Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd

INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK NORTH (ILPN)

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

Project reference TR510001

DESIGN VISION & PRINCIPLES

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Planning Act 2008

Contents

◆ DESIGN VISION & PRINCIPLES

DESIGN VISION OVERVIEW

Introduction

1.1 This Design Vision for Intermodal Logistics Park North Rail Freight Interchange (hereafter referred to as 'ILPN RFI' or 'the Proposed Development') presents the approach to the design of the Project.

1.2 ILPN RFI comprises a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) for which an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be made under the Planning Act 2008. It comprises land to the east of Newton-le-Willows in St Helens, Wigan and Warrington boroughs.

1.3 This document forms part of the consultation material for the Proposed Development and sets out the Design Vision and Principles that will inform the design of the scheme. It does not itself form a secured document within the DCO but will provide the foundation for the Design Approach Document (DAD) that will accompany the DCO submission. The DAD will explain how the design has evolved and how design commitments are intended to be secured through Requirements in the draft DCO.

1.4 The Design Principles presented here have been prepared to support the statutory consultation, enabling consultees to understand the emerging design intent and how it will guide delivery of a high-quality, environmentally responsible scheme in accordance with the consultation documents.

1.5 The Design Vision has been developed as an iterative document. It has evolved as greater detail about the Proposed Development and site constraints have become known, and feedback received from key stakeholders through early (non-statutory) engagement between 27 January and 21 March 2025, ongoing dialogue with local planning authorities, and the current statutory consultation process.

The Purpose of this document

1.6 The purpose of this document is to bring together the Design Vision and Principles, and to define the Design Principles that are to be incorporated into the detailed design of the Proposed Development.

1.7 This document captures the key principles that have shaped the preliminary design, and makes a commitment that these will be maintained and developed in the future detailed design and delivery phase of the Proposed Development in accordance with National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) requirements for 'good design'.

THE DESIGN VISION AND PRINCIPLES

1.8 The Design Principles are commitments that are *intended to be secured* through a Requirement within the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) to be submitted under the Planning Act 2008. They form the foundation for the Design Approach Document (DAD), which will be submitted with the DCO application and formally certified as part of the consented scheme.

1.9 The Design Principles apply to the Proposed Development's permanent works; they exclude the temporary construction works associated with it. Design considerations that relate to the management of construction works are detailed within the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP).

1.10 The Design Vision represents a commitment to design quality. It expresses clear design intentions, in relation to the design aspects of the proposed development, its layout, the built form, structures, enclosures, hard and soft landscape treatments, approach to mitigation and enhancement.

A clear 'Vision' to inform early design stages

1.11 The Design Vision for ILPN RFI establishes the overall 'Vision' for the Proposed Development and provides the foundation for the Design Approach Document (DAD) that will accompany the DCO submission. It identifies how the four design criteria identified within the National Infrastructure Commission's Design Principles for National Infrastructure (Climate, People, Places and Value) have informed the overarching design principles. It also provides a structure for a coherent design process that will continue through the statutory consultation stage and the iterative design process leading up to the DCO submission. The DAD submitted with the DCO will present the final fixed version of these principles, and post-consent design changes (if any) will be managed through the mechanisms secured by the Order.

A Coherent Context for Design Decisions

1.12 The Design Vision provides information on the baseline conditions within the site, its wider surroundings, and the planning, statutory and technical context that has informed the outline proposals. This contextual information will be summarised within the DAD to provide a clear baseline against which design evolution and decisions can be understood.

Facilitating Design Engagement

1.13 Throughout its duration, the Design Vision has been used to facilitate meaningful engagement in the design process. It forms part of the material published **f**or the statutory consultation undertaken under sections 42–47 of the Planning Act 2008.. It has also formed the focus for independent review by the Places Matter design review panel.

1.14 Further engagement is planned, including another stage of design review, continued dialogue with the three local planning authorities, and targeted consultation following the statutory stage. The outcomes of this engagement will be documented within the DAD as part of the design evolution narrative, in line with EN-1 (2024) paragraph 4.7 and the Planning Inspectorate's Section 51 Advice on Good Design.

The Design Vision

1.15 The Design Vision and Principles document assists the design team by acting as a live reference document to guide design decisions and to support mitigation and enhancement measures. It enables all parties working on the Proposed Development to engage with, and apply, the emerging design principles throughout the Project's evolution, up to the point of DCO submission. Thereafter, the certified DAD will serve as the secured reference for detailed design and delivery.

