



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION (SoCC)

NORTHAMPTON GATEWAY: STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

**On behalf of
Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd**

September 2017



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC') sets out the proposed approach to community consultation for the proposed 'Northampton Gateway' Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) being brought forward by Roxhill (Junction 15) Ltd ('the Applicant') on land to the west of Junction 15 of the M1 Motorway. In preparing this SoCC consultation was held with South Northamptonshire District Council, Northampton Borough Council, and Northamptonshire County Council, with comments received on an early draft (in August 2017).
- 1.2 Northampton Gateway is a proposed SRFI with warehousing, highway works and other associated development which meets the definition of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project as defined by the Planning Act 2008 ("the Act").
- 1.3 As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project the proposals are dealt with via a different process to other major planning proposals. Rather than submitting a planning application to the local authority the Applicant is required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") to the Planning Inspectorate. The application will ultimately be determined by the Secretary of State for Transport. Further details about the process are provided below (at paragraph 1.18 – 1.22).
- 1.4 Some of the key criteria for SRFI as defined by the Government's *National Policy Statement for National Networks* include:
- A site area in excess of 60ha;
 - Will be capable of handling at least 4 trains per day and capable of increasing the number of trains handled;
 - Will be capable of handling 775 metre trains;
 - Will include warehouses to which goods can be delivered from the railway network either directly or by means of another form of transport.
- 1.5 This SoCC details the Applicant's proposed consultation strategy in respect of the proposed development and has been prepared in accordance with section 47 of the Act and guidance produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government: *Guidance on the Pre-Application Process* (March 2015).
- 1.6 Section 47 of the Act requires consultation with people living in the vicinity of the land where the proposed development will be located. The proposed approach to community consultation seeks to satisfy the requirement to ensure that information and the opportunity to comment is provided to those most likely to be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.7 This SoCC follows an earlier draft 'Consultation Strategy' which was shared for discussion in November 2016 as part of the Applicant's early pre-application discussions with the host local planning authorities (South Northamptonshire and Northampton Borough). The proposed development spans the administrative boundaries of these authorities.
- 1.8 The consultation strategy devised by the Applicant has evolved over the early stages of the project's inception, and through discussions with the local authorities and community representatives. In addition to defining the proposed consultation strategy, this SoCC also provides an overview of the range of engagement activity undertaken informally and on a non-statutory basis during the early stages of the project's inception and evolution.

1.9 In brief, the consultation strategy as a whole contains multiple discrete but related stages, including:

- Presentations and discussions with local communities via Parish Councils, including a series of public presentations and meetings (undertaken in Autumn and Winter 2016);
- Briefings and discussions with other key consultees, including representatives of the Local Authorities (the two District Councils and the County Council), the Local Enterprise Partnership, and others;
- A project website containing information about the proposals, including emerging masterplans and other draft application material, including contact details (email, phone and postal) for people to comment on the proposals;
- An extensive, but non-statutory, consultation carried out through December 2016 and much of January 2017 structured around public exhibitions of project material (“the Stage 1 Consultation”);
- An updated newsletter distributed in the vicinity of the proposed development, and published on the project website, in July 2017; and,
- The statutory public consultation to be carried out in October and November 2017 (“the Stage 2 Consultation”), described below.

1.10 This formal and discrete consultation activity is in addition to the consultation with a range of stakeholders and consultees on an individual basis being carried out for scheme development and assessment purposes.

1.11 The Applicant has identified a core area for community consultation (please refer to paragraph 2.19 below, and Appendix 1 for detail) which was shared for comment and agreement with the host local authorities in advance of the Stage 1 consultation in 2016. In line with the legal requirements (section 47 of the Act), this area includes the communities ‘*in the vicinity of*’ the proposed development site and has formed the focus of both the non-statutory and statutory consultation outlined above and in further detail later in this SoCC.

1.12 In keeping with the relevant guidance, the proposed approach to community consultation seeks to satisfy the requirement to ensure information and opportunity to comment is provided to those most affected, while also being reasonable and proportionate.

