

# LAND TO THE EAST OF NEWLINK BUSINESS PARK, NEWARK

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF REPRESENTATIONS TO  
NEWARK AND SHERWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

January 2018

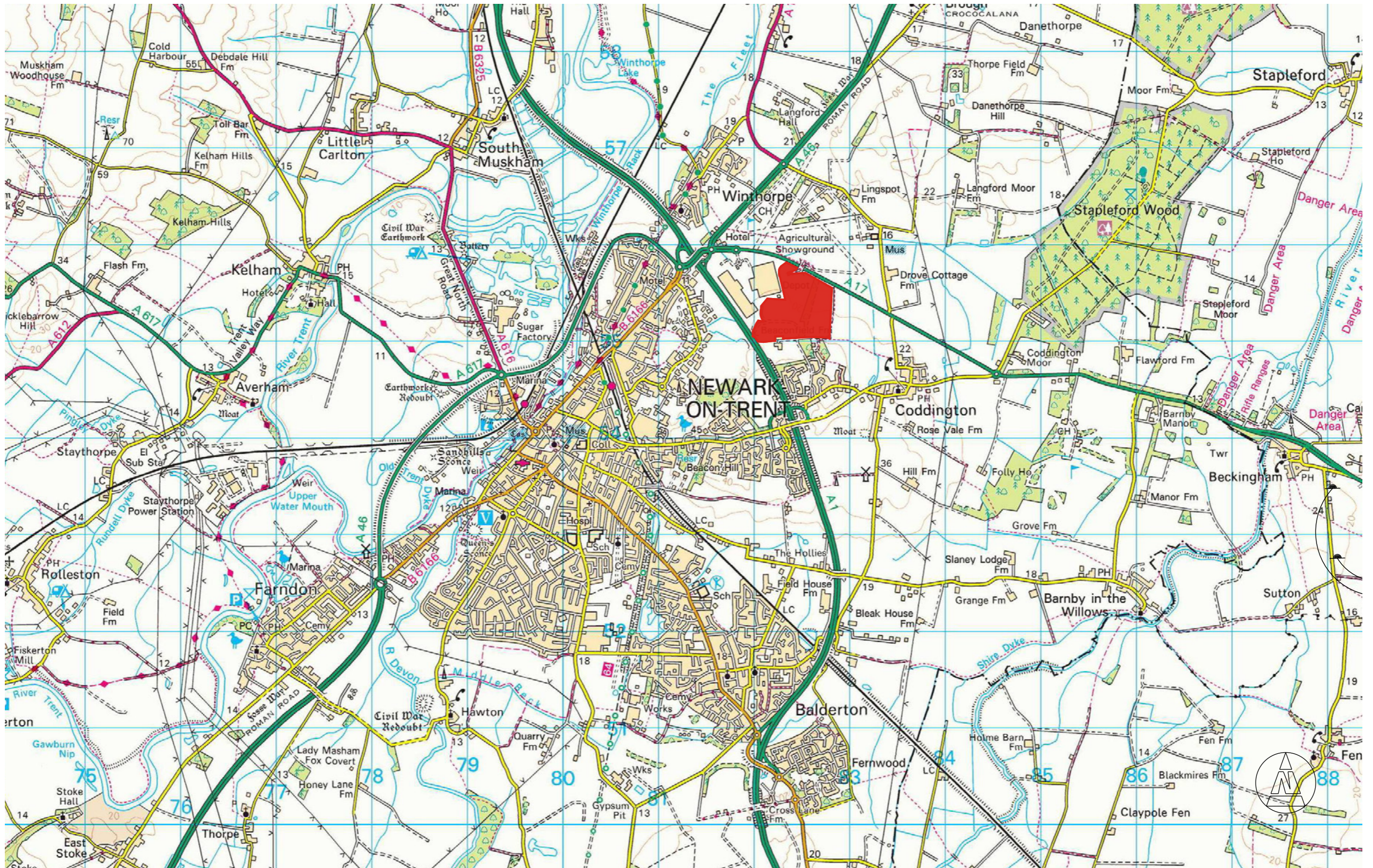


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OS Location Plan



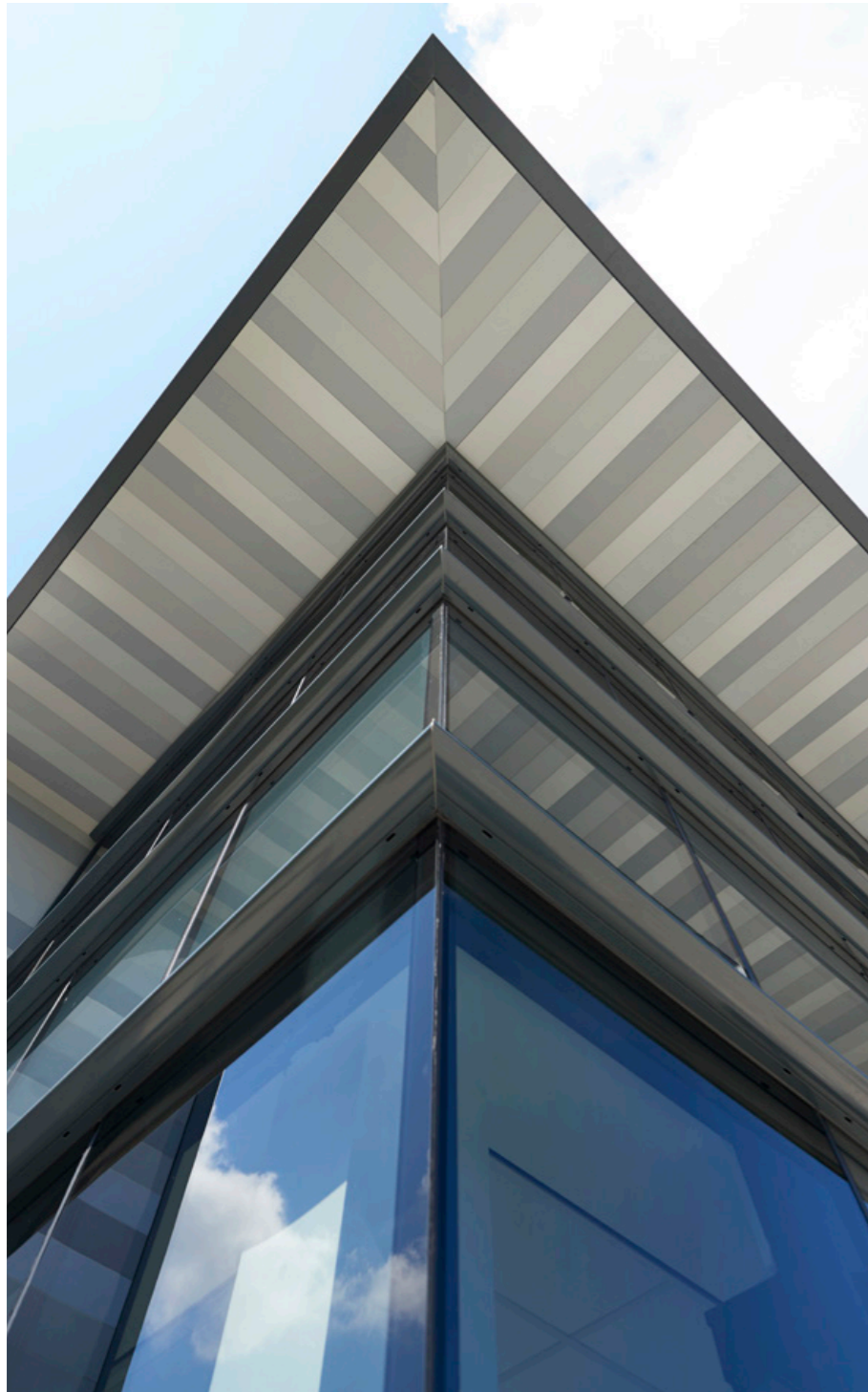
Existing Site Plan

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared to support representations to the Newark and Sherwood Local Plan Examination. It is submitted on behalf of Simons Developments and Tritax Big Box REIT in relation to land east of Newlink Business Park, Newark.
- 1.2 This document provides information on the opportunity for a strategic employment development on land to the east of Newlink Business Park and shows that the site, being promoted by Simons Developments, provides a suitable and sustainable option for growth. It should therefore be considered as an additional employment allocation through the Local Plan Review.
- 1.3 This statement should be read alongside the main representation to the Local Plan examination.
- 1.4 The scope of this report is as follows:
  - Background to Simons Development and Tritax
  - Site location and description
  - Relevant planning policy
  - The development opportunity
  - Overview of technical issues and constraints
  - Summary and conclusions



DSG National Distribution Centre, Newark



## 2.0 BACKGROUND TO SIMONS DEVELOPMENTS AND TRITAX

2.1 The site is being promoted by Simons Developments with funding provided by Tritax Big Box REIT (TBBR) who also own part of the adjacent Newlink Business Park.

### SIMONS DEVELOPMENTS

2.2 Simons Developments is part of the Simons Group, a privately-owned property investment and development company with its head office in the East Midlands. Simons Group has a 70-year track record of development with its main focus in retail, health, logistics and major projects.