1.16 The Design Vision for the scheme is:

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

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

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

1.17 This recognises the integral role ILPN RFI can play in delivering on the Government's priorities for sustainable freight movements and decarbonisation of the freight sector, as part of the overall effort to achieve net zero carbon emissions. It also reflects the ambitions to develop a holistic and unified approach to the design of NSIPs, through a scheme which aims to be technically efficient while being accessible to all and uplifting to those who work or visit the site.

The Design Principles

1.18 The following eight design principles will continue to evolve during the consultation and design review process, before being finalised and secured through the submitted DAD to ensure the scheme responds to all relevant design opportunities and constraints.

Design Quality

1.19 A cohesive architectural approach that brings together built form, colour, and materials to deliver a unified identity. The design will reflect simplicity, durability, and local character, creating a high-quality environment for workers and visitors alike.

Transport Network Connections

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

Sustainable Commuting

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

Access to the Countryside

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

Landscape Design and Visual Integration

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

Biodiversity Benefits

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

Sustainable Water Management

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

Recognition of Heritage

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

Good Design

1.27 The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN) recognises that while national network infrastructure can improve operational conditions and reduce identified problems, there may be limits to how far such development can enhance overall environmental and community quality. A well-designed scheme should apply the mitigation hierarchy to avoid, reduce, or compensate for adverse impacts, while contributing positively to the natural, built, and historic environment. NPS NN paragraphs 4.31–4.38 also require applicants to demonstrate how good design has been considered in terms of functionality, sustainability and sensitivity to place. This approach is supported by the Planning Inspectorate's Section 51 Advice on Good Design and the National Infrastructure Commission's 2024 Project-Level Design Principles (Climate, People, Places, Value), which together provide current best-practice guidance for NSIPs.

Design Process

1.28 Due regard for good design and the environment in which the Proposed Development is located, has been a key component in the development of the design and will continue to be as the project evolves.

1.29 Throughout its duration, the Design Vision and Principles have been used to facilitate meaningful engagement in the design process. It has also formed the focus for independent review by the Places Matter design review panel.

1.30 Non- statutory consultation has been undertaken with local stakeholders and feedback from this has been considered in the development of the Scheme.

1.31 Mitigation has been incorporated into the design iteratively throughout the development of the Proposed Development as a result of environmental assessments, consultation, multi-disciplinary working and the review process. The outcomes of consultation, local-authority engagement and independent design review will be reported in the Design Approach Document (DAD) to demonstrate compliance with NPSNN 4.31–4.38 and alignment with current good-design guidance.

1.32 A summary of the design evolution and the main alternatives considered is set out in PEIR Chapter 4 Site Selection and Evolution.

Table 1.1 Principles Aligned with NIC Good Design (2024)

Design Principle	People	Value	Places	Climate
1. Design Quality	Inclusive, legible environments for workers/visitors.	Durable and cost-efficient built form.	Reinforces local character.	Low-carbon materials and forms.
2. Transport Network Connections	Safer access for all users.	Operational efficiency and resilience.	Freight facilities integrated sensitively.	Reduced transport emissions.
3. Sustainable Commuting	Healthy travel choices.	Efficient, low-cost commuting networks.	Strengthens local connectivity.	Encourages modal shift to low-carbon modes.

4. Access to the Countryside	Inclusive public access.	Enduring recreational benefits.	Protects rural character while improving use.	Supports low-impact access and stewardship.
5. Landscape Design and Visual Integration	Attractive environments supporting wellbeing. Readable, comfortable spaces.	High-quality settings add long-term value. Harmonious design minimises maintenance.	Strong identity and placemaking. Landscape character reinforced.	Green infrastructure builds resilience. Natural systems mitigate climate stresses
6. Biodiversity Benefits	Daily access to nature.	Ecosystem services of economic value.	Richer ecological landscapes.	Carbon sequestration and adaptation.
7. Sustainable Water Management	Reduces flood risk to people.	Efficient, resilient water infrastructure.	Blue-green features enrich character.	Adapts to climate change naturally.
8. Recognition of Heritage	Cultural enrichment and learning.	Preserves heritage as lasting value.	Heritage embedded in place identity.	Heritage protected against future risks.

THE SCHEME

Development of the Main Site

- Provision of a logistics park comprising up to c.767,000 square metres (m^2) (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 a 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 RFI including fencing and lighting; and
- Drainage works including creation of attenuation ponds and sustainable drainage features.

Highway Works

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

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Introduction

1.33 An overarching Design Principle for ILPN is:

To develop a sustainable, future-proofed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange through a multidisciplinary team of engineers, planners, and environmental specialists, using an iterative process of development, testing, and refinement, and incorporating feedback from stakeholder consultation and statutory processes.

