



The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

West Midlands Interchange

(TR050005)

Correspondence received after the
close of the Examination at 23:59 on
Tuesday 27 August 2019

No.	From	Organisation	Date Received
1	Laura-Beth Hutton	Four Ashes Limited	3 October 2019
2	Anita Anderson		8 November 2019
3	Anita Anderson		
4	Janet Taylor		4 February 2020
5	Richard Hancher		13 February 2020
6	Debbie Gibson		14 February 2020
7	Ian Cooper	Greensforge Sailing Club	14 February 2020
8	Theo Clarke MP		12 March 2020

From: [Hutton, Laura-Beth](#)
To: [Ranger, Robert](#)
Cc: [Thomson, Morag](#); [West Midlands Interchange](#)
Subject: West Midlands Interchange
Date: 03 October 2019 15:35:31

Hi Rob

I hope you are well.

We have just been doing a check of Schedule 15 and the documentation listed. We have noted that there is an erroneous mention of a plan in the schedule – Document 2.13D (Sheet 4 of the Highway Classification Plans) – this plan doesn't exist and shouldn't be mentioned in the schedule. The Highway Classification plan series only has three sheets and the Key Plan.

Apologies for this error.

Please could this be passed on to the ExA for the purposes of reporting, so that we can avoid the need for any rectification should the Order be granted.

Kind regards
Laura-Beth

Laura-Beth Hutton | Principal Associate | Planning and Infrastructure Consenting | Eversheds Sutherland

T: +44 115 931 7642

M: [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [West Midlands Interchange](#)
Date: 08 November 2019 14:33:56

Dear Mr Singleton,

To keep you informed. 2 days ago the M6 was closed between 12 and 13 due to an accident and today there has been another one in the same place.
All traffic diverting off Mway at J12 and all surrounding roads congested.

Anita Anderson

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Secretary of State,

The review of National Infrastructure Projects is an enormous task and without a doubt the review of the West Midlands Interchange with over 1000 documents and submissions has been one of the largest of its type.

The Stop The West Midlands Interchange Group has submitted extensive reports against this proposal, however I wish to reiterate again the impact that this will have on our surrounding road network.

According to National Policy for SRFI's they should be placed in appropriate locations. WMI is not connected to an extensive trunk road network or near to a major conurbation. The A5 heading west from Gailey to Priorslee was detrunked in 1995 and narrows in places and is highly unsuitable for HGV's and this has not been considered in the traffic impact assessments.

An additional 20,000 approximate vehicle movements per day would be generated with the majority predicted to use J12 of the M6 which of course is now operating as a Smart Motorway which, as we are all aware are generating major problems and safety concerns.

The group commissioned an independent Report in respect of traffic impact from Milestone which concluded that the inconsistencies, lack of evidence and fundamental flaws in the documents submitted by the Applicants meant that the conclusions sought to be drawn by them cannot be considered acceptable.

To also highlight the situation that the default position in a morning is a queue at Gailey Island, then a queue to join the M6 at Junction 12 – where there are so many 40 ton HGV's most mornings, filtering in is difficult as the drivers simply will not move over or slacken speed. Getting onto the M6 South at J12 has it's added complications of traffic joining the M6 Toll and vice versa with traffic filtering from the Toll lanes to use the "old" M6.

The traffic flows contained in the illustrative diagram make no distinction between HGVs and cars in the numbers. It is only in the Draft Environmental Statement that we see the full picture.

