

◆ Landscape and Visual

INTRODUCTION

1. Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd. ('the Applicant') is promoting proposals for a new strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) and associated development on land to the east of Newton-le-Willows, in the jurisdictions of St Helens, Wigan and Warrington Councils. An SRFI is a large multi-purpose freight interchange and distribution centre linked into both the rail and trunk road systems. SRFIs reduce the cost of moving freight by rail and encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail, thereby reducing carbon emissions and contributing to the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.
2. 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.
3. Before making a DCO application, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development will be undertaken in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations'). EIA is a process that provides the decision maker with sufficient information about the likely environmental effects of a project and is used to improve the environmental design of a development proposal. The first stage of this process was the submission of a request for a formal scoping opinion under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.
4. The Applicant submitted an EIA Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2024. This outlined the work undertaken to date and sought advice from the Inspectorate on the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development and the topics that needed to be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A Scoping Opinion was received in December 2024 and this will be used to inform the EIA process for the Proposed Development. A summary of the main comments received and how the Applicant intends to address these are set out in the table below.

Table 1 Scoping Opinion comments and responses

Inspectorate's Comments	Applicant's Response
Effects on statutory designated landscapes to be scoped out as none occur within the study area. The Inspectorate agrees this can be	The Applicant notes this comment.

Inspectorate’s Comments	Applicant’s Response
<p>scoped out.</p>	
<p>The Inspectorate considers that provided the impact on local landscape character is assessed, and the term non-statutory designated landscapes is defined in the ES, that this matter can be scoped out of the assessment.</p>	<p>With reference to GLVIA3, the Applicant defines non-statutory designated landscapes as local landscape designations that are judged by a local authority to hold locally appreciated value. The non-statutory designation is incorporated into a local policy, typically within the Local Plan, which describes the features and qualities of the landscape that define the reasons for its designation. While non-statutory designations do not hold the same status as a statutory designation, such as a National Park or a National Landscape, they are afforded a higher level of protection from certain types of development than non-designated parts of the authority.</p> <p>This definition will be stated in the ES as requested. The Applicant can confirm that there are no non-statutory designated landscapes within the Study Area and it is noted that the Inspectorate confirms that non-statutory designated landscapes can be scoped out of the LVIA.</p>
<p>Effects on National Character Areas to be scoped out on the basis that local level landscape character is a more appropriate scale for the assessment. The Inspectorate agrees that this can be scoped out.</p> <p>The Inspectorate notes that, National Character Areas should be considered as part of the baseline description.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p>
<p>The ES should demonstrate how receptors further afield (beyond the 5km study area) would be identified and assessed and the reasons for their selection.</p>	<p>The Applicant believes that it is unlikely that receptors will be considered outside the preliminary 5 km study area. However, if receptors are identified beyond 5 km, the LVIA will explain the reasons for their</p>

Inspectorate’s Comments	Applicant’s Response
	selection.

5. Landscape and visual effects are separate, although closely related and interlinked issues. As such, the assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and visual amenity will be carried out under separate headings within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
6. Axis has been appointed as landscape consultants by the Applicant, responsible for production of the LVIA and Landscape Masterplan. Axis landscape consultants have extensive experience in infrastructure project delivery across the UK, including for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, DNS Applications, Section 36 Applications, major developments, and both EIA and non-EIA planning applications, public inquiries and DCO examination hearings.
7. The competent expert responsible for the production of the LVIA is John Meehan MLPM CMLI, a Landscape Architect with over 20 years’ of relevant industry experience in the UK who holds a master’s degree in landscape planning and chartered status with the Landscape Institute. John has worked on numerous large-scale infrastructure projects across the UK, including rail freight developments, and has experience representing landscape and visual issues at topic hearings as part of the nationally significant infrastructure project application process. DCOs that John has been landscape lead on include: Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Electrical System (consented); and A47 North Tuddenham to Easton (consented); and East Park Energy (pre-application stage).

RELEVANT LAW, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

8. The DCO application will be determined pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 and relevant regulations, the National Networks National Policy Statement (‘NPSNN’, adopted 2024) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Local planning policy relevant to the LVIA are material considerations, and have been taken into account in developing the LVIA scope and approach.

Legislative Context

European Landscape Convention 2007

9. The UK Government is a signatory of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which became binding in March 2007. The ELC is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape. It relates chiefly to public bodies and to the policies, plans and programmes produced by these.
10. LVIA is a development specific process which accords with Article 6C. This LVIA is informed by extant Landscape Character Assessment studies which more directly relate to the provisions of Article 6C.

