HINCKLEY RAIL FREIGHT TERMINAL

Comments

Sapcote Parish Council

UR: 20039514

Oct 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Sapcote Parish Council has been working closely with CPRE Leicestershire and jointly funded work by Gerald Kells, a Policy and Campaigns advisor, who assisted in our submissions. Many of the wider points we would wish to make are included in the CPRE submission so we do not repeat those in these comments.

1.2 In these comments we specifically address our concerns about the direct impacts on our village and our residents who feel

1. they will be adversely affected by increases in traffic on the road, both from the development itself and also from the additional traffic which would be likely to pass through our village as a result of the redistribution of traffic on the network following the opening of South-bound slip roads on the M69 and

2. they will suffer a loss of local amenity in terms of enjoyment of the local countryside and open spaces.

2. Relevant Representations Commented on:

4. The direct and indirect traffic impact would be serious. In particular, this would be likely to include increased traffic on local roads and through local villages, including Sapcote and Sharnford, with impacts on safety, congestion and amenity, especially when there are restrictions on other routes.

5. The major change of introducing additional slip-roads to the M69 Junction 2 would have detrimental impacts, both from development traffic to the HNRFI and from other induced traffic.
6. Access to the site by public transport and other sustainable modes would be likely to be limited.
7. There would be impacts on the landscape, biodiversity and amenity of the area which cannot be adequately addressed, including loss of countryside and landscape, impacts on habitats and species (including SSSIs and other designated sites), light pollution and loss and degradation of footpath network.

3. Transport

3.1 Sapcote Description

a. Roads

3.1.1 Sapcote has four major roads for entrance and exit to/from the village: Hinckley Road, Leicester Road, Sharnford Road and Grace Road, all of which meet near the centre of the village.

3.1.2 Sapcote is predominantly residential, with few shops or other businesses. HGVs currently use the village as a through route to Hinckley, Burbage and the B4114, either towards Leicester or through Sharnford to the A5. The number of large vehicles going through the village has increased in recent years and when there are delays/closures on the M69 this increases significantly.

3.1.3 Appendix 1 includes a number of photographs which visually show some of the issues in the village.

3.1.4 In total there are some fifteen residential roads which join the B4669. There are residential properties all along the B4669. Some, particularly near the centre, do not have off-street parking.

3.1.5 There are only two designated pedestrian crossing places, one close to the Recreation Ground on Hinckley Road and one beyond the central junction on Leicester Road. There are a number of other places where pedestrians need to cross the road, for example, the entrance of Limes Avenue where there is no pavement on that side of the road.

3.1.6 At the centre of the village is the junction of Hinckley Road (B4669), Church Street and Stanton Road. It is particularly difficult for motorists and pedestrians. On-coming visibility is limited in all directions but especially for vehicles on the B4669 heading east from Church Street. Cars turning right from

Church Street on to Leicester Road face a difficult turn because it is a blind corner.

3.1.7 The road narrows significantly just east of the Junction and if two large vehicles ‘meet’ at this point, it can cause delays as they pass one another.

Photo One: B4669 East of Junction with Church Road

Photo Two: B4669 East of Junction with Church Road

3.1.8 Our measurements show the road carriageway is 5.4 metres wide at its narrowest (approximately the right-hand edge of the blue door to where there is a change in the roofline), and then gradually widens to approximately 5.8 metres (at the change in brickwork.)

3.1.9 Furthermore, at the point where the roofline changes the pavement narrows to 0.8m and it is difficult for two pedestrians to pass or someone with a pushchair to even walk along that part. Understandably people become very

anxious when lorries are driving through that section and passing very close to them.

3.1.10 More technically Figure 7.1 of Manual for Streets (Appendix 2) gives guidance on suitable width for urban streets. In that setting and with no parked cars it allows that two HGVs can pass at 5.5m.