Road	2021 total vehicles no devpt	2021 total vehicles + devpt	% Change	2021 HGVs no devpt	2021 HGVs with devpt	Change
M6 J13- J14	154,703	156,209	0.97%	26,692	28,035	5.03%
A449 J13 – Pinfold Lane	16,172	18,168	12.34%	1,200	1,845	53.8%
A5 between J12 & site access	21,260	31,601	48.64%	1,358	5,358	294.63%
A5 between A449 and A41	19,918	21,307	6.97%	944	1,433	51.8%
A5 between A449 and Gravelly Way	22,306	22,541	1.05%	841	2,178	158.87%

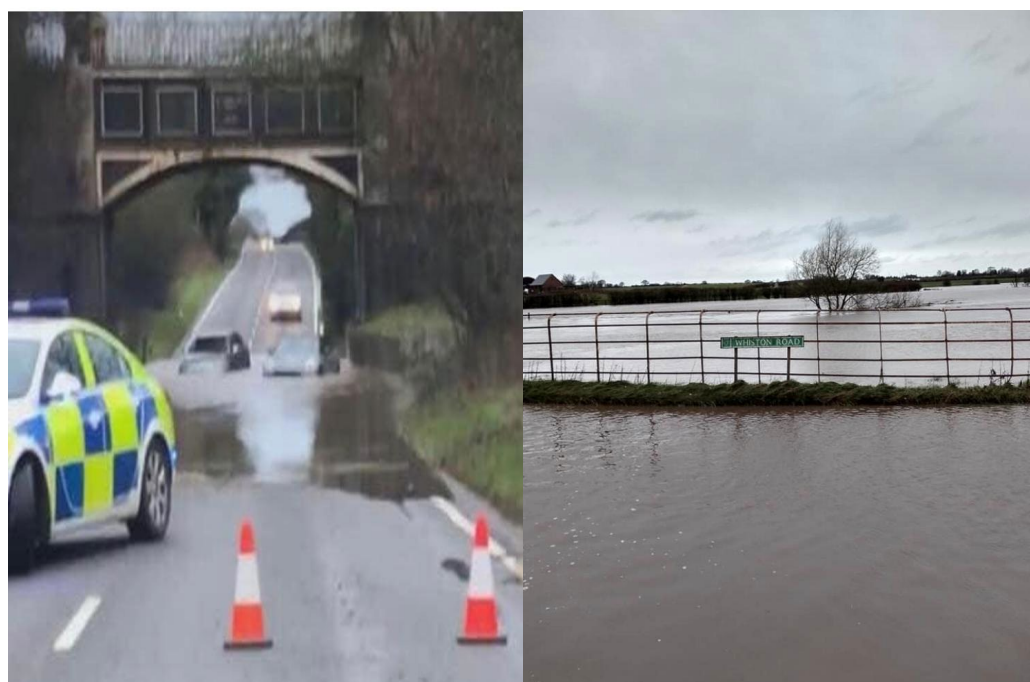
A449 between M54 J2 and Brewood Rd	27,678	32,693	18.12%	1,024	2,703	164.05%
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These figures show that, while the increase in total numbers of vehicles may be modest on some sections of the network, the increase in the number of HGV's will be very substantial. In all the cases mentioned above except the first, the number of HGV's will increase by at least 50% over current numbers and in some cases it will be 100-250%.

The applicant mentions the junction at Claygates Road – this is a notorious junction for accidents. Accidents at this junction create significant delays on the A5.

With storm Chiara and storm Dennis over the last 2 weeks, this is the impact in terms of flooding that this has had on our surrounding roads. The left hand picture is on the A5 heading West from Gailey Island and the whole length of this part of the A5 has been closed (16th February 2020). The right hand picture is the flooding in the surrounding lanes. So you can see, this is a very busy main stretch of road closed and if it remains so, there will be impending chaos when the working week begins.

A5 heading towards Weston Park



The Strategy for the A5 identifies priorities where investment to heavy rail along or adjacent to the A5 will be focused set out within Network Rails High Level Output Statement (HLOS) and Route Utilisation Strategies, along with Transport Plans and documents such as The West Midlands Regional Rail Development Plan. These will include:

Nuneaton – Coventry – Leamington Spa improvements including platform lengthening at Bedworth, new stations at Arena, Kenilworth and Bermuda Park and new platform bay at Coventry. Improvements to stations in the Trent Valley, Birmingham, Leicester and Birmingham – Lichfield corridors.

