

THE COLLECTIVE OF PARISH COUNCILS

The Collective of Parish Councils would request the Inspector to take the following information into account before making a final decision.

Alternative Site "Network Rail – Bescot Freight Depot"

The need for 300 hectares of rail served warehousing at Four Ashes is questionable when capacity exists at the Bescot (Walsall) Sidings Freight Yard.

Network Rail is currently proposing a new National Rail Sleeper Manufacturing facility at Bescot; this is a Brownfield site already connected to the West Coast mainline and should be considered for warehousing to meet some of the rail connected demand for the West Midlands prior to consideration of the use for rail sleeper manufacture.

The regenerated freight yard is being proposed by Network Rail because of the closure of Washwood Heath to accommodate an HS2 Hub together with relocation of their Doncaster facilities, however, in our view the demand for warehouse served rail connection for the West Midlands should be partly provided by the capacity at Bescot Sidings.

The applicant has not considered the Bescot site, the consideration of this Brownfield site should take priority in the planning balance, thus reducing the need for the release of up to 300 hectares of Green Belt Land at Four Ashes.

Clearly, the size of the Bescot site would preclude it from being considered as a direct alternative, however, its use for rail served warehousing would have the capability to reduce the need for 300 hectares of Green Belt at Four Ashes.