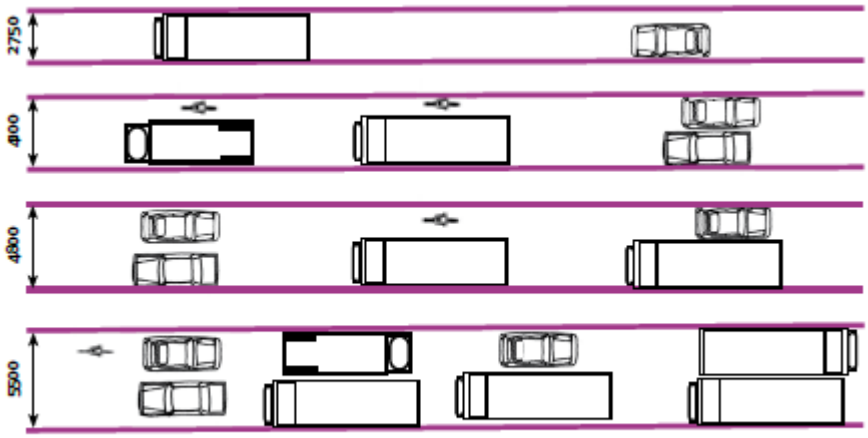


Figure 7.1 Illustrates what various carriageway widths can accommodate. They are not necessarily recommendations.

3.1.11 However, MfS include some very important caveats to that diagram. Para 7.2.2 of MfS says:

Carriageway widths should be appropriate for the particular context and uses of the street. Key factors to take into account include:

- *the volume of vehicular traffic and pedestrian activity;*
- *the traffic composition;*
- *the demarcation, if any, between carriageway and footway (e.g., kerb, street furniture or trees and planting);*
- *whether parking is to take place in the carriageway and, if so, its distribution, arrangement, the frequency of occupation, and the likely level of parking enforcement (if any);*
- *the design speed (recommended to be 20 mph or less in residential areas);*
- *the curvature of the street (bends require greater width to accommodate the swept path of larger vehicles); and*
- *any intention to include one-way streets, or short stretches of single lane working in two-way streets.*

3.1.12 In the case of bends the issue of forwards vision is particularly important.

3.1.13 In terms of width, an HGV can be 2.55 m wide and some SUVs over 2m wide. A Ford Transit van is 2.4 m wide. There is also the issue of wing mirrors. Fig 6.18 of Manual for Streets adds an additional 0.25 for wing mirrors on either

side, which would create a width of at least 5m for an HGV and car to pass and 6m for two HGVs.

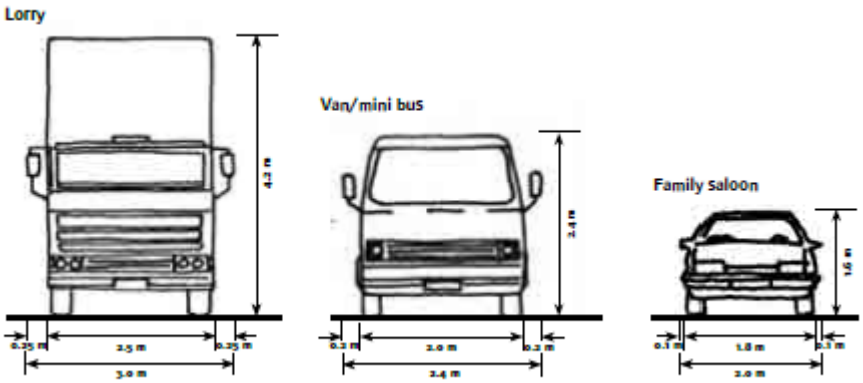


Figure 6.18 Private and commercial motor-vehicles – typical dimensions.

3.1.14 All of which confirms that the passing figures given in MfS are applicable at slow speed on straight roads in a setting where there is appropriate space for vulnerable users, in our case an adequate pavement, and no obstruction from parked cars.