National Planning Policy

11. National-level planning policies for NSIPs are set out in a series of National Policy Statements (NPSs). The NPS of relevance to the Proposed Development is the National Networks NPS (NPSNN) which was last updated in March 2024. The NPSNN is the primary statement of policy for NSIPs on the road and rail networks and forms the basis for decisions by the Secretary of State.
12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the accompanying online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are also important and relevant. Where there is any conflict, the NPSNN is the primary policy.
13. Relevant requirements of the NPSNN related to the LVIA are summarised below. Noting that the Proposed Development is not located within a nationally designated landscape (i.e. a National Park or National Landscape), references made to effects on designated landscapes within the NPSNN are not included.
 - Construction and operation stages should be considered in the LVIA.
 - Local development policies should be taken into account.
 - Consideration should be given to the impact of noise and light pollution effects, including on local amenity, dark skies, tranquillity, and nature conservation. The applicant should demonstrate how such effects would be minimised during construction and operation stages.
 - It requires that projects should be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. With regards to mitigation of effects, *“the project should be designed, and the scale minimised, to avoid or where unavoidable, mitigate the visual and landscape effects, during construction and operation, so far as is possible while maintaining the operational requirements of the scheme.”*
 - It states that *“adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure, design (including choice of materials), and topographical interventions (for example, creation of bunds or lowering of ground level). Also, landscaping schemes (including screening options and design elements that soften the built form such as green bridges), depending on the size and type of the proposed project. Materials and designs for infrastructure should always be given careful consideration in terms of environmental standards.”*
 - Off-site landscape mitigation should be considered. For example, filling in gaps in tree and hedge lines to mitigate more distant views.
 - Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans.
 - With regards to potential landscape effects of the project, consideration should be given to *“the existing character of the local landscape, its capacity to accommodate change*

and nature of the effect likely to occur.”

- In addition with regards design: *“Projects need to have regard to siting, orientation, height operational and other relevant constraints. The aim should be to avoid or minimise harm to the landscape, where adverse impacts are unavoidable providing reasonable mitigation and deliver landscape enhancement measures where possible and appropriate.”*
- Green infrastructure should be considered when designing the Proposed Development as it can prevent or reduce environmental impacts and enable developments to provide positive environmental, social and economic benefits.
- The re-use of previously developed land for new development should be considered. However it is acknowledged in the NPSNN that this may not be possible for some forms of infrastructure, including strategic rail freight interchanges.
- It is acknowledged by the NPSNN that outside nationally designated landscapes, there are landscapes that may be valued locally and protected by local policy. With regards local landscape value it states: *“Where a local development plan in England has policies based on landscape character assessment, and has identified landscapes of local value, these should be given particular consideration. However, such areas should not be used in and of themselves as reasons to refuse consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development.”*
- A summary requirement with regards the Secretary of State’s decision is that they *“should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to avoid adverse effects on landscape or to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation.”*
- With regards to weight attributed to the visual effects of a project: *“The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the development.”*

Local Planning Policy

14. Local Planning Policy relevant to the LVIA is set out in the following documents:
 - St. Helens Borough Local Plan up to 2037 (St Helens Borough Council, 2022);
 - Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy (Wigan Council, 2024);
 - Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan to 2039; and
 - Warrington Local Plan (Warrington Borough Council, 2023).
15. Relevant requirements of local policy related to the LVIA are summarised below:

- St Helens Policy LPA02 requires that development should contribute to a high quality built and natural environment by taking account of the Borough’s landscape character and townscape and the distinctive roles and settings of different areas of the Borough, in the location and design of new development, with particular regard to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- St Helens Policy LPA08 sets the strategy for Green Infrastructure (GI) throughout the Borough and highlights the contribution GI makes to landscape character, helping to provide a sense of place and distinctiveness.
- St Helens Policy LPC09 outlines the key proposals for new development in relation to Landscape Protection and Enhancement. It references the St. Helens Landscape Character Assessment and Merseyside Historic Character Study as key guidance to ensure conservation and enhancement of the local landscape. It makes reference to the need for appropriate mitigation measures where the landscape or visual character may be negatively impacted by the development.
- St Helens Policy LPC10 Requires new development to conserve, enhance, and / or manage existing trees, woodland and hedgerows.
- St Helens Policy LPD01 requires that development proposals should have regard to their scale, location, and nature, to meet or exceed requirements which include (amongst other factors): maintaining or enhancing the character and appearance of the local environment, for example with regard to the siting, layout, massing, scale, design and materials used in any building work, the building-to-plot ratio and landscaping; and respect any existing natural features of the site.
- St Helens Policy LPD06 refers to ‘gateway corridors’ which it describes as ‘motorways, ‘A’ roads, waterways and railway lines that cross the borough. These include the M6 and M62 motorways. LPD06 requires that all proposals for new development that would be within or visible from one or more prominent gateway corridor(s) must, as appropriate, having regard to its scale and nature: a) be of high architectural quality, ensuring that the density, design, height, and layout of any building(s) respond positively to the site and its setting; and b) provide appropriate landscaping as an integral part of their design and layout.
- Wigan Policy CP2 refers to Open Space, Sport and Recreation and seeks to maintain and enhance walking and cycling routes through parks and open space where they provide appropriate links within the wider network of routes.
- Wigan Policy CP10 states that the council will improve the built environment of the borough and help make it a better place to live, visit and for businesses to locate and thrive by ensuring that, as appropriate, new development (amongst other factors): respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the borough and its locality, in terms of the materials, siting, size, scale and details used; is integrated effectively with its surroundings and helps to create attractive places; and incorporates high quality landscaping.

