for National Infrastructure, particularly in its integrated approach to landscape, ecology, and place-making. These principles — climate, people, places, and value — are embedded within the oLEMP through strategies that:

- enhance climate resilience via robust, low-maintenance planting and soil reuse/restoration;
- support local communities by improving public access, green infrastructure, and landscape quality;
- reflect local landscape character and heritage features to reinforce a sense of place; and
- deliver long-term environmental and social value through a clear governance framework for stewardship and adaptive management.

SITE CONTEXT AND BASELINE OVERVIEW

Description of the Main Site of the DCO Site

- 1.17 The Main Site lies on the eastern edge of Newton-le-Willows, within the administrative areas of St Helens Borough Council, Wigan Council, and Warrington Borough Council. The landscape is predominantly flat and agricultural, with fields defined by hedgerows and intersected by a network of roads, rail lines, and watercourses. The Parkside Link Road bisects the central part of the site, while the Chat Moss Railway Line runs along its northern edge.
- 1.18 The Order Limits encompass the full extent of land required to deliver, mitigate, and support the proposed development, including areas for infrastructure, ecological enhancement, landscape integration, and long-term stewardship.
- 1.19 The core of the DCO Site is split into two main components:
- The Main Site, located east of the M6 motorway, south of the Chat Moss Line, and west of Winwick Lane. This area includes a triangular parcel of land north of the Chat Moss Line and east of Parkside Road. The Main Site covers approximately 198 hectares and is bounded by the Chat Moss Line to the north, the M6 to the west, and Winwick Lane (A579) to the southeast. Parkside Road (A573) runs through the southern part of the site, connecting with Parkside Link Road West.
 - The Western Rail Chord, a safeguarded corridor of approximately 12 hectares west of the M6 and east of the West Coast Mainline. Bordered by the Chat Moss Line to the north and the Parkside West development to the east, this land is allocated for the turn-back facility to allow train servicing from the north and east.
- 1.20 The Order Limits also extend to land north of the Chat Moss Line (the Northern Mitigation Area) and east of Winwick Lane (the Soil Reuse Area), where habitat creation measures—including woodland planting, grassland, soil reuse and wetland features—are proposed. These areas will play a key role in delivering biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, while also providing visual screening to mitigate landscape and townscape effects, particularly in views from surrounding communities and sensitive receptors.
- 1.21 Existing land uses within the Main Site include Kenyon Hall Airfield, used for recreational

flying; the Warrington Model Flying Club, which operates radio-controlled aircraft; and Highfield Farm, comprising agricultural and residential buildings. Much of the land is in agricultural use, with arable fields interspersed with small woodland blocks, farmsteads, a commercial yard, and residential properties.

- 1.22 To the north of the Main Site lies the Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a designated peatland habitat. Its hydrology and ecological sensitivity have been key considerations in the design and mitigation strategies embedded within the application.

Surrounding Landscape and Urban Interface

- 1.23 The Site is situated within a wider agricultural and semi-rural setting, with settlements at Winwick, Hermitage Green, Golborne, Croft, and Newton-le-Willows all within proximity.
- 1.24 Key sensitivities include:
- Settlements: Edge-of-settlement receptors in Lane Head / Newton Road, Hermitage Green, Croft, and Winwick, where residential properties overlook open farmland.
 - Highfield Moss SSSI (also included within the Risley, Holcroft and Chat Moss National Nature Reserve NNR): a designated peatland habitat with acid grassland and sand exposures
 - Public Rights of Way: provide the local community with access to the landscape, views, and a sense of connection to the natural environment
- 1.25 The flat topography and sparse tree cover result in a landscape with limited capacity to accommodate large-scale built development without appropriate mitigation. To reduce adverse visual effects and reinforce the landscape framework, measures such as new planting, earth bunding, and habitat creation are likely to be necessary.

Highfield Moss SSSI

- 1.26 Highfield Moss (SSSI is located directly to the north of the Main Site, and is part of the Risley, Holcroft and Chat Moss NNR. It represents a rare and ecologically valuable fragment of lowland raised bog, a peatland habitat that has become increasingly scarce in the UK due to historic drainage and land use change. The site supports characteristic bog vegetation, including sphagnum mosses and wet heath communities, and provides habitat for a range of specialist flora and fauna adapted to acidic, waterlogged conditions.
- 1.27 The ecological importance of Highfield Moss SSSI lies not only in its biodiversity but also in its role in carbon storage, hydrological regulation, and landscape character. Its sensitivity to changes in water table and surrounding land management makes it a key environmental constraint. As such, the development proposals have been designed to avoid hydrological impacts on the Moss, and appropriate buffering, habitat enhancement, and long-term monitoring measures are proposed to safeguard its condition and ecological function.