1.34 This overarching principle will be developed further within the Design Approach Document (DAD) to be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application, demonstrating how the design has evolved through consultation, design review and environmental assessment, in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN 4.31 – 4.38).

Design Principles

Design Quality

- Employ a consistent palette of materials and colours.

- Prioritize robust, low maintenance, construction methods and finishes.
- Integrate architectural features that enhance wayfinding, safety, and comfort.
- Ensure all buildings and public spaces contribute to a unified sense of place.

Transport Network Connection

- Develop a sustainable design that considers future use, including integration with the Liverpool City Region Freeport zone.
- Maximise the opportunity to support growth of rail freight in the region and to deliver rail served buildings.
- Ensure the scheme design prioritises the experience and safety of all users, including freight operators, logistics occupiers, employees and the local community.
- Ensure accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users through the incorporation of links to Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), creation and diversion of footpaths including provision for active travel corridors.

Sustainable Commuting

- Provide safe, direct pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the site.
- Integrate high-quality bus stops and public transport interchanges.
- Offer secure cycle parking facilities.
- Provide infrastructure for sustainable travel, including bus provision, car sharing schemes, electric vehicle charging and active travel routes.
- Prioritisation of active and public transport.
- Implement travel plans and incentives to encourage sustainable commuting.

Access to the Countryside

- Create new and improved public rights of way.
- Design gateways and signage to invite exploration of the wider countryside.
- Provide recreational spaces within the site.
- Strengthen ecological and recreational links across the development.

Landscape Design and Visual Integration

- Produce a landscape design that contributes to local character, provides visual amenity

and screening, and integrates the SRFI into its surroundings.

- Provide planting to screen and integrate the development into the landscape.
- Consider early planting to establish vegetation and integrate the Proposed Development sooner.
- Use locally appropriate species for planting, prioritizing native varieties.
- Minimize obtrusive light pollution through careful lighting design.
- Design noise barriers for both visual and acoustic amenity.
- Minimize impacts to heritage assets and key environmental features.

Biodiversity

- Integrate habitat corridors and wildlife crossings into the masterplan.
- Replace habitat losses and provide additional habitat to achieve at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity.
- Monitor and manage biodiversity outcomes over the long term.
- Retain and enhance vegetation where possible, minimizing removal.
- Minimize impacts to protected species through mitigation and enhancement measures.

Sustainable Water Management

- Integrate the Proposed Development into the local landscape, managing impacts on flood zones and watercourses, and ensuring resilience to climate change.
- Ensure the Proposed Development is designed to provide greater resilience to flooding than the existing baseline.
- Work with natural flood cycles, avoiding increased flood risk to downstream receptors.
- Incorporate climate change allowances into drainage and flood management strategies.
- Prepare drainage strategies to limit peak discharge rates and overall volume.
- Construct compensatory floodplain areas as needed.
- Comply with sustainable drainage system (SuDS) best practices.
- Minimize deterioration in water quality and hydromorphology.
- Select route corridors and infrastructure locations to minimize direct impacts on floodplains and watercourses.

Recognition of Heritage

- Support heritage interpretation including of railway heritage, the Huskisson memorial, Winwick Battlefield and the mining heritage.
- Support opportunities for community engagement with heritage.

CONCLUSION

1.35 The Intermodal Logistics Park North Rail Freight Interchange (ILPN RFI) represents a proposed forward-thinking response to the UK's evolving freight and infrastructure needs. Guided by a draft Design Vision and a set of clearly articulated emerging Design Principles, the scheme is positioned to deliver significant economic, social, and environmental benefits at local, regional, and national levels once consented and implemented.

1.36 By prioritizing design quality, sustainable transport connections, active commuting, and enhanced access to the countryside, the ILPN RFI aims to set a new benchmark for nationally significant infrastructure projects. The current proposals include a commitment to biodiversity net gain, sustainable water management, and the sensitive integration of heritage assets which will be refined through consultation and environmental assessment prior to the DCO submission further underscores the Project's holistic approach to placemaking and environmental stewardship.

1.37 Through iterative design development, ongoing stakeholder engagement, and adherence to best practice standards, the ILPN RFI is intended to support the decarbonisation of freight and the achievement of net zero targets whilst also fostering high-quality local employment and improved community amenities. The principles and vision set out in this draft report will when enshrined in the finalised DCO submission, ensure that the Project remains resilient, adaptable, and exemplary in delivering value for all stakeholders, now and into the future.