The Proposed Development and Site

1.13 The ‘proposed development’ consists of:

- An intermodal freight terminal including container storage and HGV parking, rail sidings to serve individual warehouses, and with the capability to also provide a ‘rapid rail freight’ facility as part of the intermodal freight terminal;
- Up to 468,000 sq m (approximately 5 million sq ft) (gross internal area) of warehousing and ancillary buildings, with additional floorspace provided in the form of mezzanines;
- New road infrastructure and works to the existing road network, including the provision of a new access and associated works to the A508, a new bypass to the village of Roade, improvements to Junction 15 and to J15A of the M1 motorway, the A45, and other highway improvements at junctions on the local highway network;

- Strategic landscaping and tree planting, including diverted public rights of way;
 - Earthworks and demolition of existing structures on the SRFI site.
- 1.14 The development will include structural earthworks to create development plots and will include significant landscaped bunding to substantially screen the site from outside view. The site will contain landscaped areas and open space, including alterations to existing public rights of way and the creation of new publicly accessible routes.
- 1.15 The land proposed to accommodate the SRFI (referred to as ‘the main site’) is located to the west of the M1 Junction 15 and east of the Northampton Loop railway line. The A508 road runs along the site’s eastern boundary. Once fully operational and in the longer-term the site is expected to accommodate up to 16 trains per day.
- 1.16 The closest settlements and communities are Milton Malsor to the west of the railway line, Blisworth to the south of the West Coast Main Line railway line, and Roade to the south of the main site along the A508. Courteenhall village is located to the east of the A508 within the context of the wider Courteenhall Estate further south. The communities of Collingtree and Grange Park are located to the north and east of the M1, and form part of the urban area of Northampton (although Grange Park is located within South Northamptonshire District).
- 1.17 The proposed development also includes land for a new bypass to the village of Roade. This part of the development site is referred to as ‘the Bypass site’. Options for the precise alignment of this Bypass formed part of the early non-statutory consultation process, with local and consultee input sought on road corridor options being considered by the Applicant.

The Planning Process

- 1.18 As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Act, the Northampton Gateway proposals are to be subject of an application for DCO to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The Act establishes the legal framework for the preparation of, and then the determination of NSIP proposals and applications. A final decision whether to grant development consent will be made by the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.19 Further information about the planning process is available on the Planning Inspectorate website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>
- 1.20 Following receipt of the application for development consent the Planning Inspectorate will carry out an “examination” of the proposals. In doing so it will consider all feedback received during the consultation exercise.
- 1.21 As part of the new process for determining applications for development consent for NSIPs, the Government has prepared ‘National Policy Statements’ on a range of infrastructure development, including various types of Energy infrastructure, Transport, Waste, and Water. In December 2014 the Government published a ‘National Policy Statement for National Networks’ which includes specific policy guidance on Strategic Rail Freight Interchange developments. This followed, and is consistent with, previous policy on Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges published in November 2011. The National Policy Statement, the earlier

Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges guidance document, and more information can be found on the Department for Transport's website.

- 1.22 These documents or links to them are also available on the project website:
www.northampton-gateway.co.uk

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.23 The development is considered to be Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development as defined in The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended), and accordingly an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.
- 1.24 That work, presented in an Environmental Statement ("ES"), will be submitted as part of the application. As progress continues in preparing the Environmental Impact Assessment, Preliminary Environmental Information in the form of draft chapters of the Environmental Statement will be available to view for comment on the project website as part of the statutory consultation.
- 1.25 The outputs from early work undertaken in preparation of the ES were compiled into an 'Environmental Report' in November 2016. In many of the themed chapters this provided an overview of the site characteristics and findings regarding the existing 'baseline', and set out the ongoing range and scope of works being undertaken and planned to form the ES in due course. This report was shared as part of the informal consultation process held in the winter of 2016/17 (described in Section 2 of this SoCC). The Environmental Report was prepared in the context of the Environmental Statement Scoping Opinion provided by the Planning Inspectorate, and various comments made as part of the Scoping process by other consultees.
- 1.26 The EIA process focuses not just on any likely impacts but importantly on the opportunities for mitigation or other actions to reduce and minimise those impacts when the project is delivered. As part of the Stage 1 consultation in 2016, the assessment work had not progressed sufficiently far as to allow details of the likely impacts or mitigation measures to be described in the Environmental Report. However, much survey and assessment work has progressed in the intervening period and information about likely impacts and emerging mitigation measures will be important components of the updated draft ES which will form part of the documentation to be consulted upon in the statutory consultation pursuant to Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) 2009. While not a complete ES this updated draft will provide a fuller and more detailed basis to help inform consultees and the public about the proposals and their likely impacts. It will be published as part of the Stage 2 consultation process starting in October 2017 (see Section 2 below for further information).

2. CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Introduction

- 2.1. This section of the SoCC sets out the details of the consultation strategy. It provides a summary of the activity undertaken to date as well as setting out the intended strategy for consultation over the remainder of the application preparation process including the statutory consultation stage.
- 2.2. As is referred to in the Introduction, the Applicant is taking a multi-stage approach to consultation. This is a response to the need to consult sufficiently early to ensure awareness and to enable community input to influence the scheme, and the equally important requirement to consult people with clear and firm proposals on which they can comment.

Stage 1 Consultation

- 2.3. As set out below, the Applicant has carried out non-statutory consultation to make local communities and other stakeholders aware of and seek views upon the emerging proposals for the proposed DCO. The Stage 1 consultation process was undertaken as if the applicant were undertaking a statutory consultation. A range of consultees and other interested parties, as well as the public, were contacted and invited to comment.
- 2.4. The engagement activity presented the proposals in the context of national strategic policies as well as key local and site specific issues or opportunities. The initial, non-statutory stage held during late 2016 is being followed by a statutory consultation being held in October and November 2017 (“the Stage 2 Consultation”).
- 2.5. In practice, discussions and dialogue about development in this general location began in 2014 when a planning application was submitted by the applicant. As a result there is already a public consciousness about the site and its potential for large-scale distribution related development.
- 2.6. Following the decision to bring forward an SRFI on this site, informal dialogue and engagement was undertaken in the summer 2016. This focused on contact with Parish Councils surrounding the site to ensure they were aware of the emerging proposals, and to discuss their questions and comments. Briefings were also provided to officers and members of South Northamptonshire District Council, Northampton Borough Council, and Northamptonshire County Council. In addition, contact with a local community action group also resulted in a briefing bring provided by representatives of the Applicant.
- 2.7. Further Parish Council public meetings and updates were also held in late 2016 and early 2017 in Blisworth, Roade, Collingtree and Milton Malsor.
- 2.8. The project website was set up and live from November 2016, and that is being used to provide updates and new information, and to facilitate comments and questions being provided by local people.

Stage 1 Consultation: public exhibitions

- 2.9. Public exhibitions formed part of the Stage 1 Consultation, with three exhibitions held in December 2016. These provided an opportunity for people to see details of the emerging proposals and provide comments and feedback.
- 2.10. These exhibitions were publicised at various meetings held with local Parish Councils during November and December, and also via a mail shot delivered by Royal Mail to all addresses in a wide area. The area for the mailshot newsletter was shared with the two Local Planning Authorities for comment and agreement in advance. An advert was also placed in the local press to help raise awareness of the first set of public exhibitions.
- 2.11. The exhibitions included:
- Displayed maps and other information about the scheme, including issues where options exist and a steer from local people was directly sought (e.g. alignment of the Roade Bypass);
 - Preliminary environmental information in the form of an ‘Environmental Report’ was available to aid the consultation process, made available via the project website, and summarised at the exhibition;
 - A physical scale model of the site and proposed SRFI site was displayed to help present the location and extent of the site and surrounding features and communities. A digital (computer generated) model was also on display showing a range of viewpoints;
 - Members of the project team were present at all exhibitions to answer questions, discuss issues and record or note comments on the scheme;
 - People were able to leave written comments and suggestions at the exhibitions, or provide comments afterwards by letter or via the website/email.
- 2.12. The initial public consultation exhibitions were held at the Hilton Hotel, Collingtree on 12th, 13th and 14th December 2016.
- 2.13. Informal community consultation and engagement continued over the months following the initial exhibitions, and will continue over the coming months and throughout the next phases of community consultation. For example, since the initial public consultation exhibitions held in December 2016 the Applicant has attended local meetings to provide updates and hear comments about the scheme, including the Roade Parish Council annual meeting in April 2017 where a presentation was given and public debate held involving the local MP (Andrea Leadsom) as well as around 300 local people from Roade and surrounding villages.
- 2.14. An update newsletter was distributed in July 2017 to the surrounding communities (the same consultation area as that proposed below). The newsletter provided an update on the main messages received from the consultation undertaken over the winter, and on the work undertaken to date. It also provided an updated picture of the project programme, including the anticipated timing of the statutory consultation exercise.

