



PLANT YOUR WEALTH.
Where investments grow

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

"Investment analysis of the UK Multi-Let Industrial (MLI) sector focusing on acquisition strategies and rental yield potential"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

▶ Executive Summary
▶ Key Takeaways
▶ Macro & Market Context
▶ Market Overview
▶ Market Assessment
▶ Data Analysis
▶ Case Studies
▶ Competitive Landscape
▶ Regulatory & Policy Environment 20
▶ Pricing & Valuation Analysis
▶ Operational Considerations

► **Risk Assessment**

► **Conclusion**

► **References**

Executive Summary

- The market is split between well-located, modern small-bay assets that retain pricing power, and secondary, energy-inefficient stock that requires explicit execution to recover value. Prioritise acquisitions where income visibility and low re-let risk are inherent. [1][3][6]
- Capital markets price a persistent premium for multi-let risk. Expect limited yield compression until financing costs ease or earnings growth materially accelerates. Price discipline must reflect the current risk spread to regional logistics. [6]
- Supply constraints in city-edge and last-mile submarkets create selective scarcity that supports landlord outcomes where delivery and planning risk are controlled. Seek pockets where consented supply is limited and barriers to entry are high. [1][2]
- Underwriting must be unit-driven. Price each asset on discrete unit-level cashflows, explicit refurbishment schedules and realistic lease-up timing. Use verified WAULT, indexation mechanics and EPC remediation plans to justify any yield improvement. [4][3]
- Execution controls are the primary alpha lever. Use milestone-based purchase conditions, vendor-funded or escrowed remediation, and staged equity draws to transfer measurable planning and capex risk away from investors. Insist on contractor warranties and performance-linked fee structures. [1][3][6]
- Operational scale reduces per-unit downtime and cost. Aggregating modern nodes into platforms improves marketing efficiency, capex delivery and vacancy management. Target platform or tranche acquisitions that create these operational synergies. [6][4]
- Financing strategy must prioritise covenant flexibility and runway. Underwrite refinancing and covenant tests under adverse letting and yield scenarios. Require clear DSCR and LTV buffers and tranche releases tied to completion certificates for major works. [6]
- KPI and monitoring framework: report unit re-let time, re-let cost as a percentage of rent, WAULT by income, service-charge recovery and capex delivery versus milestones monthly. Trigger governance escalation on consecutive KPI breaches or missed capex milestones. [4][3]
- Bid discipline: apply a default risk premium to reflect multi-let execution and regulatory exposure. Tighten pricing only where WAULT, indexation and EPC credentials are independently verified and contractually supported. [6][1]
- Tactical decision rules:
 - Increase allocation to modern small-bay nodes where planning and execution risk is low and operational scale is attainable. [1][2]

- De-risk value-add plays with vendor-funded remediation or deeper pricing margin. Require a clear, time-bound leasing plan before committing equity. [3]
- Re-run valuations at defined rate-move intervals and pause acquisitions if long-term real yields move adversely beyond pre-set thresholds. [6]
- Final position: protect downside through conservative leverage, unit-level underwriting and strict milestone mechanics. Capture upside by aggregating modern nodes, executing targeted EPC works that shorten downtime, and by compounding ERV at the unit level during re-lets. [3][4][6]

Key Takeaways

- Require a hard pricing gate using the income-cap model: do not proceed unless the asset retains at least **80% of base-case value** under a **+100 bps** required-return stress (apply $dV/V \approx -dy / (r - g)$ across $r-g$ scenarios). Tie bid authority to this stress outcome. [6]
- Underwrite at the unit level with conservative downtime assumptions: assume **3 months** average downtime for prime small-bay units and **9 months** for secondary bays, and convert those assumptions into per-unit NOI haircuts before finalising any offer. Report unit-level re-let cost as **% of annual rent** for every pricing case. [4][3]
- Structure financing and equity to absorb execution risk: require staged debt releases linked to capex and letting milestones, and maintain an **equity cushion of 15–25%** of purchase price to protect DSCR and avoid forced sales under stress. Document milestone certificates as tranche-release conditions. [6][1]
- Prioritise platform economics on acquisition: target transactions where **≥40% of NLA** is institutional-grade modern nodes or where a clear tranche strategy can separate modern lots from secondary lots with escrowed vendor remediation for the latter. Use registered-sale extracts to validate each tranche prior to exchange. [1][5]

Macro & Market Context

Interest rates - Bank Rate has been raised materially since 2022 and remains elevated relative to pre-2021 historic averages, sustaining higher discount rates for property. JLL's sector analysis shows this pressure reflected in a wider forward risk premium for multi-let industrial assets, at 2.8% versus 2.2% for regional logistics, which signals constrained scope for yield compression in the near term [6]. - Higher financing costs are reducing appetite for leverage and extending hold periods for investors. Transaction activity has therefore favoured assets with strong income resilience and lower re-letting risk [1][6].

Inflation - Headline inflation has eased from its 2022 peak, reducing immediate upward pressure on occupier input costs and wage pass-through risk. That moderation supports modest real rental growth assumptions used by market forecasters for 2025–2029 [6][2]. - Persistent but lower inflation still increases operating cost volatility for smaller occupiers. Assets with efficient operating models and recent EPC improvements will outperform where tenants are sensitive to energy and maintenance bills [3][2].

GDP and demand - UK GDP growth has been subdued and uneven across regions, limiting broad-based expansion in occupier demand. Demand is concentrated in regional distribution hubs and urban last-mile locations where e-commerce and SME logistics activity remains strongest [2][5]. - Regional divergence is evident in rental levels and occupier footprints. Prime regional rents, for example in Manchester, trade at around £14.00/sqft, underlining the stronger demand fundamentals outside London for well-located multi-let supply [5].

Implications for UK Multi-Let Industrial (MLI) - Elevated rates and a higher forward risk premium mean investors will prioritise income security, short weighted-average lease terms and assets with rental reversion potential. Yield compression is likely to be limited until discount rates fall or earnings growth accelerates [6][1]. - Moderating inflation reduces downside to tenant affordability, supporting forecast rental growth, but occupier cost sensitivity will keep demand concentrated in modern, energy-efficient units [3][2]. - Slower GDP growth keeps emphasis on targeted, regionally-driven investment strategies. Focus capital on markets with demonstrated rental growth and tight supply pipelines to capture relative total return outperformance [1][5].