- Greater Manchester Policy JP-G1 outlines how new development should respond to the special qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics of its location, in relation to the Landscape Character Types identified. It requires that regard should be had to the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (GMLCSA, 2018), in particular its guidance on future development and landscape management/enhancement within areas covered by each landscape character type.
- Greater Manchester Policy JP-G2 sets the strategy for the Green Infrastructure Network, including protection, management and enhancement. It outlines how development within and around the GI Network should be consistent with delivering major green infrastructure improvements within them.
- Greater Manchester Policy JP-G7 outlines the aims and objectives of the Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy, which is to significantly increase tree cover, protect and enhance woodland and to connect people to the trees and woodland around them.
- Greater Manchester Policy JP-G9 outlines the five purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in national policy. Particular focus is given to green infrastructure enhancement such as improved public access and habitat restoration.
- Greater Manchester Policy P1 supports Greater Manchester’s aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places. It supports conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and development which acknowledges the character and identity of its locality. It requires that development should be: *“Visually stimulating, creating interesting and imaginative environments which raise the human spirit through the use of green space, public art and quality design.”*
- Warrington Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that proposed development respects the unique attributes of spatial areas within Warrington. This policy will be taken into account with regards the potential visibility of the Proposed Development on areas which fall within Warrington.
- Warrington Policy DC6 advocates that good design should be at the core of all development proposals having regard to various principles, which include a requirement to respect, sustain and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness within the surrounding area, and where appropriate the landscape setting, having regard to density, street layouts, scale, height and massing. Consideration will be given to landscape character within the Study Area, including Warrington landscape character areas.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site location

16. The DCO Site is located on the eastern extent of Newton-le-Willows in a flat, agricultural landscape. The DCO Site is located within the local authority areas of St Helens Borough

Council, within the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority; Wigan Council, within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority; and Warrington Borough Council.

17. The DCO Site is split broadly in two sections:
 - 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 incorporating the triangular parcel of land located to the west of Parkside Road and to the north of the Chat Moss Line;
 - the Western Rail Chord – land to the west of the M6 motorway, which bisects the DCO Site in a northwest southeast orientation, and to the east of the West Coast Mainline.

18. The majority of the land contained within the Main Site is bound to the north by the Chat Moss Line (Liverpool-Manchester railway line), to the west by the M6 motorway and to the southeast by Winwick Lane (A579). The Main Site south of the Chat Moss Line is approximately 198 hectares in size. The Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also adjacent to the north of the DCO Site, which is described in more detail below. A number of other uses exist at the Main Site currently, including:
 - Kenyon Hall Airfield, which is a small airfield used by the Lancashire Aero Club for recreational flying of small propeller planes;
 - Warrington Model Flying Club, which is a model club for radio controlled model aircraft; and
 - Highfield Farm, which is comprised of two agricultural/residential buildings set within a curtilage surrounded by agricultural fields.

19. 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 a commercial yard 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.

20. The triangular parcel of land located to the north of the Chat Moss Line and to the east of Parkside Road also forms part of the Main Site.