ROAD SAFETY The proposed works to the local road network will have the effect of increasing traffic on some country lanes and through the centres of villages; they will not, as the Applicant contends; reduce it. The proposed weight limits on a number of country lanes are not enforceable and are likely to be ignored. There is a significantly increased risk to the safety and wellbeing of local residents from increased carbon emissions, light, noise and heavy traffic on unsuitable roads and the consequential rat-running.

For all the reasons that have been submitted in all documentation, can I please urge you to seriously consider the impact that this will have in this rural area of South Staffs and refuse this application.

Anita Anderson,

[REDACTED]

From: Janet Taylor <grant@shapps.com>
Date: 4 February 2020 at 14:03:31 GMT
To: "contact@shapps.com" <contact@shapps.com>
Cc: "shappsg@parliament.uk" <shappsg@parliament.uk>
Subject: Contact Grant form, Re: "West Midlands Interchange"
Reply-To: [REDACTED]

From: Janet Taylor [REDACTED]
Subject: West Midlands Interchange

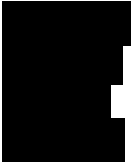
Message Body:

I write at the suggestion of Gavin Williamson to ask for you to dismiss the application of the already wealthy four ashes group for a so called WM interchange - in reality a disingenuous attempt to build a vast number of warehouses despite failing to prove any need for them other than providing a greater return on land usage than for far more necessary food production or even housing. Your government talks climate change but might be signing off the destruction of irreplaceable open land and wildlife. There are no useful plans to put in place necessary infrastructure leading to adding heavy traffic to an already overloaded A5 and A449 that cannot cope at the moment. The detrimental health effects of increased largely diesel heavy goods vehicles are frightening and unnecessary. This application is about box ticking to service greed NOT to help anyone . PLEASE do not let this happen

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13 February 2020

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State,

The proposed West Midlands Interchange

I understand you will very soon be making a final decision to approve or reject the development of the West Midlands Interchange, a proposed rail freight interchange in Staffordshire.

We have had a robust consultation process which I am sure has set out the pros and cons of this development. I am writing though as a local resident to urge you to reject this development as it is unlikely to achieve its principle aim of reducing congestion.

This week this government gave the go ahead for HS2, sending a clear signal that it supports the development of infrastructure to level up economic activity across the UK, and improve transport for us all. The decision on HS2 is fantastic for us in the Midlands. It will remove long distance passenger rail traffic from the network, particularly on the WCML, and enable a significant increase and improvement in local rail services.

I recognise and fully support the need to take freight off the road to reduce emissions and support the development of rail freight interchanges. HS2 is also a critical enabler for this. However, the West Midlands Interchange is the right concept in entirely the wrong location to achieve this.

It is proposed in the middle of a section of already heavily congested motorway, rather than above and below that section where it would genuinely reduce congestion. Whilst the adjacency of the WCML and the M6 suggest an ideal location on paper, the additional 18,000 vehicle movements per day will significantly worsen rather than improve congestion on an already congested road. This entirely misses the point of a rail freight interchange.

The proposed site lies in the middle of greenbelt, with few if any manufacturers or direct customers in the immediate proximity. Positioning it closer to Birmingham, Stoke or Manchester would position it closer to manufacturers and other customers, allowing road vehicle movements to be minimised, enabling it to deliver its core purpose.

Surely it makes more sense to position a rail freight interchange next to manufacturing businesses in the West Midlands, rather than in the middle of fields in Staffordshire.

I am also greatly concerned given recent controversy that these additional 18,000 vehicle movements will be made on a section of motorway that has been converted to smart motorway complete with All Lane Running (ALR).

Your decision to suspend further smart motorway openings pending review is welcomed in light of recent concerns. However, at a time when the future and safety of smart motorways is in doubt, it seems irresponsible to add an additional 18,000 vehicle movements per day into a section already dependent on ALR.