Existing Habitats

1.28 Habitats within the Order Limits include:

- arable fields and modified/improved grassland (dominant land use);
- small areas of neutral grassland;
- areas of disturbed ground with ruderal and ephemeral colonizing vegetation associated with the recent creation of Parkside Link Road East;
- hedgerows and treelines, some of which have ecological connectivity to Highfield Moss SSSI;
- ditches and drains associated with historic agricultural management;
- ponds and ephemeral wet areas; and
- small plantations and scattered trees.

1.29 Baseline surveys and desk studies indicate that the Site and surrounding area support:

- Birds: Farmland species such as skylark, linnet, and lapwing; woodland-edge species along hedgerows; potential use by wintering waders and wildfowl.
- Bats: Local levels of commuting and foraging activity linked to hedgerows, treelines, and watercourses, and a day roost identified within a barn in the northern area of DCO Main Site.
- Mammals: Evidence of badger activity in the wider landscape.
- Amphibians & Reptiles: Two ponds confirmed to support great crested newts, a population of reptiles present within Highfield Moss SSSI that encroaches into the northern area of the Main Site, and incidental records of common toads within Western Rail Chord.
- Invertebrates: Hedgerows, field margins, and damp grassland offer habitat for pollinators and other invertebrate groups.

Existing Public Rights of Way and Access Corridors

1.30 The following are PRoW within the Main Site, illustrated on PEIR Appendix 10.6, Annex 1, Figures 1.1 and 1.2, and listed within each respective authority:

- St Helens Footpath 608, which connects Winwick Lane on the southern boundary of the Main Site to the Parkside Farm within the central extent of the Main Site.
- St Helens Footpath 621, which connects Parkside Road to Highfield Farm at the centre of the Site and then to the northern extent of the Site. A level crossing at the railway line connects to two Wigan footpaths which all head north towards Newton Road,

Lowton: 006/86/10; 006/87/10. Wigan Footpath 006/86/10 loops back and therefore has two sections which stem from the railway line.

- St Helens Footpath 665, which connects Footpath 621 to Wigan Footpath 006/91/10.
- St Helens Footpath 666, which connects Footpath 621 to Wigan Footpath 006/90/10.
- Two Wigan footpaths run along the railway line: Wigan 006/90/10, which is located to the south of the line; and Wigan 006/88/10, which is located north of the line. These footpaths connect to a footpath which crosses the railway line at a level crossing and comprises three reference numbers: Wigan 006/93/10; Wigan 006/94/10; and Wigan 006/95/10.
- Wigan Footpath 006/101/10 is located at the eastern extent of the Main Site and connects to Winwick Lane, close to Kenyon Hall Farm.

1.31 Roads which have pavements and either connect into the footpath network within the Main Site directly, or just outside it and therefore connect indirectly, are:

- Within the eastern boundary of the Main Site, the very southern extent of Winwick Lane. This section has been upgraded as part of the Parkside Link Road and has a pavement located on its western side. However, the majority of Winwick Lane has no designated footpath provision beside it, with hedgerow abutting the road in the most part.
- Parkside Link Road crosses the central extent of the Main Site and has pavement provision beside it.
- Parkside Road (A573) provides access into the main part of the Main Site from Winwick and Hermitage Green, and has pavement provision beside it.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.32 The Proposed Development comprises the following main components.

Development of the Main Site

- provision of a logistics park comprising up to c.767,000 square metres (m²) (gross internal area or GIA) of warehousing and ancillary buildings with a total footprint of up to 590,000m² at ground floor level and up to 177,050m² of mezzanine floorspace, comprising a mixture of units with the potential to be rail-connected, rail served and rail accessible units;
- provision of a rail terminal capable of accommodating up to 16 trains (up to 775m in length) per day, including connections to the mainline and ancillary development such as container storage, cranes for the loading and unloading of shipping containers, Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking, rail control building, fuelling facilities and staff facilities;

- a rail turn-back facility within the Western Rail Chord capable of accommodating trains up to 775m in length;
- New bridges across the Chat Moss Line to enhance connectivity and replace level crossings to improve safety;
- closure and diversion of two rail level crossings (Parkside No. 1 and Lowton Moss);
- provision of overnight lorry parking with welfare facilities and HGV fuelling facilities for users of the SRFI;
- new internal roads and works to existing road infrastructure on the Main Site;
- closure of existing access and provision of new access to Newton Park Farm and neighbouring properties;
- new electricity substations;
- new energy centre(s) and potential for battery storage;
- provision of roof-mounted photovoltaic arrays and/or canopy photovoltaic arrays over parking areas capable of providing direct energy supply to buildings on which they are mounted and/or distributing and exporting power via the energy centre(s);
- strategic landscaping and open space, including: bunds up to 3m above the reprofiled ground level, hard and soft landscape works, amenity features and planting;
- earthworks to regrade the Main Site to provide development plateaus, appropriate access, connections to the railway, development plots and landscape zones;
- habitat creation, enhancements, compensation and provision of publicly accessible space;
- an amenity area north of the railway line bounded by rail lines and Parkside Road, providing amenity open space, landscaping and screening as well as heritage interpretation;
- farmland to the north of the Liverpool to Manchester railway and south of the A572 Newton Road for the provision of BNG requirements, new and realigned PRow and landscaping including tree belts to screen views from the north;
- farmland to the east of Winwick Lane for the reuse of topsoil and landscaping including stopping up gaps in hedgerow and tree belts to screen views from the east;
- noise attenuation measures;
- new pedestrian and cycle access routes and connections and infrastructure including provision of new, diversion and stopping up of existing PRow where required (see Table 3.4);

