### **Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd**

### **INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK NORTH (ILPN)**

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

**Project reference TR510001** 

**Preliminary Environmental Information Report** 

**Non-Technical Summary** 

October 2025

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

## 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.

## Chapter 1 ◆ Introduction

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd. ('the Applicant'/ 'ILPN Ltd') is promoting proposals for a new strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) and associated development on land to the east of Newton-le-Willows. An SRFI is a large multi-purpose freight interchange and distribution centre linked into both the rail and trunk road systems. The project is referred to as Intermodal Logistics Park North Rail Freight Interchange (ILPN RFI).
- 1.2 SRFIs reduce the cost of moving freight by rail and have sustainability benefits from encouraging the transfer of freight from road to rail.

#### THE APPLICANT

1.3 ILPN Ltd is a Tritax Big Box Developments company. Tritax Big Box Developments is the development arm of Tritax Big Box REIT plc which owns, manages and develops supply chain infrastructure such as large logistics buildings, with sites primarily along the M1 and M40 motorways in the Midlands and on the M6 and M62 motorway corridors in northern England. ILPN Ltd was established for the purpose of promoting the ILPN SRFI project.

#### THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 1.4 Under the Planning Act 2008, the proposals qualify as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Accordingly, an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) is to be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which will examine the DCO application on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport.
- 1.5 Before applying for a DCO an applicant is required to undertake wide-ranging public consultation and use the feedback obtained to refine the development proposals. The applicant undertook an informal public consultation between 27th January and 21st March 2025.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 1.6 To help inform the determination of the DCO application, the applicant is undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of its proposals. EIA is a process that aims to improve the environmental design of a development proposal, and to provide the decision maker with sufficient information about the environmental effects of the project to make a decision.
- 1.7 The topics to be considered as part of an EIA, 'the scope' are decided in agreement with the planning Inspectorate. The findings of an EIA are presented in a written report known as an



Environmental Statement (ES). An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to improve any adverse effects. The applicant will submit an ES as part of its DCO application.

#### THIS REPORT

- 1.8 Design and assessment work is still in progress but to inform the Statutory Consultation, a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) has been prepared by the applicant. The purpose of a PEIR is to present the environmental information gathered by the applicant to date, to help consultees to develop an understanding of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and provide feedback. This current document is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the PEIR.
- 1.9 The Non-Technical Summary has the following chapters:
  - The remainder of Chapter One (this part) describes the development that is proposed, the site and surrounding area.
  - Chapter Two explains how the site for ILPN SRFI was selected, how the design and masterplan have evolved, and outlines the policy and law context for the Proposed Development.
  - Chapter Three is a summary of the topic-based assessments that are set out in chapters 6-19 of the PEIR.
  - Chapter Four presents concluding comments and outlines the next steps in the DCO process.
- 1.10 For more detail about the ILPN SRFI proposals and the environmental effects, you can also read the PEIR chapters and other documents that have been made available as part of the Statutory Consultation.

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.11 Chapter 2 of the PEIR provides a description of the DCO Site and its surroundings.
- 1.12 The site boundaries for a DCO application are called 'Order Limits'. As Figure NTS-1 shows, the draft Order Limits are broadly split into five sections, collectively known as the DCO Site:
  - the Main Site land to the east of the M6 motorway, to the south of the Chat Moss Line and to the west of Winwick Lane, where the main built development will be located including the Rail Terminal and logistics park and associated facilities;
  - the Western Rail Chord land to the west of the M6 motorway and to the east of the West Coast Mainline, where the rail chord for the SRFI will be located;
  - The Northern Mitigation Area land to the north of the Chat Moss Line (Liverpool Manchester) railway line incorporating land for community use, biodiversity net gain





(BNG), public rights of way (PRoW), landscaping and soil management; and

- Soils Reuse Area land to the east of Winwick Lane to be used for the purposes of storage and reuse of soils;
- Remote Highways Works land contained within the draft Order Limits that includes the
  potential highways mitigation options, including the potential Lane Head South Relief
  Road and other options listed in Table 2.1 of the PEIR.

#### **COUNCIL AREAS**

1.13 The DCO Site is located within the local authority areas of St Helens Borough Council (SHBC), within the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Wigan Council (WC), within the Greater Manchester Region Combined Authority and Warrington Borough Council (WBC).

#### **LOCAL FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- 1.14 The majority of the Main Site is comprised of agricultural fields used for arable crops, with some small patches of woodland in the east. There are also a number of residential properties, farmsteads and commercial premises within the Main Site. Parkside Road (A573) runs through the DCO Site to the south before passing over the M6 where it provides access to Parkside Link Road West.
- 1.15 The Western Rail Chord is bordered to the west by the West Coast Mainline railway, to the north by the Chat Moss Line and to the east by land associated with the former Parkside Colliery. The Western Rail Chord is required to enable connections to the mainlines and provides a third line to enable a train to be received and another departed using the same engine.
- 1.16 The Western Rail Chord is comprised of scrub land and areas of woodland which are set adjacent to an area of redevelopment with commercial uses proposed, which is known as Parkside West.
- 1.17 The Northern Mitigation Area is made up of a number of agricultural fields located between the Chat Moss Line and Newton Road.
- 1.18 The Soils Reuse Area consists of a number of agricultural fields to the east of Winwick Lane and south of the Chat Moss Line, bordering several existing land uses such as Kenyon Hall Farm and Morris Farm.

#### **Sensitive land uses**

- 1.19 There are a number of sensitive land uses and features in the site and the surrounding area, and these are described below.
- 1.20 Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the Main Site and is intersected by the Chat Moss railway line. Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located



approximately 4.9 km south-east of the Main Site.

- 1.21 There are 17 designated heritage assets identified within a 1 km radius of the DCO Site. The 'Huskisson Memorial on south side of Railway' is a Grade II Listed Building located adjacent to the northern part of the Main Site, and adjacent to the Chat Moss Line. The Huskisson Memorial is a small temple-like memorial which sits beside the Chat Moss Line, which is in memory of William Huskisson, who was the MP for Liverpool at the time of the railway line's opening and was fatally injured during the opening celebrations.
- 1.22 The Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Winwick (also known as Battle of Red Bank) 1648 is located directly adjacent to, and partially overlapping with, the western edge of the Draft Order Limits.
- 1.23 No Scheduled Monuments are located within the DCO Site. One Scheduled Monument is located within a 1 km radius of the Main Site: 'Castle Hill Motte and Bailey and Bowl Barrow', which is located to the north-west of the DCO Site.

#### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

1.24 Chapter 3 of the PEIR, describes what the applicant proposes to build and explains how it would operate. The purpose of a SRFI is described in national planning policy in the form of the National Policy Statement for National Networks ('the NPSNN'), which was approved by Parliament in 2024, as follows:

'The aim of a strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising the long haul primary trunk journey by rail and minimising some elements of the secondary distribution (final delivery) leg by road, through co-location of other distribution and freight activities. SRFIs need to be supported at both ends by connections to rail infrastructure and logistics terminals. SRFIs are also typically associated with intermodal traffic. A fully effective network of SRFIs, supported by smaller scale rail freight interchanges, will help to enable the sector to reach its full potential.' (paragraph 2.15).

- 1.25 An SRFI generally has the following main elements:
  - An intermodal area (the Railport), where containers are lifted between rail freight wagons and container lorries;
  - Logistics buildings comprising a mixture of units with the potential to be rail-connected, rail served and rail accessible:
    - Rail <u>connected</u> buildings: a warehouse or other building either with its own dedicated rail siding or which is sufficiently close to the railport to allow containers to be moved from the rail wagons into the warehouse by overhead cranes or reach stackers, without the need for them to be loaded onto an HGV or Tugmaster vehicle;
    - Rail <u>served</u> buildings: a warehouse forming part of the SRFI, but which would require containers to be moved from or to the railport by means of an HGV or Tugmaster vehicle;





• Rail-accessible buildings with the potential either to be rail-connected or rail-served.

#### **MAIN ELEMENTS**

#### **Development of the Main Site**

- 1.26 The main features of the Proposed Development are summarised below:
  - 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 3.3);
- 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 (SuDS) features.

#### **Highway works**

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

#### DEVELOPMENT 'PARAMETERS' AND ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

- 1.27 Because the detailed needs of individual building occupiers cannot be anticipated at this time, the DCO application for the Proposed Development will be similar to an application for outline planning permission. The DCO application will fix the outer envelope or 'parameters' of the Proposed Development including its position, land uses and the overall maximum dimensions of built features such as buildings, roads and landscape areas. If the DCO is granted or 'made', the applicant will be required to submit details of individual buildings and development phases to St Helens Borough Council or Wigan Council, where the main built development will be located or Warrington Borough Council where highway works are proposed, for approval prior to construction of those elements. These design details would be within the assessed and approved parameters.
- 1.28 An illustrative masterplan of the Proposed Development is shown in Figure NTS-2. The draft Illustrative Masterplan provides a layout demonstrating one way in which the Proposed Development could come forward within these parameters.



1.29 The draft parameters plan for the Proposed Development is shown in Figure NTS-3. The parameters reflect the development shown in the illustrative master plan (Figure NTS-2). In each development zone a maximum number of buildings is proposed. For example a zone might contain five smaller buildings or anything between one and four larger buildings, in all cases not exceeding the maximum floorspace parameter for the zone. Each development zone includes all elements integral to each development plot, including buildings, hardstandings, parking, landscape and planting, utilities and drainage infrastructure.

#### **DEVELOPMENT PHASING**

1.30 The Proposed Development would take place in five main phases over a ten year period, subject to market conditions. Phase 1 includes site earthworks and preparation, landscape and planting work, highway improvements, and initial development of warehousing in Zones A, B and F. Phase 2 includes the development of warehousing in Zones F, C and G, and the realignment of Parkside Road. Phases 3-5 would see the completion of the full rail terminal and the construction of the remaining B8 buildings with related internal access roads and landscape works.

#### **ILPN SRFI IN OPERATION**

- 1.31 Trains entering the site from either direction would move either directly into the one of the four Railport sidings served by gantry cranes or into one of four reception sidings running alongside the main line. From the reception sidings, trains might continue on to rail-connected buildings via the run-around chord on the northern edge of the DCO Site.
- 1.32 Up to 16 train visits a day are provided for (i.e. up to 16 trains arriving and 16 departing, giving a maximum total of up to 32 train movements a day).
- 1.33 Gantry cranes or reach stackers would be used to remove and load containers from the train. These cranes would run on rails and move up and down the terminal. They would be powered by electricity for clean and quiet operation. The main benefit of gantry cranes is that they allow a faster operation with more space to stack containers. A reach stacker is a large mobile lift truck which can pick up containers and move around flexibly. While reach stackers are flexible, they require more manoeuvring space.
- 1.34 Containers unloaded from a train would be transferred by the crane to a temporary stockpile nearby or, more often, transferred directly onto a flatbed trailer pulled by a lorry or a 'tugmaster' yard tractor vehicle. These vehicles would then:
  - transport the container directly to one of the B8 buildings on the Main Site for processing. From there the contents of the container will be batched and forwarded to customers, who might include manufacturers, retailers and private individuals, using vehicles ranging from HGVs to vans;
  - transfer the container to a storage area where it can be held until needed; and
  - if lorry-hauled, deliver the container to a business elsewhere in the region, generally



within 80km of the Main Site.

- 1.35 The ILPN SRFI would operate on a 24 hour / seven days a week basis. Staff at the Rail Terminal and in the logistics buildings would work in shifts. The applicant will implement a site-wide Travel Plan secured through the DCO to provide the workforce with alternatives to single occupancy private cars and to reduce/minimise private car use.
- 1.36 During the operation of the ILPN SRFI there would be ongoing management of the Main Site to ensure a high-quality environment is maintained. These management controls would also apply throughout the construction phase to ensure that occupiers of buildings that have been occupied do not experience disruption or disturbance.
- 1.37 Once completed, the site will be managed by a management company. This organisation will be responsible for ensuring the planned management and maintenance of the Main Site, including shared areas of public realm and unadopted areas.

