

BLISWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Response to Roxhill's Document 8.7

Deadline 30th November 2018

1. Blisworth PC's contention that the Applicant has attempted to develop this land a number of times is valid. The number of schemes that have been designed and scoped prior to this one is two. We concede that the first was withdrawn, not rejected. The second was not submitted for planning as it is contrary to the development plan and would most likely have been rejected, hence its reincarnation as a SRFI.
2. The fact remains that with these prior two schemes the Applicant had no intention of including a rail connection. The connection only now appears because it is the only way, during the current plan period, that they can progress their commercial warehouse development. How it has very suddenly now become a "strategic" location of a vital piece of national infrastructure remains a mystery.
3. Just for clarity (but not central to our argument): the Applicant claims Howdens did not move to DIRFT because it was too far away from Northampton. Their chosen location in Raunds is slightly further way from Northampton than DIRFT so this is factually inaccurate and there is no greater pool of labour around Raunds than there is in the vicinity of DIRFT. Howdens have realised this.
4. In attempting to refute the PC's claim that no alternative sites have been considered the Applicant has quoted four documents: ES 5.2; Planning Statement 6.6; Design and Access Statement 6.9; Market Analysis 6.8a where details of alternatives that have been considered are stated to have been provided.
5. Within these four documents all that can be found is the dismissal (in three paragraphs) of a site at junction 13 and a comparison with Rail Central (which strategically is the same site so not an alternative).
6. The Applicant has tailored a market report to justify the location of a strategically important piece of national infrastructure on land they have attempted to develop in the past for non-rail connected logistics activities. They have considered no other regions for the development of an SRFI despite the Midlands already being the best served area in the country and others not served at all.
7. But the single most import fact remains. The Applicant, not anywhere in their submission, has undertaken an alternative sites assessment. No amount of Developer bluster can conceal this fact. This omission is contrary to the Planning Act 2008, the Town and Country Planning Act 2011, the EIA Directive and the NPS NN.