- provision of public transport hub;
- demolition of existing on-site structures (including existing residential dwellings / farmsteads and commercial premises);
- utility compounds, plant and service infrastructure;
- security and safety provisions inside the ILPN SRFI including fencing and lighting; and
- drainage works including creation of attenuation ponds and sustainable drainage features.

Highway works

- development signage; and
- highways mitigation works to be determined through assessment and review with relevant stakeholders, as set out in the Highways Mitigation Options Report (PEIR Appendix 7.2).

Construction programme

1.33 It is anticipated that the general construction programme will broadly be broken down into the following key components:

- Construction of new site access on the new Parkside Link Road (PLR);
- Realignment of Parkside Road including construction of new site accesses and bridges;
- Site preparation, demolition and clearance;
- Highway works including additional remote highway works;
- Main Site works:
 - internal highway works;
 - earthworks, removal of topsoil, creation of level plateaus for logistics buildings;
 - construction of new pedestrian bridges, closure of level crossings, diversion of PRow, creation of new PRow and other accesses;
 - energy centre;
- Rail Terminal;
- Rail infrastructure including new bridges;
- Boundary and screen planting, Soil Reuse Area, Northern Mitigation Area and landscaping; and

- Storage and logistics buildings including on-plot landscaping.

- 1.34 The Proposed Development would be constructed in a series of planned phases. Early phases of warehousing (up to 126,000m²) are proposed to be delivered prior to the rail terminal becoming operational. This approach is supported by the NPSNN at paragraph 4.88 where support is given to delivery of warehousing ahead of the final delivery and commissioning of connections to the rail network. This approach protects the Applicant from unforeseen delays with Network Rail connections and works positively for the longer construction period often required for a rail terminal in comparison to logistics buildings.
- 1.35 The indicative but cautious construction programme is shown in Table 1 of PEIR Chapter 3. It is proposed that development would take place in phases with floorspace thresholds or triggers specified for the completion of on and off-site highways works and elements of the Rail Terminal.

Working hours

- 1.36 At this stage anticipated normal working hours are:
- 07:00 to 19:00 hours Mondays to Saturdays; and
 - No routine working Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 1.37 Further detail regarding working hours is set out in PEIR Chapter 3.

DESIGN APPROACH AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Design Vision

- 1.38 The Design Vision for the Proposed Development is as follows:

ILPN will be central to the UK's economy, the regional economy and the local economy.

It will deliver sustainable methods of distribution to meet the challenges of net zero and support long-term economic growth through the creation of high-quality local jobs.

It will integrate into its surroundings, enhancing the local context, and improve access to the countryside for recreation, thus delivering multiple social and environmental benefits.

Design Principles

- 1.39 The following design principles identified below will evolve through the early stages of the Project's development, later providing a fixed reference point through the later stages to ensure a successful scheme is delivered responding to all relevant design opportunities. Key considerations include:

1 Design Quality

A cohesive architectural approach that brings together built form, colour, and materials to

deliver a unified identity. The design will reflect simplicity, durability, and local character, creating a high-quality environment for workers and visitors alike.

2 **Transport Network Connections**

The masterplan will support efficient, low-impact freight operations by integrating rail and road infrastructure in a way that maximises functionality while minimising disruption to the surrounding area.

3 **Sustainable Commuting**

The site will promote active and low-carbon commuting through walking, cycling, and public transport connections, supporting accessibility for employees and reducing reliance on private vehicles.

4 **Access to the Countryside**

The project will improve accessibility and functionality of the surrounding countryside, enhancing opportunities for walking, recreation, and nature connection for local communities, and strengthening links across the site.

5 **Landscape and Visual Impacts**

A high-quality landscape framework will shape the development, delivering a strong sense of place through thoughtful placemaking. Green buffers, tree planting, and well-designed public spaces will provide visual amenity, support wellbeing, and create a distinctive environment for those who work, visit, or pass through the site.