Market Overview

Executive summary

- Multi-let industrial (MLI) comprises small-bay, multi-occupied warehouses and urban logistics parks that primarily serve SMEs and last-mile occupiers. **Unit sizes under 5,000 sqft** remain an important segment, representing **13%** of floorspace in London and the South. [2][4]
- Modern, energy-efficient units command premium occupational demand and superior reversion potential. The share of units in “modern usage” is higher outside London at **62%** versus **51%** in London and the South East. [3]

Supply dynamics

- New-build, small-bay supply is limited in urban and inner-suburban locations. Deliveries have not kept pace with demand for modern, efficient stock, which increases refurbishment-led opportunities. [1][2]
- Planning and land constraints restrict infill development where last-mile demand is strongest. This constrains the consented and under-construction pipeline for city-edge MLI. [1][2]
- Secondary stock shows higher obsolescence risk where EPC ratings and operating efficiencies lag. Refurbishment and consolidation of bays into modern configurations are common value-add strategies. [3][2]

Demand drivers

- Occupier mix is dominated by logistics, e-commerce fulfilment for SMEs, trade counter usage and light manufacturing. Demand is concentrated where labour access and transport links support frequent local distribution. [2][4]
- Tenant preference favors smaller, flexible lease packages and units with low running costs. This drives demand for refurbished and purpose-built multi-let product with modern services and improved EPC ratings. [3][2]
- Investor demand prioritises income resilience and reversion potential in markets with constrained modern supply. Multi-let transactions remained active through late 2024, highlighting continued buyer appetite for this sector. [1]

Rental and occupational trends

- Rental growth is strongest where supply scarcity intersects with dense occupier demand. Landlord-led enhancements that reduce energy costs materially improve lease-up speed and achievable rents. [1][3]

- Micro-unit markets under 5,000 sqft retain structural support from SME growth and flexible logistics models. That segment is increasingly targeted by both occupational and investment capital. [4]

Regional summary

- Greater London / Thames Valley: High demand for last-mile and micro-units. Stock in urban locations is scarce and command premium occupancy levels for modern units. Refurbishment and infill projects are the main source of new supply. [2][3][4]
- South East: Strong SME demand and proximity to strategic distribution corridors sustain occupier activity. Modern small-bay product competes with other uses for constrained land. [3][2]
- Midlands (East & West): Appeal as a distribution hub supports multi-let conversions and developer-led schemes that target regional occupational catchments. Flexibility of unit size is a key market feature. [5][2]
- North West: Market diversity with attractive occupational pockets and steady investor interest. Prime multi-let nodes perform better than secondary locations. [5][1]
- Yorkshire & Humber: Price-sensitive occupier base delivers opportunities for value-add through refurbishment and lease restructuring. Modernisation drives rental outperformance where it occurs. [5][3]
- Scotland: Demand is localized around major urban centres. Modern small-bay supply is thinner, producing selective opportunities for new-build and upgrading existing stock. [3][5]
- South West: Occupier demand is concentrated in principal towns. Outside those centres the market is thinner and supply of modern multi-let product is limited. [3][2]

Key implications for investors

- Prioritise modern, energy-efficient small-bay stock in tight urban submarkets. Refurbishment and EPC upgrades are primary value drivers. [3][1]
- Target regions where occupational demand is dense and pipeline constrained to capture rental reversion. Seek assets with short lease re-letting risk and flexible unit layouts. [1][2]
- Expect persistent bifurcation between prime, fully serviced multi-let product and secondary, higher-obsolescence stock. Investment strategies should reflect that split when underwriting returns. [6][1]

Market Assessment

Cycle position

The market is bifurcated. For **modern, well-located small-bay stock in dense urban and last-mile locations** conditions favour landlords. Limited new supply, concentrated occupier demand and investor preference for low re-letting risk support rental resilience and stronger leasing outcomes [1][2]. For **secondary and energy-inefficient stock** conditions favour tenants. Financing constraints, higher re-letting risk and operating-cost sensitivity make these assets harder to trade and reposition profitably [3][6].

Leasing and occupational dynamics

- Prime small-bay units achieve materially faster lease-up and require lower incentives where local supply is constrained. This reduces downtime and improves income visibility for owners [1][2].
- Secondary units face longer marketing periods and higher refurbishment requirements before achieving market rents. Tenant affordability and operating cost exposure drive occupier selection toward modernised stock [3].
- Unit-level turnover drives the majority of ERV opportunity in portfolios with many micro-units. Model re-let timing at the unit, not portfolio, level to capture compounding effects on NOI [4].

Capital and transaction conditions

- Capital markets remain selective. Debt availability and pricing constrain leveraged approaches and extend typical hold periods for assets requiring active repositioning [6][1].
- Transaction appetite is concentrated on assets with demonstrable income resilience: short re-letting risk, improved EPC, or contractual indexation. Liquid pricing for secondary product is weaker and requires explicit value-add path and pricing concession [1][6].

Cycle risks and monitoring triggers

Track the following indicators as triggers for tactical repositioning or opportunistic acquisition: - Movement in long-term real yields and Bank Rate guidance, which directly affect discount-rate compression potential [6].

- Vacancy and downtime trends at unit level in target submarkets, which signal changing tenant bargaining power [2].
- Proportion of stock requiring immediate EPC or service upgrades, which drives near-term capex exposure and leasing velocity [3].

Recommended positioning for the current phase

- Allocate core capital to **prime, modern small-bay assets** in tight urban submarkets where leasing risk and capex needs are minimal. Prioritise properties with strong access to labour and transport nodes [2][5].
- Use value-add strategies selectively. Target assets where refurbishment and energy-efficiency upgrades shorten downtime and materially improve tenant appeal. Underwrite conservatively for capex timing and lease-up periods [3][1].
- Apply conservative leverage and require flexible covenant terms for assets exposed to extended re-letting cycles or significant EPC works. Financing flexibility reduces forced sales risk if discount rates remain elevated [6].
- For portfolios dominated by secondary stock, demand a clear, quantified reversion plan and deeper pricing margin to compensate for leasing, vacancy and capex execution risk.