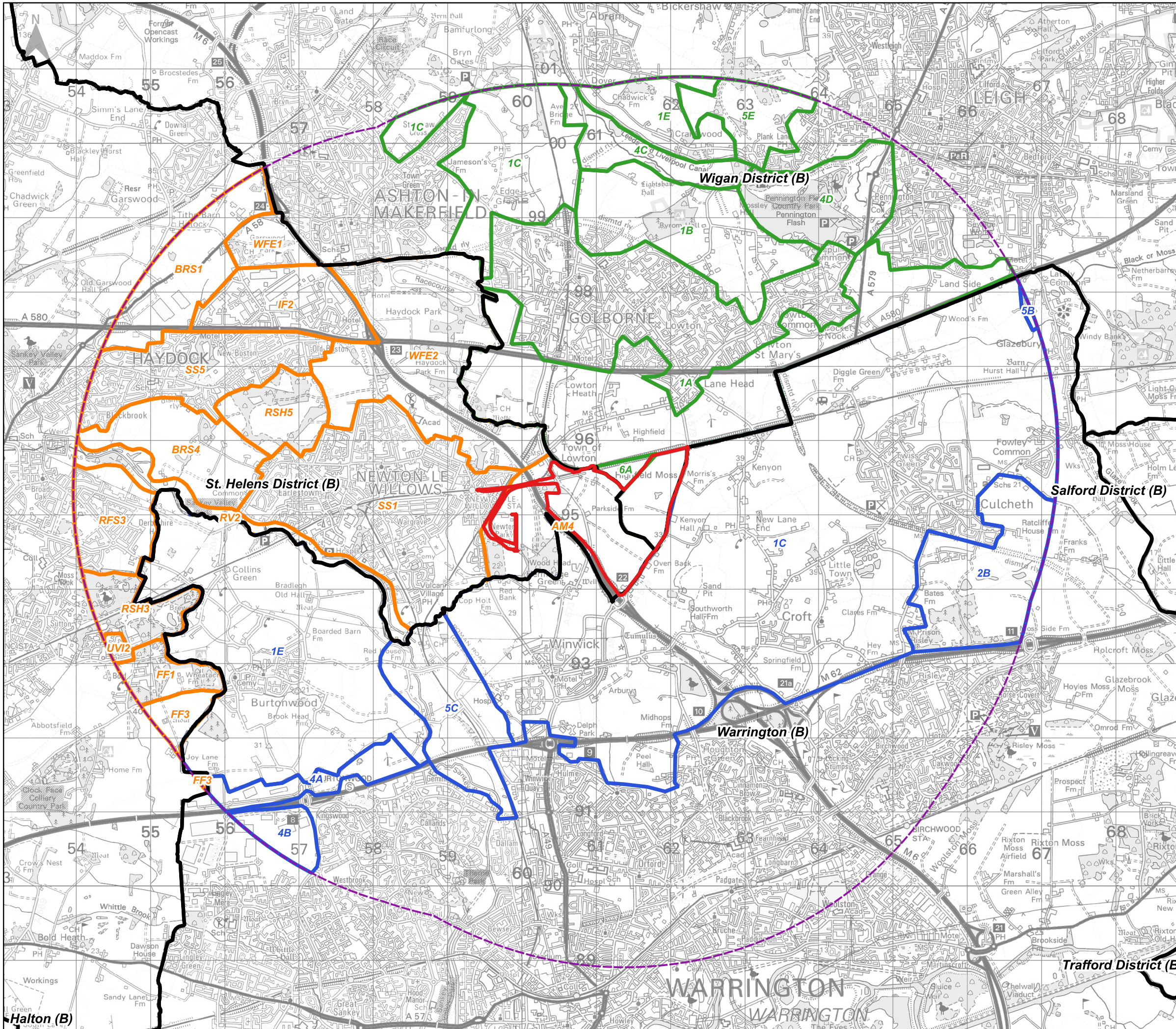
21. The Western Rail Chord of the DCO Site is approximately 12 hectares in size and is bordered to the west by the West Coast Mainline railway, to the north by the Chat Moss Line and to the east by the Parkside West Development. The Western Rail Chord is comprised of safeguarded land for the rail-turn head to enable trains to be serviced to and from the North and the East.

22. The Western Rail Chord is comprised of scrub land and areas of woodland which are set within the context of an area of redevelopment with commercial uses proposed, which is known as Parkside West, and is currently being promoted through the Town and Country Planning Act process.

Baseline environment

Landscape

23. With regards landscape value, there are no statutory designations within the DCO Site and study area, nor are there any local, non-statutory, landscape designations.
24. With regards published landscape character studies, at a local level, the study area includes the following three published local landscape character levels:
 - Landscape Character Assessment for St Helens (St Helens Council, 2006);
 - Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment (Wigan Council, 2009); and
 - Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment (Warrington Borough Council, 2007).
25. Additionally, the Wigan Character Assessment is referenced in a Greater Manchester Combined Authority document: Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment (2018). This study provides an update to the areas identified in the district level landscape character assessments and will therefore be referenced in relation to the Wigan landscape character areas.
26. The local landscape character studies are of an appropriate level of detail that they will form the basis of the assessment of landscape effects of the Proposed Development. The local character assessments describe character types and areas within the study area and while the effects of all such areas which would be subject to some visual influence of the Proposed Development will be considered in the landscape assessment, there will be focus on the direct change to the host character areas, i.e. those which the DCO Site falls within:
 - St Helens AM4: Highfield Moss (Agricultural Moss Type);
 - Wigan 6A: Highfield Moss (Undulating Enclosed Farmland Type); and
 - Warrington 1C: Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton (Undulating Enclosed Farmland Type).
27. Refer to Figure 1 which illustrates the location of local landscape character areas.

