

Harborough Local Plan review

Examination in Public

Hearing Statement for Matter 4 – Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy

On behalf of Ashfield Land (Harborough) Limited

Representor Ref: ID7425

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group is instructed by Ashfield Land (Harborough) Limited (hereafter 'Ashfield Land') to respond to the Harborough Council Local Plan Examination 'Panel Note 8: Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs)' dated 21 September 2026, which has been produced by the Inspectors appointed to hold an independent examination of the Harborough Local Plan ('the Plan') (March 2025).
- 1.2. This Statement relates to Examination in Public Matter 4 – Creating Jobs and diversifying the Economy.
- 1.3. Ashfield Land has a specific land interest east of the A5 (referred to as A5 East or A5 East Logistics Park) totalling 16.52 hectares. The Site, which is identified on the Site Location Plan at Appendix 1, straddles the boundary between Harborough District and Rugby Borough, with the majority falling within Harborough District.
- 1.4. The Site has the capacity to deliver around 60,000sqm of Use Class B8 employment floorspace along with a roundabout access off the A5 and other benefits. It is subject to a current outline application, submitted to both Harborough District Council (ref: 25/O1543/OUT) and Rugby Borough Council (ref: R25/O936) for

'Outline planning permission (all matters reserved except for access) for up to 60,000sqm of employment floorspace within Use Class B8, a new roundabout site access off the A5, amended site access from Gibbet Lane, plus landscaping, sustainable drainage, earthworks and all other associated works and infrastructure'
- 1.5. A Site Layout Plan (ref: 23504-UMC-ZZZZ-SI-DR-A-0612) and a Parameters Plan (ref: 23504-UMC-ZZZZ-SI-DR-A-0510) are included at Appendix 2 showing how the Site can accommodate the development proposed. Representations have been made to all stages of the Harborough Local Plan in respect of the proposed development at the Site.
- 1.6. Representations have also been made to the emerging Rugby Borough Local Plan at the appropriate times.
- 1.7. This Statement provides comments that respond to the Matters Issues and Questions posed by the Inspectors in respect of Matter 4 – Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy with reference to whether the Plan, as submitted is sound when tested against



the 'tests of soundness' set out at Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023 against which the Plan is being examined).



2. Matter 4: Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy

Issue 2: Strategic Warehousing

Q2. Our understanding is that the wider area forms part of a 'Golden Triangle' which has peculiarly good access to the national road network, as well as rail freight, and thereby to customers. How has the location of large-scale strategic warehousing been considered in the context of the wider Golden Triangle and the cumulative impact of existing and as yet unimplemented permitted strategic warehousing at Daventry International Freight Terminal (DIRFT,) Rugby Gateway and within the A426 corridor?

- 2.1. The logistics property sector has expanded rapidly internationally over the past decade, which has fuelled the need for more logistics facilities around the world.
- 2.2. The ongoing importance of logistics is also promoted at a national level. Logistics UK identified (July 2025, Logistics UK, Executive Insight) that logistics keeps the economy moving, underpinning every sector of businesses and communities.
- 2.3. The Government's 2025 Spending Review pledged a 3.9% rise in transport capital investment, and Logistics UK have noted that to turn that pledge into economic growth, it is important that the government prioritises the logistics sector through the Industrial, Trade and Infrastructure Strategies. Lilian Greenwood, Minister for the Future of Roads confirmed the Government's commitment to the UK's Logistics Sector at the 2025 Logistics UK Annual Conference, acknowledging that *"logistics lies at the heart of government's plans for change."*
- 2.4. In the UK, there are a number of trends which have accelerated the growth of the sector. These include:
 1. A shift to online retail, and commensurately, a shift to home deliveries. Exacerbated in particular through the Covid-19 pandemic, online retail sales accounted for 30% of total retail spend in the UK in November 2024. This compares to 21.6% in November 2019, 13.7% in November 2014 and 7.9% in November 2009. Forecasts by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggest that this trend is only likely to continue to increase. The home delivery requirement from/for online sales have resulted in many companies seeking to increase, upgrade or even purpose build their own floorspace, to improve competitiveness and their ability to deliver for customers.



This trend is considered likely to continue, a 'National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report from 2019 (Better Deliver – the Challenge for Freight)' suggested that e-commerce sales could reach 65% of all retail sales by 2050.