Bottom line

The cycle is mixed. **Landlords hold the upper hand in prime, modern small-bay segments.** **Tenants hold the upper hand in secondary, obsolete stock.** Active management, selective acquisition, and conservative underwriting are required to navigate the divergence and preserve optionality until broader yield compression or sustained rental acceleration occurs [1][2][3][6].

Data Analysis

Quantitative summary

- The forward risk premium gap between multi-let industrial and regional logistics is **0.6 percentage points**, reflecting materially higher required return for MLI relative to comparable regional logistics product [6].
- Prime regional rent reference: **£14.00/sqft** in Manchester, used below as an occupational benchmark for ERV sensitivity analysis [5].

Valuation sensitivity (formula and implications)

- Use a standard income-capitalisation model, $V = CF / (r - g)$, where CF is stabilized net income, r is the required return, and g is long-term rental growth.
- For a small increase in required return dy , the approximate percentage change in value is: $dV/V \approx - dy / (r - g)$. This relationship shows value sensitivity rises as the spread $(r - g)$ tightens.

Examples (illustrative; no claim on current market yields): - If $(r - g) = 3.0\%$, a **25 bps** increase in r reduces value by **~8.3%**. A **100 bps** increase reduces value by **~33.3%**.

- If $(r - g) = 4.0\%$, a **25 bps** increase reduces value by **~6.3%**. A **100 bps** increase reduces value by **~25.0%**.
- If $(r - g) = 5.0\%$, a **25 bps** increase reduces value by **~5.0%**. A **100 bps** increase reduces value by **~20.0%**.

Commentary: the existing premium charged to MLI means these assets are at higher re-pricing risk when discount rates move. Use the figures above to stress-test valuations rather than rely on point estimates [6].

Pricing impact of the observed risk premium

- The **0.6 percentage point** premium in forward risk implies a meaningful price difference for identical income streams. Example assumption: a given CF capitalised at **5.0%** versus **5.6%** produces a price differential of approximately **12.0%** ($0.6 / 5.0$). This quantifies how much cheaper MLI must trade, all else equal, to deliver the same expected return to investors [6]. State this as a pricing target when underwriting relative value against regional logistics.

Rental reversion and income sensitivity (practical example)

- Using a **5,000 sqft** unit at **£14.00/sqft** ERV yields annual rent of **£70,000**. A **5%** upward rent reversion increases annual rent by **£3,500**, improving net operating income and reducing reliance on capital appreciation to meet return targets [5].

- Small-bay portfolios with high unit turnover will see compounded ERV benefits from incremental re-lets. Model scenarios should therefore capture unit-level ERV moves rather than relying on portfolio averages.

Scenario testing recommendations (quantitative inputs)

Run sensitivity matrices on the following axes for each asset or portfolio:

- Discount rate moves: **+25 bps, +50 bps, +100 bps**. Report percent change in value using the dV/V formula and a range of $(r - g)$ assumptions (3.0%, 4.0%, 5.0%).
- Rental outcome: central (flat real rents), upside **+2.0% p.a.**, downside **-5.0%** one-off reversion. Report NAV and IRR under each outcome.
- Income shock: vacancy and downtime increases equivalent to loss of **6 to 12 months** of rent on average per unit across a typical re-let cycle; quantify NOI and yield impact.
- Capex and EPC: model uplift to ERV from targeted EPC and service upgrades. Use the example above to convert ERV uplift into NOI and value change.

Actionable quantitative takeaways

- Price MLI portfolios assuming a required return premium of **~60 bps** to regional logistics unless asset-specific features (long WAULT, indexation, superior EPC) justify compression [\[6\]](#).
- Stress-test valuations for **25–100 bps** upward moves in required return. Expect value declines in the **5–33%** range depending on $(r - g)$. Use these bands in covenant, leverage and hold-period planning.
- Focus underwriting on achievable ERV uplift. A modest **5%** ERV improvement on typical micro-unit geometry produces measurable NOI uplift on every re-let; convert that uplift to valuation using the same cap model to quantify accretion potential [\[5\]](#).

Sources used: [\[6\]](#), [\[5\]](#), [\[1\]](#).

Executive transaction summary

Multi-let industrial trading remained active through late 2024, with transactions concentrated in urban and regional distribution hubs. Buyers prioritised income durability, short re-letting risk, energy-efficiency credentials and clear unit-level ERV upside. Sources cite notable deal volume in Q4 2024 and continued interest in small-bay portfolios across core regions [1][2][3].

Representative comparable transactions

- **Q4 2024, Greater London submarket**

Asset: urban multi-occupied small-bay park.

Buyer profile: institutional domestic capital.

Deal drivers: limited local supply, modernised common services, short average re-let downtime. Documentation flags the trade as part of a wave of multi-let activity in the quarter [1][2].

Data certainty: sale date and regional classification are confirmed; headline price and buyer identity are not disclosed in available summaries [1].

- **H2 2024, South East regional park**

Asset: refurbished multi-let estate serving SME logistics and trade occupiers.

Buyer profile: private equity / opportunistic investor.

Deal drivers: scope for unit-level rental uplift via targeted capex and EPC improvement. Colliers research highlights strong occupational demand in similar South East locations at mid-2024, supporting lease-up prospects for this asset type [2][3].

Data certainty: asset condition and strategic rationale are reported; specific financial terms are not public in the source material [2][3].

- **Mid-2024 portfolio trade, North West (including Manchester catchment)**

Asset: multi-site portfolio with a mix of modern and secondary bays.

Buyer profile: mix of domestic institutions and regional funds.

Deal drivers: selective weight on modern nodes within the portfolio; secondary lots sold with explicit value-add plans. Industry commentary points to the North West as a market with varied occupational dynamics and active investor interest [5][1].

Data certainty: regional attractiveness and buyer mix are documented; individual lot pricing requires primary comp records to verify.

- **2023–2024 single-asset reposition, Midlands**

Asset: small-bay estate converted to meet modern occupier standards.

Buyer profile: developer-operator executing a lease-up and indexation strategy.

Deal drivers: planning flexibility for infill, ability to reduce operating costs through services and EPC upgrades, and local SME demand. Gerald Eve case notes describe similar repositioning approaches and occupier profiles for Midlands product [3][4].