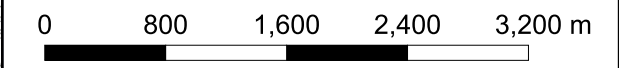


INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK (ILP) NORTH

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Key:

- Draft Order Limits
- 5km Study Area
- AM4 Highfield Moss
- BRS1 Arch Lane Slopes
- BRS4 Sankey Slopes
- FF1 Sutton Fringe
- FF3 Clock Face Farming
- IF2 Haydock Industrial Estate
- RFS3 Derbyshire Hill / Parr
- RSH3 Sutton Moss
- RSH5 Lyme and Wood Pit
- RV2 Sankey Valley
- SS1 Newton le Willows
- SS5 Haydock
- UVI2 Sutton Brook
- WFE1 Garswood Park
- WFE2 Haydock Park
- Undulating Enclosed Farmland
- 1C - Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook & Rixton
- 1E - Burtonwood
- Mossland Landscape
- 2B - Holcroft & Glazebrook Moss
- Level Areas of Farmland and Former Airfields
- 4A - Limekilns
- 4B - Former Burtonwood Airfield
- Flood Plain
- 5C - Sankey Brook
- Wigan Landscape Character Assessment (2009)**
- Undulating Enclosed Farmland
- 1A - East Lancs Road Corridor
- 1B - Aspull Common, Leigh to Bamfurlong
- 1C - Edge Green to Land Gate
- 1E - Fragmented Areas including Alder Farm (Hindley), Bickershaw /Crankwood, Hag Fold, Howe Bridge /Atherton Hall, Shakerley /Mosley Common, Hindsford Brook, Garrett Hall and Higher Green (Astley)
- Wetlands and Flashes
- 4C - Hey Brook Corridor
- 4D - Pennington Flash
- Degraded and Restored Landscapes
- 5E - Bickershaw
- Mossland
- 6A - Highfield Moss
- Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007)**
- Undulating Enclosed Farmland
- 1C - Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook & Rixton
- 1E - Burtonwood
- Mossland Landscape
- 2B - Holcroft & Glazebrook Moss
- Level Areas of Farmland and Former Airfields
- 4A - Limekilns
- 4B - Former Burtonwood Airfield
- Flood Plain
- 5C - Sankey Brook



Landscape Context Plan

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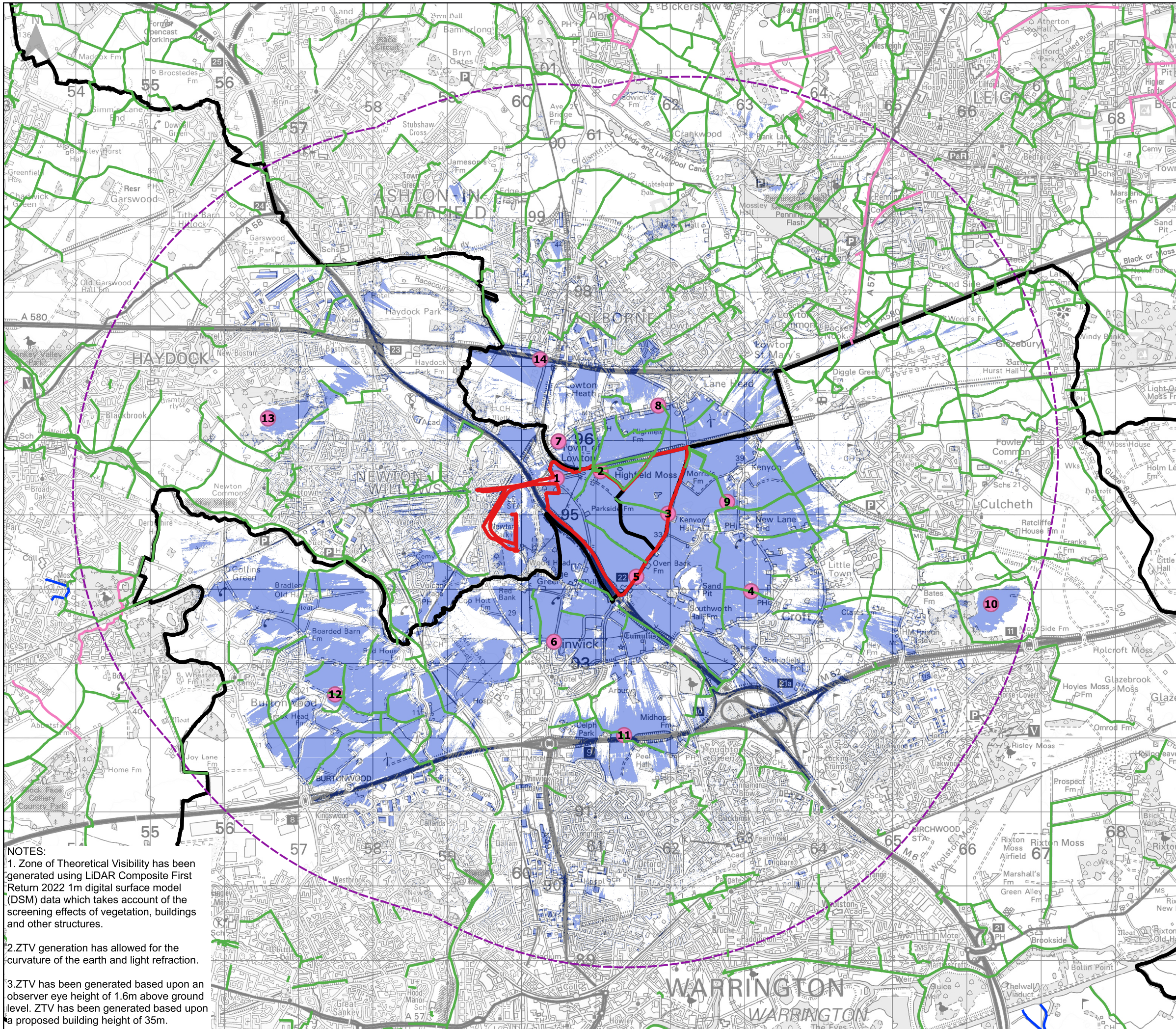
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Visual