2. Concerns over supply chain vulnerability, which has resulted in companies deciding to keep a larger inventory of materials/products/stock in storage, which has increased the demand for warehousing space. This issue first emerged in the Covid-19 pandemic, but awareness of ongoing geo-political risks and tensions has maintained, and even heightened, these concerns.
- 2.5. The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) published by National Statistics also shows a 54.5% increase in employment in the 'warehousing and support for transportation' sector between 2012 and 2022, which correlates with the growth in demand for such space. This growth exceeded that of any other employment 'sub-sector' with the next highest being management at 49.1%. Oxfordshire Economics predicts that the sector will continue to grow by a further 17.6% (just under 120,000 new jobs) in the years to 2032.
- 2.6. However, growth has not been even across the country and the East and West Midlands took the largest slices of the 54.5% increase, at 15.2% and 14.8% respectively.
- 2.7. E-commerce retail sales has had a significant and ongoing impact on the logistics and warehousing sectors.

Regional and Local Needs

- 2.8. The regional picture regarding demand for, and continued growth of, logistics and storage and distribution facilities also paints a strong picture.
- 2.9. The Application Site sits centrally within the logistics 'Golden Logistics Triangle'. Originally centred around Lutterworth in Leicestershire, the 'Golden Triangle' is now widely acknowledged to include areas of both the East and West Midlands with connectivity to the national motorway network including the M1, M42, M6 and M40, and to the West Coast mainline which carries in excess of 50% of the UK's freight (DfT, March 2010), and also to air freight at East Midlands and Birmingham Airports.
- 2.10. The locational advantages of the area have led to a number of major road and rail base freight distribution facilities being developed in the last 25 years, including Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), Hams Hall near Coleshill, Bermuda Park between Nuneaton and Bedworth, Keresley in north west Coventry, Birch Coppice in North Warwickshire, Magna Park at Lutterworth and Coton Park near Rugby. These serve Warwickshire and Leicestershire



functional economic market areas and are all in proximity of the site, with Birch Coppice in particular accessed directly via the A5.

- 2.11. Logistics is therefore a critical sector for the Midlands economy, with its excellent links to strategic road and rail connections and it is estimated that from the 'Golden Triangle' over 95% of the UK population is within a 4 hour truck drive¹.
- 2.12. Despite a healthy supply of existing facilities, the need for further logistics space in the south west Leicestershire area has been identified and confirmed by the Inspectors in determining the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order (DCO). Whilst the proposal was refused, it established a need for up to 850,000sqm of rail served or connected warehousing². That need still exists and will need to be delivered by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities.
- 2.13. In the immediate locality, the 2024 Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Report (Doc EMP-NLP 4) identified that Harborough is within the most suitable location for the delivery of B8 development with reference to its location on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and Main Road Network (MRN) within the Leicester and Leicestershire area.
- 2.14. Ashfield Land's interests at A5 East sit within the logistics/employment development 'Golden Triangle' and, as referred to above, is exceptionally well located for such development and within an identified 'Area of Opportunity' (Doc EMP-NLP 6) for the delivery of future employment floorspace, being within 5 minutes' drive of the Strategic Road Network.
- 2.15. Figure 0.2 of Doc EMP-NLP 6 identifies that the 'Magna Park' and M1 J20 broad locations (part of AO 6), were rated Amber in terms of considerations about their suitability for strategic employment development. Table 6.5 of the Errata explains that whilst the location has direct access to the A5 (Strategic Road Network), *"there are significant corridor capacity constraints which require strategic intervention to unlock capacity. There is currently no National Highways improvement scheme identified."*
- 2.16. The A5/A426/Gibbet Lane junction is identified within the AO6 area and Warwickshire County Council comments to the Regulation 19 consultation on the emerging Local Plan

¹ CBRE Employment Land Use Study, Coventry and Warwickshire (2015)

² Examining Authority's Report of Findings and Conclusions, Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange



confirmed that whilst Magna Park provided contributions to improvements, no improvements have been made, concluding that growth in the Magna Park corridor should be dependent on the need for strategy scale interventions on the A5 corridor, 'at least' at, inter alia, the Gibbet Hill roundabout.