Data certainty: strategy and occupier targeting are consistent across market reports; transaction-level economics are not published in the available extracts.

Transaction patterns and pricing signals

- Institutional buyers show clear preference for assets with short vacancy risk, recent EPC works and demonstrable unit-level ERV uplift potential [1][3].
- Developer-operator trades are common where planning and infill opportunities support densification or consolidation of bays [2][3].
- Portfolio transactions frequently separate modern nodes from higher-obsolescence lots, enabling different capital stacks and hold strategies for each tranche [1][5].
- Public summaries highlight volume and directional demand but do not consistently publish passing yields or price-per-square-foot metrics in the available sources. Use primary comp databases to capture those elements for valuation benchmarking [1][2].

How to use these comparables in underwriting

Capture and verify the following fields for each comp before applying to valuation models: - **Sale date and registered buyer** (verifies market timing and capital source) [1].

- **Region and submarket** (last-mile vs regional hub) [2][5].
- **Unit mix and average bay size** (drives vacancy and re-let timing) [3][4].
- **WAULT and lease break profile** (measures re-let risk and income durability) [1].
- **EPC bands and recent capex** (affects occupier demand and operating cost assumptions) [3].
- **Evidence of indexation or contractual rent reviews** (reduces real rent downside) [1].
- **Buyer/seller rationale** (core income vs value-add) and any stated post-acquisition plan [1][2].

Apply comparables sequentially: 1. Verify submarket match on unit-level characteristics.
2. Adjust for differing WAULT, EPC and rent review mechanics.
3. Net out explicit capex required to achieve quoted ERV uplift.
4. Cross-check implied yields and price per sqft against primary data providers before finalising bid parameters.

Key takeaways for sourcing and bid strategy

- Prioritise comps where WAULT, EPC status and documented capex plans match the target asset. Those elements explain the majority of observed price dispersion. Cite regional

transaction activity as evidence of buyer appetite, but underwrite using verified financial terms from primary disposals records [1][2][3].

- Treat public summaries as directional. Rely on registered-sale extracts, broker pack detail and title records to quantify implied yields and to reconcile buyer motivations with pricing.

Competitive Landscape

Major players

- **Institutional funds and REITs:** Active buyers for prime, modern small-bay nodes. They prioritise scale, low re-let risk and operational platforms to reduce unit-level downtime. [1][6]
- **Developer-operators:** Acquire assets for densification, refurbishment and roll-out of standardized management services. They compete on execution speed and planning capability. [2][3]
- **Private equity and opportunistic capital:** Target secondary lots with explicit value-add plans, including EPC upgrades and unit reconfiguration. These players accept longer hold periods and capex risk. [1][3]
- **Local owner-operators and smaller landlords:** Hold a large portion of micro-unit stock, provide hands-on estate management and maintain flexible lease structures attractive to SMEs. [4][5]

Market concentration and share

- Ownership of multi-let industrial at a national level is **fragmented**. Institutional capital concentrates in core nodes, but a substantial share of stock remains with regional and local landlords. [1][5]
- Market concentration rises at the submarket level. In tight urban last-mile locations the top institutional owners represent a material share of modern supply, strengthening pricing power for those owners. [2][5]
- Public transaction reporting is inconsistent on price-per-sqft and passing yields, which obscures precise market-share measurement and increases reliance on primary comp databases for benchmarking. [1]

Competitive positioning and differentiation

- Operators compete on three primary vectors: **unit modernity and EPC, service model and estate management, and lease flexibility / WAULT structure**. Higher scores on these vectors translate directly into faster lease-up and lower incentives. [3][1]
- Developer-operators differentiate through planning and consolidation capability. They convert secondary bays into institutional-grade units and capture ERV uplift on re-lets. [2][3]
- Institutional platforms compete by aggregating portfolios to achieve scale economies in marketing, lettings and capex delivery, which reduces per-unit downtime and cost. [6]
- Local landlords compete on tenancy flexibility and speed to market for small occupiers. Their advantage is responsiveness, not institutional-grade yields. [4]

Barriers to entry

- **Planning and land scarcity** restrict new-build supply in city-edge and urban locations, raising upfront cost and timing risk for entrants. [1][2]
- **Capex and conversion requirements** are high for legacy units. Entrants must underwrite refurbishment and EPC improvement programmes to achieve market rents. [3]
- **Operational complexity** is greater than for single-tenant logistics. Efficient unit-level marketing, turnover management and service delivery require specialised asset management capabilities. [4]
- **Debt and leverage constraints** limit highly leveraged market entry where assets require active repositioning. Investors need financing structures that account for lease-up time and capex phasing. [6]

Competitive threats and substitution

- Intensifying competition for prime urban sites increases acquisition prices and raises the hurdle for yield accretion through leasing alone. [2]
- Adaptive reuse pressure: in constrained markets, alternative uses or denser redevelopment can compete with multi-let options, particularly where planning permits mixed-use conversion. [3]
- Secondary stock faces substitution risk from newer, energy-efficient product that can command materially better occupational terms and lower downtime. [3]

Implications for market participants

- For acquirers seeking scale, pursue **platform transactions** or tranche buys that lock-in modern nodes and create operational synergies. This reduces per-unit marketing and capex overhead. [1][6]
- For value-add investors, target assets where planning or consolidation can measurably increase net lettable area or reduce operating cost through services and EPC upgrades. Price in execution risk and longer lease-up timelines. [2][3]
- For incumbent local owners, consider selective partnerships with institutional operators to access capital for EPC works while retaining occupancy relationships. This can monetise value without full disposal. [4]
- For lenders and equity providers, require clear milestones on capex delivery, leasing cadence and unit-level WAULT improvements before relaxing pricing or leverage constraints. [6]

Sources: [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6].

Regulatory & Policy Environment

Regulatory drivers and investor impact

- Planning constraints and local policy materially limit new-build multi-let industrial supply in city-edge and inner-suburban markets. Local Plans, Green Belt protections and site-specific allocation decisions concentrate development activity into a small number of deliverable sites, increasing execution risk and time to market for infill schemes [1][2].
- Energy performance requirements and occupier energy-cost sensitivity place upgrading obligations on owners of older stock. **EPC** status is a critical underwriting variable that affects lease-up speed, incentive levels and capex provisioning at acquisition [3]. Investors demand clear evidence of post-acquisition EPC remediation pathways when pricing assets [1][3].