Proposed Statutory Consultation, 2017 (Stage 2 Consultation)

- 2.15. In accordance with section 47 of the Act, and the DCLG Guidance, the Applicant's proposed approach to community consultation seeks to satisfy the requirement to ensure information and opportunity to comment is provided to those most likely to be affected by the proposed development.
- 2.16. A principal purpose of the various forms of consultation as set out in this SoCC is to gain a further understanding of specific issues and concerns held by the communities close to the land where the proposed development is situated, with a view to addressing and ameliorating these wherever possible.
- 2.17. The Stage 2 consultation will include updated and further progressed information about the proposed development to help inform local people and other consultees, and to aid them in making comments. This will include a range of draft reports and other documentation, including a draft Environmental Statement (ES) containing an updated assessment of likely impacts as well as information about the proposed mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate them. The consultation material will again include draft plans and drawings required as part of the DCO process, and information to help explain decisions made or changes incorporated into the scheme since the Stage 1 consultation in late 2016. New and updated material will be available electronically on the project website and in hard-copy at a number of locations (see paragraph 2.28 and 2.29 below). Updated exhibition material will again be prepared and displayed on large-scale boards at public exhibitions listed below.
- 2.18. The Applicant intends that during the proposed Stage 2 Consultation, Parish Councils are used a key point of contact to ensure wider awareness in the local communities in addition to measures and activity to engage directly with local people and communities. As part of the approach, local elected members and parish councillors will form a key part of our ongoing consultation, as described below.
- 2.19. The focus for consultation and publicity is proposed in a consultation area comprising of the following villages and communities:
- Milton Malsor
 - Blisworth
 - Roade
 - Collingtree
 - Courteenhall
 - Grange Park
 - Quinton
 - Gayton
 - Rothersthorpe
- 2.20. A map of the consultation area is included as Appendix 1. This is the same consultation area as that used during the Stage 1 Consultation which was shared for agreement with the local planning authorities at the time.
- 2.21. The Stage 2 statutory community consultation stage will begin on 9th October 2017, and will last for in excess of 6 weeks (also see paragraph 2.43). This exceeds the statutory

requirement of a 28 day period. Formal letters notifying consultees of the details of the consultation process will be sent during the week of 2nd October.

2.22. The proposed consultation strategy consists of the following complimentary elements:

Updates via the project website

2.23. As described above, a project website has been ‘live’ since November 2016. The website will be updated with information about the proposals in general, including about the consultation process.

2.24. All material used as part of the statutory consultation process will be available via the website from the beginning of the formal consultation period. Members of the public and all consultees will be able to leave comments or ask questions using the website and by email, as they have since the site was introduced.

2.25. The website address is: www.northampton-gateway.co.uk

Awareness raising leaflet

2.26. In advance of the statutory consultation a leaflet newsletter will be delivered to every residential and business address in the communities and villages listed above at paragraph 2.19 and shown on the map at Appendix 1.

2.27. This leaflet will provide a summary of the development proposals, give details of where documents and information can be viewed, including the forthcoming exhibition and consultation events, and include the website address.