2.3 In relation to commercial property, Simons Developments track record includes:

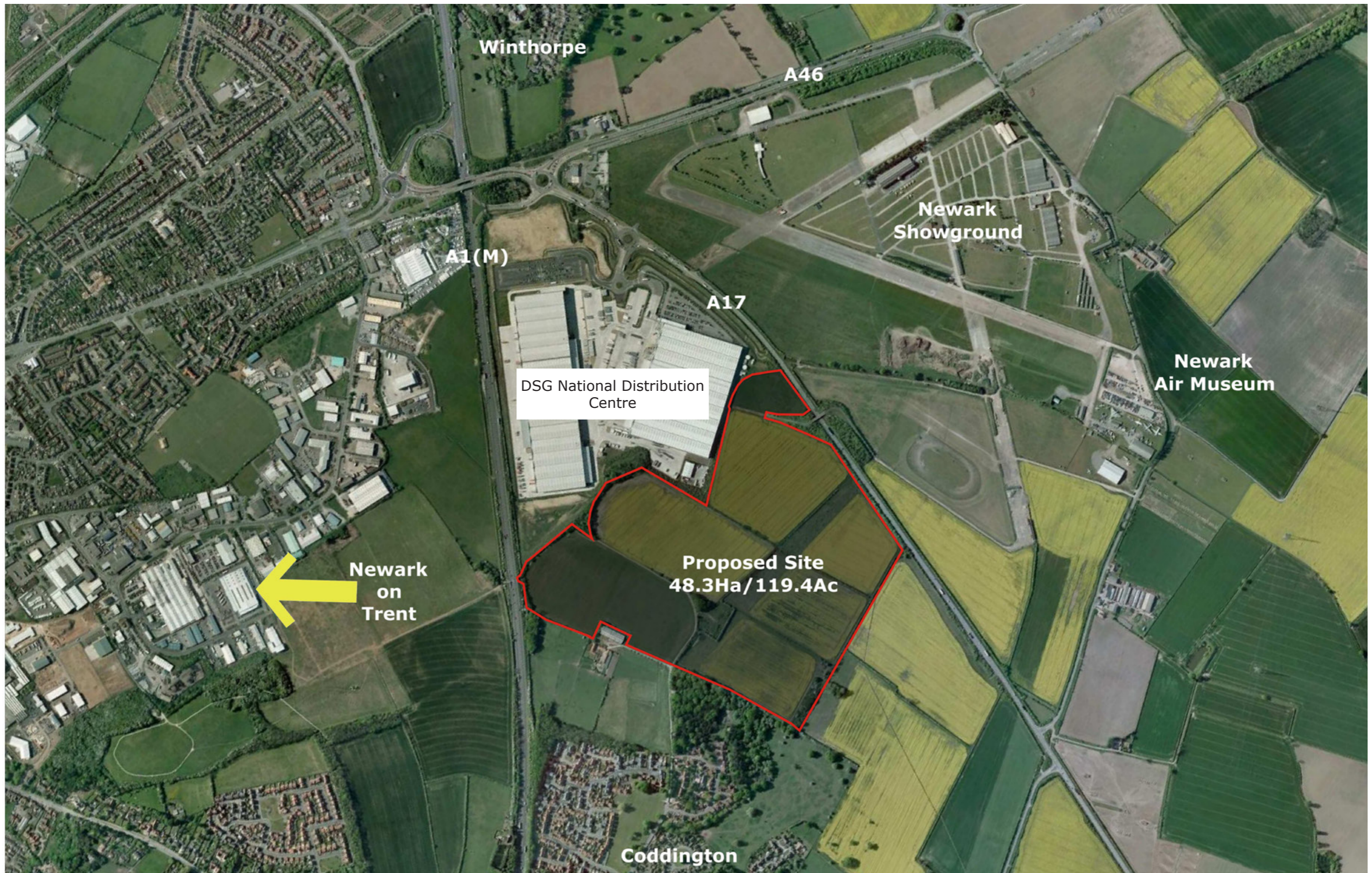
- Construction of global service operations centre for Siemens at Teal Park, North Hykeham, Lincoln with a construction value of £9.2 million;
- Construction of extension to Asda's distribution centre at Lutterworth, Leicestershire with a construction value of £12 million;
- Design and construction of a production and warehouse facility for soft drinks company AG Barr at Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire with a construction value of £12;
- Construction of 1 million square foot warehouse facility for John Lewis at Magna Park, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire with a construction value of £20 million.

### TRITAX

2.4 Tritax Big Box is a Real Estate Investment Trust (listed on the London Stock Exchange as TBBR) dedicated to investing in and funding the pre-let development of large logistics facilities in the UK.