6 **Biodiversity Benefits**

The development will deliver measurable biodiversity net gain through habitat creation, ecological connectivity, and long-term stewardship of natural assets, integrated into both built and landscaped areas.

7 **Sustainable Water Management**

Water will be managed as a visible and integral part of the landscape through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), natural features, and water-sensitive design, reducing flood risk and supporting biodiversity.

8 **Recognition of Heritage**

The design will celebrate the area's heritage, including the historic Chat Moss railway, the Huskisson Memorial, Winwick Battlefield and the areas mining heritage by supporting opportunities for interpretation where appropriate.

Role of the oLEMP in Design

- 1.40 The oLEMP provides the framework through which key ILPN RFI design principles will be delivered, by setting out the approach, responsibilities, and mechanisms for landscape implementation, habitat creation, and long-term stewardship. The oLEMP ensures that design quality (Principle 1) is underpinned by a coherent, well-managed landscape setting, aligned with the built form through coordinated planting, bunding, and material strategies. It also defines how public access and sustainable commuting (Principles 3 and 4) will be supported through the enhancement and management of Public Rights of Way and green infrastructure connections, improving access to the countryside for local communities.
- 1.41 In response to the project's environmental objectives, the oLEMP will set out the means to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain in habitat and hedgerow units and ensure no net loss of watercourse units. It will outline how retained ecological features, including hedgerows, ditches, ponds will be protected, enhanced and integrated into new landscaping, and how new woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats will be established as part of

multifunctional green infrastructure corridors.

- 1.42 These measures will contribute to delivering a connected ecological network that enhances resilience and facilitates species movement, supporting the design principles related to biodiversity (Principle 6), landscape integration (Principle 7), and protection of the Moss (Principle 8). The oLEMP will also guide the use of landscape planting for visual mitigation, screening, and amenity - directly supporting the creation of a high-quality environmental setting (Principle 5) and contributing to SuDS delivery and heritage interpretation where appropriate (Principles 9 and 10).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Delivery of Plant and Materials

Overview

- 1.43 This section sets out the roles and responsibilities of those likely to be involved in implementing the final LEMP.

Key Delivery Roles

Developer/Applicant

- 1.44 The Developer is responsible for securing consent, funding, and overseeing delivery of the project in accordance with legal and environmental commitments, including the oLEMP. They ensure that the design vision, biodiversity objectives, and long-term management strategies are embedded from the outset and monitored over time.

Principal Contractor(s)

- 1.45 The Principal Contractor(s) delivers the physical works on site, including landscape construction and ecological mitigation measures, in compliance with approved plans and environmental controls. They are responsible for coordinating site operations, ensuring implementation follows the agreed phasing, and supporting site monitoring and reporting.

Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW)

- 1.46 The ECoW acts as an independent advisor and on-site monitor to ensure ecological mitigation and protection measures are implemented correctly. They liaise between the contractor, developer, and statutory consultees, advising on sensitive operations, checking compliance, and reporting on ecological performance.

Local Authorities

- 1.47 Local authorities oversee post-consent approvals, discharge of DCO Requirements, and long-term compliance with planning and environmental obligations. They (or bodies they employ to perform the ecological consultee role in relation to their planning regulatory function) may also play a role in reviewing management plans, monitoring reports, and approving details of

the development where required.

Natural England

- 1.48 Natural England provides statutory advice on biodiversity, designated sites, and protected species, ensuring the project meets legal and policy requirements. They may review habitat creation proposals, oversee biodiversity net gain delivery, and advise on management plans for sensitive ecological areas.

Appointed Management Body

- 1.49 The Appointed Management Body is responsible for the long-term stewardship of landscape and ecological assets created by the project. This may include habitat maintenance, monitoring, public engagement, and adaptive management in line with the objectives set out in the oLEMP and other post-consent documents.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust

- 1.50 Lancashire Wildlife Trust is the established manager of Highfield Moss SSSI and holds responsibility for its ongoing ecological stewardship. They ensure that conservation objectives are met, monitor site condition, and may provide input into the project's design and mitigation strategies where these interface with the Moss, particularly in relation to hydrology and habitat connectivity.

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Habitat Creation and Management

- 1.51 The project will incorporate habitat enhancement in the form of new woodland, hedgerows, grassland and wetlands, contributing to the overall biodiversity net gain strategy, as set out below.

Woodland

- 1.52 New woodland planting will form a key part of the project's approach to green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, and landscape integration. Woodlands will be designed to contribute to visual mitigation, support habitat connectivity, and enhance the ecological character of the site. The planted areas will be located and configured to complement existing landscape features.
- 1.53 Woodland establishment will typically involve the use of native tree and shrub species, of local provenance. Planting design will aim to create structural and age diversity, incorporating a mix of canopy, understorey, and ground flora layers. This will promote a naturalistic woodland structure, capable of adapting to changing environmental conditions and supporting long-term biodiversity.
- 1.54 A general management framework will involve a five-year establishment phase, focusing on plant survival, weed control, and protection from browsing. From year six onwards, a cycle of

selective thinning and coppicing will typically be introduced to encourage regeneration, maintain structural variety, and prevent excessive canopy closure.

