

**Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd**

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

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**Intermodal Logistics Park (ILP) North Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI)**

**Project reference TR510001**

**Programme Document V3**

**April 2025**

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Applicant: Tritax Big Box Developments Ltd  
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## INTRODUCTION

1. Tritax Big Box Developments Ltd (“Tritax”) is a subsidiary of the logistics development arm of Tritax Big Box REIT plc, a FTSE 250 company. The business is dedicated to providing best-in-class greener logistics buildings, a collaborative and entrepreneurial approach, and providing an unrivalled choice of building locations and scale.
2. The ILP North Site is located within the Liverpool City Region Freeport zone. The St Helens Local Plan, adopted in 2022, identifies a large part of the Site (referred to as the Parkside East allocation) as being suitable for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI). It is described as a ‘transformational’ employment opportunity which will make a major contribution to the economic development of the North-West region and beyond, given its strategic interface between the Liverpool and Greater Manchester City Regions (as well as Warrington). Tritax has acquired 230 acres of the allocated site.
3. The adopted Local Plan allocation was underpinned by a number of strategic studies into the local/regional/national need for an SRFI and the locational benefits of the site. The Local Plan policy (LPA09) specifies that the site has a gross area of approximately 124.55ha, of which at least 60ha is reserved for development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI). Further land is also included (to the west of the M6), which is intended to facilitate the provision of rail access to the site from the north.
4. In strategic terms, the ILP North Site is located between the Transpennine (East-West Liverpool – Manchester (Chat Moss Line)) and West Coast Mainline rail lines. The Site is also directly adjacent to the M6 motorway (Junction 22) whilst also being in close proximity to the M62 motorway. Consequently, the Site is well located to support North-South and East-West movements, particularly import and exports between Liverpool, Hull, Scotland, and Felixstowe.
5. The Proposed Development comprises an 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 (m<sup>2</sup>) (gross internal area) of warehousing and ancillary buildings with a total footprint of c.590,000m<sup>2</sup> and up to c.177,050m<sup>2</sup> 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); and
- earthworks to regrade the DCO Site to provide appropriate access, connections to the railway, development plots and landscape zones.

6. This Programme Document is a live document and it is intended that this document will be updated as the pre-application stage of the DCO progresses. The Programme Document has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-Application Prospectus; and
- Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Guidance (Paragraph 010).

**PROGRAMME**

7. The following section summarises the timetable and activities necessary for an effective pre-application process, including the level of pre-application services requested.

**Intended Submission**

8. The submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application is targeted for Q2 2026.

**Pre-Application Timetable**

9. The below sets out a timetable of the Applicant’s pre-application process running from July 2024 to submission with key dates and milestones noted, where milestones have been reached and completed these are ‘greyed out’ within the table:

**Table 1 ILP North pre-application timetable**

Pre-application stage	Date
Project launch	July 2024
Submission of EIA Scoping Request	5 November 2024
Scoping Opinion issued by PINS	16 December 2024

Pre-application stage	Date
Informal (Non-Statutory) Consultation	27 January 2025 – 21 March 2025
Consultation on draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	Q3 2025
Adoption of SoCC	Q3 2025
Statutory Consultation in accordance with SoCC	Q4 2025
Submission of draft documentation to PINS for review	Q4 2025
Adequacy of consultation milestone (AoCM)	Q4 2025
DCO Submission	Q2 2026

## MAIN ISSUES

10. Having regard to the Generic Impacts section of the National Networks National Policy Statement (“NPSNN”) designated on 24 May 2024, the Applicant’s consideration of the current main issues relating to the Site and the initial pre-application process is outlined below. The list of issues will be kept under review and updated as the scheme progresses.

### Landscape and Visual

11. The Applicant is aware that due to the nature and scale of the proposals, there is potential for landscape and visual effects. Recognising that ILP North needs to be designed carefully, the Applicant has commenced consultation with relevant statutory consultees at Wigan, St Helens and Warrington Councils and is seeking to continue this engagement throughout the pre-application process, this includes undertaking meetings with the respective local authorities (including Public Rights of Way officers) and relevant statutory consultation bodies. The initial consultation that has been undertaken to date has been led by the Applicant’s Landscape and Visual consultant. This has sought to establish baseline information and agree the proposed methodology, preliminary zones of theoretical visibility (ZTVs) and appropriate viewpoints for assessment (to be undertaken in accordance with the 3rd edition GLVIA guidance).
12. The landscape and visual assessment for the proposed project (construction and operational phases) will include consideration of:

- the effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape;
- the effect on visual receptors of the Proposed Development;
- the impact of the Proposed Development on the surrounding settlements; and
- proposed mitigation.