28. A preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the Proposed Development is presented in Figure 2. The initial ZTV has been modelled based on a height of 35m from the existing ground level to reflect the maximum height above ground of the buildings. As described in Chapter 3: The Proposed Development of the Scoping Report, recent enquiries from the market have presented requirements for part 35m high buildings to facilitate operations including specialist packing and distribution occupiers. Therefore, to meet with market demand, a maximum height of 35 metres has been set as a maximum parameter for the purposes of EIA scoping. Heights of buildings will vary across the DCO Site and will be zoned based on the constraints of the DCO Site and surrounding receptors, taller buildings will be zoned in areas where there is less sensitivity and lower buildings in zones, where there is greater sensitivity, this will be defined through the pre-application assessment work and set out within the parameters plan that will be submitted as part of the DCO application.
29. As the layout of buildings within the Proposed Development is yet to be finalised, it was assumed in modelling the ZTV that there may be buildings throughout the whole DCO Site to ensure that a worst-case scenario has been adopted in the ZTV and therefore guide the preliminary landscape and visual assessment process.
30. The following are initial observations regarding the preliminary ZTV and site observations:
- The main zone of theoretical visibility would be due to proposed structures within the Main Site, located to the east of the M6 motorway. Parts of the Proposed Development which would be located to the west of the M6 (the Western Rail Chord) would be contained within the Parkside West development and therefore would have much less visual influence on the study area.
 - The relatively flat nature of the study area suggests that there would be theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development from the majority of the study area. However, the ZTV, which is based on DSM data, illustrates that the actual visual influence of the Proposed Development would be much more limited and site surveys have confirmed this.
 - The main zone of visibility would comprise an area within a radius of approximately 2km to the east and 1.5km to the north of the DCO Site boundary. The area to the east includes open farmland and the small villages of Kenyon and Croft. The area to the north comprises the very southern extent of Golborne and specifically an east-west ridge which affords views over parts of the DCO Site.
 - Views from the west would be more restricted, predominantly due to the screening effect of tree cover beside the M6 motorway. However, there would be potential visibility of the Main Site from areas to the west, including the eastern edge of Winwick, with potential views across flat, open farmland.
 - There is an area of the ZTV to the west, south-west of the DCO Site between 2 and 4km from the DCO Site boundary within which there is ZTV coverage. Site surveys have confirmed that tree cover in the intervening landscape would limit views of the

Proposed Development from here, however it will be considered fully in the LVIA.

- Similarly there are small areas of high ground within the wider study area which have been identified in the ZTV: Skylark Hill, Haydock, which is 3km west, north-west of the DCO Site; and Culcheth Heights, which is 4km east of the DCO Site.
31. The LVIA will include a detailed assessment of visual effects from a series of predetermined viewpoint locations, as are illustrated on Figure 2. Initial site surveys and the findings of the ZTV have been used to identify a provisional list of 14 no. viewpoints and develop an understanding of the location of visual receptors within the study area. Further ZTV analysis will be carried out as the design of the Proposed Development develops, however this provides an initial focus to the location of visual receptors.
 32. Engagement has been held with St Helens, Wigan and Warrington Councils regarding viewpoint locations and the list will be finalised following receipt of all comments. The viewpoints have been selected to pick up the range of views towards the DCO Site experienced by receptors in the study area from various distances, elevations, and angles.
 33. It should be noted that the viewpoint itself is not the receptor. Rather it is the people that would be experiencing the view from it. Receptor groups within the study area that are likely to experience views of the Proposed Development include:
 - Local residents;
 - Users of public rights of way, and other routes / land with public access;
 - Road users.