Zoning, permitted development and conversion risk

- Multi-occupied small-bay estates typically require explicit planning consent for meaningful change of use, densification or intensification. Permitted development rights provide limited flexibility in many urban contexts and are often subject to local authority conditions that add uncertainty to schemes that rely on conversion rather than full re-development [1][2].
- Site-specific constraints such as access, servicing, noise and hours of operation are enforced at the local level. These controls affect achievable unit layouts, loading bay provision and occupier mix, with direct implications for ERV and vacancy assumptions [2][5].

Environmental regulation and physical risk

- Regulatory emphasis on carbon reduction and minimum energy standards increases future capex obligations on secondary stock. Planned tightening of standards and market pressure from occupiers mean that assets with poor energy efficiency face higher obsolescence and financing hurdles [3][6].
- Flood risk, contamination and other environmental constraints are growing underwriting focus areas. Where these risks are present, insurers and lenders require enhanced due diligence and contingency funding, which reduces investable leverage and increases total project cost [2][3].

Tax and transaction cost considerations

- Transaction taxes and occupier levies materially influence pricing and bid strategy. **Stamp Duty Land Tax and Business Rates** remain principal cashflow items that affect buyer net yield and occupier affordability respectively. Model both transaction timing and potential business-rates revaluation when assessing IRR and hold-period exit scenarios [1][5].

- Tax-efficient structuring and use of available capital allowances for plant, machinery and building investment can meaningfully improve post-tax returns. Require tax specialist input early in bid to quantify structuring and allowances value and to reflect that in purchase pricing.

Pending policy changes and near-term risks

- Policy direction is toward stricter building performance and decarbonisation requirements. Expect increasing regulatory scrutiny on EPC compliance and landlord responsibilities for energy efficiency in the medium term. Price assets accordingly where remedial works are required [3][6].
- Local plan reviews and infrastructure funding decisions create asymmetric upside and downside across regions. Markets with recent local-plan allocations that enable employment floorspace expansion will capture rental and development upside. Markets without such allocations will face structural supply scarcity and higher redevelopment hurdles [1][2].

Operational compliance and financing consequences

- Lenders and insurers price regulatory execution risk. Expect more conservative leverage and staged funding on assets where planning risk, EPC remediation or environmental remediation are material. Require explicit milestone-based covenants for capex and leasing to de-risk financing tranches [6].
- Portfolio strategies that aggregate assets with similar compliance requirements reduce per-unit capex delivery cost and simplify landlord obligations. Single-asset plays with heterogeneous compliance issues create execution and cashflow volatility.

Recommendations for underwriting and asset management

- Require a dedicated planning and ESG due diligence budget in every acquisition model. Quantify permit timelines and conditionality, and include contingency for planning refusals or restrictive conditions [1][2][3].
- Price explicit allowance for EPC remediation where target assets fall below market-standard bands. Convert expected ERV uplift from remediation into NOI and value changes; stress-test for delays in works and tenant uptake [3].
- Model tax cashflows using scenario analysis for Business Rates revaluation and transaction tax timing. Build post-tax sensitivity into IRR and break-even hold-period calculations [1][5].
- Use conditional offers and milestone-based financing to transfer measurable planning and remediation risk back to vendor or to secure phased equity deployment where practicable [6].

Sources: [1], [2], [3], [5], [6]

Pricing & Valuation Analysis

This section quantifies pricing dynamics, compares observable transaction signals, and sets specific underwriting metrics and sensitivity tests for multi-let industrial assets.

Valuation methodology and adjustments - Core approach: use an income-capitalisation model and a DCF for assets with short WAULTs or uneven cashflow profiles. Convert unit-level ERV changes into portfolio NOI and capital value rather than relying on portfolio averages.

- Required adjustments to headline capital values: vacancy and downtime, letting incentives, near-term capex (EPC and services), rent review/indexation mechanics, and explicit WAULT differentials. Model each as line items in the first five years of cashflow and stress-test timing risk. [1][3] - Practical implementation: apply unit-level re-let timing and per-unit capex schedules, then aggregate to produce stabilized NOI. Use that stabilized NOI to derive a run-rate capital value and run parallel DCF scenarios for exit timing and yield movement. [4][6]

Illustrative price-per-sqft metrics (unit-level worked example) - Use the occupational benchmark ERV for sensitivity work and convert to capital value per unit. For a **5,000 sqft** unit at the regional ERV benchmark:

- Annual rent (ERV): £70,000 [5].
- Capitalised values at different net yields (NOI assumed equal to ERV for illustrative purposes; underwrite netting of operating costs separately):
 - 5.00% yield → Value £1,400,000, £280/sqft.
 - 5.60% yield (reflecting a 60 bps premium) → Value £1,250,000, £250/sqft. [6]
 - 6.00% yield → Value £1,166,667, £233/sqft.
- Valuation impact of modest ERV upside: a 5% reversion on rent (an extra £3,500 pa for this unit) increases capital value by £70,000 at a 5.0% yield. That equates to £14/sqft of value accretion on the unit and materially improves IRR over a typical hold period. [5]

Pricing sensitivity and stress tests - Translate discount-rate moves to value changes using $dV/V \approx -dy / (r - g)$. For typical underwriting spreads use (r - g) scenarios of 3.0%, 4.0%, 5.0% and shock required return by +25 bps, +50 bps, +100 bps. Expect value moves in the range previously modelled for these (r - g) bands. [6]

- Operational shocks: model vacancy increases equivalent to **6-12 months** average downtime per unit across the portfolio. Quantify the NOI loss and convert to yield impact by re-capitalising the reduced NOI. Include capex phasing delays in the DCF. [4][3]
- Covenant and leverage tests: run LTV and DSCR under the stressed yield and vacancy cases above. Require exit yield sensitivity to be a core covenant trigger for tranche release.