Consultation documents placed in accessible public locations

2.28. Copies of the consultation documents will be deposited at:

a) **The local authority offices** of South Northamptonshire District Council, Northampton Borough, and Northamptonshire County Council:

**South Northamptonshire District Council
(documents to be held in the Library, ground floor)**

Towcester
The Forum
Moat Lane
Towcester
NN12 6AD

Northamptonshire County Council

One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

Northampton Borough Council

St Giles' Square

Northampton
NN1 1DE

- b) Local libraries in Roade, Wooton, and Hunsbury** will have copies of key consultation documents available for public consideration – addresses and opening hours at these libraries are:

Roade Library, High Street, Roade, NN7 2NW – open Wednesday: 10am to 2pm, Thursday: 2pm to 6pm, Friday: 10am to 2pm, Saturday: 10am to 2pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.

Hunsbury Library, Overslade Close, Northampton, NN4 0RZ - Monday – Friday: 9am to 6pm, Saturday: 9am to 5pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.

Wootton Library, Wootton Community Centre, Curtle Hill, Northampton, NN4 6ED - Monday: Closed, Tuesday: 2pm to 5pm, Wednesday: 10am to 1pm, Thursday: 2pm to 5pm, Friday: 2pm to 5pm, Saturday: 10am to 2pm, Sunday: 11am to 2pm.

- 2.29. Subject to their agreement, application consultation documents will also be sent to the **Parish Councils of Blisworth, Collingtree, Milton Malsor and Roade** both for use by the Parish Council, but also with a view to them being made available to the local community at the Parish Council's office or at a village hall where practical to do so. A similar arrangement is also agreed with the **Courteenhall** Parish Meeting. Details are as follows:

Blisworth Parish Council – by arrangement with Parish Clerk¹.

Collingtree Parish Council – by arrangement with Parish Clerk¹.

Milton Malsor Parish Council - by arrangement with the Parish Clerk, documents held at The Paddocks, Baker Street, Gayton, Northampton, NN7 3EZ;

Roade Parish Council - Parish Office, Roade Village Hall, Bailey Brooks Lane, Roade (office open 10am-2pm Tue, Wed, Thurs)

Courteenhall Parish Meeting - by arrangement with Clerk, documents held at The Estate Office, Courteenhall, Northampton, NN7 2QD.

- 2.30. **All relevant local authorities surrounding the site, including neighbouring local authorities in the County Council areas of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire** will also receive copies of all of the relevant project information. This will assist the Councils in ensuring elected Members and Officers are aware of and able to comment on the proposals, but are also able to help communities and the public understand the proposals should they approach the local authorities for assistance.

Public exhibitions

¹ Address/location details to be set out in consultation notices and on the Northampton Gateway project website once confirmed.

- 2.31. **Public exhibitions** will form a key part of the Stage 2 consultation. These will provide an opportunity for people to see well advanced details of the draft proposals and provide comments and feedback.
- 2.32. In terms of content, the exhibitions will follow a similar approach to that used at the Stage 1 Consultation exhibitions held in December 2016. They will display maps and other information about the proposed scheme including updated masterplans, drainage plans, and details of the proposed highways and other infrastructural components of the development.
- 2.33. Preliminary environmental information (in the form of advanced draft ES chapters) together with other draft documentation describing and detailing the proposed development will be available for inspection at the various locations listed above, made available via the project website and summarised at the exhibition. The material will provide an overview of the likely impacts of the scheme in light of the proposed range of mitigation and design measures.
- 2.34. Where the size of venues allows, the detailed **physical model** of the site and surrounding areas will be on display again. The model has been extended since the Stage 1 consultation to show more of the context for the site as suggested by a number of members of the public. The digital (computer) model showing key viewpoints of the proposed SRFI site will also be at the exhibitions, and has also been updated since the Stage 1 consultation.
- 2.35. Members of the project team will be present at all exhibitions to answer questions, discuss issues and record or note comments on the scheme.
- 2.36. Local people and other visitors will be able to leave written comments and suggestions at the exhibitions, or comments afterwards via letter or the website/email.
- 2.37. The intention is to hold exhibitions in several venues. The exhibitions are significant in terms of the amount of space required to display the large-scale boards and the physical model. Therefore, relatively large rooms are needed to accommodate the full exhibition. The public consultation exhibitions will be held as follows:

Hilton Hotel, Collingtree – Monday 9th October, 1.30pm – 7.30pm

The Royal Oak pub, Blisworth - Wednesday 11th October, 1.30pm – 7.30pm

Milton Malsor Village Hall - Friday 13th October, 2pm – 7.30pm

Road Primary School – Saturday 14th October, 12 noon – 5pm

**The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester (SNDC Council Chamber) – Friday 20th October,
2pm – 7pm.**

Other meetings

- 2.38. As and where appropriate opportunities arise the Applicant will attend local meetings to discuss the proposals, such as those held by local authorities or Parish Councils, particularly where this would supplement the consultation exhibitions. This will represent a continuation of the engagement activity already underway.

Other Stage 2 Consultation activity:

2.39. The Stage 2 consultation will also include the following actions:

- **Issue a summary document to all households and businesses** within the consultation area described above containing key information to summarise the proposed development and providing information on how individuals can communicate and make representations. This is expected to be provided as part of the consultation awareness raising in the form of an expanded leaflet or newsletter;
- **Written contact with all County, District and Parish Councillors** representing communities within the identified consultation area, making them aware of how, where, and when they and their constituents can access the project information, and comment upon it;
- **Publicise** our intention to submit an application for this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in accordance with the requirements of the Act. This will include writing to statutory consultees pursuant to section 42 of the Act (including prescribed consultees, local authorities listed under section 43 of the Act and persons with an interest in the land as described in section 44 of the Act) as well as publishing notices in local and national newspapers pursuant to section 48 of the Act;
- Publish a notice pursuant to section 47 of the Act in the **Northampton Chronicle & Echo** newspaper to advise where the final SoCC can be inspected. This is expected to be as a minimum at the local authority and County Council offices listed at paragraph 2.28 above, but also planned to include the libraries (subject to confirmation of their agreement) in advance of the Stage 2 statutory consultation in October 2017.

2.40. This approach will ensure notices appear in the prevalent local newspaper in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, but also in other communities well beyond that immediate area. This is likely to also include the notice being included in the publication online if possible.

2.41. In addition, as referred to above, all consultation information, including details of exhibitions will be available to the public on the project website. This website will be kept live and refreshed, with new information or documentation added to it.

2.42. Respondees will be able to submit representations and comments via the following methods:

- By hand (or post – see below) via a printed comments form available at the public exhibitions;
- Online via the comments form on the project website: www.northampton-gateway.co.uk
- By email to **contact-us@northampton-gateway.co.uk**
- By telephone using the project phone line: **01788 538440**;
- By post to: Northampton Gateway SRFI
PO Box 10570
Nottingham
NG2 9RG
- In person at the public exhibitions described above.

2.43. Comments will be required by the end of Friday 24th November 2017.

Taking account of responses to the consultation and publicity

- 2.43. Dialogue and consultation with a wide range of interested parties and stakeholders has been underway for some time and will continue throughout the period in advance of, and beyond, the statutory consultation process described in this SoCC.
- 2.44. This consultation has already directly informed some key aspects of the emerging design and composition of the scheme which has evolved and developed in response to the views and ideas of local organisations and groups.
- 2.45. Representations received during both the non-statutory (Stage 1) and statutory (Stage 2) consultation stages will be properly recorded and considered. Where appropriate the project team will respond directly to the points that people make, particularly where specific proposals or amendments are suggested. An explanation of how consultation input and representations received have shaped and influenced the proposed development will be provided to the Secretary of State in a '**Consultation Report**', which is required by the Act to accompany the application for a DCO.

APPENDIX 1 – MAP OF PROPOSED CONSULTATION AREA