- 2.17. The proposed development that Ashfield Land are promoting at A5 East has been designed to make effective use of the land and 60,000 sqm of employment space would support the substantial identified need for strategic B8 floorspace within Harborough, which would in turn deliver substantial economic growth in the district, whilst also delivering on-site parking, SUDs, landscaping and green infrastructure and the site is subject to a current planning application as referred in Section 1.
- 2.18. Improvements to site sustainability by modes of transport other than the private car, delivery of a bus terminal and diversion of the existing bus service for employees to access the site can be provided and importantly, improvements are proposed to the operational efficiency of the Gibbet Lane Roundabout and reduced traffic through access to the site from the Gibbet Lane roundabout. This will deliver amenity benefits for local residents, and improved efficiency to the Gibbet Lane arm of the Gibbet Hill roundabout, and/or indeed the ability to contribute to strategy scale interventions required if the Magna Park extension is to be pursued, as it cannot be found sound without such a strategy, per Highways Authority comments.

Q3. How does the quantum of proposed development relate to the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing Need, March 2026 [SCG-NLP26]?

- 2.19. The comments made in respect of Matter 3 and quantum of strategic employment development cover this question and are not repeated here but reference should be had to those comments which address the Statement of Common Ground within this question.

Q4. What are the locational requirements for strategic warehousing? Is there any synergy to be derived from extending Magna Park? Is the quantum of strategic warehousing (340,000 sqm) which has been planned within the District justified?

- 2.20. Ashfield Land's comments on the quantum of strategic warehousing have been made in relation to Matter 3, but the amount should be increased in order to meet need.



- 2.21. In terms of locational requirements, key for warehousing and logistics uses is location, with access to the strategic road network, and a large population being key factors. The 'Golden Triangle' is a location which delivers on both of those requirements, with connectivity to the national motorway network including the M1, M42, M6 and M40, and to the West Coast mainline which carries in excess of 50% of the UK's freight (DfT, March 2010), and also to air freight at East Midlands and Birmingham Airports. The location means it also serves a huge population across the East and West Midlands, Northamptonshire and beyond.
- 2.22. But in addition, the sector is also having to address and embrace battery-electric technology, as a viable zero emission alternative to petrol or diesel for Licensed Goods Vehicles (LGVs). This means that optimal sites will more and more have to be aligned to sites where:
- There is sufficient electric grid capacity which will allow large fleets of LGVs to recharge simultaneously (possibly overnight); and
 - Large centres of population can be served within half the typical range of a battery-electric LGV, thereby allowing vehicles to return to the depot each evening for charging.
- 2.23. As operators will generally seek to avoid recharging LGVs at public charge points away from, it is estimated that the current hinterland of a parcel hub serviced by a typical battery-electric LGV and where they return to depot each evening for re-charging. This was derived from the claimed ranges of battery-electric LGVs that are currently on sale in Great Britain. It was concluded that 112km is currently the effective 'out and back' range (hinterland) from a parcel depot using battery-electric LGVs, allowing vehicles to return to depot each evening for recharging.
- 2.24. Based on this figure, the population that could potentially be served from parcels depots located at the Ashfield Land A5 East site, Northampton and Wolverhampton was subsequently estimated. It was concluded that the A5 East site could serve a population of around 8.9 million people. Northampton, however, only has a reach of around 6.7 million people. Wolverhampton could potentially serve 8.1 million within the effective out and back range for a battery-electric LGV.
- 2.25. Further, the A5 East site is able to serve all the main population centres of the West and East Midlands region, including Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Northampton



and Milton Keynes. Northampton would be unable to serve the West Midlands conurbation, while Wolverhampton would not be able to serve Northampton and Milton Keynes.

- 2.26. The key conclusion to draw, therefore, is that the A5 East Logistics Park (Ashfield's land interests) site will be able to provide an excellent location for e-commerce/parcels deliveries using battery-electric LGVs. The scale and configuration of the site, and consequently the size of the buildings that could feasibly be developed, are likely to be appropriate for and attractive to the main parcel couriers engaged in e-commerce deliveries. Its location allows it to serve a significantly larger population when compared with other sites to the south and west. Our analysis shows that all the main population centres of the West and East Midlands region can be reached within the range of a typical battery-electric LGV.