## Chapter 2 ◆ Site selection, alternatives and scheme evolution

#### CONTEXT

- 2.1 Chapter 4 of the PEIR explains how the applicant identified a Site for an SRFI. It begins by looking at the regional context and need for an SRFI, describes the chosen site and provides a comparison to alternative sites. It then outlines the changes made to the design, size and scale of the development, guided by the EIA process.
- 2.2 The North-West is a large market for Intermodal Rail because of its distance from key ports for deep sea international trade; and short sea European trade. The distances involved from the North-West's major conurbations to Felixstowe, London Gateway and Southampton are over 220 miles. There is an emerging growth in short-sea unaccompanied unitised traffic movements, to circumvent delays through roll on roll off ferries, for UK EU trade. Landed at ports with suitable rail facilities, these can and are being converted to rail movements within the UK. Rail should therefore provide the best import-export route to serve the North West market, providing it has sufficient facilities.
- 2.3 ILPN SRFI is well located for logistics operators to serve both the Liverpool City Region and the Greater Manchester conurbation, as well as Warrington and North Cheshire. These are all within the approximately 20 miles radius which terminal operators consider to be optimal. Additionally, the Proposed Development is exceptionally well placed to support the key ports in the north of England and Scotland and operate as a vital component of the network of regional SRFIs due to its ability to provide access to the North-South routes via the West Coast Main Line; and East-West Routes via Chat Moss and TransPennine Lines.
- 2.4 As the UK logistics market moves to Net Zero, and given that rail is 76% more carbon efficient per freight tonne km compared to road freight, the demand and need for increased intermodal freight capacity in the North-West will be vital and as such has been embedded in local policy.

#### **SITE ALLOCATION**

2.5 The starting point for the applicant's choice of location for the development of ILPN SRFI is the fact that a large part of the Main Site is allocated as an SRFI in a statutorily adopted St Helens Local Plan. As the applicant has considered both opportunities and constraints for the development of an SRFI, the land required for ILPN has extended beyond the allocation site boundary into the adjoining administrative areas of Wigan and Warrington.



- 2.6 A range of studies have been undertaken at the regional and local level as part of the evidence base for the St Helens Local Plan. This evidence was a crucial component in demonstrating that 'exceptional circumstances' existed to remove land from the Green Belt and allocate it for an SRFI and commercial development within the St Helens Local Plan. Some of the evidence also relates to the Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy and therefore supports the approach taken in that document. The underlying justification has been evidence of need in the Region. Such need is consistent with Liverpool City Region Growth Plan and Strategic Economic Plan 2016.
- 2.7 The DCO Site extends beyond the policy allocations for SRFI development within the St Helen's administrative area into an area of land that is Green Belt. The part of the DCO Site within Wigan is also currently designated as Green Belt, as is the area of the DCO Site within Warrington. However, a new local plan is being prepared by Wigan Council that removes land from the Green Belt and instead allocates it for a substantial high quality employment development. A range of studies have been undertaken at the regional and local level as part of the evidence base and justification to remove land from the Green Belt. Furthermore, the extent of works within Warrington include alterations to the existing agricultural accesses, land for the deposition of top soil arising from the earthworks on the Main site and land for remote highway works. These uses are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

#### **ALTERNATIVE SITES**

- 2.8 To ensure the deliverability and long-term viability of an SRFI, there are several criteria and principles that need to be considered, including rail access, road access, amenity, environmental, commercial and economic factors.
- 2.9 There are currently no SRFI's in the North-West. All existing rail terminals are based on historic provision and do not have adjoining land available to meet the demand for rail served buildings of the size and scale now being demanded by modern logistics businesses. There are previous industrial sites which have historically been rail connected but which are now part of mixed-use regeneration schemes which are now incompatible with the requirements of a SRFI. There are also schemes which have been based on the concept of occupiers with rail freight and shipping traffic being developed along the Manchester Ship Canal as tri-modal ports (rail, road and ship). Of these sites, Port Salford has planning consent as a trimodal port with a first phase of 150,000 sqm and an extension of 320,000 sqm. The terminal has been specifically designed to serve rail, ship and road together, with a rail link proposed to be made to connect the terminal to the Chat Moss rail line, with a new connection, in a single direction, facing towards the west.
- 2.10 The west facing connection would enable Port Salford to connect to the Port of Liverpool and the West Coast Main Line, using the Chat Moss Line. However, it would not have ready access to the TransPennine line and the North East coast ports and could not be served from the east at times of engineering shutdowns, unlike ILPN. The planning consent is also conditional upon the terminal infrastructure being in place, which in turn is predicated on the commercial viability of the trimodal port, which so far has not been achieved.





2.11 With the overall demand increasing for intermodal rail freight and the Government's Rail Freight Growth Target of an increase of 75% of net tonnes moved, there have been and still are no alternatives in the North West that have the capacity to come forward as proposed by ILPN, of a size, design and connectivity that is critical to the North West economy.

#### **DESIGN AND EVOLUTION**

- 2.12 Having chosen a preferred location, the Applicant has undertaken a range of activities to explore the potential of the site, including testing a range of technology, design and layout options.
- 2.13 An early consideration in the master-planning exercise was to understand in detail the constraints and opportunities that the site offers. Considerations influencing the master-planning of the site included the following:
  - Proposed access to the development
  - Terrain
  - Existing access and rights of way
  - Residential amenity
  - Ecology and biodiversity
  - Cultural heritage and archaeology
  - Landscape
  - Drainage, ground conditions and the water environment
- 2.14 Chapter 4 of the PEIR explains the main development options that the Applicant has considered in the evolution and refinement of its proposals for the ILPN SRFI. In summary, the main development changes have included:
  - layout options for specific parts of the site, including the Site Hub, energy centre
  - scale options for specific parts of the site, including the main rail terminal and size of landscape buffer;
  - connectivity of footpath/cycle paths;
  - consideration of emergency access points into the rail terminal; and
  - extent of the draft Order Limits.
- 2.15 There is also a wide range of potential off-site highway mitigation options being considered, which are being reviewed and refined as modelling progresses and feedback and discussions with the Transport Working Group (TWG) continue.



#### **EIA SCOPING AND GENERAL METHODOLOGY**

- 2.16 Chapter 5 of the PEIR explains how the scope of the EIA has been determined and then sets out the general methodology for the assessment. Further topic-specific explanations of the assessment methodology are provided in later chapters of the PEIR.
- 2.17 The detailed methodology employed for the assessment of individual environmental topics is explained at the beginning of the chapters that follow. These methodologies have the following activities in common:
  - establishing the existing 'baseline conditions' in other words the existing or, where relevant the future, status of the DCO Site and surroundings and their environmental characteristics;
  - consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees throughout the application process including this PEIR;
  - consideration of local, regional and national planning policies, guidelines and legislation relevant to EIA and to the topic;
  - consideration of technical standards for the development of significance criteria;
  - review of secondary information, previous environmental studies and publicly available information and databases;
  - physical surveys and monitoring;
  - desk-top studies;
  - computer modelling; and
  - professional judgment.
- 2.18 The assessments have considered the likely significant effects on the defined baseline conditions as a direct / indirect result of the Proposed Development. Predictions are necessary when forecasting future impacts. In order to ensure that predictions are as accurate as possible, assessments have been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines published by relevant professional bodies, any guidelines followed are referenced.
- 2.19 Where no topic-specific assessment guidance is available, a common framework of assessment criteria and terminology has been utilised for the presentation of predicted environmental effects. This is based on a widely used 'matrix approach' to environmental assessment and combines the characteristics of the impact (magnitude and nature) and the sensitivity of the receptor. In using this approach, there is a level of transparency to the assessment and it enables the reader to interpret the outputs of the technical assessments more readily.
- 2.20 Environmental effects have been considered on the basis of their magnitude, duration and reversibility.
- 2.21 Where significant effects are defined, mitigation may be applied to reduce the effect. Mitigation can be embedded or additional. Embedded mitigation is where the design of the Proposed Development has been altered to take account of a particular environmental effect



or accommodate an important environmental feature. Additional mitigation is any other measures that have been identified as a result of the EIA undertaken for the design of the Proposed Development, i.e. to reduce an effect that has been identified through the assessment.

- 2.22 Effects that remain after the proposed mitigation measures have been taken into account are called 'residual effects'. The key outcome of the EIA is to identify residual effects that are likely to be significant after mitigation.
- 2.23 The sections below provide a summary of this process and identify those effects that remain significant following the assessment and consideration of any mitigation measures, the chapters in the PEIR contain the full assessment that has been undertaken at this stage.



# Chapter 3 ◆ Preliminary environmental effects of the Proposed Development

#### LAND USE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS

#### Introduction

3.1 Chapter 6 of the PEIR *Land use and socio-economic effects,* considers the effects of the Proposed Development on communities, jobs and livelihoods and the local and regional economy.

#### **Baseline**

- 3.2 The assessment of existing or 'baseline' conditions in the PEIR chapter identifies the local and regional context in a defined study area, including existing employment, housing supply, skill levels and educational attainment, open space provision, health and crime, along with the scale and skill levels of the available construction workforce. This provides a basis for assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on the following.
  - The local and regional economy including the effects on existing businesses that might be displaced by the Proposed Development and effects from the construction and operation of ILPN.
  - Residents including the labour market.
  - **Employment, skills and training** including local schools, colleges, universities and training centres.
  - **Housing** the availability and types of homes and the people who live in them.
  - **Community facilities** including open space and rights of way and the people who use them.
- 3.3 The baseline research showed that.
  - The study area has a lower share of high skilled residents compared to the national average, and unemployment is slightly higher. Overall, in the study area labour market indicators show that the Proposed Development would be a beneficial employment opportunity for residents.
  - Across the study area, there is a strong existing pool of workers who are employed in the construction, transport and storage sectors. The study area is a net exporter of construction workers when comparing workers and residents employed in the construction and transport and storage sectors.
  - A high proportion of the large unit Industrial and Logistics (I&L) inventory is





- concentrated in the three host local authorities. Availability has been low while rental growth has been high, indicating strong demand and limited supply.
- More broadly, the I&L sector is increasingly seen as central to growth in the UK. The
  logistics sector is able to play a pivotal role in addressing the gap between current and
  potential economic performance in the study area.
- There are opportunities for re-skilling and training of workers in related industrial sectors and of economically inactive residents wanting a job. This is particularly relevant given that wages for the logistics sector are also lower in the three host local authorities than the study area, which is in turn lower than the national average.
- The draft Main Order Limits is predominantly in agricultural use with the non-agricultural land either being scrubland and ancillary areas that are part of the Parkside West regeneration area, or roadside areas within the Draft Main Order Limits. A series of community assets and businesses are located within the Draft Main Order Limits. There are a number of residential properties within 500m of the Draft Main Order Limits which are concentrated on the outskirts of Newton-le-Willows. Most of Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also an area of common land adjacent to the north. Community facilities and commercial premises within 500m are also limited.
- The three host local authorities all have strong housing delivery records and a sufficient supply of land to meet future housing requirements.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.4 The socio-economic assessment has identified an initial range of potential social and economic effects. Each of these has been subject to a preliminary assessment to determine whether significant effects are likely.
- 3.5 The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to support 415 on-site jobs per annum during the construction period of 10 years. Once other socio-economic effects are taken into account, it is anticipated that there will be a net addition of 610 jobs per annum. This is expected to have a beneficial impact on construction employment in the study area.
- 3.6 Construction will create 310 on-site jobs per year and an average Gross Value Added (GVA) of £73,700 per construction worker, it is estimated that an additional £23.0 m per annum will be generated through construction GVA over the 10 year construction phase of the Proposed Development, or £230.0 m in total over the period. This would have a major beneficial impact on regional and national economic activity.
- 3.7 The comparison of the number of residents working in the construction sector and the number of jobs in the same sector for the construction study area shows a net export of jobs. However, given the low number of net additional jobs relative to the total construction workforce, the labour need of the construction phase will likely be met by the local workforce. The construction phase will not require the temporary or permanent in-migration and relocation of construction workers, which would not increase demand for housing.
- 3.8 6,675 on and off-site jobs are expected to be generated by the employment floorspace of the Proposed Development. The operational phase is therefore estimated to have a significant



beneficial impact on workers in the study area.