2.5 The TBBR portfolio currently includes assets in excess of 24.4 million sq.ft. with a further 3.5 million sq.ft. either under construction or in for planning. Tenants within the portfolio include Amazon, Argos, Tesco, Royal Mail, Ocado, Rolls Royce, DSG, Sainsbury's, Dunelm, Stobart and Unilever.

2.6 In 2016, TBBR acquired the national distribution centre let to DSG Retail Ltd, part of the Dixons Carphone PLC Group, which is one of the two DSG distribution centres located at Newlink Business Park in Newark.



Site Location Plan

### 3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

3.1 The land east of Newlink Business Park is being promoted as a strategic employment site providing a suitable and deliverable opportunity to accommodate large scale employment growth in the District.

#### THE SITE

3.2 The site extends to approximately 48.3 hectares and currently comprises agricultural land. It is bounded by Newlink Business Park and the A1 to the west, the A17 to the north and open countryside to the east and south.

3.3 The site is relatively level and currently comprises Grade 3 agricultural land. It consists of six arable fields divided by field hedges and trees.

3.4 A public footpath route (Ref. 4A and 5) runs along the eastern and southern site boundary connecting the villages of Coddington with Winthorpe to the north-west of the A46.

#### SURROUNDING AREA

3.5 Newlink Business Park adjoins the site immediately to the west. It is a successful distribution location employing between 3000 - 4000 people and is home to the Dixons/ Knowhow Distribution complex, part of which was acquired by Tritax in 2016. Newlink Business Park was originally granted outline planning permission in 1998 and has been developed in 3 main phases.

3.6 The site is strategically located close to the A1, A17, A46 interchange, approximately 0.5 km to the north-west of the site. It benefits from good motorway connectivity north and south via the A1/A1M and onto the M1.



## 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The site being promoted by Simons Development and Tritax lies within the open countryside, but immediately adjoins the settlement boundary and urban area of Newark. A brief review of the relevant planning policy context is provided below.

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

4.2 The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.3 The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making, this means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities for the development needs of their area. Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the framework taken as a whole, or where specific policies within the framework indicate that development should be restricted.

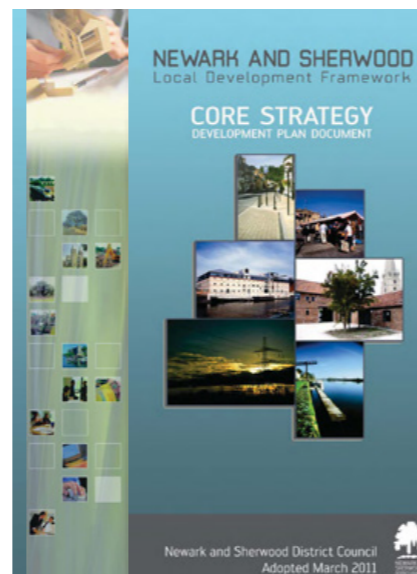
4.4 In respect of the economy, the NPPF states that the government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

4.5 The NPPF suggests that planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.

### CORE STRATEGY (MARCH 2011)

4.6 Newark and Sherwood District Council adopted its Core Strategy in March 2011.



4.7 The Core Strategy sought to focus significant new housing and employment growth in Newark Urban Area, which is the main settlement in the District and was identified as a Sub-Regional Centre and growth point in the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy.

4.8 The majority of growth was to be provided in the Newark Urban Area over the plan period (2006-2026) including 70% of the housing requirement (over 10,000 new homes) and circa 150 hectares of employment land.

4.9 To ensure that the housing and employment needs of the District are delivered over the plan period and beyond, three strategic sites were allocated in the Core Strategy - Land South of Newark (NAP2A), Land East of Newark (NAP2B) and Land around Fernwood (NAP2C).

### ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD (JULY 2013)

4.10 The Allocations and Development Management DPD was adopted in July 2013. Its main purpose is to allocate sufficient land for housing, employment and retail uses to meet the needs of Newark and Sherwood to 2026 and beyond.

4.11 The DPD allocates a number of housing, employment and mixed-use sites for development in the Newark Urban Area including Land to the North of the A17 (NUA/MU/1). This site lies outside the established settlement

boundary of Newark to the north-west of the land being promoted by Simons Developments.

4.12 It was envisaged that this site would accommodate hotel/conference facilities and restaurants to support the Newark Showground as well as employment uses. The development of this site was made dependent on the implementation of improvements to the A1/A46/A17 junction.

4.13 Employment development has already been developed to the east of the A1 (i.e. the Dixons/ Knowhow Distribution complex) and further uses are to be focused in this location.

#### LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

4.14 Newark and Sherwood District Council commenced a review of the Local Plan in 2015. The main aim of this review was to ensure that the allocations and policies contained within the two DPDs continue to be appropriate, up to date and effective. The Inspector who examined the Allocations & Development Management DPD concluded that because the plan had been prepared during the recession that an early review should be conducted to test if the market had recovered enough to continue to deliver the various elements of the plan.

4.15 To support the Local Plan Review, a number of new evidence base documents have been prepared including the Employment Land Forecasting Study, Nottingham Core HMA and Nottingham Outer HMA, which was published in August 2015, and the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment published in 2017.

#### EMPLOYMENT LAND FORECASTING STUDY 2015



4.16 This jointly commissioned study seeks to establish the employment land requirements for the Nottinghamshire Local Authorities. The study subdivides the county into the Core HMA covering Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling and the Outer HMA covering Ashfield, Mansfield

and Newark & Sherwood Districts and assesses the needs of these two areas.

4.17 With regard to Newark and Sherwood Districts it concludes that the employment land requirements for industrial land range from 62.60 to 74.53 ha over the period 2011-2033.

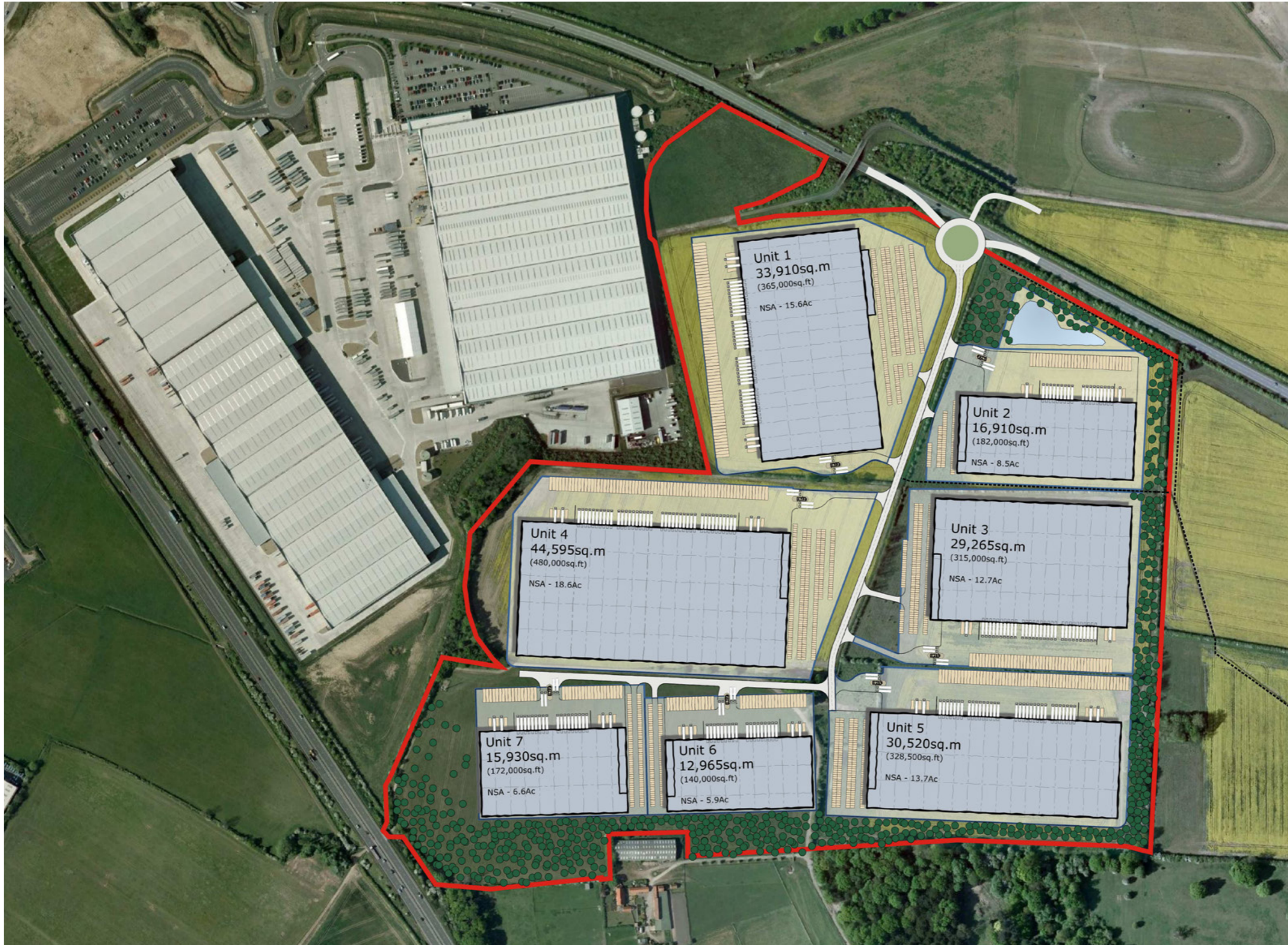
4.18 The study, however, notes that it will be necessary not just to focus on meeting forecast quantitative requirements but to consider the opportunities and risks that flow from particular policies or types of land allocation. This might concern, for example, how scope can be created for meeting as yet undefined inward investment opportunities.