3.1.15 It is clear that this section of road would fail even the laxest interpretation of Manual for Streets.

3.1.16 This corner is also where the Co-Op shop is situated, which has inadequate parking and so cars park on Church Street. This is a well-used amenity and there is often congestion at this point, at any time of the day. There is no formal crossing point but refuges are provided for pedestrians crossing the B4669.

3.1.17 This is also the point where children cross the road to and from school, indicated by signs on either side of the junction. This is manned by a crossing warden at school times. She has reported several near misses over the years with speeding cars not stopping and we worry that with increased traffic through the village this is an ‘accident waiting to happen’.

3.1.18 Further to the east, Sharnford Road leaves the B4669 and heads to the B4114. It provides a cut through to the B4114 for lorries and cars.

3.1.19 The Park Road/Cooks Lane route is also used as a short cut from Hinckley Road to Sharnford Road. Those roads can be difficult to manoeuvre along and nearly impassable for any large vehicles directed that way or trying to avoid the centre of the village.

3.1.20 Lorries have been seen taking this option when following sat nav directions.

3.1.21 With regard to cyclists, the village is a well-used cycle route. This is confirmed in the Proposer's Sustainable Transport Strategy (DR 6.2.8.1) which includes a STRAVA 'heatmap' of cycling.

Figure 8: Strava Cycling Heatmap

Source: [redacted]

From HNRFI Sustainable Transport Strategy (Appendix 8.1 Hinckley HNRFI)

3.1.22 This evidence supports our observations that cyclists regularly use this route, both individually and in groups.

3.1.23 One of the most significant cycling routes is from Stoney Stanton down Grace Road and then either:

a. turn left down Leicester Road and onto the B4114 (usually heading towards Broughton Astley.
b. turn right and immediate left heading down Sharnford Road, where they turn right on to the B4114 to Sharnford. (both could also be in reverse).

3.1.24 Use of PROWs by cyclists locally is limited, simply because they are not fit for that purpose, so the key impacts on cyclists of any proposal would be on their use of the road network. In our case, this is without dedicated cycle ways, something not reflected in the cycle maps from the applicant which concentrate on PROWs.

3.1.25 In terms of safety, (as well as the perception of safety), there is an issue with speeding as cars use the Stoney Stanton/Grace Road 'rat run' through the village and we receive complaints about this on a monthly basis. This has been of concern to the Parish Council for a number of years and a car gate has been added west of the village. The Parish Council has also recently approved the

installation of four new VAS signs (one for each road), which should be installed later this year.

3.1.26 With regard to accidents specifically, Crashmap shows a serious accident in the last five years (up to 2021) at the junction with Grace Road. The longer accident record on CrashMaps suggests that junction as well as the junction at the centre of the village are the most common accident spots.

3.1.27 There have been two fatal cycling accidents near Sapcote, one from 2020 when a young man was killed (listed on Crashmaps), and another from 2022, not yet on Crashmaps. Both appear to be at the bottom of Leicester Road with the junction of Coventry Road (B4114) (Appendix 3).

b. Recent Developments

3.1.28 Over the last ten years there have been four large housing developments within the village and various smaller 'infill' developments, with approx. 500 new houses being built in the village. The main developments are:

- The Limes (131 houses) and Heritage Grange (125 houses) both accessed from Hinckley Road.
- Ferncote (100 houses) accessed from Stanton Road
- Sapcote Lea (110 houses) accessed from Grace Road.

3.1.29 These are predominantly family homes, which has led to an increase in the number of cars within the village (at various places and times of day) and has created issues with parking. With few facilities in the village (no doctors or pharmacy for example) and no full bus service, residents use cars on a regular basis. Thus, the amount of native traffic through the village has also significantly increased.

c. Sapcote All Saints Primary School (Cooks Lane)

3.1.30 There has been a significant increase in the number of children going to the school which has doubled in size, with several development projects, over recent years. Despite efforts by the school to reduce congestion (including extending the staff car park), parking on Cooks Lane and Church Street and navigating both is particularly difficult at school drop off/pick up times.