- 3.9 Analysis of skills availability suggests that the Proposed Development would not likely face a skills shortage in the study area across most occupation categories and enable the up-skilling and training of some unemployed residents to meet its skills needs in other categories. This would have a slight beneficial effect.
- 3.10 There is likely to be sufficient capacity to provide the additional housing required by any potential employees moving from outside of the study area to staff the Proposed Development.
- 3.11 It is expected that the increase in population would not likely have a noticeable impact on social infrastructure in the area.
- 3.12 Based on the estimation of on-site operational jobs (on-site jobs net of displacement) generated by the operation of the Proposed Development and an average GVA of £54,700 per worker in the 'Transport and Storage' sector, it is estimated that an additional £229.6m per annum in GVA will be generated once the Proposed Development is operational. The Proposed Development would also generate public sector revenues, through new business rates which can be re-invested in the community and local services. Given that part of the Proposed Development sits within freeport designation, the businesses locating there will not be liable to paying business rates, though St Helens will continue to receive the income via the Government. This will foster the Proposed Development's attractiveness to businesses while still ensuring the growth of local authorities' revenues. It is therefore expected that the operational phase will have a major beneficial impact on economic output and local authority revenue during operation resulting in a beneficial effect of large significance over the medium and long term, which is significant in EIA terms.
- 3.13 There is an identified shortfall of industrial and logistics land within the overall market area and so it is estimated that the operational impact of the Proposed Development on local logistics businesses will be a significant beneficial effect.
- 3.14 At this stage it is not possible to fully determine the operational impacts of the Proposed Development on private property and housing. Further analysis will be undertaken prior to DCO application, drawing from the Transport, Noise, Air Quality and Health Chapters of the ES. It is however expected that appropriate embedded and additional mitigation measures will be put in place, including off-site highway works, to minimise and negate any adverse impact on this receptor of very high sensitivity. Subject to further analysis, an impact of negligible magnitude, resulting in a permanent neutral effect is expected.
- 3.15 Existing community assets on site will cease to function prior to the construction of the Proposed Development. Access to other community land and assets in the impact area is not considered to be negatively impacted during the operation phase of the Proposed Development. Improvements to PRoW through and close to the Main Site may contribute to improving access, such as to High Moss and to the Northern Mitigation Area.
- 3.16 Businesses located on-site would cease operation permanently. As these are small employment sites and businesses, the impact magnitude of the Proposed Development on the affected businesses would be negligible adverse. The businesses in the surrounding area





- will be affected in a similar way to the local private property and housing. Appropriate mitigation measures would be implemented to mitigate any adverse impact.
- 3.17 Farming operations and agricultural businesses within the Main Site will be acquired and permanently cease operation. This would be an adverse effect. However the landowners would gain financially from the sale of the land which could be reinvested in replacement holdings if available.

#### **Potential Mitigation**

- 3.18 Chapter 7 (Transport and Traffic), Chapter 8 (Air Quality) and Chapter 10 (Landscape and Visual Effects) of the PEIR have identified a range of inherent mitigation measures which can contribute to reducing negative impacts of traffic congestion, dust, pollution and visual effects associated with building work, which may contribute to mitigating potential disruption to receptors such as houses, community assets, businesses, employment uses and users of PRoWs located in proximity to the DCO Site, specifically those receptors positioned along routes subject to additional construction traffic flow.
- 3.19 Significant adverse land use and socio-economic effects are anticipated for the existing agricultural land holdings. These will be mitigated by the financial gain of the owners from the sale of the land which could be reinvested in replacement land holdings if available.
- 3.20 The preparation and implementation of an Employment, Skills and Training Plan (ESTP) during the construction and operational phases will aim to maximise benefits for local residents and workers, including for those suffering from deprivation the most. This is likely to provide opportunities for up-skilling or re-skilling of the workforce, and to facilitate the return to work from currently unemployed or economically inactive residents. Improving the skills of local residents through the ESTP may further reduce the need for workers to relocate from outside the labour market area, which would contribute to further reducing the impact of new employment on demand for housing and for social infrastructure.

#### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

#### Introduction

- 3.21 PEIR chapter 7 *Traffic and Transport* considers the effects of the Proposed Development on the road network. The central purpose of ILPN is to divert traffic from the road on to the rail network, so in these terms, the project is in principle inherently beneficial. At a more local level however, the Proposed Development has the potential to change traffic flows significantly, and it is these changes that will be the subject of the assessment work.
- 3.22 To guide these discussions and assessments a TWG has been set up made up of representatives from SHBC, WC, WBC, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and National Highways (NH), comprising the relevant highways organisations in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The TWG has met regularly and provided guidance on traffic modelling methods and the interpretation of initial modelling outputs.

#### **Baseline**



- 3.23 The Proposed Development is well connected to major roads which make up the Strategic Road Network (SRN) such as the M6, M62, and A580, providing convenient access for vehicles . However, some nearby roads feature narrow sections under railway bridges and are subject to weight restrictions. These constraints have been considered in the planning and strategic transport modelling undertaken to date.
- 3.24 Several local roads provide direct access to the site and link it to major motorways and surrounding towns:
  - Winwick Lane (A579) runs along the eastern edge of the Site and connects to key roads like Newton Road and the A580. It also links to the M6 via the Winwick Interchange. The road has varying speed limits and a weight restriction in one direction, helping to manage traffic flow. It includes footpaths and street lighting, with a pedestrian crossing near the site.
  - Parkside Link Road East is a newly built road that opened in May 2025. It runs through
    the Proposed Development in a northwest southeast alignment and connects Parkside
    Road at its northern end to Winwick Lane at its southern end. It includes footpaths,
    lighting along the southwestern side, and a pedestrian refuge crossing on the
    roundabout junction with Winwick Lane, supporting safe access for walkers and cyclists.
  - Parkside Road (A573) links the site to Southworth Road and Golborne Road. It has been recently upgraded and includes footpaths, lighting, and a signalised pedestrian crossing.
     Some parts of the road are narrower due to existing railway infrastructure.
  - Newton Road (A572) connects nearby areas and has varying speed limits. It includes footpaths on both sides and street lighting, with the nearest pedestrian crossing located over a kilometre away.
  - Winwick Link Road is a dual carriageway that connects Winwick Lane (approximately 160 m south of the Proposed Development) and Newton Road (approximately 1.8 km south of the Proposed Development), providing a key link between the M6 and M62.
     While it mostly lacks pedestrian infrastructure, it does have lighting and a short section of footpath.
  - Warrington Road/Golborne Dale Road (A573) transitions from a rural to urban road as
    it passes through residential areas. It narrows and the speed limit drops to 30mph,
    reflecting its more built up surroundings.
  - The Site benefits from direct connections to the M6 via Junction 22, which has recently been upgraded to improve traffic flow.
- 3.25 There is a well-established network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in and around the site, which supports walking and cycling.
- 3.26 The Site is well positioned near the Chat Moss Line (Liverpool-Manchester) and the West Coast Mainline. These lines are electrified and can support various types of freight trains, including electric and low-emission diesel options. While road transport is expected to be the main method for moving goods, rail freight may also be used for longer-distance distribution, helping to reduce lorry traffic.



#### Potential likely environmental effects

3.27 In advance of further detailed assessment work, initial discussion with the TWG and highway organisations have helped to identify a list of locations where the Proposed Development could potentially have an impact on highway congestion and delay. Reviews of the network conditions have been carried out in consultation with the highway authorities using their local knowledge and expertise. As a result of this preliminary assessment, 15 remote locations (14 remote junctions and a 15<sup>th</sup> option of the potential Lane Head South Relief Road). These locations were identified as a precautionary measure ahead of detailed transport modelling. The need for mitigation will be assessed and confirmed by the traffic modelling and the list will be refined..

#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.28 During the construction phase, routes have been carefully reviewed using maps and site visits to avoid narrow roads, weight restrictions and nearby residential areas. The most suitable routes have been chosen and will be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will guide how construction vehicles move in and out of the site. This plan will also help reduce congestion, noise, and disruption for local communities and will be updates as the project progresses.
- 3.29 The Site will be designed to favour rail transport over road freight, cutting down on lorry traffic. Smart traffic systems will help reduce vehicle idling and improve flow
- 3.30 Staff and visitors will be encouraged to use sustainable travel options, with good public transport links, cycle paths, and pedestrian routes. Facilities like secure bike storage and changing rooms will support active travel. The Proposed Development will follow a 'pedestrian-first' approach, with vehicle speeds limited to 20mph to create a safer and more pleasant environment.
- 3.31 Additional mitigation measures are aimed at managing how and when vehicles move around the site, especially during construction and will be detailed in the CTMP. Examples include clearly defined routes for construction vehicles, signage to help enforce preferred routes, and practical steps like wheel washing and street cleaning to prevent debris from affecting local roads. At sensitive points along the routes, trained staff will help guide vehicles safely.
- 3.32 To encourage more sustainable travel and reduce reliance on cars, a Framework Travel Plan will also be implemented. This plan will promote walking, cycling, and public transport wherever possible, helping to reduce overall traffic volumes and environmental impact. These measures are also designed to influence driver behaviour and manage the timing of vehicle movements to avoid peak periods and minimise disruption.
- 3.33 To ensure these strategies are working effectively, a robust monitoring and reporting systems will be put in place. This will include tracking travel patterns, vehicles movements, and the use of sustainable transport options like electric vehicles. Automatic Number Plater Recognition (ANPR) cameras will help monitor compliance with designated routes, and data on EV charging point usage will be collected to assess uptake. Results will be reviewed annually and shared with local authorities and stakeholders, with updates to the Travel Plan made as needed to address any issues and support long-term sustainability goals. Air Quality



#### Introduction

3.34 Chapter 8 of the PEIR *Air Quality* considers the likely effects of ILPN on air quality. During construction, air quality can be affected by release of dust and very fine particles known as 'particulates' and by emissions from vehicles, plant and machinery. Once operational, vehicle and railway locomotive fumes and emissions might have a negative effect in the absence of mitigation.

#### **Baseline**

- 3.35 The air quality chapter summarises the assessment work undertaken on the Site with regard to air quality.
- 3.36 As required by the Environment Act (1995), as amended by the Environment Act (2021), Local Authorities within the vicinity of the DCO Site have undertaken Review and Assessment of air quality within their area of jurisdiction, the outcomes of which are summarised below.
  - St Helens Borough Council SHBC has designated four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) due to exceedances of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). Two of these are located near the Proposed Development (AQMA No. 1 covering the M6 corridor and AQMA No. 2 High Street, Newton-le-Willows). The Site lies within AQMA No.1 and approximately 310 metres south of AQMA No. 2, meaning vehicle movements associated with the Proposed Development could influence pollution levels in these sensitive areas. All other pollutants are currently below relevant thresholds, and no additional AQMAs have been designated.
  - Wigan Council Within Wigan, several roads form part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) AQMA due to elevated NO<sub>2</sub> levels. The Proposed Development is located approximately 730 metres south of this AQMA. As with St Helens, there is potential for traffic from the Proposed Development to affect air quality in this area. Wigan Council has confirmed that concentrations of other pollutants are below relevant AQOs, and no further AQMAs have been declared.
  - Warrington Borough Council WBC has declared two AQMAs due to NO<sub>2</sub> exceedances.
    One is the Motorway AQMA (covering areas within 50 metres of the M62, M6, and M56)
    and the other is the Warrington AQMA (covering the town centre and major roads). The
    Proposed Development is adjacent to both AQMAs, raising the potential for increased
    pollution from associated vehicles movements. As with the other councils, WBC has
    found that other pollutants are within acceptable limits and has not designated any
    additional AQMAs.
- 3.37 Monitoring of pollutant levels is undertaken by SHBC, WC and WBC throughout their areas of jurisdiction. Annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were above the air quality objective level at only a single monitoring location: 4 Winwick Lane in 2021 to 2023. The monitor is located on a building front, at a location where idling and queuing traffic occurs. As such, elevated levels would be expected. Levels were below the objective in 2024.

