

**NORTHAMPTON GATEWAY RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE
ROXHILL DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

Planning Inspectorate Reference: TR050006

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL IMPACT REPORT**

November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Examining Authority for the proposed Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order application, accepted for examination on 15th June 2018, has invited Northampton Borough Council to submit a Local Impact Report (LIR) to assist the examination.
- 1.2 This Local Impact Report has been prepared taking into account the advice set out in The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note One: Local Impact Reports (April 2012, Version 2).

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 In summary, the proposed development comprises:

- An intermodal freight terminal including container storage and HGV parking, rail sidings to serve individual warehouses, and the provision of an aggregates facility as part of the intermodal freight terminal, with the capability to also provide a 'rapid rail freight' facility.
- 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.
- A secure, dedicated, HGV parking area of approximately 120 spaces including driver welfare facilities to meet the needs of HGV's visiting the site or intermodal terminal.
- 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 Junction 15A of the M1 motorway, the A45, and other highway improvements at junctions on the local highway network and related traffic management measures.
- Strategic landscaping and tree planting, including diverted public rights of way; and earthworks and demolition of existing structures on the main site.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

- 3.1 A Local Impact Report is defined in s60(3) of the Planning Act 2008 as 'a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area (or any part of that area).
- 3.2 Northampton Borough Council consider the following matters to be relevant to in respect of the likely impacts of the development within the Borough:
 - Socio-Economic Impacts
 - Landscape and Visual Impacts
 - Air Quality
 - Noise, Vibration and Lighting
 - Transport and Highway Impacts

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The application site predominantly comprises arable farmland located to the south-west of the M1 motorway, south of Northampton, and is contained by the Northampton Loop railway, and to the east by the A508.
- 4.2 The majority of the site is situated in South Northamptonshire District, but adjacent to the boundary of Northampton Borough, with some of the proposed highway improvements located within the Borough north of the M1, as well as improvements to Junctions 15 and 15a of the M1 itself.
- 4.3 In respect of that part of the development site within the Borough boundary, this comprises an elevated section of the A45 over Junction 15 over the M1 motorway, and part of the A45 dualled corridor to the north of Junction 15 and adjacent mature roadside scrubland and trees.
- 4.4 There are no specific landscape designations within the main application site. Collingtree village and Conservation Area is situated to the north of the development site, beyond, but extending up to the M1 motorway, and contains a number of listed buildings.
- 4.5 Public Right of Way KX13 extends from the south of Collingtree village, over a bridge across the M1 motorway and into the development site.
- 4.6 The M1 corridor between Junction 15 and 16 has been declared as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Northampton.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 The site was put forward for consideration as a strategic employment site as part of the consultation process for the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The site was considered unsuitable for allocation at the time by reason of being located in the open countryside away from the existing urban area, which would conflict with the desire to provide good linkages between existing and new communities; it was considered contrary to the aims of promoting sustainable transport modes; concern regarding impacts on access to the M1 at Junction 15 and the strategic highway network; and that the site was detached from the urban area and would represent a substantial extension of urban development into open countryside with potential impacts on landscape character.

6. POLICY

National Planning Policy Statement for National Networks 2014 (NPSNN)

- 6.1 The NPSNN sets out the need and government policies for nationally significant infrastructure rail and road projects for England. The policy sets out a vision for the delivery of national networks that meet the country's long-term needs; supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of a wider transport system and encourages improvements to capacity, capability and reliability of the rail network at key locations for both passengers and freight movements to reflect growth and demand and facilitate modal shift from road to rail.

National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF)

- 6.2 The NPPF is identified within the NSPNN as likely to be an important and relevant consideration in decisions on nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) and is therefore considered relevant to the project.

- 6.3 The Development Plan, for the purpose of that part of the proposed development site within the Borough, comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and the Northampton Local Plan (adopted 1997).

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

- 6.4 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy S1: The Distribution of Development
Policy S7: Provision of Jobs
Policy S8: Distribution of Jobs
Policy S10: Sustainable Development Principles
Policy S11: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
Policy C1: Changing Behaviour and Achieving Modal Shift
Policy C2: New Developments
Policy C3: Strategic Connections
Policy C4: Connecting Urban Areas
Policy RC2: Community Needs
Policy E4: Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT)
Policy E6: Education, Skills and Training
Policy BN1: Green Infrastructure Connections
Policy BN2: Biodiversity
Policy BN3: Woodland Enhancement and Creation
Policy BN5: The Historic Environment and Landscape
Policy BN7A: Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Infrastructure
Policy BN7: Flood Risk
Policy BN9: Planning for Pollution Control
Policy BN10: Ground Instability
Policy INF1: Approach to Infrastructure Delivery
Policy INF2: Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements

Northampton Local Plan

- 6.5 There is no relevant in the Local Plan in respect of the development proposals within the Borough boundary.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.6 Northampton Low Emission Strategy (NLES) 2071-2025 (December 2017) – forms part of the NBC Air Quality Action Plan in line with the requirements of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

7. CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL IMPACTS

Socio Economic Impacts

- 7.1 The submitted details anticipate that the completed development in operation could directly support 7,544 full time equivalent jobs. The socio-economic assessment of the ES concludes that around 60% of Travel to Work trips will originate from within the Northampton area. 90% of these jobs are likely to be taken by people within the core

'study area' for the analysis of Northampton Borough, Daventry District Council, Wellingborough, Kettering and Milton Keynes, with only 10% from further afield.