3.1.31 For parents walking their children to the school, the vast majority have to either walk along one of the major roads (e.g., from houses along Hinckley Road) or cross one of the major roads through the village.

3.1.32 Similarly, Smiles Children's Nursery (Hinckley Road) has limited parking available for staff and parents dropping off young children. This leads to cars parking along the road during working hours which causes congestion as vehicles are unable to pass one another. As this is close to the centre of the village where the road narrows it exacerbates an already difficult situation.

3.1.33 There are also two residential care homes in this area and we would be concerned for emergency vehicles needing access.

d. Sapcote Garden Centre

3.1.34 Sapcote Garden Centre is a thriving local business who are very supportive of the village. It has grown in popularity in recent years and at particular times of the year can be very busy, attracting visitors from around the local area and further afield, partly due to its proximity to the M69 and therefore its ease of access. Whilst they have increased their car parking and traffic flow on site, the numbers of queueing vehicles accessing from the village (turning right into the garden centre) can cause significant hold ups and congestion on Hinckley Road.

e. Sapcote Recreation Ground and Pavilion

3.1.35 This is in the centre of the village and is accessed from either Hinckley Road (where there is a small car park) and has pedestrian access from Park Road and Church Street. It is a well-used facility attracting families to the recently refurbished play area, dog walkers, local sports teams and the local children's nursery (Smiles) who have no green space of their own. This involves the staff having to having to cross the children over Hinckley Road.

3.1.36 Similarly, there is an open space and Scout Centre both at the rear of the Sapcote Lea development. Again, the majority of pedestrians accessing these have to cross Grace Road, which in itself has had an increase in traffic (cars using it as a short cut to Stoney Stanton and Hinckley). There are no specific crossing points on this road.

3.2 Impact of Development

3.2.1 There are very significant increases in traffic projected through our village on the B4669 following the development of the HRNFI. Unfortunately, it is not easy to navigate the Transport Data provided by the applicant to be sure of the exact extent of this. Table 8.19 of the ES chapter on Transport (DR 6.2.8.1) is entitled Highway Impact and includes projected Highway increase on the links (which are set out in Table 8.3).

3.2.2 However, we could not find a map which located those links and since three links are all identified as B4669 Leicester Road it is not possible to say which most closely relates to Sapcote.

3.2.3 Traffic Points 43 and 46 see traffic increases of 40-60% in 2036, while Point 92 sees an increases of nearly 20% in the with development scenario. Traffic rises above 12,000 aadt on all those sections. am and pm peak traffic figures are not given.

3.2.4 Table 7-2 of the Transport Assessment gives traffic flows at Junctions. There is no specific assessment of the junction with Church Street. However, the Junction prior to Sapcote (J39) is considered as well as the junction with Grace Road/Sharnford Road (J40). Ther latter shows a substantial 27% increase in traffic at that junction in the am peak from 1189 to 1514 vehicles. Even though this is discounted later as being within the junction's capacity, those figures suggest that the link capacity through the village is likely to be exceeded (See Appendix 4: DRMB TA77/99).

		Two-way Single Carriageway- Busiest direction flow (Assumes a 60/40 directional split)									**Dual Carriageway**			
		Total number of Lanes									Number of Lanes in each direction			
		2				2-3	3	3-4	4	4+	2		3	4
Carriageway width		6.1m	6.75m	7.3m	9.0m	10.0m	12.3m	13.5m	14.6m	18.0m	6.75m	7.3m	11.0m	14.6m
Road type	**UM**	**Not applicable**										4000	5600	7200
	UAP1	1020	1320	1590	1860	2010	2550	2800	3050	3300	3350	3600	5200	*
	UAP2	1020	1260	1470	1550	1650	1700	1900	2100	2700	2950	3200	4800	*
	UAP3	900	1110	1300	1530	1620	*	*	*	*	2300	2600	3300	*
	UAP4	750	900	1140	1320	1410	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Table 2 Capacities of Urban Roads
One-way hourly flows in each direction

Table from DRMB 77/99

3.2.5 However, what is perhaps even more alarming is the increase in HGVs at those points, which rise very substantially from between 50 and 100 to 300-400.