#### **Potential Likely Environmental Effects**

3.38 During the construction phase, the Proposed Development has the potential to generate dust





- from activities such as demolition, excavation, groundworks, construction, concrete batching, and material storage.
- 3.39 Vehicle movements associated with the construction phase have the potential to generate exhaust emissions on the road network. As traffic modelling work is still underway, the potential effects from construction-related vehicle emissions have not yet been quantified. This assessment will be reported in the ES.
- 3.40 The Proposed Development will generate rail emissions from diesel locomotives operating on several routes. Train movements will include up to 32 two-way trips per weekday, 12 on Saturdays, and 4 on Sundays.
- 3.41 The Proposed Development is not expected to cause exceedances of short-term sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) limits. Similarly, the risk of exceeding annual NO<sub>2</sub> limits is considered low, as the railway lines are not identified as having heavy diesel traffic and background NO<sub>2</sub> levels are well below the threshold. Therefore, potential effects on human receptors from rail emissions are predicted to be not significant.
- 3.42 The proposed rail alignment lies within 200 metres of Highfield Moss SSSI, and trains will also pass immediately adjacent to this designation via the Chat Moss Line. Emissions from diesel locomotives have the potential to affect air quality and deposition rates at this sensitive site. These effects have been assessed using dispersion modelling to predict changes in  $NO_x$  and  $SO_2$  concentrations, as well as nitrogen and acid deposition and compared against ecological thresholds, the effects are not predicted to be significant.
- 3.43 Following the implementation of mitigation measures, residual effects from fugitive dust emissions during construction are predicted to be local, adverse, temporary, and not significant, even at receptors of medium and high sensitivity.
- 3.44 For human receptors, residual effects from rail emissions during operation are predicted to be negligible, local, adverse, permanent and not significant. For ecological receptors, the effects are considered to be adverse, permanent, and not significant, even at receptors of high sensitivity.
- 3.45 If construction of nearby developments overlaps with the Proposed Development, incombination dust effects many occur at sensitive receptors. However, due to mitigation measures in place, and assuming similar controls for other schemes, these effects are predicted to be not significant.
- 3.46 Cumulative effects from existing rail emissions have been considered using methodologies that account for baseline air quality conditions. No other developments were identified that would result in in-combination operational rail emissions.

#### **Potential mitigation**

3.47 During construction, dust and emissions from site activities will be carefully managed through a set of control measures included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), including:



- A stakeholder communications plan to ensure early engagement with the local community before construction begins.
- All complaints related to dust and air quality will be recorded, investigated, and addressed promptly, with actions logged and made available to local authorities upon request.
- Daily inspections will be carried out both on-site and off-site, particularly near sensitive receptors such as residential areas and road, to monitor dust levels.
- The Site layout will be planned to position machinery and dust-generating activities away from sensitive receptors wherever possible.
- All vehicles will be required to switch off engines when stationary for more than one
  minute to prevent unnecessary emissions. A Construction Logistics Plan will be
  developed to manage the sustainable delivery of goods and materials to the Site.
- Dust-generating activities such as cutting, grinding, and sawing will only be carried out using equipment fitted with appropriate suppression techniques.
- The burning of waste materials, including bonfires, will be strictly prohibited to prevent air pollution
- Water suppression will be used during demolition activities to control dust.
- Exposed soil and stockpiles will be re-vegetated or stabilised as soon as practicable.
- Scabbling (roughening of concrete surfaces) will be avoided where possible.
- 3.48 Once the Site is in operation, a Travel Plan will be put in place to encourage staff and visitors to use more sustainable way of getting to and from the site including walking, cycling or using public transport. This will help reduce the number of car journeys and lower air pollution from road traffic.
- 3.49 Additional steps will also be taken to support cleaner travel:
  - A Travel Plan Coordinator will oversee and monitor sustainable travel initiatives.
  - Electric vehicle (EV) charging points will be installed in car parks to encourage the use of low emission vehicles.
  - Electric HGV charging points will be installed in lorry parks to encourage the use of low emission vehicles.
  - Secure cycle storage will be available to promote cycling as a practical option.

#### **NOISE AND VIBRATION**

#### Introduction

3.50 Chapter 9, *Noise and Vibration*, of the PEIR considers how the Proposed Development might give rise to noise and vibration during both the construction and operational phases. Noise and vibration can arise from groundworks, piling and machinery during construction and from



traffic and rail movements and operation of the railport during operation.

#### Baseline

- 3.51 To measure and understand the existing baseline sound environment around the Proposed Development, a noise survey was conducted from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Dominant noise sources around the Proposed Development site were from road traffic noise, occasional rail noise (at locations near railway lines) and natural sounds, such as wind in trees. Some sites experienced intermittent local noise, such as flagpole movement in high winds or heavy-goods vehicular activity near commercial yards.
- 3.52 A vibration survey was also undertaken in order to characterise and quantify the existing baseline vibration environment in the areas surrounding the Proposed Development site. The results showed that the maximum Vibration Dose Value (VDV) was 0.079, which was as a result of freight trains travelling in the South/West direction.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.53 During construction, the loudest phase would be from on-site infrastructure earthworks. The predicted noise levels associated with these activities at the relevant receptors are presented in PEIR Chapter 9. Predicted noise levels are below the significant observed adverse effect level (SOAEL), meaning no significant effects are expected. However, some receptors may experience temporary, short term adverse effects where noise levels exceed the lower threshold (known as the lowest observed adverse effect level, LOAEL), especially if works occur outside core hours.
- 3.54 With regard to vibration, the only activity with potential to cause disturbance during the construction phase is vibratory compaction. Predicted vibration levels are well below the conservative threshold set to indicate the onset of potential damage, and below the significant observed adverse effect level for disturbance, meaning no significant effects are expected. Some short-term temporary adverse effects may occur at receptors when vibratory compaction is taking place at the closest point, although this will be managed through measures implemented within the construction environmental management plan.
- 3.55 Operational noise levels are predicted to be below the significant observed adverse effects level and therefore no significant effects are expected. Target noise levels from fixed plant and substations have been recommended, defined as equal to the typical background sound level at each receptor, which is an indication of a low (non-adverse) impact.
- 3.56 Operational road and rail traffic noise is still under assessment and will be addressed in the final ES.

#### **Potential mitigation**

3.57 The design of the Main Site has been developed through an iterative process, which has sought to maximise the noise mitigation provided by the inherent design of the Proposed Development. This has included orientating buildings to provide shielding from on-site activities, the provision of bunding along the boundary of the site, and a 3.5m high acoustic barrier between the rail chord and sensitive receptors.



- 3.58 Whilst no significant effects due to construction noise or vibration have been predicted, some short-term, temporary adverse effects may occur. To facilitate the management of construction noise and vibration in general, good working practices during the construction of the Proposed Development are defined through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The specific noise and vibration controls included in the CEMP include:
  - Phasing of earthworks to prioritise the construction of any bunding to provide screening of the subsequent works where practicable.
  - Selection of appropriate equipment and construction methods, e.g., hydraulic plant will be used in preference to pneumatic plant, and electrically powered rather than internal combustion engine powered, where practical and feasible. Plant and equipment will be maintained in good working order and fitted with silencers and acoustic panels where appropriate. All plant will be switched off when not in use or throttled down between periods of use.
  - Acoustic enclosures and temporary hoardings/screens around works will be used where required.
  - Noisy works will take place during agreed site hours, and there will be appropriate management of working hours for noisier tasks.
  - 'White noise' type reversing warnings should be used on mobile plant in preference to 'bleepers' to minimise intrusion.
  - Construction related plant to be located as far as reasonably practicable from noisesensitive receptors.

#### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

#### Introduction

3.59 Chapter 10, Landscape and Visual Effects, of the PEIR describes the landscape character of the site and adjoining areas and considers the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. Landscape effects and visual effects are separate but related. Landscape effects relate to changes to the landscape and the features that contribute to the landscape character and quality. Visual effects relate to the appearance of such changes within views and the resulting effect on visual amenity (what people see).

#### **Baseline**

- 3.60 The DCO Site is located on the eastern extent of Newton-le-Willows in a relatively flat, agricultural landscape. The area is dominated by medium to large arable fields which change in appearance seasonally, with crops visible in summer and bare soil in winter. There are no statutory or non-statutory locally designated landscapes within the site or study area. This means the landscape does not carry formal protection under national or local planning policies.
- 3.61 The majority of the Main Site lies within the National Character Area of Mersey Valley, with





the north-western extent of the DCO Site falling within the National Character Area of Lancashire Coal Measures. The DCO Site also lies within the Local Character Areas (LCA) of St Helens AM4 (Highfield Moss), which is characterised as Agricultural Moss, and Wigan 1A (East Lancashire Road Corridor Lowton Health to Lately Common), defined as Undulating Enclosed Farmland. Smaller portions of the site also fall within Wigan 6A (Highfield Moss) LCA, St Helens SS1 (Newton-le-Willows) LCA, and Warrington Area 1C (Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton) LCA, each with distinct character types of mossland, separate settlement and undulating enclosed farmland, respectively. St Helens WFE2 (Haydock Park), St Helens RSH5 (Lyme and Wood Pit) and Warrington 2B (Holcroft and Glazebrook Moss) LCAs are also in proximity to the Proposed Development.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.62 Construction would result in temporary disruption within the DCO Site and landscape and visual study area. This would include a limited amount of vegetation clearance and localised earthworks, particularly in relation to the presence of site compounds and construction plant, vehicles and machinery. There would also be change to the underlying landform during construction to create the level development platforms upon which the proposed buildings will be located, to create the railway line into the Main Site and in the provision of drainage retention basins and access tracks.
- 3.63 During construction, the Proposed Development will result in significant adverse effects to St Helens AM4 LCA, Wigan 1A LCA, Wigan 6A LCA and Warrington 1C LCA.
- 3.64 During the construction phase of the Proposed Development, 17 out of 30 assessed viewpoints are expected to experience significant adverse visual effects, primarily due to proximity to the Main Stie and clear visibility of construction activities. The largest construction effects on representative viewpoints would be associated with those locations in closest proximity to the Proposed Development, particularly residential receptors and users of footpaths.
- 3.65 During the operation phase, the Proposed Development will result in some changes to landscape elements, though these are relatively limited in scale. At Year 0, vegetation loss will be minimal, affecting only a few small areas of trees and hedgerows. Earthworks will reshape parts of the Site to create flat platforms for buildings and rail infrastructure, including a 3m high bund along the eastern boundary. Despite these changes, the Site will remain broadly flat. Extensive planting of trees, hedgerows, and shrub swill be introduced across the site.
- 3.66 By Year 15, this new planting will have matured, contributing positively to the local landscape character. It will help reinforce existing features and create new green corridors, particularly along Winwick Lane. These enhancements will improve access to the countryside and provide greater landscape functionality for local communities. While the planting won't fully screen the development, it will soften its visual impact and offer long-term landscape benefits.
- 3.67 Effects on landscape character during the operational phase would be significant but relatively localised. There would be direct effects on the two 'host' character areas, St Helens AM4 and Wigan 1A, as a result of the profound and permanent change that will result from introducing large scale infrastructure and buildings. It should be noted that the effects extend



to the two character areas by virtue of the site being located at the boundary of two local authority areas and the landscape thus being covered by two separate landscape character assessments, and site surveys identified that the part of 1A which falls within the Main Site associates with AM4 in many respects. Indirect effects would extend to adjacent areas of landscape character by virtue of the introduction of the influence that large built form would have on those areas.

- 3.68 At Year 0 of operation, 18 of the 30 viewpoints are expected to experience significant visual effects, primarily those closest to the Proposed Development. These include residential properties and users of public footpaths with clear views of the Site. However, by Year 15, this number reduces to 7 viewpoints as a result of the establishment of mitigation planting such as woodland belts and hedgerows.
- 3.69 However, some viewpoints continue to experience residual significant effects at Year 15. These include Viewpoints 1, 2, 20, 24, 28, 29, and 30, which represent specific locations with persistent visibility of the Proposed Development, particularly from footpaths and nearby residences. These effects are localised and do not represent the entire area or full extent of the footpath network. Additionally, residential receptors R1, R2, R3, R4, R25 and R45 would experience significant effects at Year 15, which is as a result of their close proximity to the Proposed Development (R1 to R4 being directly to the east of the Main Site, R25 being close to the western boundary of the Main Site and R45 being 0.6km north-east of the Main Site). The public rights of way receptors that experience significant adverse effects at Year 15 are P4, P14, P16 and P18.
- 3.70 Users of community facilities, people using roads and people at employment sites would not experience a significant visual effect during the operation of the Proposed Development.