- 7.2 The socio-economic assessment undertaken indicates that the Gross Value Added within this area is estimated to be in the order of £348 million annually.
- 7.3 The proposed development would assist in delivering the objective set out in the National Policy Statement for National Networks, 2014. It would also help to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan objective to facilitate economic growth, by providing jobs that could be easily accessed from Northampton.
- 7.4 On a wider scale, the provision of the proposed development would facilitate use of the rail network for freight shipment to reduce road-based haulage movements across the country. However, this relies on the effective use of the proposed development as an inter-modal freight terminal. A failure to attract rail-related businesses could lead to warehousing occupied by businesses that are dependent only on road transport, negating the environmental benefits of the proposal.
- 7.5 The scale of the proposed development could be such that, whilst it may, to some extent reduce the distance of out-commuting from Northampton, it could also generate more employment than the local labour market can supply, precipitating local shortages and an increase in net in-commuting to the immediate vicinity of Northampton. This has the potential to lead to recruitment difficulties for local businesses, congestion on local road networks because of long distance in-commuting and increased demand for housing in the local area that has yet to be planned for.
- 7.6 A review and update of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy is expected to start later this year, and if the development proposals are permitted, the review would likely have to make appropriate references to it and consider it as part of the sub-regional and local economy.

Landscape and Visual Impacts

- 7.7 The main development site is situated to the south of the urban area of Northampton, beyond the M1 motorway which forms the district boundary between Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire District. Collingtree village and Conservation Area is the nearest residential receptor to the proposed development site situated to the north of the M1.
- 7.8 The very nature of the scale of the development proposed will lead to significant changes in the character of the landscape to the south of the Borough from one dominated by arable farmland and woodland, to one dominated by large scale employment units, rail infrastructure and associated infrastructure which will be permanent and irreversible. The proposed highway works within the Borough boundary would not significantly alter the character of the existing highway corridor other than changes to existing areas of scrubland and trees adjacent to the highway boundary.
- 7.9 The proposal will include significant earthworks which will re-model the existing landform creating a series of flat plateaus for the proposed employment buildings, areas of hardstanding and parking, and the rail intermodal area, with substantial perimeter mounding and landscaping around these areas, particularly to the north, west and east of the site to enclose the built development.

- 7.10 It is considered that views from Collingtree towards the proposed development will be limited to a very small proportion of properties principally on the western side of the settlement. Views will however be of the eastern perimeter mounding and associated landscape along the north eastern boundary of the site and upper parts of the nearest building units.
- 7.11 Views of the development site are likely to be more apparent during the construction phase, but with the extent of bunding and landscaping proposed in the long term impacts on views from Collingtree and the proposed Northampton South Sustainable Urban Extension situated to the west of Collingtree village are likely to be more limited and viewed in the context of existing planting alongside the M1.
- 7.12 Collingtree Conservation Area is situated to the north of the development site extending up to the M1 motorway. It is considered that the proposed development will result in a negligible effect on the Conservation Area, and no impact on the Grade II* listed Church of St. Columbia situated within the village.

Air Quality

- 7.13 The M1 corridor between Junctions 15 and 16 directly to the north of the main development site has been declared as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Northampton, and forms one of a number of AQMA within Northampton, the details of which can be viewed on the Council's website at: https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/file/3802/air_quality_management_areas_in_northampton
Collingtree village to the north of the site is the nearest residential receptor within the Borough boundary, and it should be noted that concerns in respect of air quality have been raised by Collingtree Parish Council.
- 7.14 The methodology for the assessment of air quality undertaken for the Environmental Statement of the SRFI was agreed between Northampton Borough Council and the developer of the proposed SRFI.
- 7.15 The assessment of the likely impacts on air quality includes consideration of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within Northampton Borough. The development is predicted to have some marginal adverse impacts in some AQMA and is predicted to provide some marginal benefits in other AQMA.
- 7.16 The proposed SRFI development could enhance national efforts to reduce air pollution and other emissions from transport by increasing the use of rail for the long distance transport of freight, resulting in reduced emission miles from HGVs across the road network. However, there will be some emission increases on the local Northampton road network and some improvements to air quality where traffic flows are improved.
- 7.17 The proposed SRFI development is anticipated to have a small impact on annual mean NO₂ concentrations in all years, in most study areas. However, some locally significant impacts are predicted in 2021 and the interim period ahead of key mitigation measures being in place.
- 7.18 A SoCG in respect to Air Quality has been agreed in principal which agrees the following points:
- In respect of air quality, an emission mitigation calculation valued the impact of the SRFI emissions was undertaken as a requirement of the Northampton Low Emission Strategy, this document is being validated by NBC.