- 1.55 These management principles set out a typical approach and will be developed in further detail in consultation with relevant stakeholders, statutory bodies, and the appointed management organisation, ensuring that woodland creation aligns with site-specific conditions and long-term project objectives.

Hedgerows

- 1.56 Hedgerows are a vital component of the landscape and ecological network, providing habitat, shelter, and movement corridors for a wide range of species. As part of the project's mitigation and enhancement strategy, new hedgerows will be planted and existing ones replaced or extended where lost or affected by development. These efforts will help to maintain the continuity of field boundaries, restore landscape character, and support biodiversity net gain objectives.
- 1.57 Hedgerow planting will typically use native species of local provenance. Where possible, planting will reinforce existing hedgerow lines and connect fragmented features to create a coherent and continuous ecological network. Particular attention will be paid to the role of hedgerows in supporting species movement, including bats, nesting birds, and terrestrial mammals, by linking woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats across the site.
- 1.58 Long-term management of hedgerows will be designed to balance structure, ecological function, and visual integration. A 2–3 year cutting rotation will typically be used to encourage flowering, fruiting, and dense growth, enhancing the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. These management practices will be refined in consultation with relevant ecological stakeholders and incorporated into the long-term maintenance regime set out in the final Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

Grasslands

- 1.59 Grassland habitats will form an important part of the project's ecological mitigation and landscape strategy, contributing to biodiversity enhancement, visual amenity, and habitat connectivity. Areas of species-rich neutral grassland will be created in selected mitigation zones, using seed mixes appropriate to local soil conditions and target habitat types. These grasslands will provide valuable foraging and nesting opportunities for invertebrates, birds, and small mammals, supporting wider biodiversity net gain goals.
- 1.60 In addition, some parts of the site contain naturally occurring sandy soils, which may prove suitable for the establishment of small areas of acid grassland communities with mixed scrub over time. Initially, however, those areas adjacent to the Moss will be established as a wet neutral grassland. Acid grassland is most likely to develop on the embankment area south-west of the moss protection/buffer zone. The landscape proposals include mixed scrub habitat here (with grassland ground cover). These will be managed and enhanced through sensitive soil handling and the use of appropriate low-nutrient seed mixes to encourage acid-

tolerant species typical of local habitat types¹.

- 1.61 Management of species-rich and acid grasslands will typically follow a traditional hay cut regime, with a single cut taken in late July (or one flowering species have set seed), followed by aftermath grazing on the Northern Mitigation Area or (more likely for the majority of the site) a secondary cut in early autumn (if necessary). Any arisings from cutting would be removed from the habitat to ensure nutrient levels remain controlled. This approach allows flowering plants to set seed and supports structural diversity, while helping to control nutrient levels and suppress competitive species. Management practices will be monitored and adjusted as needed to ensure grassland condition and species diversity improve over time.
- 1.62 In addition to ecological grasslands, amenity grassland areas will be established in locations intended for public access and recreation. These areas will be managed through frequent mowing, maintaining short swards suitable for walking, informal play, and visual openness. The distinction between amenity, neutral, and acid grasslands will be clearly defined in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, with detailed prescriptions developed in consultation with stakeholders to ensure each grassland type meets its intended function.

Wetlands

- 1.63 Wetland habitats will form a central component of the DCO site's green infrastructure, contributing to both ecological enhancement and sustainable water management. A diverse network of wetland features will be established across the site, including ponds, swales, ditches, attenuation and detention basins, seasonal scrapes, and areas of wet grassland. These features will be designed to work in combination, delivering biodiversity benefits while supporting the site's drainage function and climate resilience.
- 1.64 Each wetland type will serve specific ecological and hydrological roles. Ponds and scrapes will provide standing water and ephemeral habitats for wetland flora (aquatic, emergent and marginal vegetation), amphibians, aquatic invertebrates, and birds. Swales and ditches will facilitate surface water conveyance, while also supporting linear habitats for plants and wildlife. Attenuation and detention features will help manage peak flows and improve water quality, often incorporating marginal planting to support habitat complexity. Wet grassland areas will offer valuable foraging and nesting habitat for birds and pollinators, particularly in low-lying or seasonally wet zones.
- 1.65 Management of wetland habitats will focus on maintaining water quality, structural diversity, and hydrological function. This will include selective vegetation clearance, invasive species control, and periodic de-silting where needed. Wetland vegetation will be encouraged through natural colonisation and targeted planting, using native species suited to variable water regimes. Seasonal and ephemeral features will be managed to maintain open conditions and prevent scrub encroachment, ensuring habitat suitability for species

¹ Acid grassland is of particular ecological value, supporting specialist flora and fauna, and contributing to overall habitat diversity across the site.

dependent on disturbance and fluctuation.

