



The Planning
Inspectorate

Application by Four Ashes Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

Unaccompanied Site Inspection 2

Examining Authority's Record of an Unaccompanied Inspection of the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) and East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (EMG)

Thursday 28 February 2019

Paul Singleton, Examining Authority (ExA) for the application, undertook a second Unaccompanied Site Inspection (US2) on Thursday 28 February 2019 following the completion of the first Issue Specific Hearing.

The purpose of the inspection was for the ExA to familiarise himself with the general form and layout of DIRFT which has been operating as a SRFI for some years and has been expanded since first opening. The visit also enabled the ExA to observe the initial stages of construction of EMG for which a Development Consent Order was granted in January 2016.

The inspection was undertaken using public highway and estate roads accessible to the public and did not involve entering private land or secure areas. As the ExA did not enter private land this allowed the inspection to be carried out on an unaccompanied basis and made it unnecessary under the Examination Rules¹ for notice of the site inspection to be given. No other persons were present at the site inspection and the ExA did not engage with any other persons about the purpose of his visit.

Particulars of Unaccompanied Site Inspection – US2.

US2 was made by car, travelling from Wolverhampton via the M6 and M1 motorways to DIRFT and then via the M1 motorway to EMG. The visit took place in the afternoon with the ExA spending about 30 minutes at DIRFT and a much shorter time at EMG which, at the time of the visit, was a construction site.

¹ Rule 16 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

DIRFT

The ExA undertook as full a visit to DIRFT as is possible using only the publicly accessible roads to understand the overall layout and the different zones referred to in the surveys undertaken by Four Ashes Limited's traffic consultants and set out in Technical Note 5 – *HGV and Non-HGV Trip Generation* appended to the Environmental Statement for WMI application [APP-140]. The ExA undertook a general viewing of the range of building types, sizes and heights; the range and quality of elevational and roof design and cladding; access and servicing arrangements for individual warehouse units; and the extent and effectiveness of landscaping to site boundaries. He also observed gatehouse and security arrangements at the various operators' sites within DIRFT.

The ExA was able to see into the part of main Rail Port and to observe the height of container stacking and the operation of reach stacker vehicles moving containers within the site. He was also able to see into part of the separate rail freight terminal adjacent to the Sainsbury's distribution centre to observe the container stacking and operation of overhead gantry cranes within that area.

The ExA observed the general nature of the estate roads and the nature and volume of traffic using those roads as well as the use of various laybys alongside them. Although the area was not accessible, the ExA was able to identify the general area of land which is being developed as a further phase of DIRFT under a Development Consent Order granted in July 2014.

East Midlands Gateway

EMG was in the early stages of construction at the time of the ExA's visit and could be viewed only from the first part of the new site access road and other adjoining public roads.

The ExA observed the distance and approximate travelling time between DIRFT and EMG. He both viewed and used the new EMG access junction with the main highway network. He also viewed the first warehouse building which appeared to be nearing completion at the time of the visit and parts of the extensive earthworks which are visible from the access and the adjacent highways.