3.2.6 We would further anticipate an increase of traffic on the Sharnford Road from the development, as well as in the Park Lane/Cooks Road cut-through. However, the impact on these routes does not appear to be modelled, (or they are assumed not to be used.)

3.2.7 It is also not clear from the transport assessment how many of those HGVs will be the larger (and more dangerous) OGV2 vehicles and in particular how many would be articulated lorries with the added risks (particularly to vulnerable users) associated with trailers.

3.2.8 This may be mitigated by the width of the B4669 at the centre of the village, which will be off-putting to larger vehicles, however, equally it makes their presence even more dangerous. Even the smaller HGVs are not suitable for

this stretch of road and such a large increase suggests the route is likely to fail the NPPF test of providing safe and suitable access to the site.

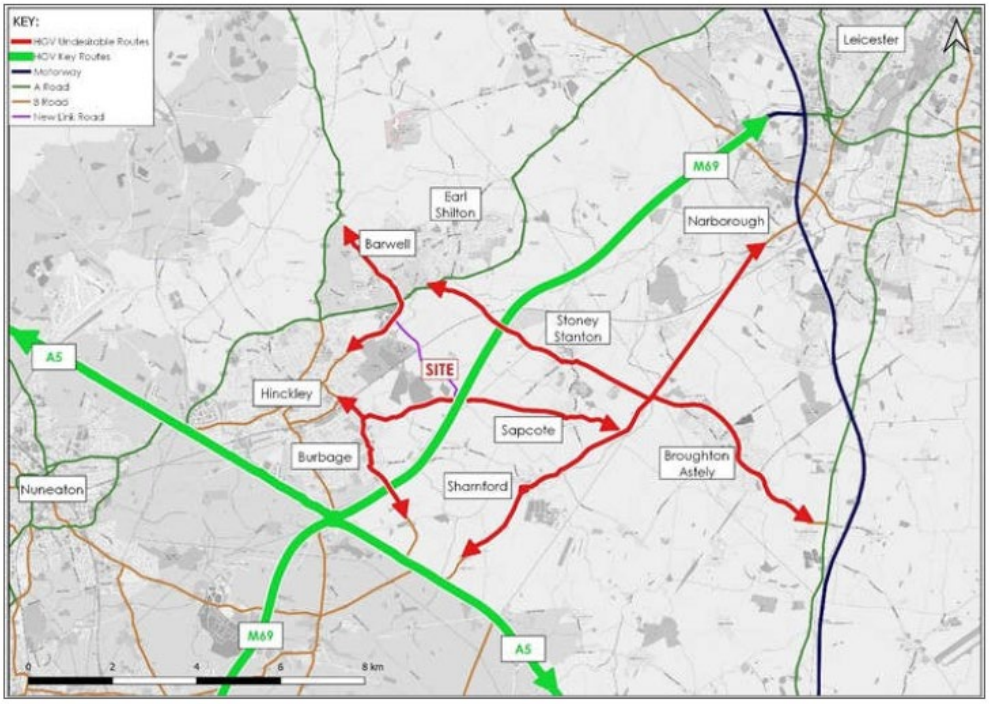
3.2.9 Fig 5.10 and 5.11 of the Transport Assessment graphically shows the dramatic increase in traffic anticipated on that route during peak hours, although this is not broken down by category and is not accompanied by figures.

3.2.10 We also could not find information on how many of those additional HGVs through Sapcote would be going to and from the site, (although presumably some HGVs would access it that way,) and how many would be redistributed traffic heading for the motorway junction.

3.2.11 Lastly, it should be stressed that this increase in both general and heavy traffic is on the assumption that the HNRFI development traffic would largely use the M69 Jn 2. How much additional HGV traffic would use that route if the motorway were heavily congested or out of use has not been tested by the promoter, even though it would clearly have a significant impact on our village, as traffic, particularly HGVs seeks a route to the A5 and other destinations.

