Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited

HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

The Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order

Project reference TR050007

ES Appendix 10.3 Hinckley Consultation Response - BDC

Report Prepared by: BWB Consulting Ltd

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Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 Regulation 5(2)(a)

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 Regulation 14

This document forms a part of the Environmental Statement for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange project.

Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited (TSH) has applied to the Secretary of State for Transport for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI).

To help inform the determination of the DCO application, TSH has undertaken an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of its proposals. EIA is a process that aims to improve the environmental design of a development proposal, and to provide the decision maker with sufficient information about the environmental effects of the project to make a decision.

The findings of an EIA are described in a written report known as an Environmental Statement (ES). An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to ameliorate any adverse effects.

Further details about the proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange are available on the project website:

[redacted]

The DCO application and documents relating to the examination of the proposed development can be viewed on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning website:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/hinckley-national-rail-freight-interchange/

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Consultation Response

Project	**Hinckley Rail Freight Interchange**		
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Consultation Response – Blaby District Council - Noise

Introduction

This technical note has been prepared by BWB Consulting Ltd to respond to comments received from Blaby District Council as part of the consultation process for the proposed development at Hinckley NRFI.

This response relates specifically to the comments detailed in the '*National Infrastructure Project Section 42 Planning Act 2008 Response*' dated April 2022. The headings and points are reproduced below, shown in blue, and BWB's response is shown in grey.

Paragraphs 10.47 – 10.54

Recognition is made that for a Tranquillity Assessment there is a need to consider both noise levels and visual appearance. Only consideration of the noise levels has been undertaken to date. The visual impact needs to be considered as this has a fundamental impact upon the experience of any user of an area.

This will be covered within the final ES.

Table 10.14

Existing noise sensitive receptors are listed within this table. However, no consideration appears to have been given to the noise levels of the new noise sensitive receptors being created through the rerouted PRoW. There appears to be an assumption that this is acceptable without being tested. Given part of this is adjacent to the M69, it will almost certainly be in excess of 55 dB, whilst Figure 10.3 shows sections of the PRoW adjacent to the A47 link road also exceed this level. It does not therefore create an attractive and inviting environment to potential users.

This can be addressed within the final ES.

In terms of all the NSR, these are all selected in relation to the main HNRFI. No consideration appears to have been given to other locations relating to the rail line. For instance, in Narborough and Hinckley, the additional trains (particularly at night) may increase noise level incidents above acceptable levels on a more frequent basis to the housing that back onto the line. Consideration of the stationary traffic at the level crossing also needs to be considered at Narborough, with more barrier downtime affecting noise levels within localised areas.

It is understood that the additional trains using the line are not dependant on the HNRFI being brought forward and the capacity and running of the trains is managed by third parties. Therefore, the noise and vibration impacts from additional trains and stationary traffic as a

result of the barrier downtime at Narborough is not a consideration of this assessment and should be assessed by others.

Paragraphs 10.85 – 10.97

The assessment only refers to generic equipment. Given the construction phase has the potential to increase noise levels by more than 3 dB, further information in respect of the specific plant to be used would assist.

This will be covered within the ES once further detail is known.

Additionally, the modelling and assessment does not account for the proposed earthworks. Further information is required in the noise mitigation strategy to reflect this from an acoustic perspective.

This will be covered within the ES once further detail is known.

Paragraph 10.137

Typographical error – refers to a figure of 3.5dB when it should be 3.7dB.

This will be amended in the final ES.

Paragraphs 10.121 – 10.146 and Tables 10.35 – 10.41

These identify a number of exceedances of noise levels to the sensitive receptors due primarily from container placement. Potentially these could be avoided if the site was arranged differently, using the proposed buildings as sound barriers to such activity.

It is worth noting that the masterplan is illustrative at this outline stage and is an example of only one way the scheme could be delivered. In line with the requirements of EIA, the parameters have been assessed, and with the proposed mitigation in place, it is considered that noise associated with the proposed development is unlikely to result in unacceptable impacts at nearby receptors.

Excesses at night-time are likely to represent more important considerations given the time tabling for when trains will be able to access and leave the rail port.

This will be covered within the ES once further detail is known.