- Proposed onsite mitigation is deemed to be standard default type I & II mitigation required by the Council's Low Emission Strategy, which is considered acceptable.
- A package of mitigation measures has been agreed between NBC and the developer of the SRFI that will help mitigate against any adverse impacts and potentially provide environmental gains in some AQMA.
- Proposed significant infrastructure to help reduce congestion and redirect traffic generated by the SRFI site away from Northampton's existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) include a £0.89 million contribution towards implementation and support of bus services linked to the development. The contracted bus service will be compliant with the minimum Euro 6 (VI) emission standard required by the Low Emission Strategy for this mitigation type to be considered Type III. This mitigation is accepted.

7.19 A Section 106 contribution has been put forward by the applicant to offset the impact of emissions to make the SRFI site acceptable. The sum proposed has been accepted by Northampton Borough Council to fund projects to help deliver the implementation of the Low Emission Strategy directly linked to the impact from SRFI site. Proposed projects will be put forward in due course and suitable wording of a Sec 106 agreement can be drafted and agreed in principal by both parties for a decision to be made by the Planning Inspector in due course.

Noise, Vibration and Lighting

7.20 Sec 8 of the ES highlight that the operational effects of the proposed RFI site for both noise and vibration are generally not likely to affect sensitive receptors within Northampton Borough Councils administrative area.

7.21 The nearest receptor within Northampton Borough is Collingtree village located to the north of the proposed site beyond the M1. In addition to the existing village, outline consent for further residential development of up to 1,000 dwellings incorporating a mixed use local centre, primary school, open space and an extension of the existing golf course to the west of Collingtree (Northampton South SUE) was allowed at appeal on 9th August 2016. The noise impacts of the development proposal both during construction and operation, and the potential for noise deflection from proposed buildings, will therefore need to be considered in relation to these receptors.

7.22 The submitted landscaping strategy includes proposals for an extensive earthwork bund and tree planting around the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the site in order to mitigate potential impacts.

7.23 A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be in place to control impacts during the construction phase, and forms part of the submitted Development Consent Order. It is considered subject to the inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures as part of the agreed CEMP the impact of noise and external lighting should not be significant to Northampton Borough Council residents during the construction phase.

7.24 Northampton Borough Council have no specific comments regarding external lighting during the operational phase. As with potential noise impacts, the proposed extensive earthwork bund and planting along the boundaries of the site will assist in mitigating

the impacts. Specific details of lighting would be required to be agreed by the relevant Local Planning Authorities to ensure appropriate mitigation.

Transport and Highway Impacts

- 7.25 The overall scheme is reliant on a number of proposed highway improvements comprising alterations at J15 and J15a of the M1, alterations to the A508 and A45 corridors, and the delivery of the A508 Road Bypass.
- 7.26 The Borough Council is concerned that the potential impacts of additional vehicle movements on the local road network have not been fully taken into account, particularly in the context of planned and committed housing growth in the area at Collingtree and Hardingstone. It is our view that, measures need to be incorporated to ensure that heavy goods vehicles do not rat-run through residential areas. West Hunsbury Parish Council has also indicated their concerns to the Council in respect of traffic congestion and issues of rat-running.
- 7.27 Notwithstanding the conclusions of the submitted Rail Reports, in particular the 'West Coast Main Line south of Rugby: capacity for additional freight', by Victa Railfreight, this Council is concerned to ensure that the additional freight traffic on the Northampton loop railway does not impact adversely on the availability of paths for passenger trains.
- 7.28 In its submissions on East–West Rail, Northampton Borough Council has expressed support for proposals for the Marylebone / Old Oak Common – Bletchley – Milton Keynes element of East – West Rail to be extended to Northampton to facilitate further economic growth in the borough to increase its contribution to Government's ambitious targets for housing and employment growth in the Oxford – Cambridge Corridor. Additionally, this Council supports the submission of a Growth Deal for West Northamptonshire which would include a significant uplift in housing provision over the period 2019 to 2050, which has the potential to involve a small number of new settlements including some on a proposed North – South line running north of Northampton.
- 7.29 Victa's report does not include assumptions for either of these potential additions to passenger services.
- 7.30 It is also noted that Victa's conclusion on the availability of freight paths following the introduction of services on HS2 is, in part, predicated on the assumption that fast commuter trains running from London to Milton Keynes and beyond will have more paths available on the fast lines of the WCML. However, it should be noted that, because the fast lines do not run through Northampton, this Council would not support any diversion of trains from the slow lines that would result in a reduction of the existing level of passenger services calling at Northampton, so it is not safe to assume that this consideration would result in a significant increase in the number of paths available for freight trains on the Northampton loop.
- 7.31 The routing and appropriate mitigation of construction traffic impacts would be required to be agreed by the relevant Local Planning Authorities to ensure appropriate mitigation as part of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan.
- 7.32 The proposed introduction of a new bus service to offer direct access between site and Northampton Town Centre and the proactive implementation of a Travel Plan would make a positive contribution towards achieving sustainable transport objectives, together with retaining the pedestrian/cycle access to the site via the footbridge over M1 at Collingtree.