### **Agricultural Land and Minerals**

13. The Applicant has commissioned the appropriate field surveys to accurately establish the Agricultural Land Classification Grades of the Site (and constituent development parcels) to inform soil management at the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development (as per the Defra Construction Code).
14. The Applicant is also to undertake the relevant surveys to identify any mineral resources on the Site due to the location of the DCO Site within Mineral Safeguarding Areas as defined in the Wigan and Warrington Local Plans. The survey results will inform the proposed strategy for engagement with the relevant local planning and minerals and waste authorities.

### **Archaeology and Built Heritage**

15. The Applicant will be undertaking an assessment of any significant effects anticipated as a result of the heritage impacts of the Proposed Development and will describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The Applicant will assess both the effects upon built heritage and the effects upon archaeology. Preliminary baseline information to identify key receptors within the DCO Site and in the surrounding area is presently being collated.
16. An introductory meeting has been held with Historic England and St Helens Council as the start of the process to prepare an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation to inform potential mitigation strategies.
17. Further consultation with relevant heritage consultees including Historic England, Wigan, St Helens and Warrington Councils is underway to refine the scope of assessment and discuss potential effects and mitigation.

### **Climate Change and Carbon Emissions**

18. The NPSNN is clear that national network infrastructure plays an important role in supporting decarbonisation to reduce and mitigate climate change impacts and to facilitate the economy-wide transition to Net Zero (and potentially beyond). Steps to minimise, prevent and offset emissions in design and construction, will be assessed.

### **Ecology (including Habitats Regulations Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain)**

19. Preliminary on-site surveys have been undertaken to begin the process of establishing the baseline position and the potential impacts on ecosystems, habitats and protected species. Surveys to date include: a site walkover; UK Habitats Classification; breeding birds; wintering birds; eDNA for Great Crested Newts; bat activity and bat static detector deployments; and

badger surveys. Survey work is ongoing and will continue through the 2025 survey season.

20. The Applicant has held meetings with Natural England (NE) and representatives of the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS – advising St Helens Council) to start to identify key issues and how the project will take advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests as well as consider how their proposal will deliver biodiversity net gain in line with the requirements in a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement. Two further meetings with Natural England have taken place as part of their Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) to discuss matters raised as part of their response to the Scoping request and on topics such as the study area, receptors and mitigation in relation to ecology and biodiversity and air quality; mitigation in relation to Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and the hydrological regime of the Site and Highfield Moss SSSI.
21. The Applicant also confirms that the DCO submission will include an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

### **Arboriculture/Woodland**

22. As per national guidance, the design development of the Proposed Development will identify/appraise existing trees and woodlands with the aim of retention as best as practically possible. On-site field surveys have been commissioned in order to commence the necessary assessments and to enable the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy (including maximising opportunities for enhancement).

### **Water Resources and Flood Risk**

23. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and the Applicant is aware of the NPSNN requirements in relation to the scope of the Flood Risk Assessment required in support of the DCO application. Initial meetings have taken place with the Environment Agency, and the relevant local planning authorities (including Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)/Internal Drainage Boards) to establish the key receptors (aquifers, existing surface water features, sewer networks), the baseline principles for assessment (including hydraulic modelling) and future off/on-site mitigation strategies (Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - allowing for climate change adaptation) which will be embedded into the scheme design development. Engagement with these parties and other relevant consultees is proposed to be ongoing throughout the pre-application process.

### **Ground Conditions**

24. The Site is predominantly agricultural land but it is necessary to consider land contamination and instability matters as part of the design development for the Proposed Development. The Applicant has held meetings with the Environment Agency and the relevant local authorities to identify appropriate data-sources and on-site survey requirements to inform the construction and operational phase assessments.