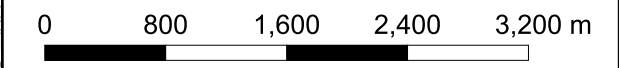


INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK (ILP) NORTH

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Key:

- Draft Order Limits
- 5km Study Area
- Local Authority Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Viewpoint Locations
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility
- Area of Visibility



Visual Context Plan

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Document Ref:	N/A
Drawing Number:	Figure 2
Drawing Status:	INFORMAL CONSULTATION
Revision:	P02
Drawn by:	SK
Approved by:	JM

NOTES:
 1. Zone of Theoretical Visibility has been generated using LiDAR Composite First Return 2022 1m digital surface model (DSM) data which takes account of the screening effects of vegetation, buildings and other structures.
 2. ZTV generation has allowed for the curvature of the earth and light refraction.
 3. ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye height of 1.6m above ground level. ZTV has been generated based upon a proposed building height of 35m.

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DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

34. The Proposed Development is a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and associated development comprising:
- provision of a rail terminal serving up to 16 trains per day, including ancillary development such as container storage, cranes for the loading and unloading of shipping containers, Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) parking, rail control building and staff facilities;
 - a rail turn-back facility within the Western Rail Chord;
 - up to c.767,000 square metres (m²) (gross internal area) of warehousing and ancillary buildings with a total footprint of c.590,000m² and up to c.177,050m² of mezzanine floorspace, subject to ongoing design and market assessment, comprising a mixture of units with the potential to be rail-connected, rail served and additional units;
 - new road infrastructure and works to existing road infrastructure;
 - provision of overnight lorry parking for users of the SRFI;
 - new energy centre and electricity substations, including central battery storage and potential provision of central Combined Heat and Power (CHP) units to augment the grid supply in the case of demand exceeding instantaneous firm and variable supplies;
 - provision of photovoltaics and battery storage on site;
 - strategic landscaping and open space, including alterations to public rights of way and the creation of new ecological enhancement areas;
 - demolition of existing on-site structures (including existing residential dwellings / farmsteads and commercial premises);
 - potential relocation of the Huskisson Memorial; and
 - earthworks to regrade the DCO Site to provide appropriate access, connections to the railway, development plots and landscape zones.

OUR APPROACH TO THE ASSESSMENT

35. The methodology and criteria used for the assessment of landscape and visual effects will be based on the non-prescriptive Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3). The GLVIA3 sets out the principles that underpin landscape and visual assessment but does not provide a formulaic recipe for reaching judgements about significance. Such judgements instead rely on reasoned and experienced professional judgement.

36. The LVIA will comprise:
- The identification of landscape and visual receptors and a description of current baseline conditions;
 - An assessment of the sensitivity of the receptors to change (taking account of both receptor susceptibility and receptor value);
 - An assessment of the potential impacts associated with the Proposed Development, i.e. a description of how the introduction of the Proposed Development will alter the baseline landscape and visual conditions;
 - An assessment of the magnitude of change to the receptors (taking into account the scale, extent, duration and potential reversibility of the change);
 - An assessment of the level and significance of the effect on the landscape and visual receptors, based on the assessments of their sensitivity and the magnitude of change that they are subject to;
 - Identification of measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects; and
 - Reporting on the residual landscape effects once mitigation has been taken into account.
37. Taking account of the ZTV, the study area for the LVIA extends to 5km from the Proposed Development boundary. This distance is sufficient for the LVIA given the screening mainly provided by surrounding built form within dense urban settlements such as Warrington, Newton-le-Willows, Golborne and Culcheth. The ZTV illustrated on Figure 1 demonstrates that the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is suitably contained within a 5km radius, with a likely focus on an area within 2km of the DCO Site in relation to the identification of significant landscape and visual effects.

LIKELY MAIN EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSALS

38. This section sets out the potential significant landscape and visual effects that could arise at construction and operation due to the Proposed Development.

Construction Effects

39. During the construction of the Proposed Development, potentially significant landscape and visual effects are likely to arise as a result of:
- Temporary activities associated with the construction of the Proposed Development, including any additional temporary land take, construction operations, and the temporary presence of construction plant equipment and fencing, all of which could affect the character of the landscape and people's visual amenity; and
 - Direct changes to the physical landscape fabric of the DCO Site from changes in landform (i.e. earthworks), or the removal of vegetation.

40. The assessment of landscape effects at the construction phase is proposed to be scoped into the ES. Landscape receptors are defined in the subsequent Operational Effects section and the construction assessment would be consistent in considering effects on them.
41. As there are no designated landscapes within the study area, it is proposed that effects on designated landscapes are scoped out of the construction phase assessment.
42. The assessment of visual effects at the construction phase is proposed to be scoped into the ES. Visual receptors are defined in the subsequent Operational Effects section and the construction assessment would be consistent in considering effects on them.

