

Intermodal Logistics Park North Ltd

INTERMODAL LOGISTICS PARK (ILP) NORTH

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

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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. Intermodal Logistics Park North (“ILP North”) is the second new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (“SRFI”) project Tritax is leading on. Its’ Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange project in Leicestershire has recently been subject to examination through the DCO process and a decision is expected in March 2025 from the Secretary of State for Transport.
3. The ILP North site is located within the Liverpool City Region Freeport zone. The St Helens Local Plan, adopted in 2022, identifies the Site (referred to as the Parkside East allocation) 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
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 this 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
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 (“NNNPS”) 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 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:
 - 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 is in the process of commissioning 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. 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 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, capture 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; breeding birds; eDNA for Great Crested Newts; bat activity; and badgers. Survey work is ongoing and will continue through the 2025 survey season.
20. The Applicant has held an initial meeting 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. A further meeting with Natural England has taken place as part of their Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) to discuss matters raised as part of their response to the Scoping request. Further introductory meetings are being convened with adjacent local authorities and their advisors.
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 are underway 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 LLFAs/Internal Drainage Boards) to establish the key receptors (aquifers, existing surface water features, sewer networks), the baseline principles for assessment and future on/on-site mitigation strategies (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 is convening initial 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 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 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, 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 are also being held with National Highways and are proposed with the adjoining local planning/highways authorities of Wigan and Warrington 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 has established a Transport Working Group with the statutory consultees on highway matters to ensure that detailed engagement is ongoing through the initial pre-application stage.

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 Site and beyond. An initial mapping exercise has therefore commenced to identify formal and informal pedestrian routes crossing the 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 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 have been held with three local planning authorities (LPAs) of St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council, which are the host and neighbouring authorities. Subsequent follow-on political briefings were also undertaken in advance of the Applicant's Project Launch.
38. Negotiations are currently ongoing with the respective LPAs to agree Planning Performance

Agreements (PPAs). The Applicant has agreed a Planning Performance Agreement with St Helens and will extend it through each milestone. The Applicant is progressing Planning Performance Agreements with Wigan and Warrington , given the commitment of the respective parties to undertake initial pre-application scoping over the coming months.

39. A tripartite Working Group will also be set up with St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council. 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 also plans to arrange 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;
 - National Highways;
 - 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. To this extent, as set out in the individual topic area overviews, the Applicant has already commenced initial discussions with the following statutory consultees through the relevant technical officer(s):
- Natural England;
 - Historic England;
 - Environment Agency; and
 - National Highways.
42. 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.
43. The Applicant has entered into discretionary advice service agreements with the respective statutory consultation bodies to ensure appropriate cost recovery.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LANDOWNERS

44. 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

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

Public Consultation Awareness

46. 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 is undertaking a non-statutory 'informal' consultation commencing on 27 January 2025, this will include four in person events, a webinar, preparation of topic papers and an updated project website. Formal statutory consultation will be undertaken later in 2025.

LPA and statutory body resourcing and capacity

47. 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 is therefore proactively seeking 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

48. 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.