

## Summary

Brewood Civic Society objects to the West Midlands Interchange proposed by Four Ashes Ltd on two grounds.

First and foremost, it would destroy 297 hectares of the greenbelt.

Secondly, the Society believes that other locations might be more favourable.

### Question 1.2.4

**South Staffordshire District Council** shares the society's concern regarding encroachment into the green belt. It says:

“Our position historically has been to raise serious concerns about the scale of incursion into the Green Belt caused by this type of development. One of the key priorities in the Council Plan 2016-2020 is to protect the Green Belt. This development is 'inappropriate' in the Green Belt, by definition, and this means that the applicants will be required to demonstrate the existence of 'very special circumstances' that are sufficient to outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt in this location, and any other harm.

The Council is aware of the National Policy Statement (National Networks NPS) that seeks to create a network of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) across the country. Shifting freight from road to rail and supporting economic growth are key strategic aims of the Government. The Council also recognises the importance of securing jobs for local people and this is expressed as a priority in the Council Plan 2016-2020.

The Council will be asking the Secretary of State for Transport, when making his decision, to consider very carefully whether or not there exists alternative sites that perform at least as well as, if not better than, Four Ashes in meeting the Government's aim of creating a national network of SRFIs. In particular, whether there are alternative sites that are brownfield in character and ideally not located in the Green Belt. The 250 hectares of land at Four Ashes is predominantly a greenfield site within the Green Belt.”

Ref: <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/west-midlands-interchange.cfm>

### Question 1.2.10

Regarding possible alternative sites, **Transport for West Midlands**, in its West Midlands Freight Strategy, December 2016 says:

“This strategy acknowledges that several developers have aspirations for a SRFI in southern Staffordshire. The strategy is neutral as to a preferred location, and acknowledges that, while there is finite demand for large warehouses, any development which provides rail access to a concentration of distribution centres will maximise potential for rail freight.

Intermodal Rail Freight Interchanges

IRFI are characterised as intermodal transfer terminals which are not located in an SRFI.

They provide capacity to meet future demand and ensure rail freight operators have access to the metropolitan area to maximise rail freight potential.

Work undertaken by independent consultants suggested there was a strategic case for additional IRFI terminal in the Black Country which would address some of these issues. The study assessed potential suitable sites and identified Bescot Yard as the most suitable location as a consequence of:

- Connectivity to local and national road networks;
- High levels of rail connectivity and accessibility to key markets and destinations;
- Proximity to the Black Country.”

Ref: <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/1207/west-midlands-freight-strategy.pdf>