Operational Effects

43. Once the Proposed Development is completed and operational, potentially significant landscape and visual effects are likely to arise as a result of:
 - The influence of the Proposed Development upon the landscape character of the DCO Site and surrounding landscape, with potential changes in the characteristics of the character areas; and
 - Views of the Proposed Development from the surrounding area, affecting the visual amenity of local residents in their properties, users of the public rights of way network (especially where routes run through the DCO Site), and road users.
44. The assessment of landscape effects at the operational phase is proposed to be scoped in to the ES and will include:
 - Effects on the DCO Site Features / Landscape Fabric; and
 - Effects on Local Landscape Character Areas.
45. It is proposed that National Character Areas (NCAs) are summarised in the LVIA as part of the baseline description, however, effects on the NCAs would be scoped out of the ES in favour of an assessment at the local level. This is because the local level is a more appropriate scale for assessment and have been published relatively recently. The overall assessment of effects on landscape character would therefore still be appropriate and proportionate.
46. The assessment of change to landscape features within the DCO Site will be recorded in the LVIA, however this will inform the levels of effect on landscape character areas, i.e. while the change will be recorded, such as a length of hedgerow to be removed, levels of effect will not be attributed to individual landscape features, such as hedgerow, trees and landform.
47. As with the construction phase, the effects on designated landscapes are proposed to be scoped out of the operational phase assessment.
48. The assessment of visual effects at the operational phase is proposed to be scoped into the ES. The receptors that have the potential to experience significant visual effects during construction are:

- Residents of individual properties located in close proximity to the DCO Site;
 - Residents of small villages located to the east of the DCO Site, i.e.
 - Users of local footpaths, including those which cross the DCO Site currently;
 - Road users; and
 - People working in the area at commercial premises.
49. It is unlikely that users of the nearby major transport routes would be subject to notable adverse effects due to the Proposed Development, and will be scoped out of the visual assessment. These comprise: car users on the M6 and M62 motorways; and rail passengers on the Liverpool-Manchester railway line, which is in cutting as it passes the DCO Site and as such would be unlikely to afford views up towards the Proposed Development.

PROPOSED APPROACH TO MITIGATION

Construction

50. It is anticipated that construction activities would be controlled via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Compliance with the CEMP would be secured through a requirement in the DCO. Measures that could be included within the CEMP to reduce adverse landscape and visual effects include:
- Measures to protect existing vegetation which is identified for retention;
 - Measures to limit the effects of any temporary construction lighting upon the amenity of local residents;
 - Protocols governing the establishment of temporary contractor compounds, again to limit any effects upon the amenity of local residents; and
 - Measures to retain the amenity of users of the public rights of ways running through the DCO Site where appropriate, including where practical measures to screen views from retained sections of routes, and from any diverted sections of routes.

Operation

51. A series of measures would be embedded into the design of the Proposed Development in order to reduce or eliminate potential adverse landscape and visual effects. These are likely to include:
- Influence on the design of the layout and scale of the proposed buildings, ancillary structures and layout in order to reduce visual prominence. This may include 'zoning' of different heights of buildings in response to the findings of the LVIA; and
 - Provision of new planting, and/or changes to the management of existing vegetation in order to reduce visibility, to improve landscape character, and to enhance green

infrastructure.

- In some cases, proposed landscape and visual mitigation may dovetail with mitigation proposed in relation to other disciplines. For example, proposed planting may also provide ecological mitigation.
52. An Illustrative Landscape Masterplan will be developed to illustrate the approach to mitigate landscape and visual effects and also mitigation proposed by other disciplines, such as ecology, noise, heritage and hydrology.
53. To ensure the long-term effectiveness of mitigation, it is anticipated that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) would be developed in agreement with key stakeholders. This would set out the aims and objectives of landscape mitigation and ecological mitigation, details of how this mitigation would be implemented, and would also set out how this would be managed by the Applicant over the lifespan of the Proposed Development.

NEXT STEPS

54. Key next steps in relation to the LVIA are as follows:
- Initial consultation has been held with St Helens, Wigan and Warrington Councils regarding representative viewpoint locations. Further consultation will be carried out with consultees regarding the approach to the LVIA as the design of the development develops further, which will inform further work;
 - Further site surveys including: winter and summer photography at viewpoints; visual surveys from nearby receptors; and landscape character studies;
 - Production of photo-realistic photomontage images from selected viewpoints;
 - Review of responses from the non-statutory consultation phase in early 2025; and
 - Production of a draft LVIA for the PEIR stage of the process, which will be consulted on during the statutory consultation phase.
55. With regards the development of a landscape masterplan, further work is programmed to input to the wider design of the Proposed Development with regards landscape and visual mitigation. This is an iterative process, whereby landscape and visual considerations will have an influence on the proposed form of the built development. Once the Parameter Plan and landscape strategy for the Proposed Development near completion, the LVIA assessment of the proposals will be progressed and finalised.
56. This topic paper forms part of the material available for the informal consultation that is taking place between 27 January 2025 and 21 March 2025. Should you wish to comment on this paper or any other matters related to the Proposed Development you can respond to the informal consultation via:
- ILP North website – www.tritaxbigbox.co.uk/our-spaces/intermodal-logistics-park-north

- Email ilpnorth@consultationonline.co.uk
- Freepost ILP North
- 01744 802043