

From: [REDACTED]
To: [West Midlands Interchange](#)
Subject: TR050005 West Midland Interchange.
Date: 03 April 2019 11:10:18

Re Your Ref 050005 West Midlands Interchange.

Interested Parties. 20013474/20015016

Dear Mr Singleton

Ref West Midland Interchange

I write to express my deep concerns regarding plans submitted by Four Ashes Ltd. For a Strategic Rail Freight Hub in rural South Staffordshire.

Green Belt Considerations

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First a historical note, in 1970 the Government wanted to link the, then, new town of Telford with Birmingham by motorway. Two routes were proposed, Northern Route following the A5 and the Southern Route bordering Wolverhampton and linking with the M6 at Hilton. Brewood Parish Council of which I was a member, fought successfully for the Southern Route as it formed a natural barrier between Wolverhampton and Rural South Staffordshire. Staffordshire, at the time was second only to Cheshire as milk producing counties, both have now been overtaken by Devon. This barrier has proved to be the case over the past 40+ years, even the i54 development with JLR etc. is South of the M54. This barrier is now under threat again from Four Ashes Ltd. Plan for the Strategic Rail Freight Hub.

The purpose of this Green Belt is not only to avoid the Urban spread of the West Midlands, which stretches over 40 miles to South of Coventry, but also to provide the means of converting the CO2 emissions created by Urban life. "The lungs for the towns and cities" The proposed development will destroy over 2000 life giving trees as well as miles of hedgerows essential for converting CO2 emissions. Acres of farmland, which forms the Greenbelt will also be lost which is hardly compensated by the proposed Calf Heath Community Park.

Site Suitability.

Four Ashes Ltd. Claim that the area is "poorly served by modern rail linked distribution facilities", and "WMI will be closest facilities to nearly 95000 businesses, 8500 retailers and 7500 manufacturers". Most of the latter are in the West Midlands and not in Rural Staffordshire or Shropshire. At the initial exhibition I was informed by a representative of FAL that if a shipment of containers of tyres, for example, arrived at Folkestone the containers would be loaded onto a train and transported to WMI thus keeping 62 HGV's off the road. On arrival at WMI they will be transferred to 62 HGV to take them back to

Coventry, home of the car industry that will use the tyres, some 40+ miles away. A round trip of over 80 miles or 80 times 62 HGV's =4960+ miles and then multiply this by 10 trains a week. FAL's search for alternative sites have not taken place in the West Midlands. More suitable sites, not in Greenbelt, can be found in the West Midlands and, therefore, nearer to its users. Within 13 miles of Four Ashes there is an ideal Brownfield site in the West Midlands, Bescot Yard at Walsall. This has been identified as a suitable site by West Midlands Combined Authority. This is in the Centre of the 'Black Country', the manufacturing 'heart' of the West Midlands. Within 12 miles of the site at Donington, Telford. There is a freight terminal that promised similar number of trains but has had only 50 trains a year OR less than ONE train a week. It is not significantly used by many of the businesses it was intended to serve. My concern is that the proposal is not to connect the warehouses to the rail network for up to 8 years and even then there is no indication how this will be done. The rail link at Gailey may not be delivered at all and the area will then become a massive storage site which will NOT be fully utilized.

The site is next to a Chemical Works with its very volatile Chemicals and next to it is a gas storage site moved from the centre of Wolverhampton because of the danger of explosions near apartments both of which are in danger from electric trains.

Transport Networks

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The South Yorkshire Gateway, recently opened by Princess Anne, is served by a 4 lane (2 in either direction) dual carriageway off the M18. It is also served by Robin Hood Airport. There are no such facilities at Gailey. East Midlands Gateway, within 50 miles, is also served by East Midlands Airport. An alternative site in the West Midlands, not investigated by FAL would be between Coventry and Birmingham served by M6, M69 and M1 plus Coventry airport. A feeder road of similar dimensions as that in South Yorkshire from the M6 has been dismissed by Highways England as not viable and besides it would result in more loss of green belt and farmland which is becoming more valuable. Currently any delays on the M6 through an accident etc. causes the road network in the area to become gridlocked. Part of the justification for HS2 was that the West Coast Line was at full capacity. The M6 Toll was constructed to relieve congestion on M6, this has not happened. The M6 continues to operate at over capacity. There is no scope for additional traffic either on M6 or rail traffic on West Coast Mainline. When the M6/M6Toll/M54 Northern link is completed the A449 will be downgraded from a trunk road, therefore, the justification that Interchanges should be next to a trunk road no longer exists.