#### STRATEGIC HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHELAA)

4.19 The latest SHELAA was published in 2017. It assesses the suitability of the land to the east of the Newlink Business Park under Ref. 16\_0174 and concludes that:

***“if the Urban Boundary designation is changed through the development plan process this site could be considered suitable for employment subject to appropriate mitigation works”.***

4.20 The assessment references a number of technical areas that would need to be considered as part of any site development including drainage, ground conditions, rights of way and Tree Preservation Orders.



Proposed Illustrative Masterplan

## 5.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

- 5.1 The land east of Newlink Business Park was submitted to the District Council for consideration through the Local Plan in 2016 and has subsequently been promoted for employment uses through each stage of the Local Plan review.
- 5.2 The development team of Simons Developments & Tritax Big Box have an established and extensive track record delivering large logistics parks successfully across the UK.
- 5.3 Technical work is ongoing. However, excluding the provision of infrastructure and structural landscaping, approximately 33 hectares of developable area is anticipated to be provided.
- 5.4 An initial masterplan has been prepared which demonstrates that the site is capable of accommodating a range of large footprint user requirements within Use Classes B2 and B8, with a total potential floorspace of some 185,000 square metres. Buildings will be of a high specification, with unit sizes determined by market requirements.
- 5.5 The site is proposed to be accessed via a new roundabout junction off the A17.

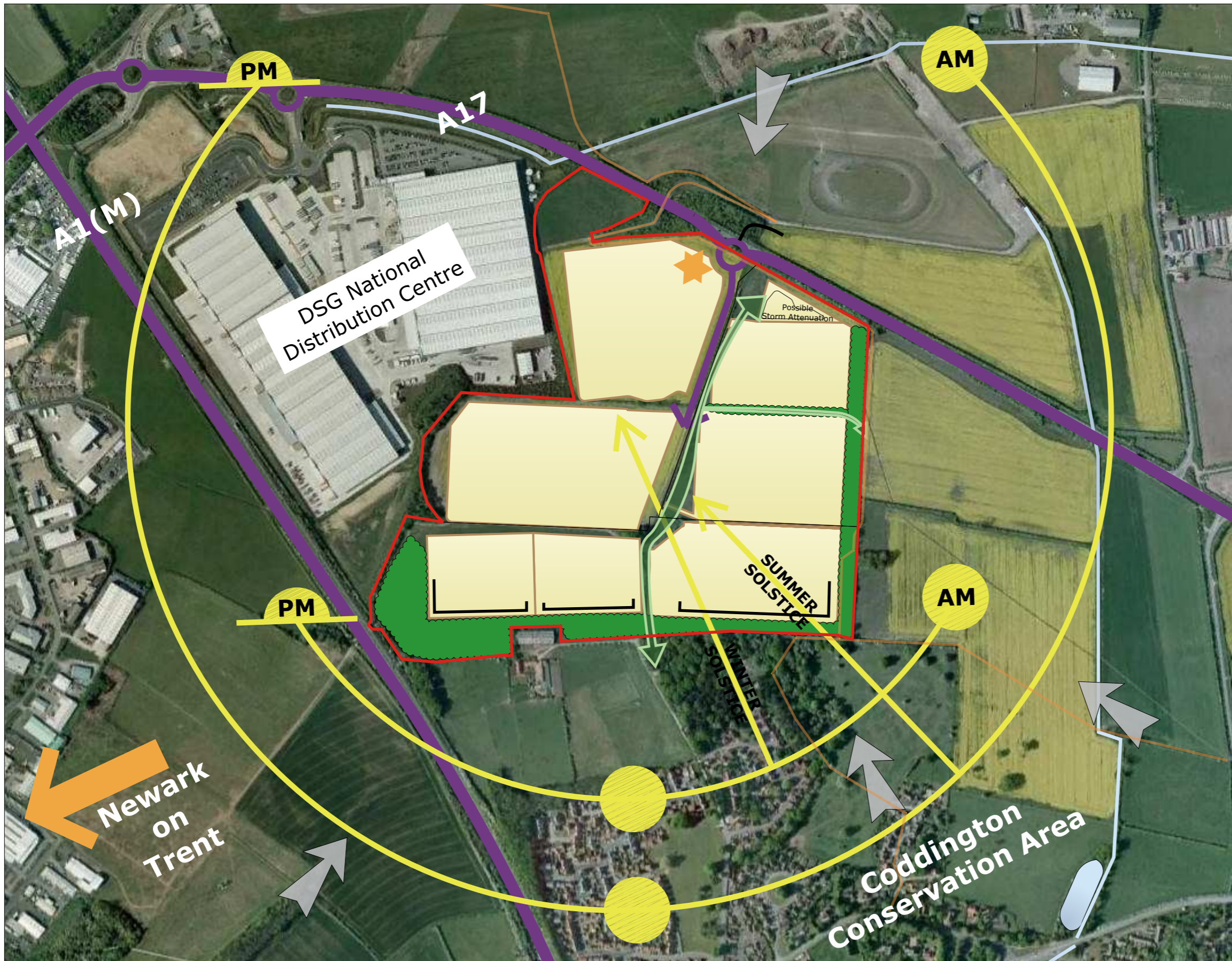
- 5.6 A phasing plan has been prepared which shows how the site could be developed from east to west and north to south.
- 5.7 The development proposal also provide an opportunity to connect to existing logistics facilities to the north-west if required.
- 5.8 The key benefits of this proposal are summarised as:
- This Development Opportunity is brought forward by an experienced development team with a proven track record for delivering employment parks of this nature;
  - Potential for 185,000sq.m of employment space with access to existing highway infrastructure;
  - Provision of a range of building sizes to accommodate market demands;
  - Logical extension to existing logistics facilities to the north west;
  - Potential to support at least 2,500 jobs;
  - Proposals set in a managed high quality landscaped environment with enhanced landscape buffers and green corridors with biodiversity benefits.