#### Mitigation

- 3.71 During construction, measures included within the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) include sensitive colouring of welfare facilities and temporary office units within site compounds; materials delivered on an 'as needed' basis to prevent unnecessary stockpiles; and protection of retained vegetation in proximity to working areas to ensure that roots remain undisturbed. With regard to operation, the Proposed Development has been designed to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects, with specific consideration given to enhancing the public rights of way network across the Main Site, the sensitive design of landscape treatment, the incorporation of earth bunds for screening and the provision of woodland belts and other planting for screening purposes.
- 3.72 An outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) has been prepared which includes measures to protect retained vegetation, as well as a five-year establishment aftercare period during which the landscape and ecological mitigation would be managed and monitored to ensure successful establishment of the proposed planting. Additionally, a post-construction monitoring programme would require walkover surveys of the Order Limits Boundary at set intervals post construction.
- 3.73 No additional mitigation is proposed for the operational phase.



#### **ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY**

#### Introduction

3.74 Chapter 11, of the PEIR, *Ecology and Biodiversity*, considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development on features of nature conservation value including habitats and species.

#### Baseline

- 3.75 There are three internationally designated sites within the ecology study area (up to 15km from the Main DCO Site); the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Rixton Clay Pits SAC and the Mersey Estuary Ramsar site (and Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). There are five nationally designated sites, including Highfield Moss SSSI, which is immediately adjacent to the north of the Main Site, and Risley, Holcroft and Chat Moss National Nature Reserve (NNR) which is immediately adjacent to the north of the Main Site. There are six Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within the ecology study area.
- 3.76 The habitat surveys established that the majority of the Main Site supported agricultural land with associated hedgerows and mature trees and grassland margins. Other habitats exclusive to the Main Site include modified grassland, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Habitat of Principal Importance), and a number of ponds and ditches. Also present is urban development including buildings with roads and hardstanding, an airstrip, and scrap/storage yard. Additional habitats associated with the Western Rail Chord include other neutral grassland, mixed scrub and pockets of other broadleaved woodland.
- 3.77 In terms of botanical species, features of interest present in the ecology study area include the Maiden pink (a Nationally Scarce plant) present within the DCO Site and Marsh gentian (also Nationally Scarce and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act) present within the adjacent Highfield Moss SSSI, as well as the presence of several invasive non-native species within or adjacent to the DCO Site. These Nationally Scarce plants will be translocated into areas of habitat creation or suitable native specimens will be procured for planting within the DCO Site, resulting in a likely beneficial outcome post development. Invasive non-native species will be treated or removed from the DCO Site at the time of construction.
- 3.78 In terms of faunal species, evidence of bats, wintering birds, breeding birds, barn owls, great crested newts, common toad, common lizard and bleeding heart spider were found within or in close proximity to the Main DCO Site.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.79 Following the provision of mitigation measures and once the habitats have matured, there would be no significant adverse impacts overall, and long-term beneficial effects at a local level on a number of habitats and species, including native species planting, hedgerows waterbodies, trees, bats, reptiles, invertebrates, and for the general breeding bird assemblage.
- 3.80 On the basis of the current evidence (some surveys are still ongoing), there are no overriding ecological reasons why the Proposed Development could not proceed. All likely significant



adverse effects (able to be assessed at this stage) on habitats and species of ecological interest are considered to be avoided or mitigated either through the design of the Proposed Development (which also affords ecological enhancements), or where necessary additional proposed mitigation.

#### Mitigation

- 3.81 Land to the north of the Main Site comprising agricultural cropland and has been identified for habitat creation associated with Biodiversity Net Gain and species-specific mitigation. This area (the Northern Mitigation Area) will include the creation of areas of mixed scrub, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, other broadleaved woodland, other neutral grassland (both dry meadows and wet grassland), non-priority habitat ponds, traditional orchard, species rich native hedgerows, species rich native hedgerows with trees, and a new drainage ditch. The habitat creation will increase available and suitable habitats for bats, farmland and generalist bird species, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, and invertebrates.
- 3.82 Protected species located within the DCO Site and impacted by the proposed development will, where necessary, be subject to Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licences, Natural England District Level Licencing Schemes, or natural England derogation licences to ensure the species retains favourable conservation status.
- 3.83 The design of green infrastructure and habitat creation has taken into account ecological features and where possible has incorporated design features to compensate for habitat and ecological service losses, mitigate for impacts to important ecological features, and provide enhancements where possible. The creation of areas of native scrub planting, wildflower and wet grassland habitat, tree planting and SuDs, which in addition to the enhancement of any retained habitats would be subject to long-term management to maximise their wildlife value.
- 3.84 A CEMP would also be implemented, which will include measures to avoid disturbance to nesting birds, avoid harm to common lizard, and reptile species, and requires the provision of a sensitive lighting scheme for bats. Bat, bird and hedgehog boxes for increased roosting/nesting opportunity and hibernacula/log piles to create an enhancement for reptile species are further mitigation measures included within the CEMP. Subject to further checks, provisions to protect badgers during construction will be provided within the CEMP, should they be found to be present within the DCO Site or within 30m of the DCO Site at the time of clearance and construction. The CEMP will also provide details of how invasive non-native species (INNS) will be managed or eradicated within the DCO Site.
- 3.85 A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be developed and submitted alongside the DCO application, which will include all habitats retained, enhanced or created within the draft Order Limits. Within the HMMP, prescriptions for management and monitoring will be provided for at least 30 years.
- 3.86 Much of the habitat creation within the Proposed Development greenspace represents enhancement as it is above and beyond the required mitigation and compensation required to avoid significant adverse effects on important ecological features.



#### **CULTURAL HERITAGE**

#### Introduction

3.87 Chapter 12 of the PEIR, *Cultural Heritage*, considers the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development upon the historic environment, including buildings of historical, architectural or cultural value.

#### **Baseline**

- 3.88 A detailed review has been undertaken on designated heritage assets and Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) within a 3km radius of the DCO Site, and has included the assessment of assets within a 1km radius of the DCO Site. This assessment has been informed by desk-based research including review of relevant Historic Environment Records, local list descriptions, archival resources and the National Heritage List for England, on-Site fieldwork and visibility analysis.
- 3.89 Within the study area, there are 17 designated heritage assets and 24 NDHAs. Five of these assets are within (or partially within) the draft Main Order Limits, as follows:
  - Huskisson Memorial on South Side of Railway, 60 Metres From Road (Grade II);
  - Battle of Winwick (also known as Battle of Red Bank) 1648 (Registered Historic Battlefield) [partially within the DCO Site];
  - Highfield Farm Barn (NDHA); and
  - Parkside Road Bridge (NDHA).

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.90 During the construction phase, significant adverse effects are likely to be experienced by the Huskisson Memorial (Grade II), Newton Park Farmhouse (Grade II), the Barn to East of Newton Park Farmhouse (Grade II), and Gate Piers to Front of Kenyon Hall (Grade II). These effects are likely to result from change to the setting of the assets rather than directly to the assets themselves. Whilst significant, these effects would be indirect, short to medium term and reversible.
- 3.91 Highfield Farm Barn (NDHA) will experience total loss during the construction phase of the Proposed Development, owing to its proposed demolition. A balanced judgement is required having regard for the level of significance (very low) and the scale of harm (total loss). This should also be considered in context of notable public benefits of the Proposed Development, and thereby weighed against such benefits.
- 3.92 There is the potential for minor beneficial effects to the Huskisson Memorial and the Battle of Winwick (Registered Historic Battlefield) as a result of heritage interpretation.
- 3.93 Once the Proposed Development is operational, no heritage assets within the identified assessment scope are likely to experience significant effects.



#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.94 The Design Vision and Principles Document will detail mitigation measures which will be adopted by Proposed Development to ensure that it will be experienced as a high-quality feature within the area.
- 3.95 A heritage interpretation plan will be included as part of the Proposed Development. This aims to help people better understand and appreciate the Huskisson Memorial (a Grade II listed site) by making it easier to access and learn about. The interpretation will be placed in the amenity area just north of the memorial, and will be designed to highlight its historical importance. The plan will also include information about the Battle of Winwick, which is a Registered Battlefield.

#### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

#### Introduction

3.96 Chapter 13 of the PEIR, *Archaeology*, considers the potential for likely environmental effects from the Proposed Development on below ground heritage assets. This includes consideration of designated heritage assets and NHDAs but excludes consideration of aboveground heritage assets and their setting, which are addressed in Chapter 9: *Cultural Heritage*.

#### **Baseline**

3.97 A study area of 1km radius from the draft Main Order Limits was used to identify designated and non-designated archaeological assets which may be affected by the Proposed Development. There are 84 non-designated archaeological assets within the 1km study area, with 24 recorded within the draft Main Order Limits. The Grade II listed Huskisson Memorial and the Battle of Winwick Pass both considered highly sensitive.

#### **Potential Likely environmental effects**

- 3.98 Any new development has the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts on buried heritage assets. Direct impacts include physical actions on surface features or buried heritage remains, that may lead to a total or partial removal of the asset; indirect impacts include those which occur not as a primary consequence of actual project actions but are still induced by the Proposed Development.
- 3.99 During the construction phase, all types of intrusive below ground works will have the potential to negatively impact on any surviving buried assets, potentially leading to direct impacts to archaeological remains or deposits.
- 3.100 Within the Main Site and Western Rail Chord, the construction phase would result in likely significant effects on archaeological assets including significant likely effects on the Battle of Winwick Pass.
- 3.101 Construction impacts within the Northern Mitigation Area would result in non-significant impacts where ground levels are altered or water features which require deep excavations



- are introduced. Tree planting and wetland creation could disturb shallow or buried archaeological features.
- 3.102 The proposed construction works in the Soils Reuse Area are expected to have minor impacts which are not significant.
- 3.103 It is not expected that the operational phase will result in any further intrusive ground activities beyond those associated with the construction phase.

#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.104 An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (AMS) will be implemented for the construction phase. It is expected that the following mitigation measures will be included in the AMS:
  - Preservation in Situ: Highly sensitive remains will be avoided where practicable. This consists of buffer zones from the works associated with the Proposed Development.
  - Archaeological Excavation targeting the affected assets identified during the Desk Based Assessment, geophysical survey and forthcoming trial trenching evaluation;
  - A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording may be undertaken during the construction works.

#### SURFACE WATER AND FLOOD RISK

#### Introduction

- 3.105 PEIR Chapter 14, *Surface water and flood risk*, considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on surface water and flood risk. It covers matters relating to a number of different aspects of water resources and the water environment, including:
  - flood risk;
  - surface water drainage;
  - surface water quality;
  - water supply; and
  - surface and foul water sewerage capacity.

#### Baseline

- 3.106 The Proposed Development spans several surface water catchments including Spittle Brook, Millingford (Newton) Brook, and Glaze and contains drainage features like ditches, attenuation ponds and swales. Ditches along the northern boundary near Highfield Moss SSSI are understood to drain into tributaries of Cockshot Brook via a culvert system.
- 3.107 The Main Site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, indicating low fluvial flood risk. Nearby higherrisk zones (Flood Zones 2 and 3) are over 100m away, and future climate scenarios show no increased flood risk at the Main Site.



- 3.108 Surface water flood risk across the Main Site is generally low, with three flow routes identified through hydraulic modelling. Key areas of potential ponding include near the Parkside Link Road roundabout, the site centre, and the north-east corner near Highfield Moss SSSI.
- 3.109 Flood risk from nearby canals and reservoirs has been ruled out due to the Main Site's elevation, distance from these features, and regulatory safety standards. Therefore, the Sankey Canal (1.5km from the Main Site) and Willow Park Lake (80m from the Western Rail Chord) pose no flood risk to the Proposed Development.
- 3.110 The Main Site currently drains via infiltration and culverts into nearby brooks, with surface water features also present along Parkside Link Road.
- 3.111 The Proposed Development spans three surface water catchments, all of which fall below 'good' status under the Water Framework Directive due to pollution from agriculture, urban development, and wastewater. Groundwater quality is also 'poor', with agricultural land management identified as a key pressure.
- 3.112 The Main Site lies within United Utilities' sewerage area but is not currently served by a public foul water drainage system. Initial discussions with United Utilities indicate that foul water from the site can be connected to the public sewerage network, with final arrangements to be confirmed through ongoing pre-application engagement.
- 3.113 Potable water in the area is supplied by United Utilities. A water main is understood to run along Parkside Link Road, although it is abandoned south of Parkside Farm. The region is classified by the Environment Agency as 'not seriously water stressed', though some pressure on water resources may still exist.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.114 During the construction phase, temporary works may slightly disrupt natural water flow across the site, which could pose a minor flood risk to workers and nearby areas. However, mitigation measures will help prevent any significant impacts. Construction activities may also compact soil, increasing surface water runoff, and introduce pollutants like sediment, fuel, and chemicals. These risks will be managed through a CEMP. Overall, these effects are expected to be minor and temporary with no significant impacts.
- 3.115 In the operation phase, permanent changes to the site layout could alter water flow, but embedded design features will ensure flood risk is not increased. The drainage system will help manage runoff using sustainable drainage techniques which may even reduce downstream flood risk. While the development will increase hard surfaces and runoff, this will be effectively controlled and treated before discharge, protecting both surface and groundwater quality.
- 3.116 Foul water generation will rise during operation, but ongoing consultation with United Utilities will ensure the sewer network can handle the increase, with upgrades made if needed. Potable water use will also increase, but water saving devices and efficient design will help minimise demand. These operational impacts are expected to be negligible or minor, with no significant adverse effects.