Comparable transactions and market evidence - Public transaction summaries are directional and often omit passing yields and price-per-sqft. Registered sale extracts and broker disposals records are required to populate a reliable comp set. Use those primary sources to confirm sale date, buyer type, unit mix, WAULT and EPC status before applying a comp. [1][2]

- Transaction signal: buyers pay a premium for short re-letting risk, recent EPC upgrades and indexation mechanics. Price differentials between modern and secondary lots are observed consistently, though percentage gaps vary by submarket and execution risk. Adjust any comp for these factors before deriving an implied yield or price per sqft. [1][3]

Underwriting rules and pricing guardrails - Base yield bias: price MLI with a **~60 bps** required return premium to regional logistics unless asset-specific features (long WAULT, robust indexation, superior EPC) justify compression. Apply this as a default bid-adjustment while sourcing. [6]

- Bid-sizing and margin: require a margin to cover execution risk from capex and letting. Convert expected capex into a present-value per-sqft haircut and deduct from comp-implied price before finalising the bid. Document capex milestones and build milestone-based pricing or escrow where necessary. [3][1]

- Reversion capture: model unit-level ERV moves explicitly. For micro-units, frequent re-lets compound ERV gains. Convert expected re-let frequency and uplift into an additive NOI stream and capital value uplift, then test sensitivity to slower-than-expected uptake. [4][5]

- Secondary stock pricing: demand explicit discount for execution and energy risk. Absent verified WAULT, indexation or EPC remediation plans, require either deeper yield premium or vendor-funded remediation milestones. Quantify the discount with a defensible line-item for expected vacancy loss and capex.

Execution checklist for pricing validation - Verify comp fundamentals: sale date, registered buyer, unit mix, WAULT, EPC, indexation clauses. Adjust comp yields for each differential. [1]

- Convert ERV moves to NOI, then capital value using multiple yield scenarios. Report value ranges not single-point estimates. [5][6]

- Stress all bids for **+25–100 bps** yield moves and for **6–12 months** additional downtime per unit. Use these outputs to size covenant thresholds, required equity cushions, and acceptable hold periods. [6][4]

Conclusion: pricing guidance - Underwrite with a default **60 bps** yield premium to regional logistics and test upside from achievable ERV changes at the unit level. Price per sqft targets should be derived from unit-level NOI capitalisation after deducting present-value capex and vacancy allowances. Use the worked example above to convert ERV moves into concrete price-per-sqft outcomes during bid discipline and scenario testing. [6][5][3]

Operational Considerations

Management and staffing

- Define an asset-level operating model before acquisition: assign a lead asset manager, a dedicated letting resource, and a single point of contact for estate services. Centralise procurement of reactive maintenance and marketing to capture scale benefits and reduce per-unit turnaround time. **Scale** in estate management materially reduces per-unit cost and vacancy exposure [6][4].
- Specify on-site versus centralised functions. On-site staff should cover security, basic repairs and tenant liaison; central teams should manage major void works, legal, insurance and service-charge billing. Document responsibilities in the management agreement and include performance SLAs for void repairs and marketing cadence. [4][1]

Operating expense drivers and control

- Track operating costs at unit level. Key line items: common-area services, utilities, insurance, reactive maintenance, estate management fees and local service contracts. Reconcile service-charge recoveries monthly to limit cashflow volatility. [3][4]
- Use the following controls: monthly variance reporting by estate, monthly reconciliation of recoverables, procurement framework for contractors, and annual benchmarking against comparable submarkets. Link part of the on-site contractor fee to KPI outcomes (repair response times, tenant satisfaction). [4][1]
- Require an annual operating plan that separates recurring maintenance from one-off remediation and capital projects. Move one-off items to the CapEx plan to prevent NOI distortion. [3]

CapEx requirements and phasing

- Create a rolling **5-year CapEx plan** at acquisition with unit-level line items for roofing, cladding, gates, mechanical services and EPC works. For each item record scope, cost estimate, timing, procurement route and landlord/tenant cost allocation. [3][2]
- Phase works to align with re-let cycles and avoid simultaneous downtime across clustered units. Prioritise works that reduce running costs and speed lease-up (energy measures, fabric upgrades, communal services). Capture expected ERV uplift per intervention and stress-test delivery delays. [3][5]
- Require a staged funding approach: holdback or escrow for identified remedial works, vendor-funded milestones where material, and a contingency allowance of **10–20%** on forecast CapEx for execution risk. Use milestone releases tied to planning approvals and completion certificates. [1][6]

Tenant-facing capital and operating programmes

- Prioritise interventions with short payback from reduced incentives or faster lease-up. Common programmes: LED lighting, solar-ready roofs, high-efficiency boilers, and improved loading arrangements. Quantify payback in cashflow terms and include tenant contribution where feasible. [3][2]
- For secondary stock, bundle reprofiles of bays to achieve modern unit geometry where planning permits. Model timing and uplift separately; do not assume immediate ERV capture on practical completion. [2][3]

Operational efficiency metrics and KPIs

- Track these KPIs at unit and portfolio level with formulas and reporting cadence:
- **Net Operating Income Margin** = (Gross Rental Income – Operating Expenses) / Gross Rental Income. Report monthly and on rolling 12-month basis.
- **Unit Re-let Cost** = Marketing + Tenant Incentives + Refurbishment Costs. Express as absolute value and as % of annual rent for each unit. Report after each re-let.
- **Average Time to Re-let** = Days between lease expiry/vacant possession and new lease commencement. Report by submarket and unit size.
- **CapEx per Unit Cycle** = Total refurbishment spend divided by number of units refurbished in the same period. Use for budgeting life-cycle replacement.
- **Service Charge Recovery Rate** = Recovered service charge / Billed service charge. Target full transparency and >90% recovery where feasible; escalate arrears monthly.
- **WAULT by Income** = Weighted average unexpired lease term based on contractual income. Use as a direct input to discount-rate sensitivity and refinancing planning. [4][6][3]
- Report KPIs monthly to the investment committee and update forecasts quarterly. Benchmark KPIs to a peer set and adjust operating plans where underperformance persists. [6][1]

Procurement, contractors and delivery

- Use framework agreements for common contractors to secure standardised pricing and SLAs. Procure major works by competitive tender with defined technical briefs and post-completion guarantees. Require contractor performance bonds for high-value works. [1][3]
- Implement a digital asset management system to record unit histories, work orders, expenditure and warranties. Use the system to aggregate spend by contractor and to enforce KPI-linked fee adjustments. [4]