The developer's modelling assumed capacity growth from completion of smart motorway programmes between Birmingham and Manchester which are now in doubt, and is based on the capacity provided by ALR in the vicinity. There are therefore significant grounds to suspect that the developer's modelling of local road capacity is now inaccurate and overestimates the capacity on the local road network.

It seems prudent therefore to reject this proposal until long terms issues around smart motorways are resolved.

I also ask you to consider the evidence that the rail freight interchange is only being used in this instance as convenient justification to bypass planning regulations and build warehousing in the greenbelt.

Throughout consultation the developer went to great lengths to minimise its commitment to rail, carefully defining a set of reasons within the draft DCO and other papers that would alleviate the requirement to build the rail connection. You will note that they also submitted further arguments in this regard after the consultation, at one point constructing a legal argument that merely having "the ability" to have a rail connection would justify this development as a rail freight interchange even if one were never built.

The developers propose an absolute bare minimum number of trains per day. The number has varied between 6 and 10 per day in their submissions, even with HS2 in place. This is a very low number that will take very little freight off the road.

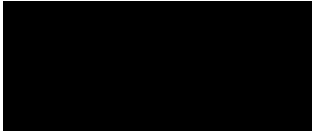
Better options exist in the region for rail freight interchanges, such as the site in Birmingham proposed by Midlands Connect with a far more aspirational 36 trains per day. A site which also meets the criteria of being close to manufacturing businesses, and below the most heavily congested section of the M6 where it would genuinely relieve congestion.

Better options to reduce congestion also exist for this site. The same adjacency of the M6 and the WCML would lend itself perfectly to a park and ride passenger station to serve the Midlands. Local residents have called for this for years, as it would take thousands of passenger vehicles off a heavily congested section of the M6, rather than adding to them.

So I urge you to reject this proposal on the basis that this is the right concept in entirely the wrong location. The developer's arguments give reasonable grounds for concern that they will not actually construct the rail element of this proposal. And better options exist for this site that would take more vehicles off the road.

If we are going to build infrastructure in the greenbelt, let's at least do something that will fix the problem we are trying to address rather than making it worse.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Hancher

From: D GIBSON [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 February 2020 09:13
To: grant@shapps.com <<mailto:grant@shapps.com>>
Subject: Note from Debbie Gibson to your Facebook Page Grant Shapps

Dear Secretary of State,

In less than two weeks time you will make a decision on the West Midlands Interchange. A decision that could affect my life and the lives of many other people.

I know this is a great responsibility that you will not take lightly.

I trust that the planning inspectorate has fully reviewed all of the proposal and taken onboard the views of over a thousand people that took the time to respond. In comparison, and for such a rural location, that is more than responded to Hinckley power station. The whole process is very daunting and hard to understand for many people like myself.

There are many things the rural area has to offer, all of which are good for the environment and people's health. Calf Heath wood, miles of vital hedgerow, thousands of trees, Cycling, horse riding, fishing, sailing, canoeing, Pheasant shoots, canal cruises, public footpath, the Macmillan Cross Britain Way and running clubs all operate within the 700 acres of greenbelt. We simply can't wipe them out.

We are situated in the centre of an area of the M6 where the new smart motorway operates and has to run all

lanes as the M6 Toll, M54 and M5 all merge very close to this section of the M6. Plans have also recently been approved for a new M54-M6 northern link road that will bring traffic directly onto the M6 from the M54 at junction 11, just 1 mile down from junction 12 where the M6 Toll also merges onto the M6.

As I'm sure you are aware there have been many many accidents including one death fairly recently on this section of the M6 and to add 18,000 vehicle movements to this area of Smart Motorway has massive safety implications.