- 1.66 The wetland strategy will be detailed in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and refined through consultation with relevant ecological and water management stakeholders. Long-term stewardship will ensure that wetland habitats continue to deliver biodiversity net gain, visual amenity, and ecosystem services throughout the life of the development.

Protected and Priority Species

- 1.67 The current intent with respect to protected and priority species is as follows:
- 1.68 Flora: it is proposed that specimens of the nationally scarce flowers maiden pink *Dianthus deltoidesi* (present within the Western Rail Chord) and marsh gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (present within Highfield Moss SSSI) will be seeded or translocated in appropriate areas of habitat creation to safeguard populations of these species.
- 1.69 Bats: connective habitats and features will allow bats to commute along the northern boundary of the Main DCO Site and maintain connectivity along the western and eastern boundaries. Semi-natural habitats will provide some potential for movement along the Parkside Road corridor and through the proposed development in the north-east of the Main Site. Lighting design will allow for sufficiently dark areas to accommodate the movement of bats particularly through the northern habitat corridor. Habitats proposed to the north of the Main Site (Northern Mitigation Area) will provide increased opportunities for bats to forage with habitats and species that will promote a diverse range of invertebrate prey.
- 1.70 Amphibians: habitats will include both terrestrial and wet/aquatic features that will compensate for the loss of ponds to the development as well as increasing connectivity for amphibians, particularly in the area surrounding Highfield Moss SSSI. The inclusion of enhancements such as log piles and semi-natural hibernacula as well as new hedgerows and areas of scrub and woodland will provide terrestrial refugia to support the lifecycle of amphibians year round.
- 1.71 Reptiles: habitat creation will be appropriate to support and increase opportunities for the existing population of common lizard in Highfield Moss SSSI and the northern area of the Main Site. An embankment with grassland, scrub and bare ground will provide reptiles ideal habitat for foraging and basking with connectivity to newly created wet grassland and the habitats within Highfield Moss SSSI. Enhancement features such as log and rock piles will also provide natural refugia for reptiles.
- 1.72 Barn Owls: barn owls known to roost in buildings within the Main Site will be provided with barn owl nesting features (boxes or void spaces in proposed buildings) as compensation for the loss of roosting habitat. Habitats proposed will continue to provide opportunities for barn owl hunting and movement, particularly in connectivity with Highfield Moss SSSI and the areas of habitat creation to the north of the railway line.
- 1.73 Birds: habitats created will provide additional breeding and nesting opportunities for generalist bird species that will take advantage of hedgerows, scrub, and woodland habitats as well as foraging in grassland areas. New areas of wetland and aquatic habitat will promote the use by species which specialise in these habitats. Although there will be a reduction in

agricultural habitat the large areas of proposed grassland in the Northern Mitigation Area will provide some continued value to farmland specialist species.

- 1.74 Invertebrates: the range of habitats proposed will continue to support a diverse range of common and widespread invertebrates. The habitats will also support the potential expansion of the range of the nationally scarce bleeding heart spider *Nigma puella* (one specimen was identified within the Main Site during surveys).

Buffer Zone Management Adjacent to Highfield Moss SSSI

- 1.75 A key element of the ecological strategy for ILPN RFI is the creation and management of a dedicated buffer zone between the Proposed Development and Highfield Moss SSSI. This buffer, ranging in width from 40 to 95 metres (averaging approximately 50 metres), is designed to protect the sensitive peatland habitat from potential adverse effects associated with the new development, while enhancing ecological connectivity and local amenity.
- 1.76 The buffer will be subject to targeted habitat creation, focusing on a mosaic of wet grassland, wet woodland strips, shallow ponds and scrapes, and south-facing bare sandy slopes designed to support basking reptiles and invertebrates. These habitats will serve multiple functions: filtering runoff, absorbing nutrients, providing transitional habitat, and supporting species movement between Highfield Moss SSSI and the wider ecological network. Native planting and low-intervention management will promote habitat diversity and minimise disturbance.
- 1.77 In addition to ecological enhancement, the buffer incorporates specific hydrological and lighting mitigation measures. A perimeter filter drain will be installed along the development edge to control surface water flows and prevent alterations to the water table or nutrient enrichment of the Moss. This feature will also serve to protect against any adverse environmental release from the development relating to surface water. Adjacent areas of the development will incorporate sensitive lighting design to reduce light spill, protecting nocturnal species and preserving the natural dark environment associated with the SSSI.
- 1.78 The buffer also represents a positive change in land use, replacing intensively farmed arable land with low-input, semi-natural habitat. This change will significantly reduce the risk of nutrient overspray, fertiliser drift, and pesticide runoff entering the SSSI, contributing to improved site integrity and long-term ecological resilience.
- 1.79 To manage recreational pressure, the buffer will include carefully routed public access paths, providing alternative routes through informal open space. This is intended to alleviate pressure on Highfield Moss SSSI, particularly from dog walking and anti-social users on motorbikes, both of which can damage or disturb sensitive habitats. Wayfinding, interpretation, and fencing may be used as part of a visitor management strategy to encourage responsible use and protect the integrity of the designated site.

