

3.1.1 The Flexibility provided for in the draft Requirements

I understand from the ExQ3 document that the applicant is now seeking flexibility regarding the timing of building the rail hub, with the possibility of actually never building the rail hub, if there are matters outside the control of the applicant, which could prevent this.

The applicant has indicated that significant warehouses will need to be built, in advance of the rail hub, in order to help fund the building of the rail hub, and to ensure occupier demand for the rail services once they are available.

In the summary literature, made available to local residents, the applicant made no mention of the fact that warehouses will be built before the rail hub, in order to finance the rail hub and determine whether there is a demand for a rail hub. Instead, all the publicity indicated that there was existing demand for a rail hub, and the West Midland Interchange would be the best location to satisfy this demand.

If this is not the case, then the building of the warehouses is at best, speculative, and does not therefore meet the requirements of the special Very Special Circumstances needed to justify development in the Green Belt.

While the ownership of Four Ashes Limited is opaque, at best, it is part owned by companies, having significant assets at their disposal. This would suggest that the rail interchange could be funded, without the need for the warehouses to be built in advance of the rail hub.

I consider this to be such a fundamental change in the proposal that the application should now be brought back to the initial consultation, which is open to all local residents.

3.2.1 It appears that the Applicant has accepted that modelling in the original air quality assessment resulted in significant over-estimations of NO₂ levels at some receptors (along motorway corridors) and in significant under-estimations of NO₂ levels at other receptors (along other road corridors).

Given the significant resources available to the applicant, it throws into doubt the integrity of the applicant. Despite recent publicity about the impact of air quality, the applicant has shown scant regard for the health and safety of the local residents. This would indicate that other representations made by the applicant are not reliable.