### **Waste and Materials**

25. In accordance with the NPSNN, the Applicant will seek to demonstrate that the Proposed

Development will adhere to the waste hierarchy, preventing and reducing waste produced where possible and maximising preparation for reuse and recycling for waste that cannot be prevented. The Proposed Development will appraise the use Modern Methods of Construction and other sustainable design practices.

### **Air Quality/Dust Emissions**

26. The NPSNN details that increases in emissions of pollutants during the construction or operation phases of projects on the national networks can result in the worsening of local air quality and could contribute to adverse impacts on human health, on protected species and habitats. The Applicant consequently acknowledges the requirement to assess the impacts of the Proposed Development (both on and off-site) and distinguishing between construction and operational phases, in relation to meeting environmental assessment requirements or affecting the UK's ability to comply with the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 or impact the relevant local authority's ability to comply with the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000.
27. Initial discussions have taken place with the relevant local authorities and statutory consultation bodies to identify appropriate data-sources, additional survey requirements, agreement on assessment methodology and receptor positions and to discuss potential mitigation measures. These discussions will continue throughout the pre-application stage of the DCO application.

### **Noise and Vibration**

28. The Applicant notes the NPSNN cross-refers to the Noise Policy Statement for England which promotes good health and good quality of life through effective noise and vibration management. It is also acknowledged that noise effects of the proposed development on ecological receptors should be assessed in accordance with the NPSNN.
29. The Applicant has undertaken meetings with the relevant local planning authorities (St Helens, Wigan and Warrington) to discuss the scope and methodology of the noise and vibration assessment. It is proposed that engagement continues throughout the pre-application process and to consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction noise.

### **Traffic, Transport and Highways**

30. The Applicant has undertaken consultation with the highway authorities focusing on proposed approach and modelling through a Transport Working Group attended by Wigan, Warrington, St Helens, National Highways and Transport for Greater Manchester. This has led to reaching agreement on a number of the elements relating to the appropriate scope/methodology which will underpin the transport assessment. Separate discussions have also been held with local planning/highways authorities to discuss local matters since it is recognised that traffic and transport matters for the construction/operational phase impacts of the proposed SRFI scheme will extend beyond the immediate vicinity of the Site.
31. In order to ensure full overview and co-ordination of the modelling (and ultimately the Applicant's highway proposals and mitigation) requirements of the respective statutory local/national highways authorities, the Applicant will continue detailed engagement through



the initial pre-application stage with the Transport Working Group.

### Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Non-Motorised Users

32. The Applicant is aware of the need to avoid, or minimise, the effects of the Proposed Development on the existing users of the DCO Site and beyond. An initial mapping exercise has therefore commenced to identify formal and informal pedestrian routes crossing the DCO Site with the aim of developing an appropriate scheme layout, whilst ensuring the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained and any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact.
33. The Applicant is currently in the process of convening introductory meetings with relevant local planning authority officers (PROW officers etc.) to establish the baseline position.
34. Active travel and non-vehicular access requirements to the DCO Site will also be established through proactive engagement with relevant statutory consultation bodies.

### Rail Engineering

35. The Applicant has commenced formal engagement with Network Rail. This engagement has been positive and Network Rail has appointed a project sponsor and initial workshops have been held with further scheme design workshops and surveys planned.
36. These workshops will help to inform the delivery and layout of the scheme with technical input from Network Rail so that connection to the network can be agreed.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES AND RELEVANT CONSULTATION BODIES

37. Introductory briefing meetings were held with three local planning authorities (LPAs) of St Helens Borough Council (10 July 2024), Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (3 July 2024) and Warrington Borough Council (14 June and 25 June 2024), which are the host authorities. The meetings introduced members to the proposals and included a presentation from the Applicant about the developer, the proposal site, the vision for ILP North and the DCO process. Key discussion points in the meeting with St Helens Borough Council included the potential economic benefits of the project, job creation, and social value, as well as the consultation strategy and the importance of the site from the council's point of view. Key discussion points in the meeting with Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council included the expected delivery and construction timeline of the project, with members asking to be kept informed with the project launch press release. Finally, key discussion points in the meeting with Warrington Borough Council included transport, impact on the Green Belt, capacity of the railway, movement of vehicles and the impact of the development on local roads, as well as clarification on the vision for the project while learning more about resident views. Subsequent follow-on political briefings were also undertaken in advance of the Applicant's Project Launch and for the informal consultation.
38. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) have been agreed with St Helens Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council, with Wigan Metropolitan Borough Councils PPA just awaiting. The PPAs will extend these through each milestone.