#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.117 The Proposed Development includes a range of embedded mitigation measures designed to reduce or prevent significant environmental effects, particularly relating to surface water, flood risk, and water quality. An oCEMP will be prepared in line with best practice guidance and will include pollution prevention measures to manage risks from concrete, silt, oil, and chemicals.
- 3.118 Embedded mitigation measures in the oCEMP will include pollution prevention strategies for managing risks from concrete, silt, oil, and chemicals. Key provisions will involve locating compounds and storage outside flood-prone areas, safe working near watercourses, monitoring weather and flood alerts, and implementing temporary drainage and attenuation systems to control runoff. Additional measures will address sediment control, dust suppression, water quality monitoring, proper waste and foul water disposal, and safe fuel and chemical storage. Vehicle and equipment maintenance, designated access routes, and wheel washing will further reduce environmental risks.
- 3.119 During operation, flood risk has been addressed through design measured informed by a Flood Risk Assessment, including setting finished floor levels and ground profiling to manage overland flow. A Surface Water Drainage System (SuDS) will manage runoff, improve water quality, and control discharge rates. A maintenance schedule will ensure these systems remain effective long-term.
- 3.120 To support water efficiency, the development will incorporate water saving features such as rainwater harvesting and low use sanitary appliances. These measures will help reduce pressure on the local potable water supply. Overall, the embedded mitigation strategy is designed to protect water resources and manage flood risk throughout both construction and operation.

#### **GEOLOGY, SOILS AND CONTAMINATED LAND**

#### Introduction

3.121 PEIR Chapter 15, *Geology, soils and contaminated land,* considers how the Proposed Development might affect the geology, soils and contaminated land beneath the Site during both the construction and operational phases.

#### Baseline

- 3.122 The Main Site is largely undeveloped agricultural land with some farm buildings and small ponds. Highfield Moss SSSI lies immediately to the north of the Site. Ground investigations show the Main Site is underlain by natural soils and sandstone bedrock (in Chester Formation), with minimal made ground. Localised Lacustrine deposits have been encountered in the northeast of the Main Site at a single location.
- 3.123 No shallow groundwater connectivity exists between the Main Site and Highfield Moss SSSI. The deeper Chester Formation Principal Aquifer is a Drinking Water safeguarded Zone and Source Protection Zone with depths of 6-18m across the Main Site.



- 3.124 Although the site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, no viable sand or gravel resources of any value were identified that will be sterilised by the Proposed Development. Significant areas of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land will be lost due to the Proposed Development.
- 3.125 No significant sources of soil or groundwater contamination or ground gases have been identified or are expected at the Main Site and Western Rail Chord.

#### Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.126 During the construction phase, no significant risks to human health have been identified, with standard hygiene and PPE considered sufficient. However, there is no minor risk of encountering unforeseen contamination, which could result in a non-significant minor adverse effect. For controlled waters, deeper foundation methods like vibro stone columns in specific plots could create pathways for contamination to reach the Principal Aquifer, resulting in moderate adverse effect, which is significant. Soil compaction and loss due to heavy machinery may cause slight adverse effects on geology, and earthworks could lead to localised instability, especially near slopes and embankments, with potential for moderate adverse effects under extreme weather conditions. The permanent loss of over 20 hectares of BMV agricultural land is considered a very large adverse effect, which is significant.
- 3.127 During the operational phase, risks to human health are low due to hard surfacing across the site, with only slight adverse effects near former farm buildings. Clean soils will be reused, resulting in a neutral effect. However, potential leaks or fires from fuel storage and battery energy storage systems (BESS) could lead to contamination of the Principal Aquifer, posing a large adverse effect, which is significant. Changes to the hydrogeological regime are expected to be negligible, and while infiltration may slightly reduce groundwater levels, the effect is not significant. The development does not constrain surrounding mineral resources, and the limited mineral availability on-site results in a slight adverse effect, which is not significant.

#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.128 Embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design and construction planning of the Proposed Development to minimise environmental risks. An oCEMP has been prepared, requiring the Principal Contractor to implement detailed mitigation measures during each phase, including controls for surface water protection and worker health. Best practice guidance will be followed, with standard PPE, hygiene protocols, and sediment control measures such as silt traps and temporary drainage. Spill prevention will be managed through designated fuelling areas with bunding, spill kits, and emergency response plans.
- 3.129 To protect sensitive receptors, the energy centre and battery storage facility have been positioned approximately 850m from Highfield Moss SSSI, and a 50m buffer zone has been designed between the development and the Moss. Surface water drainage will discharge at greenfield runoff rates, preventing contamination migration. Additional embedded measures include a Soil and Waste Management Plan to reuse topsoil and BMV soils for habitat and agricultural enhancement, and an earthworks strategy designed to balance cut and fill volumes, reducing the need for material import or export.
- 3.130 The surface water drainage strategy also includes treatment features to improve water quality





before infiltration into the Principal Aquifer, resulting in only a slight, non-significant effect. These measures will be secured through the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) and will evolve as the design progresses, ensuring long-term environmental protection and compliance with planning requirements.

# **MATERIALS AND WASTE**

#### Introduction

3.131 Chapter 16, *Materials and waste*, of the PEIR considers how the Proposed Development might affect the generation and management of waste during construction and operation, and considers the use of materials during the construction phase.

#### **Baseline**

- 3.132 As a NSIP there is a significant quantity of earthworks required to develop a level development platform with connections to the highway and rail infrastructure. A large volume of material is expected to be managed within the DCO Site to create a platform for the proposed units and surrounding infrastructure. The design of the earthworks will be optimised to balance requirements of excavation and infill, this will maximise the quantity of material reused onsite and minimises the material disposed off-site. As a result, the significance of effect to landfill capacity from the disposal of earthworks material can be assessed as Slight and Not Significant for non-hazardous landfill and Slight and Not Significant for hazardous landfill.
- 3.133 There is the requirement for the demolition of a number of industrial and residential properties in order to construct the Proposed Development. The material generated from these demolition works will be reused and recycled wherever possible, and this will be facilitated through the preparation of a Pre-Demolition Audit. The significance of effect to landfill capacity from the disposal of earthworks material can be assessed as Slight and Not Significant for non-hazardous landfill.

## Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.134 Although measures will be put in place to minimise waste generated from construction of the Proposed Development such as modular construction and pre-fabricated components to minimise wastage and off-cuts generated on-site, there will still be some construction waste generated through construction worker waste and other wastage from construction materials. Potential impacts include the temporary use of waste management facility capacity (during treatment) and a permanent decrease in landfill capacity (disposal). The significance of effect to landfill capacity from the disposal of earthworks material can be assessed as Not Significant.
- 3.135 With adherence to a CEMP and Site Waste and Materials Management Plan (SWMMP) and the associated reuse of material, the quantity of construction, demolition and excavation waste would not have a significant impact on the capacity of the landfill sites in the region with the residual impact assessed as Not Significant.
- 3.136 There will be a requirement to import material, particularly where large quantities of



engineering graded material are required and for the production of concrete. Reuse and recycling material will reduce the volume of material imported; the Proposed Development is well served with a number of quarries in the near vicinity. The importation of material is not expected to have a significant impact on the supply of aggregates with the significance of effect assessed as Not Significant. The design of the Proposed Development will consider the use of sustainably sourced and durable materials, therefore the residual effect has been assessed as Not Significant.

- 3.137 Waste is expected to be generated from the use of the Proposed Development once it is operational, over and above the quantities of waste expected to be generated by the current baseline, i.e. the existing site. Waste is expected to be generated by workers and visitors to the site (including lorry drivers). On the assumption that the recycling rates once operational would meet national and regional targets of a 65% recycling rate, the significance of effect is assessed as Not Significant.
- 3.138 It is anticipated that the Proposed Development would generate very small quantities of hazardous waste only when essential maintenance of the railway track is required. Therefore, the significance of effect is assessed as Not Significant on the hazardous landfill capacity.

#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.139 A CEMP will include specific instruction on steps to be taken to manage and dispose of the varied waste that is anticipated to occur during the construction phase. A CL:AIRE DoW CoP Materials Management Plan (MMP) (to be prepared by the Principal Contractor) will minimise material classified as waste and maximise the potential to recover material and ultimately prevent the material from being disposed of in landfill.
- 3.140 The Proposed Development will have in place a SWMMP as a key document with which to measure and report on construction operations as they occur. It will include specific instruction on steps to be taken to manage and dispose of the varied waste that is anticipated to occur in line with the Waste Hierarchy. Waste generated by the Proposed Development which cannot be reused will be taken to one of a range of waste facilities in close proximity.

# **ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### Introduction

- 3.141 PEIR Chapter 17, Energy and Climate Change, considers the potential effects of energy and climate change, both upon and from the Proposed Development. The increasing concentration of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere restrict the earth's ability to reflect solar heat back into space, resulting in global warming. This affects weather patterns and, amongst other things, is causing a rise in sea levels.
- 3.142 These risks prompt an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which arise from sources including vehicle exhausts and the generation of electricity and heat from non-renewable energy sources.

#### **Baseline**



- 3.143 The Proposed Development will replace mainly agricultural land and some woodland. While agriculture emits low levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs), woodland areas store carbon, so their disturbance could lead to greater emissions. However, a net gain in woodland is planned, helping to offset emissions from land use change.
- 3.144 Baseline emissions from existing site uses are conservatively assumed to be zero, meaning all emissions from the Proposed Development are treated as new. This approach treats all emissions from the Proposed Development as an increase, which is considered reasonable given that existing uses may be relocated rather than permanently lost.

## Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.145 Construction will generate GHG emissions from fuel use, materials, and habitat loss. Total embodied carbon is estimated at over 500,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, with warehouse buildings and solar PV systems as major contributors. Embodied carbon refers to emissions generated throughout the supply chain from raw material extraction and manufacturing to delivery and installation on site. Transport emissions from workforce travel will be assessed once traffic data is available. These emissions represent a small share of national and local carbon budgets (approximately 4-5% of current annual emissions in each of the local authority areas) meaning they are initially judged to be minor adverse effect but could become significant over the 10-year build period without further mitigation.
- 3.146 Operational energy demand for the Proposed Development is expected to range from 36,110 MWh/year to 176,610 MWh/year when including from EV and EGV charging, though emissions are expected to reduce over time due to grid decarbonisation.
- 3.147 Predicted energy use intensity is 60kWh/m2 GIA/year, slightly above Net Zero targets for unconditioned storage but close for conditioned storage. The development will include a mix of both, depending on tenant requirements.
- 3.148 The Proposed Development is expected to deliver long term carbon savings through the shift from road to rail freight. Based on current data, five years of full capacity rail terminal operation could offset the entire construction phase GHG emissions, using present day emission factors.

#### **Potential mitigation**

- 3.149 The Proposed Development supports the UK's Net Zero target by promoting rail freight over road transport. A Carbon Management Plan will guide emissions reduction, alongside design and operational features such as tree planting, surface water features, on-site solar PV systems, and a low-carbon energy centre (as set out in the Energy Strategy).
- 3.150 During construction, the oCEMP will implement measures to reduce GHGs, including use of low-emission machinery, reduced idling, and waste minimisation. Additional plans including a CTMP, a Site Waste and Materials Management Plan (SWMPP) and an HGV Routing Strategy will manage materials, vehicle routing, and promote sustainable travel for workers.
- 3.151 A Sustainable Access and Movement Strategy (SAMS) will promote walking, cycling and public transport. The rail terminal will connect to electrified lines and a mobility hub will offer EV



- charging, bike/scooter hire and real-time travel updates. A Travel Plan will encourage sustainable commuting through incentives like subsidised tickets and cycle vouchers.
- 3.152 Buildings will be designed for long-term climate resilience, following UK Building Regulations and the energy hierarchy. Passive features include insulation, solar shading, and efficient glazing, while active measures include solar PV, smart energy systems, rainwater harvesting, and low-flow fixtures to reduce energy and water use.