Proposed Phasing



Possible option for extending existing distribution centre into Phase 1



- Legend**
- Site Boundary
  - Primary Road
  - Potential Development Plots
  - ← Ecological Corridor
  - Areas of retained existing hedgerow and proposed additional screen planting
  - Views to site
  - Watercourse
  - Existing Footpath link
  - ★ Potential Focal Point
  - Building Screens to Service Areas

Constraints and Opportunities Plan

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ISSUES AND SITE CONSTRAINTS

6.1 As with any development site, there are a range of environmental and technical considerations that need to be considered as part of any development allocation. The following section of this document identifies those aspects that need to be considered. Known baseline conditions, the data required to assess impacts and the scope for any mitigation measures are discussed.

6.2 The key issues for this development will be:

- Traffic and Transportation;
- Landscape and Visual Impacts;
- Ecology;
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;
- Flood Risk and Drainage; and
- Ground Conditions.

### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

6.3 The site is located between the A1 and A17 adjacent to Newlink Business Park, which is accessed off the A17. It lies approximately 0.5 km from the A1/A46/A17 junction.

6.4 There are presently known capacity constraints at this junction and along the A46 corridor. Both the district and county councils have long recognised that these junctions and the congestion they cause need to be addressed to help promote economic growth in Newark. Because of this a large amount (£4.5m) of the CIL receipts have been earmarked for improvements to the A46 junctions.

6.5 In addition, major infrastructure improvements to the A46 were announced in the Government's 2014 Road Investment Strategy which details the following programme of works for Newark:

***“A46 Newark northern bypass – widening of the A46 north of Newark to dual carriageway, raising the last section of the A46 between the A1 and M1 to Expressway standard. Improvement of the A46/A1 junction to allow for better traffic movement to Newark and Lincoln.”***

6.6 Work has now begun on planning this major infrastructure improvement and it is proposed that work will begin in the 2020-2025 period.

6.7 Simon Developments are fully aware of existing highway issues and acknowledged that these will form a critical consideration when the land east of Newlink Business Park is brought forward for development. However, it should not stop the site from being considered for allocation, particularly with a planning horizon to 2026 and beyond, and in light of the fact that these highway constraints will affect all major development sites around Newark.

6.8 As shown on the illustrative layout, it is proposed to access the site directly off the A17.

6.9 With regard to sustainable transport modes, the closest bus stops are located at Coddington with regular bus services to Newark and other local destinations. There is already a public footpath route connecting the site with the village of Coddington and as acknowledged by the SHELAA site assessment these bus stops lie within an 800m or 10 minute walking distance of the site.