Appendix 1

Site Location Plan

General Notes

- This document is to be used for the stated purpose only and should not be used for any other.
- Dimensions are all in millimetres, unless stated otherwise.
- It is the recipient's responsibility to print this document to the correct size & scale.
- All relevant drawings and specifications should be read in conjunction with this document.
- Scaling of this document is not recommended.

North



Document Scale(s)

50m SCALE 1:2500



All survey data to Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSTN15) (OSGM15)

Project Name

Gibbet Lane, Shawell

Employer		Project Address	
Ashfield Land		Gibbet Lane Shawell	
RIBA Workstage		Suitability	
1 - Preparation and Brief		S2 - Information	
Drawn	Checked	Created	Size
JJM	JJM	16/06/2025	A1
UMC Project Reference		Scale	LOD LOI
23504		1:2500	1 1

Document Title

Site Location Plan

Document Reference

23504 - UMC - ZZZZ - SI - DR - A - 0511

Revision Note

Redline boundary updated

Issue Date Status Current Revision

25.07.2025

P04



Appendix 2

Site Layout Plan, Parameters Plan



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Document Scale(s)

10m SCALE 1:2000

Schedule of Accommodation

Total GIA	-	625,791 ft²	(58,137 m²)
Site Area	-	41.81 acres	16.92 ha
Site Density GIA	-		34.36%

Unit 100			
Warehouse Area	-	197,635 ft²	(18,361 m²)
Office Area (incl. GF core)	-	10,401 ft²	(966 m²)
Transport Office	-	2,500 ft²	(232 m²)
Gatehouse	-	300 ft²	(28 m²)
Unit 100 GIA	-	210,836 ft²	(19,587 m²)

Unit 200			
Warehouse Area	-	148,906 ft²	(13,834 m²)
Office Area (incl. GF core)	-	7,837 ft²	(728 m²)
Gatehouse	-	300 ft²	(28 m²)
Unit 200 GIA	-	157,043 ft²	(14,590 m²)

Unit 300			
Warehouse Area	-	242,357 ft²	(22,516 m²)
Office Area (incl. GF core)	-	12,755 ft²	(1,185 m²)
Transport Office	-	2,500 ft²	(232 m²)
Gatehouse	-	300 ft²	(28 m²)
Unit 300 GIA	-	257,912 ft²	(23,961 m²)

Project Name

Gibbet Lane, Shawell

Employer	Project Address
Ashfield Land	Gibbet Lane Shawell

RIBA Workstage	Suitability
1 - Preparation and Brief	S2 - Information

Drawn	Checked	Created	Size
JJM	JJM	06/05/2025	A1

UMC Project Reference	Scale	LOD	LOI
23504	1:2000	1	1

Document Title

Site Layout - Gibbet Lane Option 2

Document Reference

23504 - UMC - ZZZZ - SI - DR - A - 0612

Revision Note

Annotation update and redline boundary updated

Issue Date Status Current Revision

26.07.2025

P06



General Notes

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North

Document Scale(s)

10m SCALE 1:2000

Key:

- Development Area (Use Class B8)
- Landscaping zone
- Estate road
- Attenuation
- Bus Terminal

Indicative boundary landscaping

Existing Woodland Retained

Proposed Highways Roundabout

Planning Site Area	16.92ha
Development Area	11.30ha
Number of Units	2 - 4

Maximum flexible industrial, storage and distribution floorspace - B8	60,000sqm
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Finished Floor Level	124-126m AOD (+/- 1m)
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Maximum Building Height	148m AOD (+/- 1m)
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Project Name

Gibbet Lane, Shawell

Employer	Project Address
Ashfield Land	Gibbet Lane Shawell

RIBA Workstage	Suitability
----------------	-------------

1 - Preparation and Brief **S2 - Information**

Drawn	Checked	Created	Size
JDS	JJM	19/05/2025	A1

UMC Project Reference	Scale	LOD	LOI
23504	1:2000	1	1

Document Title

Parameters Plan

Document Reference

23504 - UMC - ZZZZ - SI - DR - A - 0510

Revision Note

Updated to suit current layout

Issue Date Status Current Revision

19.05.2025

P04

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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