Amenity and Recreation Areas

- 1.80 The LEMP will take a balanced approach to amenity and recreation, aiming to create an attractive and engaging landscape that supports public access while safeguarding the ecological integrity of new and existing habitats. Paths, open spaces, and viewing areas will be designed to integrate sensitively with the natural environment, providing opportunities for

leisure and connection with nature. At the same time, the plan will include measures such as zoning, path routing, habitat screening, and interpretation signage to minimise disturbance to sensitive habitats and species, ensuring that ecological success and recreational value can coexist sustainably.

Sustainable Drainage and Water Features

- 1.81 SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) will be integral to the site’s water management strategy, designed primarily by drainage engineers to manage surface water flow, attenuation, and water quality. However, to ensure these features are truly multi-functional, they will be developed in close collaboration with ecologists and landscape architects. This integrated approach will allow SuDS components—such as swales, basins, ponds, and filter drains—to be shaped not only for hydraulic performance but also to deliver biodiversity benefits, visual interest, and recreational value. Careful detailing of planting, grading, and water depth will support habitat creation and aesthetic quality, enabling SuDS features to function as valuable green infrastructure that serves both ecological and amenity purposes while maintaining their core drainage role.

Landscape Character and Views

- 1.82 The landscape strategy will be guided by a clear understanding of landscape character and views, with measures taken to limit and manage visual change through the strategic deployment of landscape elements, primarily woodland planting, woodland belts, and subtle landform. These interventions will be targeted to soften views of large-scale built form and reduce the visual prominence of infrastructure, particularly from sensitive receptors. However, care will be taken to strike a balance between maintaining the characteristic openness of the local landscape—a defining feature of the area—and selectively screening or filtering views where appropriate. Importantly, the approach does not assume that all views of the development should be entirely screened; in certain locations, operational aspects of the site—such as rail movements and logistics activity—may be of legitimate public or interpretive interest, contributing to the site’s identity and engagement with its functional role.

Community Access and Engagement

- 1.83 Community access is a central consideration in the landscape strategy, recognising the importance of ensuring that the countryside surrounding the proposed development remains functionally useful and engaging. The project presents an opportunity to transform a currently fragmented and lightly used network of public paths, set within a relatively uninspiring, denuded farmland landscape, into a connected, high-quality assemblage of routes. These routes will be designed to link local communities with workplaces, support sustainable travel, and offer a variety of circular recreational options for walking, cycling, and nature appreciation. Where appropriate, views of the proposed development will be embraced as part of a distinctive sense of place, allowing users to experience the working landscape in a way that reinforces local identity and fosters a stronger connection between people and the evolving environment.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Invasive Species Management

- 1.84 INNS present a risk to biodiversity, landscape integrity, and long-term site management. As part of the ecological baseline assessment, several invasive plant species have been identified within or near the draft DCO Order limits. These species are known to spread rapidly, outcompete native vegetation, and in some cases, cause damage to infrastructure or pose risks to human health. The LEMP will include targeted control and monitoring measures for each species, developed in line with best practice and legal requirements. Ongoing management will be essential to prevent further spread and support the successful establishment of new habitats.

Japanese Knotweed

- 1.85 Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) has been recorded within the Western Rail Chord area. This species is highly invasive and difficult to eradicate, with the potential to regenerate from small root fragments and damage built infrastructure. A site-specific management plan will be implemented to control and, where possible, eradicate the infestation before construction activities begin in the affected area. Treatment is likely to involve herbicide application under controlled conditions for a minimum of 3 years, with follow-up monitoring to assess effectiveness and ensure compliance with environmental legislation.

Himalayan Balsam

- 1.86 Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) has been noted in woodland areas south of the Western Rail Chord. While visually striking, it spreads rapidly along watercourses and in damp woodland, often forming dense stands that suppress native ground flora. Management will focus on manual removal or targeted strimming before seed set, likely carried out over multiple seasons to reduce seed banks. Efforts will also be made to restore affected areas with native vegetation to improve ecological resilience and prevent recolonisation.

