

As a longstanding (therefore old) rail fan I am impressed by how well our victorian rail system is used these days to carry the volume of freight, bulk and containerised. Rail webcams wonderfully let anyone now see it in real time.

Railfreight is a good thing and in the last year I have been daily viewing the growth in the longer distance Tilbury, London Gateway, Southampton, Seaforth routes to Doncaster, Wakefield and Leeds and beyond.

The nearby EM Gateway and Northampton RFI's are still developing. As are our local Magna Park and Coalville/Burton warehouse developments. The latter able to be served by the "Ivanhoe" line.

During the Tritax consultation period I formally raised questions on :-

Water Storage (twice), Alternative Sites (twice), Soil structure, Sewer Pipe, Cut and Fill Volume.

Only response was to 1st Water Storage Question and (now changed) floor levels.

I think there are better alternative sites, but the priority here is to list the problems with the site proposed :-

I can understand why the greenfield site is attractive, although it is NOT a "level" site, having a 27 metre variation within the site and being the high ground on one side of the shallow valley within the immediate area. Questions already raised elsewhere on why all of the 255 ha need to be developed ?

1. Cut and Fill increasing levels up to 5 metres and creating a 5 metre "step" between the two development platforms.

An early consultation advice paper warned Tritax of the difficulties in moving and filling with Mercia Mudstone in wet conditions.

Other local advice is that it has been successful if done dry and kept dry, but if there are hidden slip lines, the additional weight can cause movement.

Within the same area development of the "Hinckley Crematorium" started in early 2021. Substantial earthworks and level changes happened, but further work on foundations is still awaited. The contact is Hinckley Council Project Office for further detail.

During the consultation period I formally raised :-

- 1) The question of the development site providing a groundwater supply to the SSSI Woodland.

I had a response - "it was only surface water, which would be dealt with by the development"

- 2) I repeated the survey in a later dry spell and repeated the conclusion to Tritax.

No response from Tritax on the second submission.

I have now looked at the water volumes arising from a nominal half inch (12.5 mm) rainfall in one hour.

Development site, 630 acres, gives 31,869 cu metres/hr

Tritax figures Present (and proposed) outflow from site 501.3 l/sec gives 1,805 cu metres/hr

I therefore think there is substantial absorption and groundwater storage which feeds into the SSSI woodland and other areas of Burbage Common. Also the final ditches and streams – one adjacent to my land, have never been dry in any of the recent dry summer periods, which again all the wildlife know and use.

Also my experience is usually dry ditches at the top, running water at the bottom of the slopes.

Planned built (imp) area 128.16 ha gives 16,020 cu metres/hr (12.5mm again)

And can then also compare with the Tritax planned surface water storage (SUDS) of 24,304 cu metres

And that leaves 126.84 ha of permeable ground with 15,849 cu metres/hr (12.5 mm again)

This seems a high percentage of the total area – using inside areas for “built” perhaps ?

Obviously no allowance for in/out flows, but indicative of the round figures. And SUDS not working anyway once storage reaches the overflow level.

I would suggest the proposed site is a substantial water storage area, preventing flooding downstream in all but the most severe circumstances.

2. The site has a Severn Trent 500mm pressurised sewerage pipe crossing one corner and the mainline rail track. Severn Trent confirmed a 20 metre easement for this pipeline. The latest proposed diversion route shown on “Concept Foul Water Drainage Strategy” drawing still appears to be within the proposed Railport Area ?
3. The proposed site layout requires substantial slopes for both road and rail connections due to :-
 - 1) Hinckley to Elmesthorpe rail track is on a general 1 in 124 downslope. Even with a workable slope within the terminal, the connection back to the mainline is 400+ metres with a slope of 1 in 78.
 - 2) The fixed elevations of the M69 roundabout, Railbridge and rail level have needed connecting roads changing levels in short distances on the present warehouse layout.
4. The final proposed layout has edged further towards Burbage Common, with the lorry park and container storage area. This requires the elimination of path V35/2 and the adjacent hedge line and mature oak trees. Only a few metres of development space are obtained. That hedgerow and mature trees should be retained, which does mean another 10 metres for root run and a retaining wall at least by the mature trees for the change in levels down to the roadway.
5. The proposed site has little noise attenuation built in – all the “noisy” elements of rail in/out, lorry in/out, container full/empty stack or load all take place along the outside of the buildings, all facing residential or recreational areas. The stacker trucks (EM gateway) are using horn signals to the truck drivers, so with reflection from the warehouse or container walls and no earth bunds and no ground attenuation due to the rail elevation, I think close by residential properties will have continuous disturbance. There is no calculation of wind effects as per the EM Gateway plans ?
6. The proposed link road to the A47 runs alongside the existing Burbage Common Road and the Burbage Common cafe and car park. There should be a suitable earth bund along the new road to reduce the noise at the cafe and the rest of Burbage Common.

In summary the proposed is not a good site for development. It contains risks and the result will be

far from ideal inside or outside the site.

The area west of Leicester already has substantial areas of ex Greenfield and ex Brownfield sites with developed or planned warehouse projects. There are still development sites, usually intended for residential, which are on flatter ground and potentially could have rail connections, as do old BR sidings and other rail infrastructure. These do not appear to have been considered.