Paragraphs 10.170 – 10.181

Unacceptable impact upon NSR14 identified, with high noise levels and a change in excess of 5 dB as a result of traffic noise. The text suggests that as the dwelling is not on the roundabout the impact will be less and therefore is acceptable. It would appear however that in order to reach this conclusion, more modelling/noise level collection is required. Assumptions cannot simply be made when the change in noise levels are so high.

Additional baseline noise monitoring will be undertaken adjacent to the M69 in the vicinity of NSR14 and NSR15 to better characterise the existing noise environment. The results will be used to further inform the assessment and will be detailed within the final ES.

Paragraphs 10.185 – 10.189 and Table 10.48

This table identifies noise level exceedances at NSR 1, 15, 19, 20, 21 and 22 from the A47 link road. These would all have permanent moderate to major adverse impacts from this highway

without mitigation. It then concludes unhelpfully that further road traffic noise monitoring is required. Given the number of receptors that it affects, further consultation needs to be undertaken on this matter once the evidence has been completed.

The results of the additional monitoring and updated assessment will be presented in the final ES.

Paragraphs 10.190 – 10.205 and Table 10.49

There is a fundamental flaw within the Tranquillity Assessment as it only covers the daytime (paragraph 10.198). However, footpaths are frequently used in the early morning and evening for running/sport activity and dog walking in particular. The assessment period therefore needs to be reconsidered. It also needs to be related back to good design concepts on layout and its impact – something akin to the Healthy Streets Approach would be sensible to adopt.

The daytime period refers to the hours between 07:00 and 23:00 and therefore includes both the morning and evening periods. In accordance with BS8233:2014 and WHO guidelines, outdoor amenity is protected for this period, with set criterion to be achieved. However, no reference is made within these documents to the night-time period.

The following was proposed during consultation with the Environmental Health Department at Blaby District Council at the outset of the project;

'Although various approaches have been put forward in the past to determine the impact of a development on tranquillity, there is no industry standard approach. Therefore, we propose to develop a methodology drawing on multiple sources such as local open space policies, BS8233:2014, WHO Guidelines (1999), CPRE Tranquillity Map for England, and other web-based tranquillity tools. Areas such as open spaces, public footpaths, local reserves etc would be considered within any assessment. We are keen to discuss this further with you, and it would be beneficial if we could arrange a call at your convenience'.

In response to the above, the dealing Environmental Health Officer stated that they could see no issue with our proposals with regards to the tranquillity assessment.

Therefore, the tranquillity assessment will continue to focus on the change in noise levels, with further baseline noise monitoring within the vicinity of the M69 feeding into this. Where footpaths are proposed adjacent to the motorway, any assessment will be focused on the daytime period only, and will likely adopt a criteria based on an absolute noise level for the whole period.

The Healthy Streets Approach is for streets rather than footpaths and the concept was developed for towns and cities. It is therefore considered that the approach undertaken to date is more appropriate in this instance.

It is unclear how the conclusion of noise levels to Burbage Common, Freeholt Wood and Aston Firs has been calculated. Presumably it is to a mid-point in both, given the comment in paragraph 10.203 in respect of Burbage Common that it may be higher close to the link road. When considering such areas, the closest receptor position must surely be used. If you have circular routes within these areas, for example, then the user will always be exposed to these higher noise levels. Moreover, if the noise levels are too high for even part of these spaces, it has the potential to also impact upon fauna using the area which will again change the appearance and sensation to anyone using the area.

The assessment location is a representative location within Burbage Common, Freeholt Wood and Aston Firs. The closest position is not necessarily representative of the noise levels across

the site and only provides a limited picture. Notwithstanding this, noise contours will be produced showing the propagation of noise across these areas within the final ES.

The potential noise impact on fauna will be covered within Chapter 12 of the ES.

Reflecting the above assumption that it is not the edge of Burbage Common and Aston Firs that has been assessed, it is considered that the levels stated are an under representation. For Aston Firs, it is cited in Table 10.49 as being 10 dB lower than the very close-by NSR15 figures (51 compared to 61 dB), despite the wood actually projecting closer to the A47 link road. This suggests that Aston Firs would then exceed the 55 dB recommended limit and thus generate an unacceptable relationship.

As discussed above, noise contours will be produced for the final ES, demonstrating the noise propagation across the site.