39. A tripartite Working Group has also been set up with St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council and two meetings have already occurred. The Applicant has already established a separate working group for transport and will seek to set up further topic specific working groups as required.
40. The Applicant has also arranged further meetings or briefings as appropriate with the following prescribed bodies, in addition to the Applicant’s non-statutory and statutory consultation. Where relevant, enhanced/ discretionary advisory services will be agreed/proposed:
- Network Rail;
  - Natural England;
  - The Environment Agency (EA);
  - The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England);
  - The relevant Parish Councils; and
  - Relevant statutory undertakers with whom the Applicant proposes to agree protective provisions as part of the DCO.
41. The Applicant has also already had significant engagement with Network Rail, and will continue to progress those meetings in respect of rail connections and delivery.
42. The Applicant has entered into discretionary advice service agreements with the respective statutory consultation bodies to ensure appropriate cost recovery.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH LANDOWNERS

43. The Applicant owns 230 acres of the Site allocated in the St Helens Local Plan. Proactive discussions have commenced with adjacent landowners to facilitate appropriate access for the Applicant’s appointed consultant team to undertake baseline surveys and the Applicant will continue to negotiate with relevant owners as the scheme boundary is refined throughout the pre-application process.

### POTENTIAL RISKS

44. The below sets out the Applicant’s initial identification of risks to achievement of the pre-application programme.

#### Public Consultation Awareness

45. The Applicant has planned a comprehensive public relations/consultation exercise. This included as part of the Project Launch an open dialogue and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders. The Applicant undertook a non-statutory ‘informal’ consultation which ran from 27 January 2025 to 21 March 2025. This included four in person events, two webinars (one for members of the public and one for parish councils), preparation of topic papers and an

updated project website. Members of the public could provide their feedback via a variety of channels, including online and paper feedback forms, via the dedicated project email or telephone line, and traditional letter submissions. In total, 239 consultation responses were received during the non-statutory consultation. Formal statutory consultation will be undertaken later in 2025 and a comprehensive suite of material will be made available, including a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and draft versions of application plan and documents.

**LPA and statutory body resourcing and capacity**

- 46. The Applicant is aware that resources of statutory bodies and local authorities can be constrained which might impact the extent and quality of engagement or consultation responses. The Applicant has therefore proactively sought to enter into Planning Performance Agreements with respective LPAs and statutory consultation bodies enhanced/ discretionary advisory services, with the aim of maximising the availability and engagement of the parties during initial pre-application scoping (and beyond).

**Transport and Highways**

- 47. The Applicant notes that the protracted nature of traffic/highway modelling can impact programme. The Applicant has therefore established a Transport Working Group with the relevant statutory authorities (LPAs plus National Highways) to discuss and co-ordinate all transport matters including modelling. The members of the Transport Working Group are as follows:

Sam Denby, Hydrock	Mike Taylor, Warrington Council
Ashley Russell, Hydrock	Richard Skitt, Mott Macdonald
Vassil Pavlov, Hydrock	Adam Johnson, National Highways
Mark Loveridge, Stantec	Neville McKenzie, WSP
Joe Payne, Stantec	Emma Trevett, WSP
Sinead Turnbull, Tritax	Alessandro Pagani, BWB
Stephen Gill, St Helens Borough Council	Steven Riley, Wigan Council
Laura Appleton, AECOM	Peter Wilson, WSP

Alistair Johnson, AECOM

Zoltan Tosaki, Hydrock

Ryan Dyson, St Helens Borough Council

Jonathan Marsh, Transport for Greater Manchester

Emma Anforth, Transport for Greater Manchester

Lewis Evans, Tritax

Andrew Bagnall, Stantec

Sean Traynor, St Helens Borough Council

Paul Gray, Systra

Ben Bell, Systra

48. The Transport Working Group have held five meetings to date at the time of writing. The discussions have centred on the method of assessment which includes the opportunities for sustainable transport to generate the vision and validate approach; trip generation methodology; the appropriateness of comparable Rail Freight site's for surveying; the modelling approach at both the strategic and local junction level; and general operational concerns of the highway network.