3.2.12 We already see lorries using our roads instead of the motorway (identified by the proposer as unsuitable for HGVs. (See Fig 5-7 below) and we have concerns that this would only increase if the development is permitted.

Figure 5-7: Key Desirable and Undesirable HGV Routes



3.2.13 The extra traffic includes local people travelling to HNRFI for work purposes. As the facility would be open 24/7, 365 days we are also be concerned

about the increase of traffic noise and pollution through the village, particularly in the centre where houses are close to the roads and at night-time.

3.2.14 Overall, we consider the impact on Sapcote is very significant and, because it is one of the villages most affected by traffic changes resulting from the proposals, that serious impact should have been more fully assessed by the promoter, taking account of the sensitivity of the location, and the presence of vulnerable users, such as cyclists and pedestrians.

3.2.15 The material currently provided by the promoter is limited and so the extent of the issues has been hard for us to gauge fully but we would suggest the developer has not shown that those impacts are acceptable when compared with the requirements of the NPPF in our case.

4. Landscape and Amenity

4.1 Sapcote villagers are particularly concerned about the impact on the landscape, which will be impacted by views of the development. These would be mitigated to an extent by new planting but it is unlikely this will completely obscure the buildings, particularly at night when light will spill from the site.

4.2 Equally, we are concerned about the impact the development will have on our access to services. In the broadest sense, Sapcote villagers rely on access to Hinckley for many essential services, as well as Burbage Common, so any deterioration in the B4669 or the M69 Junction 2, as a result of congestion would impact adversely on our daily lives.

4.3 More specifically, in terms of access to the countryside Sapcote benefits from access to a number of Public Rights of Way (PROWs). In particular two PROWs link to Sapcote Road and then cross towards the motorway.

4.4 A further footpath extends towards Aston Flamville linking to the motorway island and there is a bridleway allowing from the B4669 which links to the bridleway which crosses the motorway and the proposed site.

4.5 All these links, as well as several others criss-crossing the adjacent countryside, give us access to the countryside around the village and are likely to be directly impacted, not only visually but by an increase in noise and dust.

4.6These paths are also used by families, ramblers and dog walkers. The assessment of PROWs by the proposer does not consider usage of PROWs beyond the site boundary, but because those paths are close to the village, we would anticipate that usage is likely to be higher than on those assessed for Tritax.

4.7 Sapcote villagers also benefit from access to Burbage Common, and we are particularly concerned about the impact of such a large site (and access road)

next to the Common. The interruption in the footpath network by the development would also put people off from walking to the site via that network.

4.8 Any deterioration in access to the Burbage side of the Common would also be likely to have a major effect on horse riding in and around the proposed site. A number of the bridle paths and quiet roads are used daily by riders from a selection of livery yards. Horses by their very nature do not like lots of noise and certainly not HGVs or similar large vehicles. The building work alone would be likely to stop riders feeling able to use the local area to exercise their horses.

4.9 The PROW Strategy (DR 6.3.11.4) shows some form of bridle path around the outside of the industrial park with a corral for crossing main roads. This would most likely stop any nervous horses or riders being able to use the area going forward, especially if it was heavily used by employees accessing the site. The surrounding areas of Burbage and Elmesthorpe are specifically popular for their suitable horse facilities and this is threatened by the development.

5. Conclusions

5.1 In conclusion, we consider the proposals should not go ahead. As set out by CPRE, there are wider issues in relation to Transport, Climate Change and Need which we support.

5.2 However, in terms of our local environment the key issues that worry us are:

1. the increase in traffic particularly HGVs.
2. the impact that will have to congestion and safety in our village and surrounding roads
3. the impact on the landscape around our village and
4. the loss of amenity and enjoyment of the countryside, including the setting of Burbage Common.

5.3 Until a fuller assessment is done of the impact on Sapcote and other local villages we believe the proposals should be rejected.