I fully agree with government policy, that SRFIs are a fabulous idea, but they must be built in the right location and this area is not. There are many other more suitable sites that would not bring all of those vehicle movements to this area of Smart motorway, areas that would keep traffic away from this potentially dangerous section of the M6, such as Birmingham or Stoke, areas that are crying out for this development and employment.

The land owner has previously tried to develop this land but due to its greenbelt status the local planning authority denied his plans. I believe, as he is also one of the directors of Fourashes ltd, he has no intention of building the rail infrastructure and is only interested in by-passing the LA to build warehouses in the greenbelt.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Kind regards

Debbie Gibson,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 February 2020 10:56
To: POCorrespondence <POCorrespondence@dft.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: West Midlands Interchange Development threatens future of Greensforge Sailing Club

Dear Sir,

My name is Ian Cooper, I am the Principal and a Trustee of Greensforge Sailing Club. We are directly affected by the proposed WMI development; the reservoir we sail on is adjacent to the site. We are a small sailing club but are an RYA training centre, we also have very active Sea Scout and Sea Cadet groups. We contend that warehousing on the scale, height and proximity to the reservoir would alter the flow of the wind and cause such unpredictable turbulence that it could become dangerous to sail, especially for inexperienced helms.

The sailing club has formally responded to the supplementary questions from the Secretary of State dated 24th January but this morning Debbie Gibson and Maurice Cotton of Stop The Hub informed me that Four Ashes Ltd's solicitors, Eversheds, have submitted a further document that is relevant to us. The link to it is below. I read this last minute submission and was incensed by the untruths it contained and responded to Maurice by email.

Debbie Gibson suggests that I forward my reply to yourselves and I do so, verbatim (though the email addresses are redacted to comply with GDPR)

If you have any queries or seek further information please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Ian Cooper

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: Greensforge SC Wind Assessments
Date: 2020-02-14 08:58
From: D GIBSON

Hi Ian.

Send that heartfelt email to the SOS.

POCorrespondence@dft.gov.uk

Kind regards
Debbie Gibson.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone [1]

On Friday, February 14, 2020, 8:31 am, [REDACTED] wrote:

> Maurice,
>
> Thanks for this information.
>
> Are there any more underhand lengths these guys won't go to?
>
> They were obstructive on the Inspector's site visit.
>
> They lied about having keys to the clubhouse, then stated that they'd
> never had any (but interestingly did not deny that they had said they
> had keys).
>
> They now state that we have not presented any evidence to refute the
> findings of their computer modeling. Not true. They have ignored the
>
> empirical data we submitted comprising actual wind direction readings
> across the reservoir which proved that the base assumptions within
> their computer model was badly flawed.
>
> They plain dismissed the peer reviewed data we submitted from
> professional international wind flow analysts because the subject was
> concerned with wind energy and turbines rather than sailing
> conditions.
> Yes, that's true but it doesn't compromise the rules of physics, it's
> perfectly relevant to wind flow and turbulence.
>
> The Wolfson report from their expert (who is a yacht designer, not a
> wind analyst) gave an inaccurate and favourable summary of their
> computer model results, it contradicted RWDI's own conclusions within
> the original report.
>
> They are now claiming that if the SoS denies an exclusion zone for
> warehousing it's going to lose up to half a million square metres of
> WMI profit generation, sorry my mistake, nationally important
> strategic warehousing solution.
>
> Oh, we can always go to sail across the road. Simple solution but the
>
> clubs are totally different. Just three members of GSC would be able
> to sail at South Staffs in their own boats; GP14 and Solo dinghies.
> All other GSC members would have to sell their boats and buy
> replacements because South Staffs sail a very limited fleet of
> designs. As an analogy, I drive Saabs and have done for 25 years, ah
> but no longer.
> Now forced to buy BMW. Well, thank you but no thanks. It might cost
> some of our family members five times as much to sail across the road,
>
> they could not afford it. And not every sailor wants to be groomed to
>
> be a championship winning racer, certainly not me.
>
> The Applicant now dismisses the need for Wind Tunnel testing. It
> would be just another expense to them because the Council has no
> expertise and no money to refute any wind tunnel findings (likely
> manipulated if it went ahead). GSC wants a say in reviewing the
> results. Personally I suspect that they really don't want to do wind