Air Quality and Carbon Emissions

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The WMI will generate a huge amount of traffic, not only from the HGV's which will be involved with the warehouses but the employees getting to work. It is accurately predicted that there will be an extra over 18000 vehicles a day which will generate 16.3 tons of extra CO2 emissions. So much for the EU goal of cutting CO2 emissions by 37.5% from cars and 31% by 2030 compared with 2021 predicted levels NOT increasing.

Noise

With extra freight on the West Coast Line, which is at full capacity, would necessitate the freight moving at night thus creating noise 24 hours of the day, especially at night with the loading and unloading of trains. At present noise from the trains is kept to a minimum as the line passes through a cutting but the development would need to be at ground level increasing noise pollution. 24 hour operation necessitates the use of differing staff patterns which causes disruption throughout the 24 hour period.

Socio-Economic

South Staffordshire Local Profile 2017 states that the area that the development will attract employment from is less than 1% unemployed. The majority of the labour force in employment according to the same Local Profile is semi-skilled and as the Development will attract unskilled staff, those in employment will not re-locate locally, therefore, the labour force will have to be drawn from areas of higher unemployment. Stoke on Trent to the north and Walsall to the South are examples of high unemployment. The site itself is only served by a 'bus service every hour connecting to Wolverhampton and Stafford. There is no other public transport service particularly from areas of high unemployment, locally, such as Telford and Cannock. There are no plans by Network Rail to re-open Four Ashes or Gailey Stations. The alternative is to build houses for the work force thus destroying the very nature of Rural Staffordshire and 'sicking' it into the West Midlands.

Cultural Heritage

The Romans occupied the site, or very close, for nearly 400 years and left their mark on the area. Pennocrucium, the exact location has yet to be established, would have been of considerable size as a major garrison town with the junction of several Roman roads. The important one being the junction of two major roads, one going to Holyhead, (Watling St.), and the other going to Chester. This junction is at Stretton, less than 2 miles from the site, there is also a Roman road from Stretton to Featherstone (Monument No 1029299 documented by Historic England) that passes within metres of the site of WMI. The Saxon occupation of the area is also significant as bordering the site, (on the other side of A449), is an area known as Engleton named after a Saxon tribe as is ENGLAND. In light of the comparative closeness to the M6 Toll and the A5 of the 'find' of the Staffordshire Hoard and how it almost became covered in concrete for ever, I feel a very concentrated historical search needs to be undertaken before the Cultural Heritage is lost for ever.

Landscape and Visual Impact

The sheer size of the 'ugly' Warehousing, up to 30 metres high, will destroy the 'openness' of the Countryside. The Beriscote development on the same site is small by comparison and is already visible from the Village of Brewood let alone further afield as Stafford, Cannock Chase and St. George's in Telford. Spoiling the landscape will not only be the

warehouses but also the storage of containers and there is no amount of screening that will 'hide' the development. The light pollution from a 24 hour operation will be 100%. It will prove a veritable "Blot on the Countryside"

Ecology and Nature Conservation.

Insignificant notice has been taken of the effect of the removal of trees and hedgerows to the ecology and nature of the area. One can provide artificial habitats such as bat boxes but what about their food? The natural habitats of wild life etc. cannot be replaced by a small area of Urban Parkland on the site (Calf Heath Community Park) OR replacement trees that do not grow instantly.

These are the views of two Brewood residents and if more information is require we are only too happy to oblige.

Yours sincerely

David and Jill Evans.

Interested Parties 20013474 and 20015016