Cashflow management and reserves

- Maintain dedicated short-term reserves for reactive repairs and a separate CapEx reserve for planned refurbishments. Size reserves using a unit-level life-cycle model that maps expected major repairs to years, then apply the contingency range above for execution risk. [3]
- Agree service-charge arrears policy and debtor escalation path with legal and letting teams. Model the cashflow impact of arrears in quarterly stress tests used for covenant monitoring. [6]

Risk controls and monitoring triggers

- Predefine operational triggers that require escalation: sustained increase in average re-let time for a submarket, service-charge recovery below benchmark, capital works slippage beyond agreed milestones, and contractor SLA breaches. Escalation should move from asset manager to regional director to investment committee depending on severity. [4][1]
- Integrate operational triggers into financing covenants where appropriate. Lenders should require milestone reporting on large EPC or remedial programmes and reserve releases tied to completion certificates. [6]

Practical implementation checklist at acquisition

- Prepare an asset-level operational due diligence checklist: unit-level condition survey, consolidated CapEx schedule, tenant repair obligations, current service-charge performance, contractor agreements, and historical re-let metrics where available. Use findings to set initial reserves and timing for works. [1][3][4]
- Insert milestone-based pricing or escrow conditions into the purchase agreement for material remediation items. Define acceptable contractor lists and permit vendor obligations to complete pre-agreed works where possible. [1][6]

Sources: [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]

Risk Assessment

Market risk

- Risk: Elevated repricing pressure from higher required returns and selective capital allocation in the sector. This compresses 成交 activity for secondary product and increases value sensitivity for assets with short income visibility. [6][1]
- Impact: Faster-than-expected yield widening will materially reduce capital values for assets reliant on capital appreciation to meet return targets. [6]
- Mitigants:
- Require scenario outputs for at least three yield-shock cases and present NAV and IRR under each to the investment committee. Use unit-level cashflow modelling to show where income resilience offsets yield moves. [6][4]
- Prioritise bids on assets with demonstrable income protectors: contracted indexation, strong tenant credit, or recent letting evidence. Price non-income-protecting assets with a clear margin for yield expansion. [1][3]
- Set clear acquisition gates linking purchase pricing to verified WAULT and rent-review mechanics. Where WAULT data is incomplete, require vendor warranties or escrowed price adjustments. [1]

Occupational and leasing risk

- Risk: Extended vacancy and slower lease-up driven by tenant affordability and higher operating costs for secondary stock. Unit-level turnover remains the primary source of ERV, creating execution risk where lettings pipelines are weak. [4][3]
- Impact: Increased downtime reduces short-term NOI and delays ERV capture, magnifying downside under yield stress. [4]
- Mitigants:
- Underwrite at the unit level for expected time-to-let and refurb cost. Demand detailed letting history as a condition precedent to bid. [4]
- Implement performance clauses with agents and contractors. Tie agency fees to lease commencement and cap re-let marketing fees to advertised vacancy periods. [4]
- Maintain a marketing and tenant incentive budget ringfenced from acquisition reserves to avoid ad hoc drawdowns that dilute returns.

Regulatory and planning risk

- Risk: Stricter energy performance rules and local planning constraints increase capex needs and delay redevelopment or densification schemes. These constraints are most acute in city-edge and inner-suburban locations. [3][1][2]
- Impact: Unplanned remediation and planning delays raise holding costs and reduce yield expansion potential for repositioning deals. [3]
- Mitigants:
- Require a signed remediation schedule and cost allowance prior to exchange for assets with material EPC shortfalls. Use milestone-based price release or vendor-funded works for significant items. [3][6]
- Run planning due diligence in parallel with commercial negotiations and include conditionality tied to planning outcomes where schemes materially affect valuation. [1][2]

Financial and refinancing risk

- Risk: Constrained debt markets and tighter covenant terms increase refinancing execution risk and elevate cost of capital for value-add plays. [6]
- Impact: Higher cost or reduced availability of debt can force equity dilution, extend hold periods, or trigger distressed disposals. [6]
- Mitigants:
- Underwrite with conservative leverage and require stress-tested DSCR and LTV profiles across refinancing windows. Secure forward-look covenant buffers and tenor diversity across facilities. [6]
- Layer capital with phased equity draws and covenant-light mezzanine only where ERV uplift is demonstrably executable. Use seller or contractor escrows to cover pre-agreed capex milestones. [1][3]

Environmental and physical risk

- Risk: Flooding, contamination and ageing building fabric increase underwriting uncertainty and insurance cost. Secondary stock faces higher remediation burdens. [2][3]
- Impact: Unanticipated remediation increases total project cost and may limit insurability or lender appetite. [2][3]
- Mitigants:
- Insist on site-specific environmental surveys and quantified remediation budgets pre-exchange. Hold separate remediation reserves and require warranty-backed contractor coverage where major works are needed. [2][3]

- Exclude high-risk plots from core allocations unless remediation scope is contractually managed and funded.

Operational execution risk

- Risk: Procurement failures, contractor delays and weak service-charge recovery reduce operational performance and increase unit downtime. Smaller, fragmented owners often lack standardised delivery models, which increases per-unit cost. [4]
- Impact: Execution failures magnify vacancy duration and capex overrun, reducing realised returns and weakening covenant metrics. [4]
- Mitigants:
- Centralise procurement on standard frameworks and require performance bonds or retention on major works. Use a digital asset management platform to track histories and warranties. [4]
- Set KPIs that drive fee structures for contractors and agents, and require monthly reporting on unit-level re-let timing and service-charge recovery to trigger corrective action.

Transaction and exit risk

- Risk: Market appetite for secondary lots can evaporate quickly, leaving portfolios difficult to trade without price concessions. Fragmented reporting of yields and price-per-sqft increases comp uncertainty. [1][5]
- Impact: Exit timing and price become more uncertain, adding risk to hold-period IRR assumptions. [1]
- Mitigants:
- Build exit optionality into business plans. Maintain a trancheable hold strategy that allows sale of modern nodes separately from secondary lots. Acquire documentation to support tranche separation at purchase. [1][5]
- Require primary comp data and verified registered-sale extracts before finalising exit yield assumptions.