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

6.10 A Landscape Assessment SPD was published by Newark & Sherwood District Council in December 2012. The land to the east of Newlink Business Park forms part of the Winthorpe Village Farmlands within the East Nottinghamshire Sandlands, a large area to the north and north-east of the Newark urban area. This area is described as a flat and gently undulating arable landscape with numerous woodland blocks and settlements. A generally intensive land use is evident throughout the area, with the majority occupied by highly intensive, medium to large scale arable fields. This intensive land use is reflected in the field boundaries, being primarily composed of strongly trimmed Hawthorn hedgerows, fragmented or lost in places, and post and wire fencing used as infill.

6.11 The assessment looks at the sensitivity to change of the identified landscape policy areas. It considers the landscape sensitivity of this area to be moderate. With regard to landscape features, a number of actions are recommended including the creation of new hedgerows and conservation of existing hedgerows. Opportunities should be sought to conserve field pattern where feasible and to contain new development within historic boundaries. With regard to built features, the assessment recommends that to conserve what remains of the rural landscape, new development should be concentrated around existing settlements.

6.12 The site is located at the edge of the Winthorpe Village Farmland between the existing Newlink Business Park, the A17, the village of Coddington and the A1. It borders the urban area of Newark and whilst currently in agricultural use it does not connect well to the wider rural landscape of the area and therefore makes a limited contribution to the rural character of this landscape.

6.13 It contains an existing framework of vegetation along its site boundaries and it is considered that opportunities exist to strengthen this to enhance the wooded structure of the landscape.

## ECOLOGY

6.14 A search has been carried out of information available on Natural England's Magic Map website. This has revealed that the site is not located in an area that is particularly sensitive in terms of ecology. There are no nationally or locally designated sites on or immediately surrounding the site.

6.15 As with any development site of this nature, a detailed ecological appraisal would have to be carried out to identify any habitats and wildlife on the site worthy of protection and/or enhancement. However, based on the site's current use and its characteristics, it is not expected that ecology will place a particular constraint on the site's development for employment uses.

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

6.16 There are no listed buildings on the site or immediately adjoining land. However, the Coddington Conservation Area lies to the site's southern boundary.

6.17 The impact of any proposed development on the character of this conservation area will form an important consideration in the detailed design of the site. As shown on the Illustrative Masterplan, the site offers significant scope for inclusion of buffer planting to mitigate any impacts of the development on the conservation area. This could include new woodland planting to strengthen the wooded character of the northern extent of the Coddington Conservation Area.

## FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 6.18 As shown on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map, the site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at low risk of flooding.
- 6.19 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out by WSP in May 2012. This confirms that the site is located in Flood Zone 1 and that there are no historic records of flooding on the site. However, the SFRA suggests that part of the site is at risk of surface water flooding.
- 6.20 As with any development of this scale, detailed proposals will have to be developed in due course to accommodate the necessary foul and surface water drainage, and detailed strategies to address any impacts will be required. The principles of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) will be incorporated into any design. However, at this stage it is not envisaged that there are any constraints that would prevent acceptable drainage solutions being achieved.

## GROUND CONDITIONS

- 6.21 The SHELAA assessment for the site notes that a potentially contaminative usage has been identified. We assume that this relates to the former Winthorpe Airfield. The site has been in agricultural use for decades and although it formed part of the airfield in the past, no significant contamination is expected. This can be further investigated at planning application stage.

## DELIVERABILITY

- 6.22 The site is being promoted by Simons Development, an East Midlands based developer with a successful track record of delivering commercial developments. It has the financial backing of Tritax Big Box REIT, an investment trust specialising in large logistics facilities.
- 6.23 The site can therefore be considered to be available and deliverable.





## 7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This document has been prepared to support representations to the Local Plan Examination. It is submitted on behalf of Simons Development and Tritax Big Box REIT in relation to land east of Newlink Business Park, Newark.
- 7.2 The proposal site extends to approximately 48.3 hectares and currently comprises agricultural land. It lies immediately east of the Newlink Business park and the A1, and south of the A17.
- 7.3 The site is immediately available and deliverable. There are no known technical or land ownership constraints. An initial masterplan for the site has been prepared and shows how the site could accommodate a range of large footprint user requirements within Use Class B2 and B8, with a total potential floorspace of some 185,000sq.m.

- 7.4 As set out in the main representations to the Local Plan examination, the Local Plan currently only includes one site of a strategic nature (NAP2A) which would be suitable for a strategic logistics user or other large scale footprint operations. The Plan therefore offers a very limited choice for operators looking for large high quality sites and we consider that this lack of choice could constrain investment in the District.
- 7.5 It is considered that the site presents an excellent opportunity for large scale employment development which could be brought forward in the early stages of the plan period. It should therefore be considered as an additional strategic allocation to provide additional employment land and ensure a sufficient choice of employment sites for strategic logistics or other large scale footprint users.

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