> tunnel tests because that would prove GSC's assertions that the wind
> flow would be greatly influenced by warehousing.
>
> There is a real danger than the outcome will be that the sailing club
> folds after 46 years at Calf Heath. Worse than that we would have no
> compensation for this loss and would be bankrupted by having to
> demolish the clubhouse and restore the land to its former state which
> is a term
>
> of our licence should we vacate the site.
>
> It's the home straight now and it looks as though the big boys are
> going to win. The stakes are too high for them to lose. They will
> manipulate the evidence and maintain the dirty tricks right up to the
> wire. All objecting parties have done as much as they can. I am at as
> loss as to
>
> how we can prevent this development going ahead, or even how to reduce
>
> its scale.
>
> Regards,
>
> Ian
>
> Ian Cooper
> Principal & Trustee, Greensforge SC
>
> On 2020-02-14 00:11, Maurice Cotton wrote:
>> Hi Ian & Allison,
>> Hope you are well. Just a quick heads up. Whereas we have all
>> responded to the last Department for Transport / PINS request; have
>> you spotted that WMIs solicitors Eversheds also slid in a few extra
>> representations at the same time. One of them relates to you, and
> like
>> the main application, seeks to wriggle out of doing anything extra.
>> The reference is:
>>
>>
>> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR050005/TR050005-001455-Four%20Ashes%20Limited-Response%20to%20SoS%20Consultation-Appendix%203.pdf>
>> Regards,
>> Maurice Cotton
>>

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Theo Clarke MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR



CHH
RSP

Dear Grant,

9th March 2020

Following the petition that I presented to Parliament last month, my constituents have been waiting for the announcement of your decision regarding the proposed West Midlands Rail Freight Interchange (WMI). I have enclosed a copy of the petition that was submitted on behalf of the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP and my constituents on 26th February 2020, for your information.

A number of my constituents have contacted me over the past few days, as they are anxious to know what the current situation is regarding the proposed WMI. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise again my views on this matter. I believe that the proposed WMI is the wrong proposal in the wrong place. It will carve up a significant amount of the green belt and cause untold traffic chaos for local residents. During the planning inspection process, the applicants argued against any proposal to make them build the railway link before they built warehouses and accepted tenants. The railway it would seem, will be an after-thought. This in my opinion makes this application nothing more than a Trojan horse to build a standard road served industrial estate on green belt land. I would therefore urge you to refuse it.

I would be most grateful if you would kindly inform me when you are planning to make a statement on this matter to the House. I would also really appreciate it if you would advise me in writing as to what the current status of the proposed WMI is, so that I can update my constituents.

Yours ever,



Theo Clarke MP
Member of Parliament for Stafford

Enc: WMI petition [P002560], 26th February 2020

Petition

26th February 2020

UIN:
P002560

Theo Clarke

PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF GAILEY, PENKRIDGE, WHEATON ASTON,
BISHOPS WOOD, STAFFORD, AND STAFFORDSHIRE

26th February 2020

To the House of Commons,

The petition of residents of Gailey, Penkridge, Wheaton Aston, Bishops Wood, Stafford, and Staffordshire,

Declares that the current proposals to build the West Midlands Interchange at the A5 roundabout near Gailey will lead to mass congestion in the region, with over 18,000 extra vehicles occupying the A449 and A5, erode the identity of the small surrounding villages and have a devastating impact on the environment, with the development predicted to cause over 16 tonnes of added CO2 emissions.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government and Secretary of State for Transport to take all possible steps to reject these proposals and to ensure that the greenbelt is maintained for the benefit of future generations.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

[P002560]