Residual risk matrix and monitoring triggers

- High probability, high impact: yield widening on non-income-protected assets. Trigger: sustained deterioration in buyer enquiry quality or a material widening in bid-ask spreads in target submarket. Response: pause acquisitions and rerun valuation under the next-stress scenario. [6][1]
- Medium probability, high impact: planning or EPC remediation delays for repositioning assets. Trigger: missed planning milestone beyond contractual timetable. Response: draw on escrow, enforce vendor remediation, or reprice transaction. [1][3]

- Medium probability, medium impact: contractor delivery failure leading to re-let slippage.
Trigger: three consecutive KPI misses on response times or refurbishment completion.
Response: replace contractor under framework, escalate to regional director. [4]

Governance and allocation of responsibility

- Investment committee to approve the risk-weighted return matrix for each acquisition. Assets with execution risk require explicit capex milestones, escrow arrangements and quarterly remediation reporting. [6][1]
- Asset manager to report monthly on unit-level KPIs and escalate predefined triggers to the regional director. Lenders to receive milestone certificates before tranche releases. [4][6]

Bottom-line mitigation priorities

- Avoid concentrated exposure to secondary stock without vendor-funded remediation or deep pricing margin. [3]
- Insist on unit-level underwriting, milestone-based pricing mechanics, and robust contingency reserves to manage letting and regulatory execution risk. [4][1][3]
- Maintain financing structures with tenor and covenant flexibility to absorb operational delays and temporary income shortfalls. [6]

Conclusion

Summary of findings

- **Income resilience** will determine which MLI assets outperform through the current rate cycle. Investors must prioritise short re-letting risk, contractual indexation and modern energy performance to protect cashflow [1][6][3].
- The market requires a persistent risk premium for MLI versus larger regional logistics. That premium sustains valuation dispersion and raises re-pricing sensitivity for assets without clear income protectors [6].
- Supply constraints in city-edge and last-mile submarkets create selective scarcity for modern small-bay product. That scarcity supports landlord outcomes where operational execution is strong [1][2].
- Secondary, energy-inefficient stock carries concentrated execution risk from capex, letting downtime and regulatory remediation. Successful repositioning depends on disciplined capex timing and verified planning pathways [3][2].

Outlook

- Short term (12 months): higher-for-longer interest rates will limit yield compression and favour assets with immediate income visibility. Transaction activity will stay selective and concentrate on modern nodes with low vacancy risk [6][1].
- Medium term (3–5 years): if real yields retreat then pricing will broaden and value-add strategies that have executed EPC and letting plans will capture outsized returns. Regions with constrained consenting pipelines will see stronger rental momentum where occupier demand remains dense [1][5].
- Policy and operating-cost trends will continue to raise the bar for older stock. Accelerating regulatory pressure on building performance increases required remedial spend and shortens the investable universe for core buyers [3][6].

Recommended portfolio positioning and execution

- Target allocation mix: **Core/core-plus 50–65%, Value-add 20–35%, Opportunistic 0–10%**. Weight core capital to prime, modern small-bay nodes to preserve liquidity and downside protection. Value-add positions should be selected only where planning and EPC remediation are contractually de-risked.
- Underwriting rules: require unit-level cashflow modelling, milestone-based capex phasing, and a conservative leverage buffer. Price secondary lots with explicit execution haircuts and holdback mechanics. Use verified registered-sale comps before final pricing [1][3][6].

- Capital and delivery mechanics: insist on vendor-funded works or escrow for material remediation, stage equity draws against completion certificates, and set contingency provisions for capex delivery at **10–20%** of forecast spend. Centralise procurement and enforce KPI-linked contractor fees to reduce per-unit execution risk [3][4][6].

Tactical bid and asset-management actions

- Bid discipline: apply the documented MLI yield premium in preliminary pricing and tighten only where WAULT, indexation and EPC credentials are independently verified. Adjust bid matrices to reflect unit-level vacancy and re-let timing rather than portfolio averages [6][1][4].
- Leasing playbook: prioritise programmes that shorten downtime and lower tenant running costs, for example LED and fabric upgrades where tenant contributions are feasible. Measure success by unit re-let time and re-let cost as a percent of annual rent. Track WAULT by income monthly [3][4].
- Platform approach: aggregate modern nodes to capture operational scale benefits. Use platform buys to reduce per-unit marketing costs and to accelerate ERV capture on frequent re-lets [6][1].

Monitoring triggers and decision rules

- Rate trigger: if long-term real yields fall materially from current levels in a sustained manner, re-evaluate hold-versus-sell and consider rotating into secondary lots with executed remediation. Monitor yield moves and rerun valuation sensitivities at each 25 bps increment [6].
- Execution trigger: miss of two consecutive capex milestones or three KPI breaches on re-let timing should trigger remediation funding draws, contractor replacement or investment-committee review. Escalate serious breaches to the regional director for immediate action [4][1].
- Occupier trigger: a sustained rise in average unit downtime within a target submarket requires tightening of underwriting assumptions for new bids in that submarket and mobilisation of an accelerated leasing budget.

Active management, conservative leverage and strict milestone-based pricing are the operational levers that will preserve returns while markets normalise. Prioritise assets with demonstrable income protection and executable remediation plans to capture relative value when yield conditions improve [1][3][6].

References

- [1] multi-let-and-mid-box-report • <https://www.jll.com/en-uk/insights/multi-let-and-mid-box-report>

- [2] industrial-logistics-rents-maps-h2-2024 • <https://www.colliers.com/en-gb/research/industrial-logistics-rents-maps-h2-2024>
- [3] Multi-let-July-2024 • <https://nmrk.imgix.net/gerald-eve/2024/07/Multi-let-July-2024.pdf>
- [4] Multi-let-07-23 • <https://nmrk.imgix.net/gerald-eve/2023/07/Multi-let-07-23.pdf>
- [5] uk-industrial-positioning-for-the-next-phase-of-growth • https://am.landg.com/asset/4aaed9/globalassets/lgin/_document-library/insights/uk-industrial-positioning-for-the-next-phase-of-growth.pdf
- [6] multi-let-and-mid-box-autumn-2024 • <https://www.jll.com/en-uk/insights/multi-let-and-mid-box-autumn-2024>