Suspected Hybrid Giant Hogweed

- 1.87 A suspected hybrid giant hogweed has been identified to the west of the Main Site. This species is of concern due to its potential health hazards, including phytophotodermatitis (skin burns upon contact with sap and sunlight). Given the safety implications, management will involve careful identification and controlled removal by trained personnel, with strict handling protocols in place. Public access to affected areas will be restricted during treatment, and the site will be subject to ongoing surveillance to ensure the species does not re-establish.

Rhododendron ponticum

- 1.88 *Rhododendron ponticum* has been identified in woodland within the Western Rail Chord. This species outcompetes native vegetation and forms a dense canopy blocking sunlight and preventing ground flora establishing. The likely approach to removal will involve a programme of clearance and control measures, combining mechanical and/or herbicide-based techniques, with the precise method to be confirmed at the detailed implementation stage.

- 1.89 The management plan for INNS will include a comprehensive set of measures to ensure effective control and prevent further spread. Key actions will include mapping and clearly marking the locations of INNS, establishing Buffer Protection Zones (BPZs) to minimise accidental disturbance, and providing toolbox talks and site signage to raise awareness among contractors and site operatives. The plan will also detail methods for treatment or removal of each species, tailored to site conditions and species-specific risks. In addition, wash-down facilities and biosecurity protocols will be implemented to prevent the spread of invasive species via machinery, equipment, or personnel moving across the site.

Climate, Sustainability and Adaptive Management

- 1.90 The oLEMP will embed climate and sustainability considerations throughout its design and management framework to ensure long-term environmental resilience. This includes selecting drought-tolerant and climate-resilient planting to adapt to changing weather patterns, using low-carbon materials where applicable, and minimising reliance on intensive inputs such as irrigation, fertilisers, and pesticides. Habitat creation will support carbon sequestration, particularly through woodland, wetland, and soil-based strategies, while sustainable drainage features should contribute to both flood mitigation and water quality. The oLEMP will also promote adaptive management, allowing maintenance regimes to evolve in response to environmental monitoring and emerging climate trends, ensuring that the landscape remains ecologically functional and resource-efficient into the future.

Monitoring and Reporting

- 1.91 Monitoring and reporting will be an essential component of the oLEMP, providing a mechanism to track the effectiveness of landscape and ecological measures throughout the life of the development. While this document sets out the broad principles for monitoring—such as establishing baseline conditions, checking habitat establishment, and identifying the need for adaptive management—the detailed monitoring protocols and reporting schedules will be developed post-consent, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This will ensure that monitoring is proportionate, targeted, and aligned with agreed success criteria, allowing for transparent review and timely intervention where necessary to achieve the project’s long-term environmental objectives.

Securing Mechanisms

- 1.92 Relevant design, landscape, and ecological commitments set out in the oLEMP will be secured through the DCO via certified documents and Requirements, which legally bind the developer to deliver key measures. These may include commitments to biodiversity net gain, habitat creation, long-term management, and post-consent approvals, with specific details to be agreed with local authorities and statutory bodies through discharge of Requirements.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Overview

- 1.93 The following checklist outlines the key themes and considerations that will inform the monitoring and review framework within the oLEMP for ILPN RFI. While detailed methodologies and responsibilities will be developed post-consent in consultation with relevant stakeholders, this list sets out the high-level principles that will guide the implementation, maintenance, and ongoing evaluation of landscape and ecological measures. It ensures that the oLEMP remains a living document, capable of responding to change while securing the long-term success of habitat creation, public realm integration, and green infrastructure across the site and providing an overarching framework for the LEMPs.

Soils and Materials Management

- Baseline soil assessment and classification to guide reuse.
- Soil handling and storage in line with best practice (e.g. Defra Code of Practice).
- Compatibility of soils with habitat creation objectives.
- Ongoing monitoring of soil performance and integration with wider materials management strategies.

Management Objectives and Zoning

- Defined management aims by character zone (e.g. rail operations, ecological corridors, community interfaces).
- Clear link between intended landscape function (e.g. screening, access, biodiversity) and management strategy.

Implementation, Phasing, and Monitoring

- Delivery aligned with construction phases, including advance planting where appropriate.
- Monitoring regime including short-term (establishment) and long-term (maintenance) periods.
- Use of measurable indicators (e.g. DEFRA habitat condition targets) to assess success.
- Adaptive management framework to address underperformance or change in site conditions.

Roles, Governance, and Long-Term Responsibility

- Defined roles during construction and operational phases (e.g. developer, ECoW, management body).
- Clear governance arrangements for review, reporting, and decision-making.

Compliance and Securing Mechanisms

- Linkage to DCO Requirements and other certified plans.
- Post-consent approvals, including final LEMPs to be agreed with the local planning authorities.
- Long-term funding arrangements and handover strategy to support ongoing stewardship.