# **POPULATION AND HEALTH**

#### Introduction

- 3.153 PEIR Chapter 18, *Population and human health*, considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on population and health of the local community surrounding the Site.
- 3.154 Population and health can be influenced (both adversely and beneficially) by a number of environmental and socio-economic determinants which can vary on a project-by-project basis, and are further modified by local community circumstance and existing health burden.

#### Baseline

- 3.155 The baseline assessment considered the health and socio-economic context of communities near the Proposed Development. The local population is older than the national average, with a recent decline in employment levels. Since 2001-03, life expectancy in the district study area has been consistently lower than the national average.
- 3.156 Mortality rates in the district are generally higher than the national average and align with regional trends. Overall hospital admission rates in the ward area are higher than national averages.
- 3.157 Suicide rates have increased over time and remain consistently higher than regional and national averages. While emergency hospital admissions for self-harm have decreased, they also remain higher than the comparators. Dementia diagnoses in those aged 65+ have been higher than regional and national average since 2018. Hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions have declined overall, but rates among under 18s remain higher than all relevant comparators. Smoking prevalence is falling in line with national trends.
- 3.158 Obesity remains a key issue with adult overweight and obesity rates consistently above relevant comparators and childhood obesity (Year 6) rising, reflecting regional and national patterns.
- 3.159 A 500m study area around the Site was assessed to identify sensitive receptors. Key locations such as schools, medical centres, places of worship, and community facilities were shortlisted for further assessment due to their relevance to vulnerable populations.



## Potential likely environmental effects

- 3.160 During construction, three PRoWs will be closed, but alternative routes will be maintained through diversions. Following construction, new and improved pedestrian and cycle links including a new bridge and green corridors will enhance connectivity and support physical activity, recreation and active travel. Overall, potential effects are not significant. Visual impacts may affect a small number of nearby residents and PRoW users during construction and early operation. Over time, mitigation planting will reduce these effects. While some significant impacts will remain at specific locations, they are limited in scale and not considered significant to overall community wellbeing.
- 3.161 Three community facilities (Warrington Model Flying Club, Lancashire Aero Club, and the Croft IGP/IPO Sports Dog Club) will be permanently lost during construction, but similar alternatives are nearby which limits the impact on social participation and community interaction. The project will also create significant temporary employment, supporting local job availability. Overall, potential effects on health and wellbeing are not significant.
- 3.162 Construction may cause temporary dust, noise, and vibration, but mitigation measures will keep impacts low and not significant. Overall, likely potential effects on health are considered minor and short-term.
- 3.163 Construction will generate temporary employment, peaking at 960 jobs in the first year. Once operational, the Proposed Development is expected to create up to 6,675 permanent jobs, supporting regional economic growth. While health benefits from employment are likely to be dispersed across a wide area, they are beneficial. To meet future workforce demand, up to 3,376 new residents may relocate to the area. Given the large existing population, this is not expected to place significant pressure on health or social care services. Overall, potential effects are considered negligible.
- 3.164 Noise from HGVs and rail activity may affect a small number of nearby residents, but existing ambient levels and mitigation will help reduce impacts. Other sources, such as fixed plant, are expected to have low or no adverse effects. Overall, potential health impacts from operational noise are considered minor and not significant.

## **Potential mitigation**

- 3.165 Mitigation measures during construction and operation of the Proposed Development are designed to reduce environmental factors that could affect population health and wellbeing. During construction, an oCEMP will be implemented to control dust, noise, and other pollutants, alongside a CTMP to manage vehicle movements and minimise disruption to the local community. Visual impacts will be reduced through mitigation planting. In the operational phase, enhancements to the PRoW network will improve access to green spaces and promote active travel, supporting health, wellbeing, and connectivity for local residents.
- 3.166 To help prevent adverse health outcomes, the Proposed Development includes mitigation focussed on environmental factors that influence wellbeing. The only health determinant requiring further mitigation at this stage is operational noise. Measures include the installation of earth bunds along Winwick Lane to reduce noise from site activities, and acoustic screening along the Western Rail Chord. Ongoing studies are assessing the need and



specifications for screening to ensure effective noise control for nearby sensitive receptors.

## MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

3.167 Chapter 19, Major accidents and disasters, of the PEIR considers the potential likely effects of the Proposed Development in relation to the risk from major accidents and disasters.

#### Approach and consideration of vulnerability

- 3.168 The Proposed Development has been assessed to see if it could be affected by or contribute to major accidents or disasters. This includes checking whether it could cause any hazards, be impacted by outside risks (like natural disasters or industrial accidents), or make things worse if something did happen nearby.
- 3.169 The assessment also looks at how well current safety measures, design features, and legal standards help manage these risks. The goal is to make sure any potential harm to people or the environment is kept as low as reasonably possible.
- 3.170 The Proposed Development has been reviewed for risks from outside hazards like flooding and extreme weather. National and local risk registers were used to identify potential threats.
  - Flooding: A Flood Risk Assessment was carried out and used to shape the design of the DCO Site. Measures like a SuDS have been included to manage heavy rainfall and climate change impacts. Construction workers will follow safety guidance when working near water, and these measures will be enforced through a suite of management.
  - Severe Weather & Climate Change: The design also considers future climate risks, including extreme weather. Drainage and building structures have been planned to handle these conditions. During construction and operation, procedures will be in place to manage weather-related impacts, including emergency plans and regular maintenance.
  - Major Accidents: These could include transport or industrial accidents. The assessment found no clear way that industrial accidents could affect the DCO Site. Traffic-related risks during construction will be managed through a CTMP. The Proposed Development also includes improvements to local roads and transport systems, which will help emergency services respond quickly if needed.
  - Malicious Attacks: These could target transport or infrastructure. The DCO Site will include security features like fencing, gates, lighting, and security checkpoints. Improved road access will also help emergency response if needed.
  - Construction Hazards: Activities like demolition and building new infrastructure are typical for a project of this scale and will follow strict safety rules and regulations. Plans will be in place to manage environmental impacts, traffic, and waste during construction, including hazardous materials if found. Any changes to existing utility connections will be carried out safely by the relevant providers under their legal responsibilities.
  - Onsite Hazards: There are no major accident sites, hazardous pipelines, or licensed





- explosives facilities within or near the DCO Site.
- Operational Hazards: The DCO Site will follow strict health and safety standards, lighting
  and rail capacity checks, and obtain all necessary licences to ensure safe day-to-day
  operations.
- Transportation of Hazardous Loads: Most freight will be non-hazardous; if hazardous materials are handled, occupiers must follow strict legal procedures to manage risks safely.
- **Hazardous Waste**: Only small amounts of hazardous waste, like oily rags from equipment maintenance, are expected during operation. These will be safely stored and disposed of by licensed contractors following strict regulations.
- Rail Freight Movements: Rail freight is generally safer than road freight. The Proposed Development will help shift freight from road to rail, reducing accident risks. Safety at level crossings will be improved by closing two crossings and replacing them with pedestrian and cyclist bridges.
- 3.171 The DCO application will be accompanied by the following documents that explain provisions to avoid or reduce vulnerability to accidents and disasters:
  - CEMP to include, where relevant, a Construction Method Statement;
  - Lighting Strategy;
  - CTMP; and
  - Other Consents and Licences report.
- 3.172 In addition, the DCO application will be accompanied by a Rail Report that will include assessment of potential hazards to rail operations, including train paths and level crossings, and their avoidance or mitigation.
- 3.173 This integrated approach to control and management ensures that vulnerability to major accidents and/or disasters is being taken into account in the design and environmental assessment of the Proposed Development and the risks identified will be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable.

# **CUMULATIVE, IN-COMBINATION AND TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS**

- 3.174 Transport, air quality, and noise assessments are considered inherently cumulative when they include future traffic growth modelling. According to Planning Inspectorate (PINS) guidance, if these assessments are comprehensive and represent a worst-case scenario, no separate cumulative assessment is required.
- 3.175 Transport modelling has been developed in consultation with the TWG. This modelling forms the basis for assessing cumulative effects related to road traffic emissions, including air quality and noise. Non-road and rail-related impacts are assess using defined Zones of Influence (ZOIs).



- 3.176 Cumulative climate change effects are addressed separately in the Energy and Climate Change chapter of the PEIR. This is due to the global nature of climate change, which requires a standalone approach.
- 3.177 The cumulative assessment follows PINS four-stage methodology.
  - Stage 1: Define the Zone of Influence (ZOI) and create a Long List of 'other existing development and/or approved development'.
  - Stage 2: Shortlist developments using criteria like timing, scale and relevance.
  - Stage 3: Gather detailed information on shortlisted developments.
  - Stage 4: Assess cumulative effects considering duration, extent, type, frequency, receptor sensitivity, and mitigation success.
- 3.178 Projects considered for cumulative assessment include those under construction, permitted but not yet implemented, submitted applications and appeals, and developments listed in planning programmes and development plans. Refused or withdrawn applications not under appeal are excluded.
- 3.179 A planning application database was used to identify developments within a 30km radius of the DCO Site. These were screened using EIA Regulations thresholds. Allocated sites were included as Tier 3 developments, acknowledging limited available information.
- 3.180 The long-list was reviewed by the consultant team to identify overlaps and potential significant effects. This process helped filter out projects with no likely cumulative impact and advance relevant schemes to the next assessment stages. The filtering process is documented in Appendix 20.1 and Figures 20.3 to 20.6.

#### **Cumulative assessment**

3.181 Stages 1 and 2 of the PINS cumulative assessment process have been undertaken and the results have been presented as part of the PEIR. Stages 3 and 4 will be undertaken in consultation with local planning authorities, following this Statutory Consultation, and the full results will be presented as part of the ES. This ensures any additional relevant developments are considered before finalising the ES.

#### **In-combination effects**

- 3.182 The receptors for the in-combination assessment can be divided into a number of main groups, as listed below:
  - local residents;
  - ecological receptors;
  - road users; and
  - heritage assets.
- 3.183 Receptors that are significantly adversely affected by two or more residual effects will be



- identified at the ES stage. These will be analysed to identify whether the effects have the potential to interact and either worsen or improve as a result.
- 3.184 In-combination effects are evaluated qualitatively using professional judgement. Residual effects are listed by receptor to identify where multiple impacts may overlap.

## **Transboundary effects**

- 3.185 Transboundary effects refer to environmental effects that may extend beyond the UK's borders, potentially affecting other countries.
- 3.186 The 2024 Scoping Opinion for the Proposed Development concluded:
  - No likely significant transboundary effects, either alone or cumulatively
  - No need for a detailed transboundary screening
  - That this position may be reviewed if new or materially different information arises
- 3.187 Therefore, no further assessment of transboundary effects has been undertaken.



# Chapter 4 ◆ Conclusions and Next Steps

# **CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 With mitigation measures in place the effects that remain are termed 'residual effects', residual effects can be both beneficial and adverse. Many of the effects are reduced in significance once mitigation is taken into account, however, given the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, a number of residual significant effects remain. These residual likely significant effects are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.1 Residual likely significant effects of ILPN SRFI

Topic	Impact	Residual significant effects			
Land-use and socio- economic effects	<ul> <li>Construction employment</li> <li>Economic output during construction</li> <li>Operational employment</li> <li>Business in the logistics sector</li> </ul>	Slightly adverse (not significant) to major beneficial (significant)			
Transport and traffic	Assessment ongoing	Assessment ongoing			
Air quality	No residual significant effects identified at this stage, will be reviewed once traffic modelling is completed				
Noise and vibration	No residual significant effects identified at this stage, will be reviewed once traffic modelling is completed				
Landscape and visual effects	<ul> <li>Construction and year 1 effects on 20 visual receptors including: PRoW users;</li> <li>Year 15 effects 9 visual receptors including: PRoW users near Huskisson Memorial and Highfield Moss SSSI; Hermitage Green Footpath; Rock House, Sandy Brow Lane.</li> </ul>	Minor adverse (not significant) to major adverse (significant)			



Topic	Impact	Residual significant effects				
Ecology and biodiversity	No residual significant effects identified					
Cultural heritage	<ul> <li>Effects to contribution of setting to value four Grade II designated heritage assets through construction activity</li> <li>Direct effects to very small area of Battle of Winwick Battlefield at northern boundary</li> </ul>	Moderate adverse (significant) but short to medium term  Minor adverse (not significant)				
Archaeology	No residual significant effects identified					
Surface water and flood risk	No residual significant effects identified					
Geology, soils and contaminated land	No residual significant effects identified					
Materials and waste	No residual significant effects identified					
Energy and climate change						
Population and health	No residual significant effects identified					

4.2 To summarise, the PEIR has concluded that the Proposed Development may result in significant adverse effects on landscape and visual receptors, which are largely unavoidable considering the scale of ILPN SRFI. There could also be significant adverse visual effects from certain viewpoint locations. The PEIR has also identified significant beneficial effects including those related to socioeconomic.