In respect of Burbage Common/Freeholt Wood, the fact that a section of acoustic barrier on the railway bridge has been noted as necessary to protect this area highlights that there is a relationship issue. The elevated nature of much of the road section between the railway line and the B4668 to the west where it crosses the floodplain raises concern as to whether this acoustic fence needs to be significantly extended in order to provide an acceptable relationship.

We disagree with this statement, bunding has been proposed adjacent to the A47 link road where it passes NSR1, effectively placing the road within a cutting. This is shown on the earth work drawings and has been included within the noise model.

Paragraph 10.216

Agree that it is important to recognise that development is not only acceptable if completely screened; it would not be appropriate to completely screen the gantry cranes within the current layout configuration, but in a different arrangement they could be largely concealed from most views by the warehouse buildings.

Any matters to reduce noise is beneficial where it causes no harm. Agree that it is commonplace that acoustic screens above 6 metres have little additional benefit; they do however have significant visual impacts. Consideration of even 6 metre high screens needs to be given careful consideration from a visual impact perspective.

Any visual impacts will be considered within Chapter 11 of the final ES .

Paragraphs 10.219 – 10.239 and Tables 10.50 – 10.55; Figure 10.4

These refer to the proposed noise levels and mitigation to protect against noise from the development. Tables 10.50 – 10.53 show that there are exceedances at a number of NSR, especially at night-time. The overall impact is reduced when the existing higher than acceptable background noise levels are considered. However, it is very questionable whether making an unacceptable situation worse should be allowable. Moreover, some of the noise levels even with mitigation are not met – notably for NRS24. It is also questionable how acceptable the mitigation proposed is in some instances; a 6 metre high fence adjacent to a caravan park at NSR15 for example.

We do not agree with this statement as the results of the assessment indicate that the increase in ambient noise levels as a result of the Proposed Development are marginal and are unlikely to be perceptible to the human ear.

With mitigation in place, and taking into account the context in accordance with the relevant guidance, the residual effects are predicted to be permanent, minor adverse when considering noise from HGV movements, loading/unloading operations and service yard areas including SRFI operations, which in accordance with this EIA, is considered not significant.

It is suggested that additional consideration of the operational arrangement and the associated mitigation proposed needs to be undertaken.

As previously discussed, the masterplan is illustrative at this outline stage and is an example of only one way the scheme could be delivered. In line with the requirements of EIA, the parameters have been assessed, and with the proposed mitigation in place, it is considered that noise associated with the proposed development is unlikely to result in unacceptable impacts at nearby receptors.

Paragraphs 10.225 – 10.239 and Tables 1050 – 10.55

In terms of operational noise, there should be a desire to seek the use of all electric vehicles on the site opposed to fossil fuel based engines. This would have multiple benefits to the development, including potential reduction in operational noise levels. If possible this should be considered within the operational section if it is a realistic prospect.

This can be dealt with at a much later stage of the project as the design develops. Notwithstanding this, the noise assessment has considered the use of diesel operated vehicles which presents a robust assessment. Should electric vehicles be used in the future, then this will present a betterment in terms of noise.

Paragraphs 10.240 – 10.242

Reference is made to a number of elements that can be installed to reduce the operating noise of the gantry cranes. However, no proof of this has been provided. It all appears hypothetical.

Further details are provided in Appendix 10.4 submitted with the ES. Notwithstanding this, the scheme is at the outline stage and the exact plant types that will be installed are unknown at this time. However, the assessment has considered diesel powered cranes to provide a robust assessment, and any deviation from these will provide a betterment in terms of noise.

Paragraphs 10.243 – 10.244

Operational maximum noise levels are noted as being exceeded for 6 of the 26 NSR locations, or 23% of the receptor locations. The suggestion that this is a worst case scenario and would not happen all the time. However, it is expected that the fact it 'would not happen all the time' would be of little comfort to any surrounding noise sensitive receptors if they are repeatedly disturbed by this 24 hour operation. Maximums are in place for a reason and presumably should not be exceeded. The mitigation as currently proposed does not therefore appropriately offset harm as a result of noise.

The assessment has predicted the resultant L_{AFmax} level at the façade of nearby receptors assuming no screening is provided from any container stacks or other sources. The results of the assessment, with mitigation in place, indicate exceedances of up to 5dB at a worst-case receptor. This is as a result of the source operating in close proximity to the receptor. When the source is located further away, the level at the façade as a result of instantaneous noise is lower. Notwithstanding this, further detail will be provided within the ES.