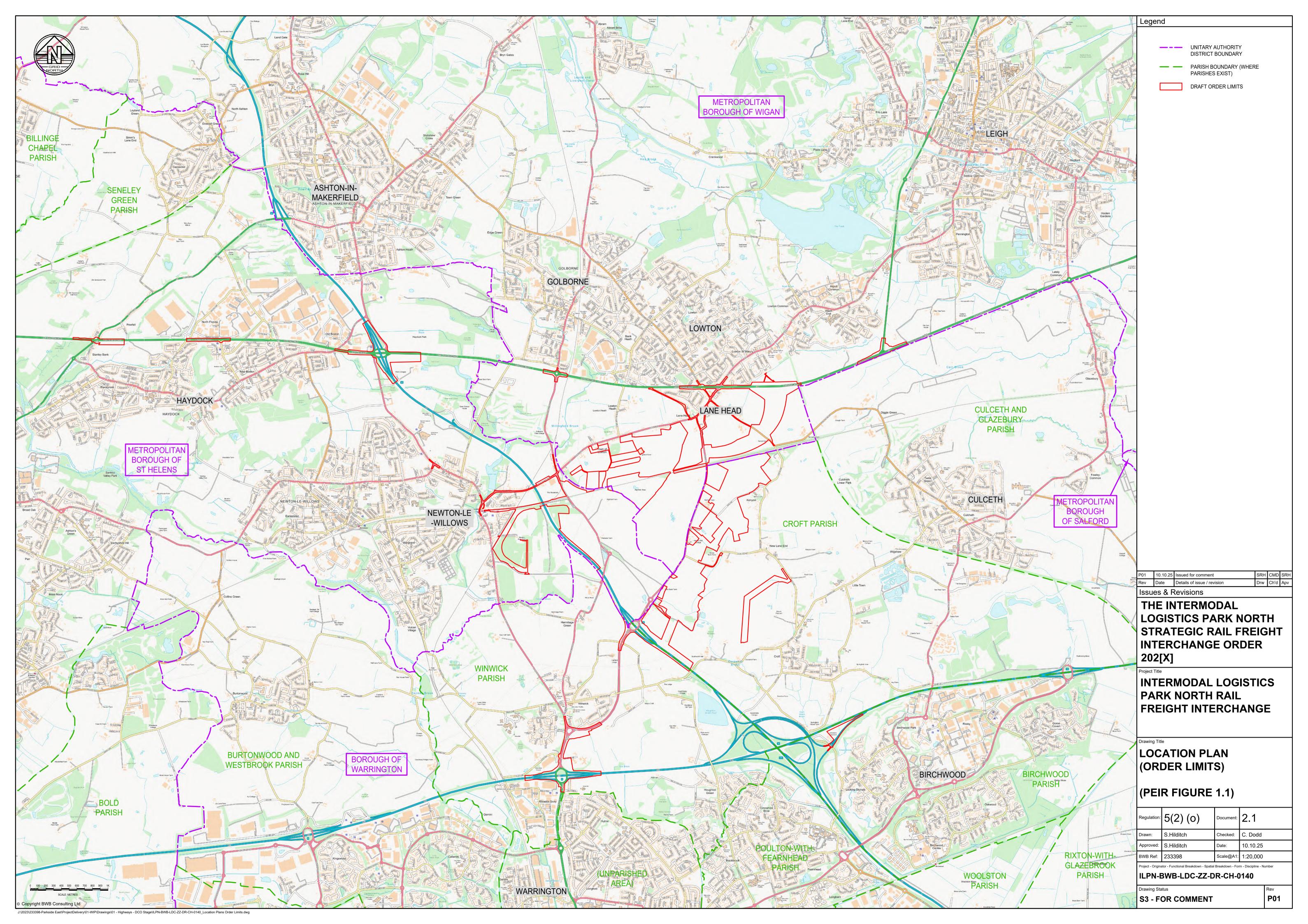


## **NEXT STEPS**

- 4.3 On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025 the Applicant commences a statutory consultation. The PEIR and its NTS forms a part of the statutory consultation materials presented, helping the local community and other consultees to understand the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development, and thereby informing their responses to the consultation.
- 4.4 The outcomes of the consultations undertaken, the findings and how these have been taken into account in the application will be set out in a number of the documents that support the DCO application, including the Consultation Report and the Design Approach Document.
- 4.5 Consultation responses can be made in the following ways:
  - Completing the feedback form online which can be accessed via the project website from Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025: (<a href="https://www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north/">https://www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north/</a>)
  - Attending a consultation event and completing a printed feedback form which can be handed into the project team in-person or taken away and sent to us via a freepost (using FREEPOST ILP NORTH)
  - Feedback forms can also be collected from the community deposit locations, downloaded from the website, and completed in pen or requested from the project team, using the contact channels.
  - Emailing ilpnorth@consultationonline.co.uk
  - Writing to us at FREEPOST ILP NORTH (no stamp is required)
- 4.6 Consultation materials will be available for download on the project website. They can also be obtained by contacting the information channels. These information channels will be advertised by the various methods used to promote the statutory consultation (newsletter, press releases, social media, emails and letters, notices and posters).
- 4.7 The following channels will be available throughout the consultation for members of the community and other stakeholders to get in touch with the project team, ask questions, request further information, or request copies of the consultation materials and documents.
  - Website: https://www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north/
  - Telephone: 01744 802043
  - Email: ilpnorth@consultationonline.co.uk

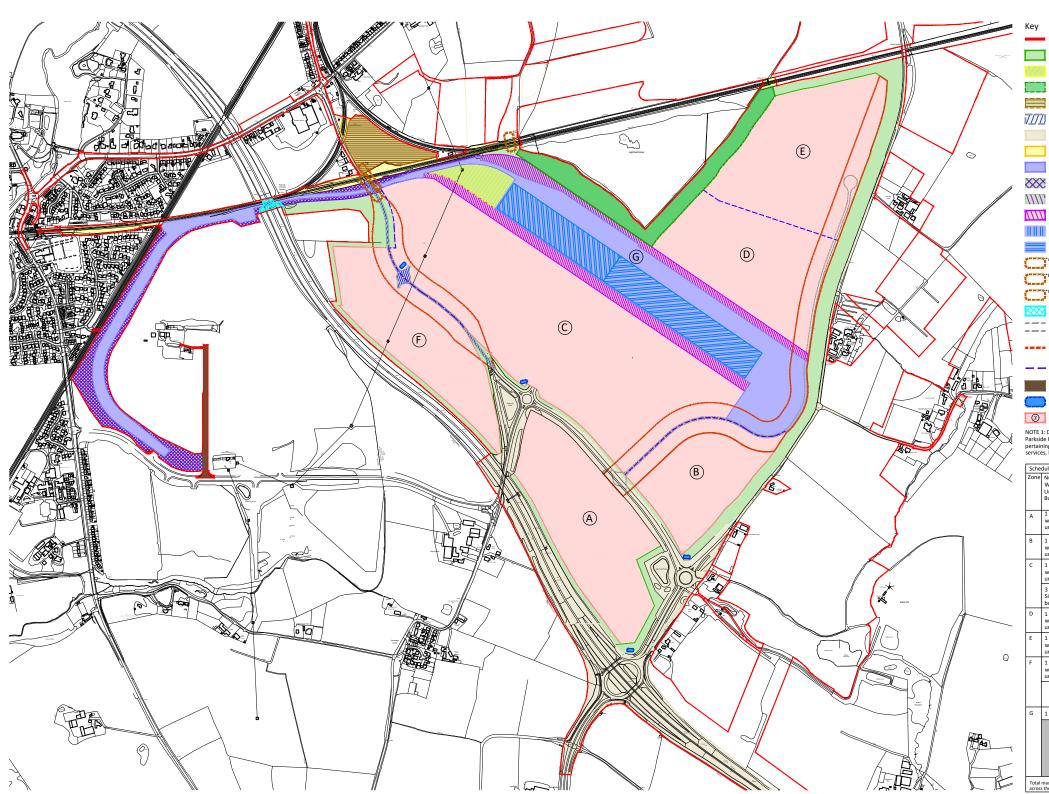












#### INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK (ILP) NORTH

02.10.25 Date: Paper Size: A3 Scale: 1:12500 100 200 300

Key:

Open land / landscaping, including bunding, fencing, attenuation ponds, public footpaths and cycleways, estate road infrastructure, drainage infrastructure, realignment of Parkside Road and bridgeworks.

Private open land, non accessible to the public

Parkside road realignment, including associated footpaths, cycleways, landscaping and drainage infrastructure.

orainage intrastructure.

Area of existing highways and land reserved adjacent to existing highways for construction / laydown of materials /compounds, highways, engineering and drainage works.

Rail freight interchange including rail sidings, gantry cranes, container hardstanding, lorry park, bridge infrastructure and estate road access.

Limit of deviation for Western rail chord and associated works

Rail corridor within open land

Location of Container Stack up to 7 high

Location of Container Stack up to 5 high

New road bridge infrastructure over rail line

New pedestrian / cycleway infrastructure over rail line

New pedestrian footpath infrastructure over rail line

Extent of M6 motorway (retained as existing) within the Draft Main Order Limits above the existing and proposed rail infrastructure

Notional alignment of new estate roads

Deviation Potential of Parkside Road and new estate roads.

The boundaries of zones through which a limit of deviation runs will change depending on the final alignment of the infrastructure within the limit of deviation

Boundary between development zones. The boundary will change depending on the final alignment of the infrastructure and the limits of deviation.

Development signage locations

NOTE 1: Development Zones include the existing buildings to be demolished, the new alignment Parkside Road, estate road infrastructure, rail freight interchange link to estate road and elements pertaining to individual development plots including buildings, hardstandings, parking, energy services, landscaping, bunding, fencing and storm water attenuation.

Zone	Number of Warehousing Units / Buildings *1	Maximum development floor space per Zone (m²)	Other Defined Element Within Zone	Maximum building / element height measured to roof ridge / highest point in metres above Ordnance Datum	Equivalent building heigh relative to FFL
Α	1 to 5 warehousing units	76,000 sq.m.		63.15m	Up to 30m
В	1 to 3 warehousing units	50,000 sq.m.	Energy Services	63.50m	Up to 30m
С	1 to 10 warehousing units	245,000 sq.m.	Energy Services	63.50m	Up to 30m
	3 to 4 Site Hub buildings	1,500 sq.m.		48.50m	Up to 15m
D	1 to 3 warehousing units	85,000 sq.m.		64.00m	Up to 30m
Е	1 to 4 warehousing units	80,000 sq.m.		63.45m	Up to 30m
F	1 to 4 warehousing units	55,000 sq.m.		65.35m	Up to 30m
			Lorry Park	N/A	N/A
			Welfare	45.35m	Up to 10m
G	1 to 6 buildings	3,000 sq.m.		49.00m	Up to 15m
			Yard Container stacks 5 high Container stacks 7 high	48.50m 53.30m	Up to 14.5m Up to 20.3m
			Gantry Cranes	59.00m	Up to 25m
			Lorry Park	44.00m	Up to 10m



Drawing Status: Statutory Consultation V1

TRITAX

BIG BOX

PEIR FIGURE 3.1: Parameters Plan

Drawn By: Approved By: