Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Written Representation

Stoney Stanton Action Group

October 2023

Contents

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Forword

1.1.1 The Stoney Stanton Action Group (SSAG) believes that the HNRFI development should not be allowed to go ahead for many reasons. A lot of these were listed in our Relevant Representation. We have elaborated on some of them in the later sections of this document, and summarised them in section 1. In cases where we have not elaborated, the original concerns raised in the RR still stand.

1.1.2 The SSAG committee is formed of a small group of residents of Stoney Stanton. The representation we've submitted has been written without any professional help and is therefore a collection of what we can discern from the vast volume of examination documentation with some input from associates.

1.2 Purpose, Need, Location and Policy

1.2.1 Despite many claims by the applicant that the site is suited to being a SRFI, (documents 16.1 and 162), in fact the area is already well served by SRFIs and the country would not benefit from another one being built in this location in the Midlands

1.2.2 The applicant has stressed the importance of the connection to Felixstowe, however a look at the Felixstowe freight timetable will show that there are already many regular services operating from Felixstowe to RFIs in the Midlands, with more services to existing RFIs in the region planned.

1.2.3 There will be a surplus of warehousing in Leicestershire, as the Magna Park extension is already being built.

1.2.4 The largest conurbations in the Midlands are already well served by SRFIs, a new one located in the rural countryside is not needed

1.2.5 In a similar vein, the location would imply that most "local" markets to be served will be >20km away by road. Whereas because of the location in the so called "golden triangle", most probable markets served will be a long haul distance from HNRFI by road. This does not comply with the NN NPS.

1.2.6 NN NPS calls for SRFIs in areas that are **not** already well served and cites example areas. The Midlands is not an area that requires a new SRFI

1.2.7 NN NPS talks about development of the National Networks "to support national and local growth and regeneration particularly in the most disadvantageous areas – helping to rebalance the economy". This is certainly not the case for HNRFI which is proposed for an area where employment is already above average.

1.2.8 NN NPS paragraph 3.2 states "The Government recognises that for development of the national road and rail networks to be sustainable these should be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts and improve quality of life". In this case the development will have a high adverse social and environmental impact and will severely decrease the quality of life for most local residents.

1.2.9 Most of the jobs "created" will actually be redeployments. One consequence of this is that the majority of people employed on the site will need to travel long distances on a daily basis.

1.2.10 On site selection. The selection process has been very Leicestershire centric, which surely should not be the case for a nationally important Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. The site chosen is on the very Western edge of Leicestershire. Other sites to the West of Leicestershire should have also been considered, it is possible that a site where less environmental impact / damage would occur could have been chosen.

1.3 Land Use and Socio Economic Effects

1.3.1 Impact:

The applicant has underestimated the impact of all aspects of the development.

There has been no study cited to investigate impacts of climate change on the workforce (as opposed to HNRFI meeting the new reduction in emissions legislation).

1.3.2 Employment

A major concern surrounds the availability of workforce to fill all jobs once the site is operational. Employment rates in the local area are higher than the national average although wage growth is lower. The proposed workforce could potentially be from locations outside the area and distances travelled will put more strain on the infrastructure. Likewise, some operational jobs required to manage and maintain machinery, which are likely to increase over time with more automation, will require a more highly skilled workforce, in area that traditionally has poor graduate retention rates..

1.3.3 Housing

Housing needs will outstrip supply, as the existence of HNRFI was not taken into account when measuring an already substantial unmet housing need from Leicester City, which Leicestershire County Council are having to share.

1.3.4 Infrastructure

The importance of upgrading the A5.
The need to address the extra volume on the M69, particularly at J2 Fosse Park/M1, which has significant queues now at peak times, particularly for traffic turning north on the M1.
Proposed mitigations for limiting the effects of 3 shifts of workforce in and out of site, plus approx 9,500 HGV movements per day, do not seem anywhere near adequate.

1.3.5 Policy

Current NN NPS - development will not improve our quality of life.
New draft NN NPS – looking to a national network, not all clustered in the Midlands. Shift from building lots of new infrastructure to fewer and more targeted interventions, and maximising the efficiency and quality of existing assets.
Developments should not be built on farmland, for multiple reasons given.

1.4 Rail Traffic

1.4.1 No rail freight services or paths are guaranteed or reserved, despite the fact that the applicant is claiming there will 16 trains in and out per day. The SRFI should not be allowed to be built if there is no concrete guarantee of rail freight services.

1.4.2 The applicant claims that new paths are available, however at the same time National Rail is aiming to increase passenger services, this has been reported in the press, and possibly other freight services along the same track. The paths are not likely to be available for HNRFI.

1.4.3 The concept of using HNRFI as a rail freight hub does not seem to have been factored into any rail path requirements calculations.

1.4.4 Lack of suitable sidings in the area to cope with train problems.

1.4.5 Potential traffic caused by more closures at the Narborough crossing

1.4.6 No obvious protection against train runaway scenarios

1.4.7 Have the difficulties of slow moving large freight trains been taken into account, especially when they need to stop and start in the vicinity of Hinckley Station?

1.5 Road Traffic

1.5.1 Lack of agreement between the applicant and relevant highways authorities about the content and completeness of traffic modelling. We cannot properly assess what has been provided in examination documentation

1.5.2 A Safety audit is required for all junctions affected, not just those where mitigation is proposed

1.5.3 A bypass for Stoney Stanton and Sapcote is still required

1.5.4 Dismissing the construction phase as being “short term” therefore will have an insignificant effect is wrong. It will have significant impact for years.

1.5.5 Information about GEART modelling had been provided in the public consultation material (PEIR Chapter 8) and allowed us to conclude that many significant “sensitivity receptors” had been missed out of the assessment of traffic through Stoney Stanton and Sapcote. The equivalent information was not supplied in the examination document and so we were not able to check the conclusions the applicant had come to (even though they acknowledged that we had uncovered issues).

1.5.6 Selective referencing of the Leicester and Leicestershire 2050 Our Vision for Growth (2018) document and associated documents. Ignoring the fact that a significant aspect (the A46 Expressway) is not happening so reducing the argument for HNRFI.

1.5.7 ES Chapter 8 has numerous places where the information supplied is insufficient to draw a conclusion, however frequently the conclusion “it is therefore considered that the sensitivitiy of … is negligible” has been made. This renders it impossible for a reader to check or understand the conclusion.

1.5.8 Dismissal of the importance of existing traffic on trunk routes, e.g. M69, A5. Where there is already a tailback (or log jam) type situation occurring frequently, then a small increase will

have an amplified effect. The algorithm used seems to calculate that an increase on an already large traffic flow is insignificant (which it probably would be if traffic were flowing well)

1.5.9 With respect to roads included in the traffic analysis – reference to link numbers is almost impossible to follow as the links defining different roads sometimes have the same name (e.g. Hinckley Road). Checking what the applicant has said about individual "links" is almost impossible.

1.5.10 Some significant roads have been missed out due to an assumption that they will not be badly affected by traffic, however in some cases they are so close the site (e.g. B581 Station Road through Elmesthorpe) that their significance is due to their location. The approach (or at least the documentation provided) is flawed.

1.5.11 Given what has already been said about the ability to check the identification and use of sensitivity receptors, it is still clear that the applicant has disregarded significant features which affect traffic through Stoney Stanton and Sapcote (difficult tight S bends with narrow walkways etc.)

1.5.12 The choice of a "future baseline" of 2036, which itself pre-supposes that traffic will increase year on year till then without the development going ahead, has the effect of apparently minimising the effect of HNRFI. This seems to be misleading

1.5.13 The presentation of results of traffic modelling seems to be too simplified to convey the true overall picture. On top of this traffic flow disruption scenarios (which happen frequently) are not shown or dismissed, there is just an indication that a plan will be put in place

1.5.14 Stated (or proposed) public transport improvements are not underwritten by any sort of agreement by potential operators.

1.5.15 The proposed A47 link road does not join onto the A47, but onto a smaller road which has many amenities directly fronting onto it. We could not see any mitigation for these.

1.5.16 Mitigations proposed for parts of Stoney Stanton (e.g. traffic lights in the village) and Sapcote are likely to have a detrimental effect on the quality of life for residents of the villages and at the same time will not actually mitigate against the real problems

1.5.17 Generally, proposed mitigations that won't work, proposed mitigations that will cause their own (new) problems and missing mitigations.

1.5.18 We understood that the M69 Southbound slip roads were not open in the first place (1976) due to potential traffic problems this would occur in the area. This issue is not addressed in the proposals.

1.5.19 Adding 1,767 vehicles (494HGV, 1,273 light) to the M69 J2 roundabout at the peak hour is an absolutely major disruption to the motorists that regularly use this junction and is unacceptable.

1.6 Pollution

1.6.1 Net global offsetting of CO_2 emissions does not remove the problem of local increases.

1.6.2 Local increases in NOx and Particulate Matter levels in an area where levels are generally known to be already higher than national figures

1.6.3 Are requirements for electric vehicles charging points met?

1.7 Ecology and Biodiversity

1.7.1 Site Description and proximity to SSSIs – insufficient separation from site

1.7.2 Concerns regarding Biodiversity Net Gains and offsetting. Lack of information about how BNG will be achieved, lack of evidence that proposals will work and lack of involvement of local communities

1.7.3 Loss of Mature Trees: Mitigation will not be effective for decades

1.7.4 Impact of hedgerow removal

1.7.5 Loss of carbon capture opportunities

1.7.6 Specific concerns regarding impact on wildlife populations.

Displacement of nesting sites, some of red listed birds, will cause permanent loss.

Negative effect on aquatic wildlife, bats and badgers.

1.7.7 Concerns about the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. Studies have shown that mitigations of the types described sometimes fail. If mitigations fail to achieve desired results, who will be held accountable? SSSIs in particular, should be afforded more protection given the uncertainty of the effectiveness of protective measures proposed by the applicant.

1.8 Environmental

1.8.1 Serious concerns about the routing of natural waterways

1.8.2 Serious local floods in 2019 demonstrate that the area, or sites in the vicinity, are prone to flooding if waterways are not managed properly

1.8.3 Concerns about the capacity of existing sewage and freshwater systems

1.8.4 Concerns that issues that have been raised with South Trent Water authority resulting from the 2019 flooding event have not been taken into account.

1.8.5 Concerns that changes to the level of the water table will have a serious effect on the health of the SSSIs

1.9 Agriculture, landscape and heritage

1.9.1 Agricultural land should be protected for food production

1.9.2 Given the site location, next to SSSIs and meadows set aside for leisure, the development will have a major detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the countryside

1.9.3 The development does not comply with national policies in several ways, but essentially the harm done to the environment, ecosystems and the peaceful aesthetic of the area will far outweigh any value of the proposal.

1.9.4 The proposal is totally out of character with the existing area and will likely attract undesirable elements such as increased crime to what has always been a peaceful area.

1.10 Visual Impact, Quality of Life and Wellbeing

1.10.1 The proposal will have a detrimental effect on people mental health and wellbeing

1.10.2 None of the mitigations proposed to reduce the adverse visual impact will work in the medium term (15 years) and probably not in the long term.

1.10.3 The consultation material lacked any visualisation regarding the night view of the proposal. This is unacceptable as it will have an impact on people in the local area. Suggesting the impact will be low is incorrect. The nearby Calor gas site can be seen for miles around, and the proposed main site is 10 times the size of that.

1.10.4 The proposal is to have through the night lighting, with motion sensors determining whether some lights are on or not will be disturbing to nearby residents

1.10.5 Through the night lighting will have a catastrophic effect on wildlife.

1.10.6 The overall combination of noise, pollution, overwhelming size of the development, traffic, light pollution, vibrations, intrusion into a peaceful and loved area, damage to the ecology etc. will have a very bad impact on the wellbeing of local residents.,

2. Purpose, need, location and policy

2.1 Examination library documents 16.2 (APP-357) and 16.2 (APP-358) make strong claims about how well suited HNRFI is to being a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), linking into both the rail and trunk road system, with a "direct" rail connection to the eastern port of Felixstowe and a location between the West Coast and East Coast mainlines. Making it "exceptionally well placed to serve a regional market function and a national rail hub function". However the chosen site is **not suitable** because it does not align with the National Policy Statement for National Networks, December 2014 (NN NPS) in many ways described later in this section

2.2 The area is already overcrowded for Rail Freight with Warehousing terminals therefore we do not need this one and it is not of strategic importance:

- DIRFT (Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal) ~ 15km by road from HNRFI site
- East Midlands Gateway ~ 42km by road from HNRFI site
- West Midlands Interchange ~ 64km by road (DCO granted 4th May 2020 and works started July 2023 expected to take a decade)
- Hams Hall ~ 41km by road from HNRFI site
- Birch Coppice ~ 28km by road from HNRFI site
- Birmingham (Landor Street) ~ 57km by road from HNRFI site
- Northampton SEGRO Logistics ~ 63km by road from HNRFI site

Many of these, (e.g. East Midlands Gateway, Hams Hall, Birch Coppice, Birmingham Landor Street and recently announced, DIRFT) already operate freight services to/from Felixstowe, which is a main feature of HNRFI, and the West Midlands Interchange will also when it is built.

2.3 There are also many very large warehousing complexes in the area, such as Magna Park ~ 9km, one of the largest distribution centres in Europe, plus many large warehouse complexes recently built along the A5 near to Hinckley (although these are not easily accessible from HNRFI as they are on the West side of Hinckley). There is no need for additional warehousing in this area. The applicant has referred to a report "Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change" April 2021 prepared by GL Hearn with MDS Transmodal Ltd and input from, amongst others, Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley). The report shows (executive summary para 0.4) that for "non-rail served sites", if the planned extension at Magna Park is included, in Leicestershire there is a surplus of warehouse area up to 2041 but for rail served there is a deficiency (note their conversion of sq. m to hectares is incorrect and therefore the report overstates the amount in hectares). There are significant problems with the report if it is to be used as a justification for the HNRFI:

The report is Leicester and Leicestershire centric and does not address the wider status of the combined West and East Midlands. For a project of "National Significance", the area considered should be across the whole region, not just Leicestershire. In the geographical area where the HNRFI is proposed, which is right on the "boundary" between East and West Midlands (the proposed site is on the western boundary of the East Midlands), there are several SRFIs "just over the border" in the West Midlands, e.g., Birch Coppice, Hams Hall, Birmingham. DIRFT, just 15km away, is in Northamptonshire.

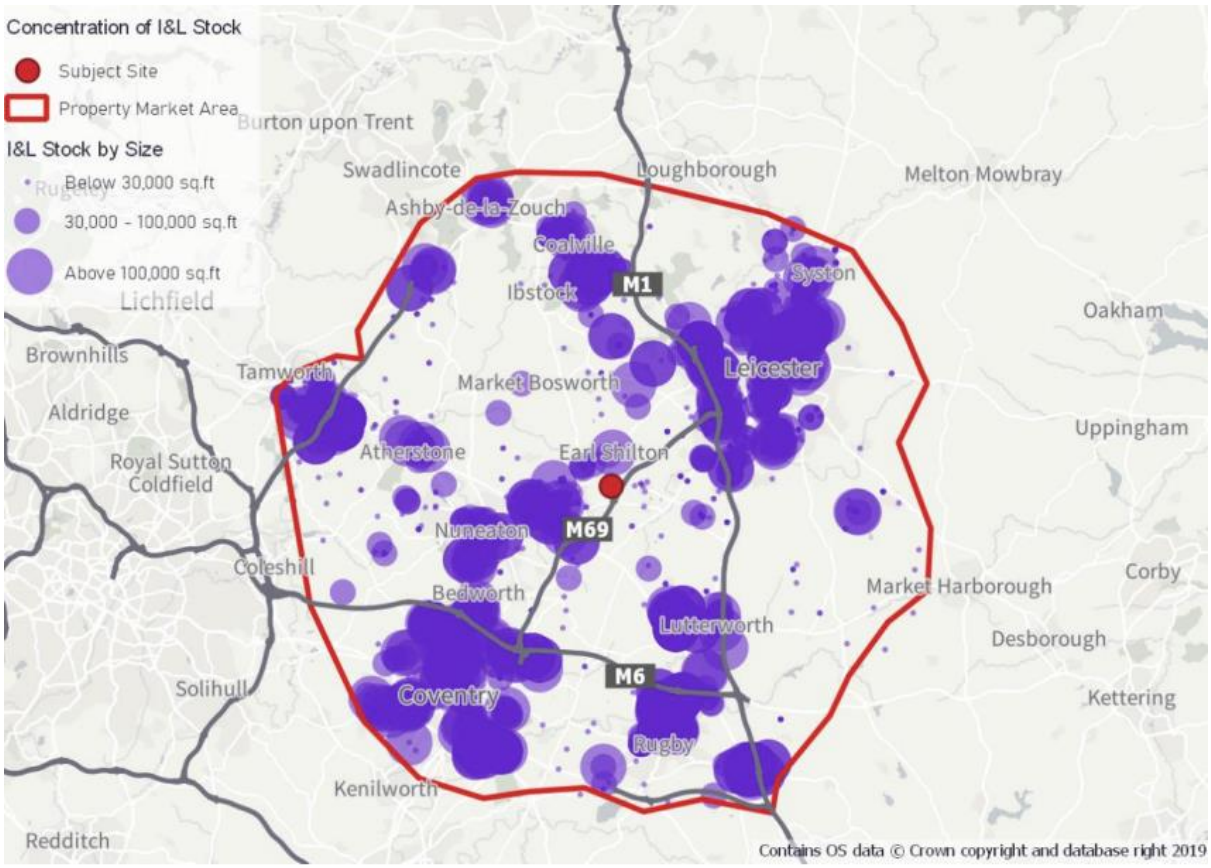
The "Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change" April 2021 report refers to the East Midlands Gateway, which is a brand new 700 acres SRFI

site operated by Maritime Transport Ltd. The Warehousing and Logistics report does not include EMG in the Warehouse availability figures (Table 7 and paragraph 3.11), stating that it is not yet operational. In fact, it is now running daily services to Felixstowe, London Gateway, Southampton, and Liverpool. The East Midlands Gateway is better connected, larger and able to expand (therefore sustainable). Therefore, the Warehousing report, even though dated April 2021, is out of date in important relevant details.

2.4 ES Chapter 4 – site selection and evolution. This chapter shows clearly that only locations in Leicestershire were considered. Not only that, but the chosen site is on the very Western edge of Leicestershire. HNRFI is claimed to be a nationally important Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, but only locations in one county were considered. This implies that the development is not of National Significance

2.5 ES Chapter 4. The train line from Leicester to Nuneaton crosses the Westcoast Mainline at Nuneaton. Surely locations to the West of Hinckley should have been included in considerations. It is entirely possible that a suitable site could have been found with a lower environmental impact (i.e. more brownfield than the proposed greenfield site).

2.6 The map below is from document 16.1 – Fig 5.1 on page 35. This used by the applicant to show why HNRFI is critical, but this shows the saturation of warehousing already, with other speculative warehouses already being planned.



2.7 The largest conurbations in the area, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Coventry, Birmingham, Rugby, and Northampton, are already well served by SRFIs with access to Felixstowe as well as

to Southampton, London Gateway, and other major ports. Therefore, this proposed development is not needed.

2.8 NN NPS paragraph 2.44 (referred to from 16.2 para 2.6) clearly states in that "The aim of a strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimising some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road, through co-location of other distribution and freight activities."

The HNRFI proposal does not comply with this requirement because it is strategically located in the so called "golden triangle" where most parts of the UK can be reached "by a 4 hour HGV journey". The local area is already saturated with SRFIs, most of which are closer to conurbations, therefore adding one more can only benefit the long haul logistics by road sector and does not serve to minimise the distribution leg by road.

2.9 NN NPS paragraph 2.56 states that SRFIs should be located near to the markets they serve. Document 16.1 Para 6.8 states that the SRFI provides "a terminal in line with Midlands Connect plans" – that the HNRFI will serve Coventry to Leicester and Magna Park markets within a c20 mile radius of the rail terminal, with an ability to readily serve deep-sea and short-sea ports without the need to route through Birmingham. If the claims that most traffic will go onto the M69 is true, then most of the HGV traffic will travel at least 15km (toward Leicester along the M69) or 20km (toward Coventry along M69 then M6 or A46) before even properly commencing journeys. The location of HNRFI would then make it unable to achieve the intention of NN NPS

2.10 NN NPS paragraph 2.41 states that The Government's strategy is to provide for increasing use of efficient and sustainable electric trains for both passenger and freight services. The environmental performance of the railway will be improved by continuing to roll out a programme of rail electrification. But the line HNRFI is situated on is not electrified.

Comment by Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the letter of support) page 49 of 16.1)
We face a climate emergency and transport generates approaching half of all CO_2 emissions in the UK. Electric cars, vans and buses are now commonplace and electric HGVs for local and regional deliveries are starting to emerge. There is, however, no practicable solution available for decarbonising long distance road haulage and the only proven method of moving freight in quantity over long distances with zero emissions is electric rail.

2.11 NN NPS paragraph 2.45 (referred to in 16.1 para 2.7) states that "This requires the logistics industry to develop new facilities that need to be located alongside the major rail routes, close to major trunk roads as well as near to the conurbations that consume the goods." The HNRFI does not comply with this National Policy because the conurbations that consume the goods will not be nearby and the rail link from Leicester to Nuneaton is not a major rail route. They are also well served by other existing National Rail Freight Interchanges.

2.12 NN NPS paragraph 2.50 states "While the forecasts in themselves, do not provide sufficient granularity to allow site-specific need cases to be demonstrated, they confirm the need for an expanded network of large SRFIs across the regions to accommodate the long-term growth in rail freight. They also indicate that new rail freight interchanges, especially in areas poorly served by such facilities at present, are likely to attract substantial business, generally new to rail".

This proposal is to put a new rail freight terminal in an area that is already well served (therefore not complying with the policy).

2.13 NN NPS paragraph 2.57 (not specifically referred to in 16.1) states "Existing operational SRFIs and other intermodal RFIs are situated predominantly in the Midlands and the North. Conversely, in London and the Southeast, away from the deep-sea ports, most intermodal RFI and rail-connected warehousing is on a small scale and/or poorly located in relation to the main urban areas. The HNRFI proposal only adds to those already in the Midlands and therefore does not benefit the nation.

2.14 NN NPS paragraph 2.58 states (also not specifically referred to in 16.1) "This means that SRFI capacity needs to be provided at a wide range of locations, to provide the flexibility needed to match the changing demands of the market, possibly with traffic moving from existing RFI to new larger facilities. There is a particular challenge in expanding rail freight interchanges serving London and the Southeast." The HNRFI proposal only serves to concentrate more SRFIs in the Midlands and does not benefit the nation, as a whole, which is the purpose of having a National Policy Statement for National Networks.

2.15 NN NPS paragraph 2.6 (not specifically referred to in 16.1) states: "A need for the development on the national networks to support national and local economic growth and regeneration, particularly in the most disadvantageous areas – helping to rebalance the economy. This is certainly not true for the area that the proposed HNRFI is to be sited in as employment in this area is already above average.

2.16 NN NPS paragraph 3.2 states "The Government recognises that for development of the national road and rail networks to be sustainable these should be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts and improve quality of life".

The applicant relies on statements in the National Policies which allow a project, if deemed to be of "National Importance'' to "mitigate" any negative social and environmental impacts in largely unspecified ways. This is against the spirit of NPPF and NN NPS. This development, if it were to go ahead, would reduce the quality of life of many people in the area, would be detrimental to the environment, and yet the notion of "National Significance" depends on the possibility of being able to service a minimum of four trains a day. The balance here seems to indicate that the HNRFI development is not likely to be of National or Strategic importance, will not minimise social and environmental impacts and will not improve quality of life, and therefore should not be allowed to proceed.

2.17 NN NPS paragraph 4.87 states "SRFIs can provide many benefits for the local economy. For example, because many of the on-site functions of major distribution operations are relatively labour intensive, this can create many new job opportunities. The existence of an available and economic local workforce will therefore be an important consideration for the applicant."

In fact, during local consultations, it has been indicated that there will be up to 2500 new jobs and up to 5900 jobs which will be people relocating from existing jobs e.g. from within cities such as Leicester, Coventry, Birmingham etc. Therefore, the workforce will not be local, in fact they will mostly be driving large distances.

2.18 Take up of Logistics building supply. The applicant cites many reports which indicate how strong take up of warehousing is in the Midlands, however from a national strategy perspective, concentrating even more into an already congested area will continue to create

more infrastructure problems in this area and will not benefit the nation. It may well be of financial benefit to the owners and shareholders of logistics companies.

2.19 Relying on trends that seem to have been exacerbated by Covid19 for future development is not a reliable approach for forecasting warehousing need. Some habits may reverse with the strong will to retain high streets and meet other demands on our country to protect green space, the environment and social well-being. A conservative shared approach across the country should be adopted for warehouse unit building and supply.

2.20 Therefore, positioning a new Strategic Rail Freight Terminal in the heart of an already congested area, known as the “Golden Triangle” because of the ability to access all parts of the country from this single area (i.e., by virtue of a long secondary distribution leg by road) is not in accordance with the December 2014 National Policy Statement for National Networks and, in fact, acts against the purpose of the National Policy.

3. Land Use and Socio-Economic Effects

Referring mainly to APP-116 ES Chapter 7

3.1 Impact

3.1.1 Environmental impact. There is great concern that the environmental impact of the proposed development has been minimised.

3.1.2 7.191 In response to the ES Chapter 7, assessments significantly under-estimating the impact of the development on the health of local residents, the applicant has prepared a separate document on this Appendix 7.1 Health and Equality Briefing Note (document reference 6.2.7.1) The conclusion at the end of this document deems all factors under consideration, taking into account mitigation measures where appropriate (air quality, noise, surface water and flooding, visual and electrical infrastructure) not to have any significance!

3.1.3 Unbelievably, air quality, noise, traffic, light and health still assessed as minor adverse effects. The application site is within 300 metres of the closest houses in Elmesthorpe, and very close to the traveller site at Aston Firs. There are implications in terms of noise, light, traffic and visual impact for these residents, and for others living just outside the immediate area, where the traffic, noise and light pollution will be keenly felt, and be a major disrupter to life as it is now. (Table 7.24) Despite the applicant's efforts to minimise the visual impacts with their artists' impressions, these huge structures will dominate what is at present a rural landscape. The proposed SDA, is, of course, not mentioned, but the homes on the motorway edge of the development would surely fall into this category too, should they be built. The assessments seem to massively underestimate the effect this development will have locally. In every respect, the impact of this development will be highly significant.

3.1.4 Climate change ES 7.273-277 Surprisingly, this document is very dismissive of any mitigation needed to address the huge challenges of Climate Change for their employees, so there are great concerns here, with more frequent adverse weather conditions, and higher temperatures likely in summer, and wetter winters. All these factors will affect the workforce when travelling, and the operating conditions on site.

3.2 Employment

3.2.1 ES Statement 7.85 and table 7.9 shows that there is still 63% of the workforce involved in basic warehousing roles. Where are these people coming from, given low levels of unemployment currently, and difficulty filling vacancies in certain areas, as detailed in statement 7.9 and 7.91, and the huge rise in employment in this sector, forecast in 7.93? Figure 7.3: Modelled HNRFI employee trips to HNRFI in 2036 AM peak shows employees travelling from outside local area lie along M1/M69/A5 corridors. Anecdotal conversations seem to suggest that the potential employment area is much wider, given the shortages in some areas.

3.2.2 If, as the report suggests, (7.3) many workers will be relocated from other RFI's in the area to more modern warehousing within HNRFI, then, surely, average distances travelled are likely to be longer? The future available labour pool will have a shortage of occupations such as Professional, Associate Professional and Technical, Skilled Trades, and Process and Machine Operatives. Between 2,730 and 3,660 workers may be required to move from outside the

Study Area. Some may commute on a daily basis, increasing the distances travelled, while others would move permanently, which would increase the demand for housing.

3.2.3 ES 7.53 states that some of the warehousing jobs would be replaced by automated processes, although a number of high skilled jobs would be created to manage and maintain the automation. The LLEP Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030 states that up to 42% of jobs in Leicester and Leicestershire will require graduate skills by 2030, but the region has low graduate retention rates.

3.2.4 ES 7.54 It is also worth reiterating that Leicester and Leicestershire's Strategic Economic Plan states our area's relative weaknesses are: congestion on the roads and railways poor economic productivity per head of population, low pay structure and high levels of commuting.

3.2.5 ES 7.117 states that 80.1% 16-64 year olds are economically active in study area (2022 ONS). Employment rate is higher than the national average. Unemployment rate is lower than the national average at 4.4%. However, young people (16-24) unemployment is worse than national average at 13.5%. ES 7.153 states that wage growth has been lower in the Study Area with regional and national wage growth being faster. Again, this indicates that the workforce needed may need to come from a much wider area than is being suggested.

3.2.6 7.242Crossing data on future unemployed people by occupation (Table 7.21 above), on the share of occupation in the I&L sector (Figure 7.9) and on net additional on-site jobs (net of displacement) in the proposed development, would suggest that the future pool of unemployed people may be insufficient to fill all the jobs created by the HNRFI as shown in Table 7.22 below.

3.3 Housing

3.3.1 ES Statements 7.116 - 7.118 highlights demand for housing outstripping supply, and details huge rise in house prices of nearly 30% in ten years to 2019. While updated representation again states Leicester/Leicestershire are likely to be the main areas where additional housing would be needed, but overspill would be likely in Coventry/Warwickshire, the question not addressed is if housing is scarce (Leicester's unmet need) and expensive, how will people doing basic warehousing jobs afford to live here?)

3.3.2 ES 7.166 A Statement of Common Ground has now been signed between the authorities with BDC accepting that they will take 346 homes per year of Leicester City's unmet need in addition to their own needs. BDC's Local Plan review is therefore planning for circa 12,000 homes over the plan period. ES 7.172 A review of the latest Local Plans and Monitoring Reports has revealed that these documents do not specifically refer to employment created by HNRFI or by the logistics sector to define housing need.

3.3.3 Also, if, as the report suggests, many workers will be relocated to more modern warehousing within HNRFI from other RFI's in the area. Surely, average distances travelled are likely to be longer, thus negating some of the arguments for location?

3.3.4 Some of this data on workforce availability is still based on the 2011 census. Tritax's representation suggests this is the latest data available, which may be true, but how relevant is it? All the results from the 2021 census should have been available by June 2023, so why are these not being used?

3.4 Infrastructure

3.4.1 Statement 7.70-71 identifies growth areas as Leicestershire International Gateway, Melton Mowbray, A46 Priority Growth Corridor (Expressway downgraded) and A5 Improvement Corridor. This report admits (7.71) that A5 has been suffering from increased congestion, and details the removal of A5 Dodwells to Longshoot widening scheme (Chapter 8 traffic and transport 8.15), thus sustaining the strictures along the route This scheme is under current consideration in Parliament: "Investing in the improvement of the A5 will also support growth in advanced manufacturing and logistics developments in the area, as well as housing delivery"

SGP 2018. Project in decision phase (23/24)

Publication of RIS3 May 23.

Decision making is ongoing, but to grant permission for HNRFI to go ahead without the improvements necessary on the A5 and surrounding roads would seem unthinkable.

3.4.2 Additionally, the peak time capacity of the M69 seems to have been underestimated, particularly at J2, where it meets Fosse Park traffic and the M1. Substantial queues of traffic wanting to turn left onto the M1N, build up at peak times, and the right hand lane merges with the middle one, resulting in all lanes being reduced to moving very slowly. Again, this will require further investment if the project gets the go-ahead.

3.4.3 At ES 7.114, the community S47 consultation feedback topics are listed. The word traffic does not appear once, just the much vaguer term "quality of life". The proposed works to mitigate some of the increased traffic of at least 9,500 HGV movements a day, plus workforce movements of 3 shifts a day, plus other movements associated with the warehouses, once they are operational, seem to be tinkering at the edges. We will still have the same roads for the most part, with a huge increase in the volume of traffic.

3.5 Policy

3.5.1 ES Statement 7.43 National Policy Statement states that the sustainable development of national road and rail networks should minimise social and environmental impacts and improve quality of life. Clearly, this development will have completely the opposite effect! The buildings will be huge, dominate the landscape, and be out of character with the surrounding area. The effect of the development will have a devastating effect on the environment, and the traffic generated by the operation of the site will severely exacerbate an already acute traffic problem. Junctions that are already difficult to negotiate at peak times, will see queues get unbearably longer. There will be excess noise, light and air pollution.

3.5.2 ES Statement 7.50 The LLEP strategic economic plan identifies the following issues as major risks to the local economy: lack of suitable employment land for logistics and manufacturing, and inadequate transport infrastructure, causing congestion and adding to business costs. We are a rural area, surrounded by farmland. Farmland should not be used as employment land, particularly at a time when food miles count. We should be producing more of our own food locally. If we carry on building on farmland, it will lead to the need for more importing of food, and, therefore, ironically, to an increase in the need for freight capacity. The loss of farmland also highlights questions about the fragility of the global food supply chain; trends away from

free trade; rising inflation; the vulnerability of some of our core crops and some farming business models to climate impacts, such as new pests and new diseases; and the growing spectre of conflict across the world, not just in Ukraine. These shocks to the economy are recognised in 7.41. (The government recognise these issues, and others, are they are being addressed in the Framework for Land use 2023, due to be published in the next few months.)

3.5.3 ES Chapter 7 Table 4.14 In spite of Scoping consultation responses (2020) suggesting there is currently overcapacity regionally, Tritax have cited Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing growth and change (amended 2022) in Chapter 5: Policy and need of this chapter, there is a forecast need of 2,570,000sqm of warehouse floorspace by 2041 (para 7.67). 7.78 – 83 High growth trajectory, and analysis in assessment (supply of premises has at all time low, demand is up 113% against long term average)is cited as evidence to make a robust case for market need. Regional vacancy rate 1.4%. Demand trend towards larger units. Level of demand is 150% (2.5 times) higher than current supply of 709 ha. While this may be so, this does not justify in itself the location of the rail hub. The new NN NPS argues for a nationwide network of hubs, strategically located:

"Consideration should be given to ensuring existing SRFI locations are taken into account when making an application, to ensure that SRFIs are strategically located and thus enable a cross-country network which unlocks the full range of benefits that an expanded network of SRFIs can provide. Whilst there may be a natural clustering of SRFI proposals in the distribution heartland of the nation, consideration should be given to proposals for SRFIs in areas where there is currently lesser provision. "(3.108 draft NN NPS March 2023)

Additionally, (7.65) Blaby District Core Strategy (2013) prevents built development with significant adverse effects on the character of the landscape, but recognises the need for a balanced approach with the need to provide new development in sustainable locations.

4. Rail Traffic

4.1.1 ES Chapter 8 (Transport and Traffic table 8.1 PINS ID 4.2.4: In response to the PINS query, the applicant has included in their response that "Network Rail has confirmed that the addition of new train paths for the Proposed Development will be required to fit around the existing services within the working timetable…… These paths are neither guaranteed nor reserved for the Proposed Development but demonstrate the availability of paths for trains in the working timetable on this route on the rail network." How can a "Strategic" Rail Freight Terminal be allowed to be built without a guarantee of required rail paths?

4.1.2 ES Chapter 8 subsections 8.92 to 8.99 selectively choose statements from various documents which emphasize the importance of rail freight (although some strangely talk about North / South e.g. construction materials from the Peak District to London – which would bypass this proposed site). The importance of improving or providing new rail services for passenger traffic is also talked about in these documents. Over several years there have been many suggestions that more passenger rail services will run between Leicester and Birmingham, plus between Leicester and Coventry (local newspapers and Network Rail Strategic Advice July 2020), and very recently as a result of redistribution of development money as a result of changes in HS2 plans, which would all pass-through Hinckley along the same line. We believe the line between Leicester and Nuneaton could not take as much additional freight as proposed by HNRFI as well as increased passenger services. This aspect seems to have been neglected by the applicant.

4.1.3 During the consultation period there was very little mention of the use of HNRFI as a rail freight hub, however this possible use was emphasized more in the Examination documents (e.g. train from a port carrying containers for multiple rail destinations in, loads separated out and sent on to different rail freight terminals out). This seems a good concept, however in order to be efficient this would require more paths to be allocated along the Leicester to Nuneaton line, which seems to be unlikely. There seem to be little evidence that paths for this have been included in any rail traffic considerations.

4.1.4 The HNRFI site is situated on the train line between Wigston Glen Parva Junction and Nuneaton. There are no 'refuge sidings' or 'relief/layby loop lines' between these two points. Therefore this, combined with the fact that the Felixstowe to Nuneaton line merges with the busy Midlands Mainline between Syston and Wigston, limits the ability to run more freight trains along this route and limits the possibility of dealing with problems.

4.1.5 An impact of more rail traffic will result in even more serious traffic congestion and inconvenience to nearby settlements (e.g. Littlethorpe, Narborough, Cosby, Enderby) due to the increased numbers of closures of the Narborough Station level crossing.

4.1.6 Whilst the whole site is built on a 1 in 162 gradient rising towards Hinckley, there appears to be no provision for a runaway derail trap or sand drag at its eastern access link. A gradient of 1 in 330 is quite sufficient for unbraked rail vehicles to run away. If a locomotive is not permanently attached during container handling, it will be vital that fixed brakes are applied to the train, and that running lines are protected by a derail or a sand drag arresting facility, to prevent egress.

4.1.7 The Wigston <> Nuneaton route is already very busy. If the HNRFI is to have a realistic role in rail transport substitution for HGV road traffic, there will be considerable difficulty in securing adequate train paths both sequentially along the route and in junction pathing at Wigston, and probably at Whitacre, Water Orton and Landor Street Junctions. A key problem will be sequential pathing with trains operating at widely differing speeds e.g. all stations "slow" passenger services, semi-fasts e.g. stopping at Hinckley and Nuneaton, or fast – Nuneaton only. Add to that slower freight services and junction pathing conflicts with Midland Main line trains between Leicester London Road and Wigston North Junction, and junction movements in themselves. The consequences of even slight delays will cause either the need for extensive recovery time allowances in timetabling or frequent and widely disruptive delays, which could affect West Coast Main Line (WCML) and Midlands Main line (MML) services.

4.1.8 The most difficult obstacle will be trains requiring access or egress from the HNFRI site. Eastbound trains will almost certainly be slowed to a stand or 5-10mph before entering the site. That access will then require a prolonged obstruction of both eastbound and westbound lines until the train is fully clear of the main running lines. Egress will require similar line obstruction and a similar delay whilst the train accelerates to its line speed.

4.1.9 The same problems will affect westbound trains, which will not obstruct the eastbound line, however restarting a 1,500-tonne train on a 1 in 162 gradient, particularly in adverse rail conditions, will require extended signalling section occupation. This will cause considerable problems on a line which is as restricted and busy as the Wigston <> Nuneaton line is.

4.1.10 The effect of this proposal, if indeed incremental rail traffic is genuinely to be developed, and rail access is not being used to expedite planning consent, will be extremely negative on railway operations on the route. This use of applications for "ghost" rail access has led to the installation of sidings that have never been used

4.1.11 On strategic development of the rail network. A report has been produced by Network Rail, "Leicester Area Strategic Advice" dated July 2020, also titled "How can growth and partners' aspirations be accommodated in the Leicester area over the coming decades?". This Network Rail advice paper talks about, amongst other things, adding direct Leicester to Coventry passenger services along the same line, potential re-opening of the Ivanhoe Line (Leicester to Burton), and the ability to increase freight for Leicestershire aggregates quarries, e.g. Mountsorrel, Bardon Hill and New Cliffe Hill. These will all either directly affect traffic on the Leicester to Nuneaton Line, or indirectly by adding traffic to the Midlands Mainline from the Wigston North Junction to Syston. The strategic advice paper does NOT mention HNRFI. It does not appear that the HNRFI has been looked at holistically, considering new traffic generated by other strategic developments, therefore it is unlikely that the rail network will ever have the capacity to run many trains to HNRFI.

5. Road Traffic

Comments in this section generally refer to APP-117, ES Chapter 8, or in some cases related appendices.

5.1.1 It is of extreme concern that throughout the Public Consultation period and then following that into the Pre-Examination period there had not been an agreement between the Leicestershire County Council's Highways Authority and the applicant about traffic modelling data and

mitigation plans. Logically this implies that the Examination cannot be carried out as intended. It is noted that the National Highways Authority, Leicestershire County Council and Warwickshire County Council (within their Procedural Decision Deadline A Submissions) have made the point that insufficient or inadequate information has been supplied by the applicant in-spite of repeated requests for this information.

5.1.2 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.28 implies that agreements have been reached with Highways Authorities about data used in modelling (but notably not on the outputs of the models) this seems to be at odds with the comments made by these authorities in their Procedural Decision Deadline A Submissions. It appears as if the applicant trying to gloss over important details.

5.1.3 APP-117 ES Chapter 8 (Transport and Traffic table 8.1 PINS ID 4.2.9: In response to the PINS query, the applicant has included in their response that "Stage One Road Safety Audits will be undertaken for junctions where mitigation is proposed and is included in the Transport Assessment". This ought to be extended to "for junctions affected", not just where mitigation is proposed. This is especially required as one of our major concerns is that mitigation is inadequate and insufficient.

5.1.4 ES Chapter 8 subsection 8.22: The applicant states that there was considerable local opposition to bypasses for Sapcote and Stoney Stanton, but less opposition to an A47 link road. These proposals were not mutually exclusive. A solution to the Stoney Stanton / Sapcote traffic problem that HNRFI would cause is still needed as the proposed development would be damaging and detrimental to the villages. The feedback that was submitted was that in their proposed format they were poorly conceived and in the wrong location, with others proposed.

5.1.5 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.70: Talking about routes from the M69 Junction into Hinckley. The document states that "there is likely to be no significant effects on Traffic and Transport due to their short-term temporary nature (2 years)". The interpretation of "no significant effects" is not the same as ours as there are already regular tailbacks which can take 10s of minutes to get through starting from 3:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m. most working day afternoons (tailing back from the Brookside, Burbage, traffic lights). Any increase will be significant.

5.1.6 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.87: This section references GEART, however the link for this has been redacted in the ES. The link provided for this in the consultation documentation only led to a training document and not to the guidelines document "Guidance Note 1. 1993". This made it extremely difficult to check whether the applicant's use of "Sensitivity Receptors" was correct. In the event, checking these for a small area (Stoney Stanton and Sapcote) led us to realise there were many mistakes and omissions. If these were extrapolated to the whole document, then there could easily be many omissions. It does not give confidence in the validity of the traffic modelling. Why is the "Matrix of magnitude and sensitivity" not included in this document to avoid the problem of referring to documents that change over time (looking back, some of these were included in the PEIR – see below)?

5.1.7 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.95 and 8.96: The Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth (2018) document. The reference to this is flawed and misleading. The full sentence taken from the document (page 38, 3rd paragraph) was "This includes key improvements to the M42 motorway, A5, A42 and A46 to expressway standard, including a new road to the south and east of Leicester linking into strategic highways to the west". This last part of the sentence was omitted because that plan was dropped from the Midlands Connect Strategic Transport Plan. It was called (in the Leicester and Leicestershire growth plan) "The A46

Expressway", and was claimed to be "critical to our strategy" (page 48 of the plan), however as it has been abandoned, then the logic for placing the HNRFI in this location (where the A46 Expressway would have joined the M69) is negated.

5.1.8 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.95: The Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our vision for growth (2018) document: Page 49 – goes on to talk about the East Midlands Gateway (strategic rail freight terminal), which is where the M42 meets the M69. The fact that this is not mentioned in ES Chapter 8 seems to be misleading.

5.1.9 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.123 to 8.187 Baseline conditions: From re-reading these, it is clear that a lot of the significant features that will affect or be affected by additional traffic are not included, frequently leading to the dismissive erroneous statement "It is therefore considered that the sensitivity of …. Is negligible" or similar. In most cases use of the word "therefore" is not logical because there is insufficient information provided to base the conclusion on. See instance below

5.1.10 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.128: This subsection concludes with "It is therefore considered that the sensitivity of the M69 is negligible." This does not follow logically from the statement that new south facing slip roads will be added at Junction 2 or from previous subsections. The M69 has regular tailbacks which can take 30 minutes to get through leading to the M1 junction, and at the Coventry end there are regular tailbacks leading to the Clifford Bridge Road access roundabout. Any regular increase in traffic will have an adverse impact.

5.1.11 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.137: The A5 through this area is already problematic, especially given the huge relatively recent increase in large logistics sites along its path. Saying that sensitivity is expected to be minor is very dismissive. Traffic on that part of the A5 is already of major concern to residents of the area and through traffic. There have been multiple collisions with the A5 bridge (the low bridge is referred to) and numerous accidents, including fatalities, at Smockington Hollow. The A5 itself should be prioritised for improvements and these should take place before any work is allowed to commence on any more new logistics sites in the area.

5.1.12 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.140 to 8.166: It is good that the sensitivity of the B4669 going through Sapcote has been increased from Minor (subsection 8.146) due to our comments (see also 8.29) however there seems to be little in proposed mitigation to solve the problems, other than "tinkering" with junctions and traffic calming. These do not solve the problem of increased traffic flow (and corresponding air pollution) through areas where there are children's day care centres, access to schools, access to doctors' surgeries, care homes and shops.

5.1.13 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.140 to 8.166: I have tried hard to check revised tables describing sensitivity receptors, but cannot find them in the ES! It is very frustrating that I cannot check that comments I've made previously have been properly accounted for. I suspect the relevant sections and tables have been deleted from the ES. For reference, these are the sensitivity receptors that were wrong or missing in the consultation material (and this information was provided to TSH – changed to past tense):

5.1.14 PEIR Chapter 8 Section 8.44 Table 8.2 (not to be confused with another Table 8.2 under section 8.13 in the same PEIR chapter!) detailed the definitions and for the surrounding areas. I cannot find the corresponding data in the ES. The following designations should have applied:

- Manorfield Primary School access on both Station Road B581 and Hinckley Road – Major Sensitivity
- Doctors Surgery Access directly onto Hinckley Road – Moderate Sensitivity
- Roads with narrow footways used frequently by pedestrians (Hinckley Road, New Road, Broughton Road, Sapcote Road and Long Street) – Moderate Sensitivity
- There are multiple others including the Star Inn, Village Hall and Living Rock Church that have minor sensitivity.

PEIR Chapter 8 Table 8.4 under section 8.52 referenced the increasing traffic volumes, then table 8.5 under section 8.216 had the following serious misclassifications

- Row 4 – B4669 Hinckley Road through Sapcote, near sensitive receptors should be YES, and the significance should be MAJOR
- Row 6 – Stanton Lane / Hinckley Road, near sensitive receptors should be YES, and the significance should be MAJOR not minor
- Inexplicably missing from this table: The whole of Station Road, New Street, and Broughton Road (from Elmesthorpe) which must be included as the increased traffic is suggested to be 129.6% therefore will be impacted. Based on the assessments used in the exercise the significance of traffic effects will be major and totally overwhelm the existing and proposed road network solutions."

5.1.15 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.140 to 8.166: There is no mention here of Stanton Lane / Hinckley Road (in Stoney Stanton village) which connects the B4669 to Stoney Stanton and already has severe problems. This should be included, also with a moderate to major sensitivity due to school access and an adjacent surgery.

5.1.16 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.140 to 8.166: These paragraphs contain a very general description of the roads in the area (however with some important roads missing, such as Stanton Lane / Hinckley Road from the B4669 to Stoney Stanton as mentioned above). They do not mention any of the significant factors that will affect traffic flow, such as the difficult and narrow S bend in the centre of Sapcote (adjacent to child care centres, shops and near to care homes) and also the difficult junction and narrow S bend in Stoney Stanton, also adjacent to shops and near to a school and the very tight bend on the road from Stoney Stanton to Huncote at the edge of the village. These must be sufficiently important to be included in this section

5.1.17 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.149: This section ignores the fact the B581 goes through Stoney Stanton and has a junction where the Stanton Lane / Hinckley Road traffic mentioned above joins. This ought to be included in the description and at this point (through Stoney Stanton) sensitivity should be major due to school entrances, surgery entrance, two churches in the immediate vicinity of that junction.

5.1.18 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.150 to 8.156: A47 and B4668. These sections miss out some important features, such as where the A47 connects with the A5 to the West, there is a small industrial complex which already has a lot of HGV traffic and long queues at busy times. The section doesn't mention the important proposed link road from HNRFI to the B4668 (see 8.172) which will then lead on to the A47. This will have a significant impact on traffic along the B4668 (which has a primary school and a large secondary school at the Hinckley end) and also

the A47 near to the A5 which has a considerable number of industrial frontages onto the road and a turn into a supermarket and other shops.

5.1.19 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.188 to 8.240: These sections describe the "Future Baseline" of 2036 (no development), and then subsequently the document attempts to describe the effects of the HNRFI development compared with the Future Baseline (if my understanding is correct). As residents of the area, we are also interested in comparisons with existing traffic conditions any time after construction starts. From our point of view, local conditions will be worse for residents of the area from the moment development starts. Comparing with a hypothetical future date when baseline traffic levels are predicted to be already higher will have the effect of minimising the apparent impact of the development, and therefore be misleading.

5.1.20 ES Chapter 8 Subsection 8.210 and 8.211: I read this as the ability to cross roads. It doesn't make sense because a) it mixes up major trunk roads (e.g. A5), rather thin main roads (e.g. the B4114 through Sharnford, which also contains a one way system, and other even smaller streets, but as described it appears to use the same criteria for all. So the "severance level" quoted is meaningless (even if carried out using an agreed methodology – an agreed methodology should be used where it is relevant, not just because it exists).

5.1.21 ES 8.48 Table 8.3: Is this table the definition of the "Link Nos." used in later tables? Some of the definitions are not unique enough and this causes wasted time and uncertainty when reviewing the vast number of tables. For instance Hinckley Road appears at least 3 times (as different roads), Stanton Lane twice etc.

5.1.22 ES Chapter 8 Tables 8.11 to 8.17 – referring back to the previous comment. Identifying which link refers to which actual road is almost impossible.

5.1.23 ES Chapter 8 Tables 8.11 to 8.17 – as an example, I regularly run along the B581 (Station Road) between Elmesthorpe and Stoney Stanton, which is one of the closest roads to the proposed development. There are times, e.g. when hedgerows are a bit overgrown, that it feels positively dangerous when HGVs pass by. I can't find this at all in tables 8.15 (Fear and Intimidation), or 8.13 (2036 Baseline Pedestrian Delay). Looking back at 8.47 and 8.48 I see that this road has been missed off the list either because it is deemed that HGV traffic will not increase by more than 30% (Rule 1), or not by more than 10% in sensitive areas (Rule 2). As a person who lives locally, it is inconceivable that the applicant has chosen to not include one of the closest local roads in this part of the study. 8.47 ought to include a "Rule 3 – Roads of concern to local residents". Although national guidelines are apparently being followed, the interpretation of these and quantification of factors seems to be entirely by the applicant and to their benefit, i.e. the applicant is making the rules and marking their own homework.

5.1.24 ES Chapter 8 8.243: Disagree with "However, there will be no likely significant effects on traffic and transport due to their temporary short-term nature." Because the construction phase will be over several years. This is not short term to residents.

5.1.25 ES Chapter 8, 8.267, 8.276: These tables list simulated effects of the development on 101 links. It is clear that some links, like link 46 B4669 Leicester Road – suffer adverse effects on many of the tables, but this is always treated as if it is irrelevant. The cumulative effects of these ought to be considered and should justify either a bypass to the West of Sapcote (already dismissed due to local opinion) or recommendation that the development not go ahead (which is also the local opinion).

5.1.26 APP-117 ES Table 8.27 Shows that B581 Station Road will have a decrease in traffic for 2036 predicted levels with development compared to predicted levels for 2036 without development. I do not believe this can be correct, and therefore question the validity of the model. Who validates the model? In general, conclusions drawn are too simplified as there would be a range of possible predicted traffic levels. Situations where traffic needs to be diverted, either in a controlled way or an uncontrolled way, are not included.

5.1.27 ES Chapter 8 8.308 to 8.312 – Public Transport. All of the proposed improvements depend on agreements with the operators and are therefore not guaranteed. There needs to be a guarantee in order for such a huge, disruptive development to go ahead.

5.1.28 ES Chapter 8 8.319 etc. The new A47 Link Road is misleadingly named, the proposed route would join to the B4668 which is a smaller road linking Hinckley to the A47. This road is not classified for the volume of vehicles that would be proposed to use this route. The proposed link road must connect directly to the A47, not by intermediate roads that are not suitable for the increased volume of traffic, both from the HNRFI but also as a result of opening the South Bound facing slip roads to the M69.

5.1.29 ES Chapter 8 Subsections 8.319, also 8.150 to 8.156: A47 and B4668: The proposed A47 Link road is also adjacent to the Hinckley Sports Facility comprising Hinckley Town Tennis Club, Hinckley Rugby Club, Hinckley Rugby Football Club and Leicester Road Football Club. This is used by many residents and is busy with children and activities most days into the evening. Access from the facility is already difficult with the existing volume of traffic, and adding more, especially HGVs, will introduce a significant risk and danger.

5.1.30 ES Chapter 8 8.319 etc. The join of the A47 link road is directly adjacent to the access road to Burbage common, used by many walkers and vehicles accessing the facility.

5.1.31 ES Chapter 8 Table 8.28. We note that the proposed Off-site mitigations B1, B2, B3 and B4 are all within the Sapcote / Stoney Stanton area and will all have a detrimental effect for residents without solving the underlying problems caused by the proposed HNRFI development.

5.1.32 ES Chapter 8 8.327 to 8330: Whilst it is good that schemes are proposed to “encourage” HGV drivers to use key strategic routes, it is also clear that they cannot be prevented from going through the sensitive village areas.

5.1.33 ES Chapter 8 General: It has been suggested that figures used for modelling are out of date. Latest figures from traffic modelling should be used.

5.1.34 ES Chapter 8 General and 8.332: There is no documentation for traffic flows in the event of incidents, and where the traffic will flow if the arterial trunk roads are closed. Saying “There will be a site access emergency plan” is insufficient.

5.1.35 ES Chapter 8 8.341 The claim that “enhancements to pedestrian facilities etc. will improve connectivity around the HNRFI site, notably around Sapcote and Stoney Stanton” is disputed. There is no evidence that there will be any improvements by the proposed enhancements for the villagers.

5.1.36 ES Appendix 8.1 Table 9.1 and associated text. These proposals include significant mitigation for the ends of Stanton Lane (J39 at the West end, J37 at the East) and along the length of that road, but in other parts of the traffic documentation (I have not read it all!) I find it difficult to

see where this link is included. Additionally there is no intended mitigation for J38 even though the already bad junction there will get worse.

5.1.37 ES Appendix 8.1 Table 9.1: B3 and B4. Where are “gateway traffic calming” features described? Speed of traffic isn’t the issue – it is the difficulty of navigating through the centre of Sapcote where footways are narrow. The proposal doesn’t appear to take into account the real problem here.

5.1.38 ES Appendix 8.1 Table 9.1, Also Table 8.32 within TR050007-000746-6.2.8.1: Adding a traffic light control junction (J37) to the centre of the village to remove the existing roundabout will mean standing traffic past the primary school, which has entrances along leg C and also an entrance next to the doctors’ surgery along leg B, the doctors’ surgery itself along leg B, what is not said is that the large area on the corner between legs B and C is the “Living Rock Church” car park which is heavily used at times. The Living Rock Church itself is just across the road off leg C. The access road to the Memorial Playing Fields is off Carey Hill Road, leg B. The effect of traffic lights would be to make this area much more difficult for residents and users of the facilities in the area.

5.1.39 ES Appendix 8.1 Table 9.1, Also Table 8.34 within TR050007-000746-6.2.8.1: The modelling indicates that this junction is already over capacity, will get worse with HNRFI traffic added, but nothing can be done about it. Stating that there will be an impact on the central junction adjacent to the Coop, but there is nothing that can be done to address the impact is not acceptable. If a detrimental impact is apparent, but nothing can be done, an alternative must be found for the increased traffic volumes. The same roundabout has seen several significant incidents over the last 10 years, including vehicle-to-home collisions resulting in structural damage. Reports by several agencies including the LCC Highways team have highlighted that nothing can be done to improve the junction without the removal of the buildings adjacent to the junction (one is grade 2 listed). When large vehicles turn at the roundabout, they must use both sides of the road and wait for traffic from 100m up Long Street to be clear prior to turning, which leads to significant delays every day.

5.1.40 ES Chapter 8 and Appendix 8.1 The B581 leading from Stoney Stanton to Broughton Astley along leg B from Junction 38 – just a few 10s of metres - has a tight bend, where large vehicles must take both sides of the road to complete movement, this leads to issues as traffic must be clear leading to the roundabout for them to make the turn.

5.1.41 ES Chapter 8 and Appendix 8.1: Along the B581 (leg B of J38) and Long Street (leg A of J37) the pavements are narrow (less than 75cm) which means pedestrians and traffic are dangerously close.

5.1.42 ES Chapter 8 and Appendix 8.1: J37 general: Any increase in traffic from commuters to the facility, traffic to the M69 or HGV traffic will make a known dangerous junction even worse and heighten the risk to injury which is unacceptable.

5.1.43 ES Chapter 8 8.149 and 8.157 to 8.161: There is no mitigation for the use of Burbage Common Road as an emergency access point to the site nor consideration of how this traffic will impact the village of Elmesthorpe in the plans.

5.1.44 ES Chapter 8: 8.147 to 8.149 Elmesthorpe is the closest village to the site. The impacts on the village must be considered. Elmesthorpe is not mentioned, in the in the description of the

B581, a road that runs straight through the middle of the village. Sensitivity Receptors are also not mentioned.

5.1.45 ES Chapter 8: 8.319 The opening of the M69 South Facing Slip roads doesn't take into consideration reasons for them not being installed in 1976 when the motorway opened, which was due to the traffic impact on the surrounding villages . Since then, the traffic has significantly increased causing daily traffic congestion through Stoney Stanton and surrounding villages.

5.1.46 ES Chapter 8 8.359 The statement "Running up to 16 freight trains a day will mean a huge switch from road to rail. Each one will remove up to 76 lorries from our roads, meaning 1.6 billion fewer kilometres travelled by HGVs a year" is still on the Tritax Symmetry HNRFI website (under "Overview", "Key benefits" – checked 3/10/2023). The ES now states 83 million HGV miles, with no explanation of how that is calculated. Compared with the Felixstowe port website, which claims that 74 trains a day will remove 100 million HGV miles from the road, then the TSH figures are a factor of 4 higher (i.e. on this basis they should quote 22 million HGV miles fewer per year). These figures are not supportable. Estimates by Network Rail talk about lorries or trucks being used for the last 20 miles, which is not the case here.

5.1.47 APP-141 Doc 6.2.8.1 ES Chapter 8 Appendix 8.1 Part 4 (Trip Generation) contains some startling statistics, but one obvious point is the sheer volume of traffic that will enter and exit the M69 J2 roundabout (B4669 junction). Assuming most trips go via this roundabout – as the proposal documentation says, then there will 555,984 additional HGV journeys added per year, and during a normal day up to of 1,767 additional vehicles (494 HGV, 1,273 light) added at the peak hour. This equates to one vehicle every 2 seconds, and included in this would be one HGV every 7.3 seconds. This equates to an absolutely major disruption to the motorists that regularly use this junction.

6. Pollution

6.1 Air Quality

6.1.1 Linked directly to the traffic is the amount of additional air pollution that will be coming both from the increase in traffic and the operation at the site and significantly during its construction.

6.1.2 Net global CO_2 offset is all well and good, however there is no precise detail behind what the CO_2 volumes emitted locally will be from the build and operation and fails to consider the increase in other gaseous pollutants and particulate matter. The emissions regulations are improving, however industrial plant equipment that will be in use extensively during the build and operation is significantly worse than that of passenger cars and HGV's, due to the regulations regarding treatment of exhaust gas and emissions. As there will be many vehicles using the site the pollution from the operation and transport of employees to work will further decrease the already poor air quality. Traffic leaving the site will emit significantly higher levels of pollutants as engines warm up.

6.1.3 As emissions legislation is adapting and with the imminent release of EU7, the emissions from tyre and brake particulates are included in measurement and in many instances the 10 and 23um particulates generated that are deemed hazardous to heath are significantly higher than that produced from a modern efficient internal combustion engine. The

emissions from tyre and brakes are directly correlated to vehicle starting and stopping activities, as well as during routine normal operation. This is not considered and must be taken into consideration.

6.1.4 Studies (e.g. Leicestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018-2021, Air Quality and Health Chapter) have shown that in general Leicestershire has higher levels of Particulate Matter than averages for England. It is also known that workers in Transport and Storage will be exposed to higher levels. Placing a large SRFI in this area will make this worse. The prevailing wind in the area and indeed the United Kingdom is generally from the West and will therefore tend to blow the pollutants toward Stoney Stanton.

6.1.5 In detailing the receptor locations (in the consultation material), the information is exceptionally difficult to understand. Rather than providing a map with the area, each location is identified by its co-ordinates. Looking at the receptors, a large majority of these are in Stoney Stanton, and the adverse effects of the proposed development cover a large area of Stoney Stanton which is unacceptable.

6.1.6 The intended and publicised use of this rail hub would be for regional journeys, and as the technology for HGV propulsion moves forwards, coupled with the government requirements to make HGV zero tailpipe emissions by 2040 the local journeys facilitated by this hub would be ideally suited to EV powered HGV. In order to facilitate this however a significant number of high-power chargers would be required, that in turn needs a large power supply. There appears to be no recognition of this. We are aware of the addition of 43MW PV capability with batteries in the examination documentation (which wasn't in the consultation documentation) however it seems this is required for site operations and does not make provision for fast charging of HGVs. By installing a 5MW gas powered generator for electrical provision this merely generates CO_2 and other pollutants. Within 0.5km of this site is a National Grid high voltage line, this should at least be considered for power rather than local generation from fossil fuels; it appears that it has not been factored.

6.1.7 To charge an HGV there will need to be a significant number of rapid chargers of circa 500kW+ in capacity to complete a charge in the standard 45-minute break.

6.1.8 For visitors, and those travelling distance in passenger vehicles there will need to be significant infrastructure albeit at lower power than HGV.

7. Ecology and Biodiversity

This section refers mainly to APP-121 ES chapter 12

7.1 Site Description and proximity to SSSIs

7.1.1 The proposed HNRFI will cover 450 acres of mixed habitat which currently includes both arable and pasture farmlands, all of which will be lost. Other types of habitats include ponds, ditches and an unnamed stream, marshy ground, mature hedgerows and trees providing vital dwelling and foraging space for a large variety of fauna and growth sites for many and varied plant species. Of particular concern is the juxtaposition of the proposed RFI to Burbage Common and Woods as it is immediately adjacent to the western boundary. This is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a much loved and used area for relaxation and recreation. The SSSI is described in ES Chapter 2 Site description as mixed ash, oak and maple woodland - one of the

best remaining examples in Leicestershire. It is of National Importance and contains plant indicators of a healthy woodland such as yellow archangel, bluebells and wild garlic. A further SSSI, Aston Firs is also adjacent to the boundary. 12.134 mentions one mitigation method of providing a substantial buffer of 25-50+m, despite the Woodland Trust recommendations of at least 50m needed to avoid adverse impacts such as pollution and root damage. The width of the border is insufficient in places to protect this unique area

7.2 Concerns regarding Biodiversity Net Gains and offsetting

7.2.1 NPPF Jul 2021 Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – paragraph 174 states: '*Planning Policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: … d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'*

7.2.2 The NPPF requires a net increase in biodiversity when a large development is undertaken, and this net increase is specified at 10% in the Environmental Act (EA) 2021. The new draft NN NPS requires that applicants should 'identify and deliver…wider environmental opportunities for enhancements by providing net gains for biodiversity'. It is thus an area to which developers need to give particular attention and clarity.

7.2.3 The HNRFI technical ES appendix 12.2, Biodiversity Impact Assessment, indicates a significant net loss of habitat diversity should the 450-acre development proceed. This is calculated using the BIA (Biological Impact Assessment). One response by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) to remedy this is to improve some existing remaining green spaces and to create several new habitat areas onsite i.e. within the Main Order Limits (MOL). This includes what are referred to as 'substantial' buffer zones of a minimum of 25m to 50+m between the development and the SSSIs and buffers around the protected hedgerows. In addition 11.34ha of open meadow grassland to the west of the MOL will be provided (which is existing grassland), including shrub and tree planting and aquatic habitat improvements. Also provided will be provision of 11.33ha of new habitat to the south of the proposed new A47 link road. This area is already existing green space and therefore not entirely 'new habitat' as claimed. A consequence of this is that approximately 50% of this 'new habitat' exposes any wildlife it attracts to a new traffic hazard.

7.2.4 Despite the remediation described, there remains a negative impact on biodiversity. To make recompense for this and using BIA calculations, in Appendix 12.2, Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) proposes to purchase and replant appropriately 11 hectares of land for possible offsite mitigation. Since the PEIR reports, the location has now been indicated very loosely as being 'north of the calculation area'. However, the purchase of this land is not secured as yet. Even IF the purchase and use of this offsite land is successful, Appendix 12.2 points out that further remediation offsite will be required, possibly using an offsetting scheme such as the Environment Bank, to achieve the 10% net gain required by the Environmental Act 2021. 12.58 points out that this will become a legal requirement of planning permission for development in Nov 2023. Although biodiversity offsetting is permissible and will be legislated for this year, the developers' plans seem to lack definition and clarity at this crucial point of application. The Environment Agency makes the valid point in table 12.1 that 'offsite compensation should only be considered as a last resort to supplement on site gains.' The developers point out that biodiversity offsetting is mentioned as a mitigation strategy in the NPS and refer to it in 12.66

''As a general principle, and subject to the specific policies below, development should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through mitigation and consideration of reasonable alternatives. The applicant may also wish to make use of biodiversity offsetting in devising compensation proposals to counteract any impacts on biodiversity which cannot be avoided or mitigated. Where significant harm cannot be avoided or mitigated, as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.
In taking decisions, the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance, protected species, habitats and other species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.'

7.2.5 Without knowing the location of the proposed offsite mitigation land, it is impossible to evaluate the effect on local biodiversity. The necessity for BNG is vital and highlighted for Britain in the very recent State of Nature 2023 report which concludes that 'Across the UK species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970.' In addition, 'The Earth.Org' article 'UK Biodiversity Loss Nearly at 50%, at risk of Ecological Meltdown', in it, Lai (2021) concludes that the UK has lost almost half of its biodiversity since the Industrial Revolution and furthermore is ranked in the bottom 10% of the world and is the worst of the G7 countries in this regard. The Natural England Chairman, Tony Juniper, (Guardian article June 2023) has also very recently warned the Government that they are set to miss legally binding biodiversity targets to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030. It is therefore of paramount importance that clarity of measures to ensure 10% increase in BNG are provided by Tritax. It is also pertinent to point out that a recent study (Biological Conservation March 2022, Tupala, Hutton and Holme) highlighted the fact that biodiversity offsets rarely include participatory methods to involve local people. I can find no evidence of this in any of the Environmental statements, yet it would seem essential to inform the lay person what exactly 10% BNG and biodiversity offsetting actually mean and to seek local opinion.

7.3 Loss of Mature Trees

7.3.1 12.149. The direct loss of hedgerows and mature trees is rated as significant. In the case of trees, 258 mature trees will be lost. It is noted in 12.149 that this loss is of high magnitude and extent and would result in a permanent negative impact at district level resulting in a significant effect in the absence of mitigation. Part of the mitigation includes planting 500 new trees, which is welcomed. On the surface, this would appear a very advantageous outcome- However, taking an oak tree as an example, a mature tree supports over 2300 plant and animal species including 38 bird species, 1178 invertebrates and 31 mammals. Amongst the plants are 716 lichens, 229 bryophytes and 108 species of fungi. 320 of these 2300 species are only found on oak (Action Oak 2018). An oak tree takes 30 to 40 years to mature. It is therefore reasonable to assume that even allowing for new tree planting, the imbalance between loss of mature trees and replacement with younger trees supporting less biodiversity will have a negative impact.

7.4 Impact of Hedgerow Removal.

7.4.1 ES 12.151 states that the Proposed Development has been designed to incorporate the hedgerow network yet then paradoxically confirms that large losses are unavoidable. Hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerow Regulations Act 1997, and it is noted that the

hedges deemed important -Elmesthorpe Plantation Hedgerow LWS, Field Rose Hedgerow LWS, and Elmesthorpe Boundary Hedgerow pLWS are being retained and afforded a development buffer. They are protected by law. However,Table 12.7 predicts a 74.10% loss within the MOL, which is of grave concern. Hedgerows support and enrich the environment in many ways:

A) Hedgerows support, feed and shelter wildlife and provide safe, natural corridors for travel from one area of territory to another

B) Prevent loss of soil from fields through erosion

C) Regulate the flow of water within catchments, reducing the risk of flooding

D) Play an important role in carbon capture. 1 km of hedge can store 600-800 kg of CO2 per year for up to 20 years (figures supplied by Hedgelink UK)

In the last 80 years, 50% of British hedgerows have been lost. The Independent Climate Change Committee has recommended that we need a 40% increase by 2050 at the latest. Table 12.7 indicates that a total of 13,990m will be removed. Although the hedges are of variable quality, the table indicates that 9,180 m of those to be removed are species rich - 66% of the total that will be lost. 12.8 states that there will be some enhancement of existing habitats and provision of new hedgerow planting. However, new hedgerows take 5 years at least to develop flowers and fruit and enough leafy cover for protection. At this stage, they will become attractive to birds and other wildlife and some of the other benefits bullet pointed above will become apparent. As with the replanting of trees, there will be a loss of 5 -10 years when new planting is becoming established and cannot support the equivalent amount of biodiversity that the removed hedges did. Therefore, there will be a significant loss of biodiversity due to loss of established hedgerow.

7.5 Loss of Carbon Capture Opportunities

7.5.1 Carbon Capture is a vital part of the present Government's vision for tackling climate change and achieving net zero by 2050 (Net Zero: Build Back Greener 2021). However, the removal of 14km of hedge will reduce carbon capture on the site. Using the figures quoted previously (see bullet pointed benefits of hedgerows above), 1km of hedge can store between 600-800kg of CO2 per year. Taking the average of 700kg, this will result in a loss of 9,800kg per year of potential carbon capture capability. Although some new hedgerows will be planted, a growth period of a minimum of 5 years is necessary for them to become established, during which carbon capture will be reduced. Trees also have an important role in carbon capture. Exact amounts vary with size and age of tree, but an average tree captures 25kg CO2 per year. 252 mature trees are to be lost, implying a total reduction of 6,300kg per year of potential carbon capture during the period when the newly planted trees grow and mature. The ability of the hedgerow and trees in existence on the site to absorb 16,100kg of CO2 per year, which will be removed if work commences, should be factored into any CO2 and net zero targets of the development. There is no reference to this loss of carbon capture potential in ES 12

7.5.2 Approximately 350 acres of farmland will be lost if this development proceeds. Natural England has recently published a paper entitled 'Building Partnerships for Nature's Recovery' (October 2020). This identifies the farming sector as a key partner in the aim to make the farming industry a net zero greenhouse gas producer. Farming methods are being proposed, e.g. cover cropping, which aid carbon capture. The ability to take advantage of these methods of carbon

sequestration and contribute more towards net zero will be permanently lost if the area is built on.

7.6 Specific Concerns regarding impact on wildlife populations

7.6.1 It is generally assumed that displaced wildlife can move into habitats nearby. For example, 12.163 states that the farmyard assemblage of birds will be displaced into the surrounding landscape. However, this depends on the amount of habitat available. For example, hedgerows can support on average about 10 nesting birds per km (Impact of Modern Agriculture on Birds, Ian Newton, paper delivered to Leics Lit and Phil Soc 2022)). Displaced hedge nesting birds such as red listed yellow hammer and linnets (identified within the Main Order Limits) cannot simply move into a nearby hedge - there must be sufficient distance from other nests and sufficient food available. The loss of approximately 14km of hedge potentially means 140 pairs of nesting birds will lose nesting sites. Similarly, ground nesting birds e.g. Lapwing and skylark (red listed and identified within MOL) require a defined area in which to nest, availability of which will be much reduced by the ground coverage of the development. When displaced, they will be in competition with others of their own species for both nest sites and food. This can only result in a reduction of breeding potential for the red, amber and green species of birds listed in Appendix 12.1. How will this problem of time-lag between destruction of existing habitat and growth of new trees and hedgerows supplying the required conditions for resident species be addressed? If it isn't addressed then there will be a permanent loss.

7.6.2 The site contains aquatic habitat including nine ponds, marshy grassland and a stream. Five ponds are to be lost should the construction go ahead, and the stream will be rerouted and parts culverted. Common frog, smooth newts and common toads have been identified onsite using these pools and waterways. All these amphibians migrate to the ponds from where they were spawned to breed in the spring. If these breeding ponds are destroyed, this will have a negative effect on the amphibian population. ES 12.123 notes the potential presence of a small number of Great Crested Newts in the 2018 survey. One pond gave positive results in 2019 and the 2021 survey produced negative results. It was concluded that the site previously supported a small, non-breeding population of Great Crested Newt but this has since declined to undetectable levels. However, as Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) has committed to carrying out further surveys before the development commences, which is welcomed, (earliest 2026) this would potentially give opportunity for breeding evidence to be found onsite. How will the presence of Great Crested Newts be addressed?

7.6.3 Bats are protected species (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). Several species have been identified as roosting in the woodland areas adjacent to the site and traversing the site when foraging. Some species of bats are negatively impacted by artificial lighting, e.g. common pipistrelles, of which there is a healthy population nearby and using the site. The brightly lit site would therefore affect their feeding patterns and limit availability of foraging grounds. Street lighting along the new A47 link would have a similar negative impact.

7.6.4 Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. ES 12 confirms the presence of badgers within the MOL and notes several active setts. It states that a significant part of their territory lies within the MOL. Despite intended mitigation to ensure legal compliance, an outlying sett will be lost. This will disrupt and affect the badger population negatively. Badgers are creatures of habit, living in ancestral setts, following routes established over generations for foraging and moving between setts. The Badger Trust reports that surveys in the late 1990s

show that 66% of the adult population of badgers in the UK per year are killed by traffic. This is partly due to the building of new roads crossing their territory and the proposed new A47 link road will be an obvious danger. ES 12.201 states that: *Badgers are likely to be at higher risk of collisions with vehicles and disturbance from humans. However, recognising that opportunities are present in suitable adjacent farmland off-site and within new woodland areas, and this species' ability to successfully adapt to and inhabit urban areas, combined with the species value, such permanent, irreversible negative effects will at most be significant at a Site level.* Given that badgers follow habitual routes to known foraging areas, this is an optimistic statement.

7.7 Concerns about the effectiveness of Mitigation Strategies

7.7.1 The summary and conclusion section in Table 12.8 details the significance of the effects caused by the proposed development on identified ecological features, many of which are significant at a district level or local level. Table 12.8 also supplies the corresponding mitigation and enhancement methods. In every case, Including the SSSIs, following mitigation, 'no significant effect' is predicted. This is an absolutely best case scenario and is hard to comprehend. It would appear to have a watertight solution for any concerns raised about the impact on biodiversity at this stage with the answer 'there will not be any'

7.7.2 The intended mitigation methods are provided in the LEMP 17.2 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) , the CEMP 17.1 (Construction Environmental Management Plan)1 , and, in the case of the SSSIs, a Woodland Management Plan. These strategies are recognised and accepted but it is difficult for the lay person to trust that in 25 years' time, all will have been so incredibly effective and result in no negative outcomes. To support this concern, an article evaluating ecological mitigation measures has highlighted evidence gaps in evaluating their effectiveness – specifically empirical evidence (*Evidence shortfalls in the recommendations and guidance underpinning ecological mitigation for infrastructure developments, S Hunter, S Ermgassen et al, July 2021 British Ecological Society*) As infrastructure expansion creates a very significant pressure on biodiversity around the word, it is vital that accepted Mitigation Strategies are effective in reality, not just theory. The study looked at ecological reports taken from 50 housing developments dated from 2011 to 2020. Analysis revealed that of 446 recommended measures using 65 different mitigation methods, over half of the recommended methods had not been empirically evaluated and only 13 measures were deemed beneficial. Furthermore, it was found that the measures employed often lacked reference to supportive scientific evidence and what was used was often out of date or based on circular referencing. These findings raise concerns about the efficacy of methods currently in use that are designed specifically to offset any negative effects on the biodiversity of large developments of which HNRFI would certainly be one. It begs the question - if the development goes ahead and the mitigating effects fail, at least to some degree, who will be responsible for rectifying any negative impact and what will happen if any negative effects cannot be rectified?

7.7.3 The NPPF July 2021 paragraph 180 (b) states: *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.* The buffer zone between the SSSIs and the proposed RFI is, at best, minimal and this will have a

significant impact on those using the area for leisure. At the very least, its proximity will give rise to increased noise in an otherwise peaceful area and create an ugly vista on the rural horizon. Points made above indicate that although it is stated that there will be no significant negative effect on the SSSIs, we cannot be certain that this will be the case. The fact that the impact on Burbage Common and Woods is deemed to be of National Significance prior to such mitigation methods being employed is of extreme concern. The statement that *the benefits of the proposed HNRFI development clearly outweigh its likely impact on the features of the site* is not proven by the evidence supplied by the developers at this crucial point of examination.

8. Environmental Impact

8.1 Surface Water & Flood Risk

8.1.1 The ecological impact of re-routing of natural waterways is a concern. Especially into culverted sections that will then require regular cleaning and maintenance.

8.1.2 The re-routing of water into the Stoney Stanton catchment into watercourses that are already over capacity and have resulted in flooding in 2019 is not acceptable.

8.1.3 The proposed site was submerged in many areas during the flooding resulting from the 1 in 18-year rainfall that occurred on the 1st of October 2019, and substantial areas of the proposed site remained submerged a week after the heavy rainfall. This rainfall was assessed by LCC Local Flood Team (LLFA) and is cited in the feedback given to the Stoney Stanton Flood Action Group. The area of rainfall completely covered the proposed site and Stoney Stanton. This flooding at the proposed site was post a 1 in 18-year rainfall event, given that the requirements for development are currently 1 in 100 years + 30% for climate change, then the statement that the site is not at risk or does not flood is inaccurate.

8.1.4 There are statements in the ES that recognised the lack of capacity in both the sewerage and freshwater systems at the proposed location post modelling by Severn Trent Water. Also that work would have to be completed to upgrade the network which would have implications for many of the surrounding areas and developments as that work is carried out.

8.1.5 Statement in ES 14.28 states that a “survey was not required in relation to other works” without giving any descriptors as to why not. The hydrology and water table in the wider area, including the water courses are linked and affected by each other and this is evidenced by the works that the LLFA LCC have conducted during the flood investigations at Stoney Stanton, therefore this statement seems dismissive of the issues in the local and wider vicinity and therefore a full survey should be conducted.

8.1.6 It is concerning in statement ES 14.32 that a limitation and an assumption has been made to the accuracy of the supplied drawing and they have been used as the basis of the modelling. The records kept by STW and the EA in direct exposure through the investigations into the Stoney Stanton Flooding have unearthed multiple serious shortcomings, anomalies and incorrect identification of water and drainage assets. This is acknowledged by both organisations as something they are trying to correct. Given this, a full survey is needed before any modelling that will have any form of accuracy must be completed, including the wider catchment areas outside the proposed site.

8.1.7 Statement 14.64 is using the 2011 LLFA Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, it is worth noting that significant work has been completed by LLC LLFA since this time, and as a result the information contained within it is not wholly accurate and other risks and areas of concern have been added, including Stoney Stanton Parish in the direction of the proposed site.

8.1.8 Statement 14.74 - 14.76 reference the current local plan that is in place, this development and site is not included in the current referendum release of the local plan

8.1.9 The statements relating to flooding 14.91 - 14.98 consider the flood risk from both fluvial and tidal sources, given the previous statements regarding the distance before the recognised watercourses, and the distance from any tidal influences, the methods for determining flood risk and considering it as a low probability should discount these forms of flooding. The low impact from fluvial and tidal is purely because of the lack of impact that these two can have on the development as the features do not exist at the site.

8.1.10 Statement 14.112 references the current foul water connection to the site, this is a system that is pumped over the hill to Stoney Stanton and is already over capacity, when it rains there are instances of foul water coming up through the manholes in Station Road and is also limited by the condition of the pipes in Station Road where multiple significant issues are present. The statement from STW in 14.106 clarifies this but does not indicate the significance of the works that would be required to upgrade this system which flows through gardens, under homes and significant parts of the road, if this were to be upgraded the significant detrimental impact to the village of Stoney Stanton must be taken into consideration, in addition to the poorly thought out traffic mitigation schemes.

8.1.11 Statement 14.119 makes note of the SSSI of Burbage Common Woods indicating that there will be no impact from the development as the water runs away from the SSSI. However, the impact of the development because the water cannot flow from the SSSI through the site as it currently does, means the site will be impacted from the development and will change the characteristics of drainage and water table. This must be investigated.

8.1.12 Section 14.128 details that most of the site is in flood risk 1, however this appears to be a risk due to fluvial and tidal flooding. Previously the site has flooded and remained flooded for several days post heavy rainfall. Using the data from the EA rain gauges located in the vicinity (3 of them) and averaging the rainfall, there was no significant rainfall events that do not occur each winter season and certainly none to a level of 1 in 5 years, let alone 1 in 100 years + 30%. Based on direct information and visiting the site, it is evident from this flooding and in previous years that there are serious errors in the modelling that has been conducted.

8.1.13 Section 14.147 makes statements that the site will be re-profiled to 2 plateaux, this will only exaggerate the impact on the remaining areas below the plateaux. It also directs all the flow to the sub tributary of the Thurlaston Brook which will be “re-aligned” this will both ecologically and impact the risk outside the immediate site in a detrimental way. The early statements state that the site has no direct drainage, and the water is absorbed by the ground, if the ground is now impermeable due to the construction, and the water will run off into the sub tributary, then significant volumes of water will both flow through the water course, and far quicker, even with SUDS in place. The plateauing of the site will elevate this further as the development and the road will be elevated from the natural site

levels. The statement 14.138 takes into consideration the low flood risk of the new development, but nothing of the adverse effect on the wider areas. Given the flooding within the site currently, and in the surrounding 3km this is not acceptable, and the modelling appears inaccurate

8.1.14 Section 14.149 appears to recognise the issues but provides no information of how this will be mitigated, merely proposals that are not defined in the appendices.

8.1.15 Section 14.154 - 14.156 recognises the impact of a major flood event, but this is related to the site itself, not the surrounding area. A consultant to the Flooding Action Group states that the impact of the immediate and wiser vicinity must be looked at in greater detail. The site currently floods during rainfall and dissipates over a prolonged period. The water that accumulates here is from a wider area, and if no longer able to flood and disperse from here the impact on the wider vicinity will be affected. This appears to be considered with the plateauing of the construction to avoid flooding but not factoring the impacts on the other areas namely the SSSI, motorways and Aston Firs, and within 2km Sapcote, Stoney Stanton, Elmesthorpe and Hinckley.

8.1.16 Section 14.158 acknowledges the building of the site on a flood plain and the flooding risk in normal rainfall conditions. This is at odds with the modelling

8.1.17 Section 14.180 states that a SUDS will be developed but there is no documentation stating what this will be or proposed to be for it to be scrutinised. As this document is in response to a public consultation this is further alignment to the lack of maturity in the proposal to allow detailed scrutiny and therefore comment.

8.1.18 Section 14.176 is in contradiction to other statements in section 14 and others as this seems to state that the route for all foul water once the site is completed is via an upgraded foul network with the vast majority through Stoney Stanton. Other statements have alluded that this is one option and STW have yet to buy in or upgrade the line, if the risk is low in this instance which other options have been considered?

8.1.19 Section 14.191 says the risk could be low but there is risk that it could impact the local public water supply. Given that there are no customers for the proposed site and therefore the activities are unknown, how can the impact on the water supply be determined when the usage is unknown. Also, any impact on the local water supply is not acceptable to anyone living in the surrounding area from lower water pressure or supply quality issues.

8.1.20 Section 14.197 states that the re-profiling of the ground will be away from built environment, fails to take into consideration that this must also not influence the hydrology in the adjacent SSSI, this covers a far larger area of border adjacent to the proposed site than the built environment, and would impact far more people who use the areas for recreational purposes, as well as damaging the ancient woodland.

8.1.21 We also have serious concerns that any changes to the level of the water table for the SSSIs will have detrimental effects on the health of the woods.

8.1.22 In section 14.110 which states the “rainfall is believed to infiltrate the ground” given the site will no longer be permeable most of the water leaving the site will now be through the Thurlaston Tributary and an increase not a decrease is inevitable. This is contradicted throughout Chaper 14 where claims of less runoff are made

9. Agriculture and visual Effects

9.1 Agriculture

9.1.1 Our agricultural land needs protecting for valuable food production.

9.1.2 Brexit has shown that we must become more self-reliant on food production in this country. It is therefore counter to the post-Brexit emphasis and the need for food if we build warehouses over prime agricultural land. Further, government policy post-Brexit is to replace European subsidy and encourage our farmers, through the Environmental Stewardship (ES)

9.2 Landscaping and visual effects

9.2.1 In respect of landscaping and visual effects the NPS states that in taking decisions, the Secretary of State should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to avoid adverse effects on landscape or to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation. The development of the proposed site at this scale and location will undoubtedly have detrimentally significant impacts upon the character and appearance of the countryside: the landscape, visual amenity and ecologically.

9.2.2 The colossal size of the proposed development demonstrates an ambition to cram too much into one site – leaving inadequate areas for landscaping mitigation and biodiversity offset.

9.2.3 The proposed areas for landscaping are very limited and do not offer sufficient areas of separation even after small increases following consultation. The amount of landscaping proposed falls significantly short of the benchmark level needed to offset the harm and adverse effect caused by the loss of the existing vegetation and ecosystems on site.

9.2.4 The HNRFI proposal is in direct conflict with the NPPF paragraphs 130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities). The proposed site, and, in particular, the B8 buildings will become the significant view from many parts of the surrounding areas and dwarf any natural landscape features. The whole site will detract from the beauty of Burbage Common (SSSI), the nearby ancient woodland, and the wider countryside views and villages.

9.2.5 The HNRFI proposal is at variance with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 174 which states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes

9.2.6 In section 5.158 of the NPS: The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the development.

9.2.7 The section on Open Space says that 'All open space of public value …. which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation can act as a visual amenity.' The visual impact from the north of the site will be harsh high boundary fencing to lessen the noise from the site; this offers negligible mitigation as the additional noise from the site will be an increase in what is present today. Likewise, the fencing itself is not in keeping with the current landscape character of the area.

9.2.8 The NPS section 5.160 on Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure, design (including choice of materials), and landscaping schemes, depending on the size and type of proposed project

9.2.9 The site sections clearly show that the proposed vegetation would only screen just over half of the heights of the buildings based on 15 years tree growth circa 10-12m height species dependent.

9.2.10 Site sections: – The noise bund with clear stem trees on the crest would not screen the visibility of the container lorries from the adjacent parkland proposed, this would not create a natural filtered transition between the industrial access route and proposed parkland buffer.

9.2.11 Site sections: - The container yard has hardly any screening shown to the West just a sloping embankment circa 5m with native shrubs/thicket to the crest and some wildflower graded towards the parkland gaining 5m screening height from FFL of container yard to lower level of meadow.

9.2.12 Containers can be stacked high, up to 9 in each row at 2.9m in height, each row totalling a potential height of 26.1m and this should be represented in the section elevations clearly for clarity!

9.2.13 These would also face Burbage common and SSSI woodland, the visual impact on the parkland/ancient woodland site would be significant without substantial screening – this is not shown on Fig 11.17

9.2.14 The top 8-10m of the buildings would be visible in the directions of Stoney Stanton/Sapcote, although some of this may be lost in topography there is no photo montage / eastern elevations to show the minimal impact for the villages.

9.2.15 Artists impression type views (photo viewpoints) shown during consultation were considered to be very misleading (usually by using a wide horizon) – minimising the apparent impact of the development from various perspectives.

9.2.16 The amount of railway infrastructure needed to support a rail freight terminal will have a negative impact on both the landscape and visual amenity.

9.2.17 With specific reference to impact on Stoney Stanton, large scale warehousing B8 will be 'high' sensitivity to Stoney Stanton rolling farmland LCA 15 (Local Character Area).

9.2.18 The visual amenity for footpath and bridleway users will be severely and adversely affected as the proposed site will be clearly visible and completely out of step with the landscape character area.

9.2.19 The recreational experience will be impacted by the noise at the Construction stages. At Year 1 and Year 15 – the visual amenity will not have improved with such limited mitigation

landscaping proposed and inadequate screening of the A47 link road. The significant surge in the amount of traffic using the site and the link road will be easily visible from a fair distance and the traffic noise generated will exacerbate the noise already heard from the M69.

9.2.20 The huge size of this development warrants photo montages of all viewpoints at construction stage, Year 1 and Year 15 to clearly show the public the full extent of the impacts of this proposal on landscape and visual amenity.

9.3 Cultural Heritage

9.3.1 In response to the NN NPS 127f, HNRFI will not add to the overall quality of the area. It will not respond to local character and history nor reflect the identity of the local surroundings. Crime is likely to increase in the surrounding areas based on the experiences of the villages adjacent to the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (1). Huge warehouses and crane gantries, which will dominate the landscape, cannot be overcome by landscaping.

(1) (https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR050006/TR050006-000833-Andrew%20Bodman%203.pdf p 65-68).

10. Visual Impact, Quality of Life, and Wellbeing

10.1.1 The overall impact of the proposed development to those that live locally will be staggering. The combination of the visual impact and the increase in noise and light pollution will have a detrimental effect on residents' day to day life and over long periods of time this will impact their wellbeing and mental health.

10.2 Visual Impact

10.2.1 Blaby District Council Local Plan 2029 Policy DM2 Development in the Countryside states ' in areas designated as countryside on the policies map , development proposals consistent with core strategy policy CS18 will be supported when the following criteria are met ' General (a) the development is in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape , development form and buildings , decisions in respect of impact on landscape character and appearance will be informed by the Blaby landscape and settlement character assessment - The visual impact on the local villages will be catastrophic , we will no longer be as we are , we will be forever changed and this development is not in keeping in any way shape or form with the characteristics of the local area

10.2.2 NPS 5.161 states 'Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off site, although if such landscaping was proposed to be consented by the development consent order, it would have to be included within the order limits for that application. For example, filling in gaps in existing tree and hedge lines would mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista' - additional landscaping outside of the boundary including filling in gaps in existing tree lines would offer a greater visual barrier whilst allowing the on-site landscaping to mature - it would also beneficial for this to be considered prior to construction to offer local residents more screening, especially as the construction phase is 10 years so it would be at least 25 years from the commencement of construction to the landscaping maturing.

10.2.3 Consultation material stated that after completion, and as mitigation measures have matured c.15 years from completion, the magnitude of change expected upon the Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland LCA would remain as high and an effect of major and significant adverse and permanent - there are many areas within the local area where the magnitude of change is similar - what the local area stands to lose is significantly more than that can be gained by this development and the effects will be irreversible

10.3 Light Pollution

10.3.1 There were no photomontages in relation to night view – making these available will give people in the local area a much better understanding of the impact that the artificial light will have - the 'glow' that is emitted from the Calor Gas site on the outskirts Stoney Stanton can be seen for miles - the proposed site is significantly bigger in size and much of the Calor Gas site is storage so is not well lit - how far will the HNRFI 'glow' be visible for? The picture below was taken approximately 1.4 miles 'as the crow flies' from the

centre of the Calor Gas site which is less than 40 acres in size. The proposed development is more than 10 times the size. Due to the impact that the light emitted from the site will have on local residents, further information should have been made available regarding the proposed lighting strategy.

10.3.2

10.3.3 During consultation, questions were asked specifically about lighting of the site - many of which were not answered by the team of specialists - namely the height of various lights and the type of lights, including the strength, all of which have an impact on the amount of light emitted.

10.3.4 Motion-sensor lights were 'suggested' for areas such as car parks to reduce energy usage and reduce the overall lighting of the site, these would remain on at low levels when the area was not in use and the brightness would increase when the area was in use. Whilst this may be a good way to conserve energy, constantly varying levels of light would be much harder for people in the local area to adapt to.

10.3.5 This level of artificial lighting will have catastrophic effects on the local wildlife as it will always be 'daytime'.

10.4 Wellbeing

10.4.1 NPS-NN paragraph 3.2 states "The Government recognises that for development of the national road and rail networks to be sustainable these should be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts and improve quality of life". -It is reasonable to say that when you consider the above concerns about visual impact, noise and light, it will do nothing to improve the quality of life of those living locally, especially as the local area does not require 'levelling up'. Living standards are good, the sense of community and local pride is strong, unemployment rates are lower than the national average - there are areas in the country where a development such as the one proposed would be welcomed as it would offer local much needed jobs and help to raise living standards.

10.4.2 NPS 5.159 states 'Reducing the scale of a project or making changes to its operation can help to avoid or mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design or changing the operation of a proposed development may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function. The site is proposed to be operational 24/7 and the noise and light concerns stated above could have an impact on local residents overnight. This would vary throughout the year such as in summer months when warm weather means residents would want their windows open or during the winter when many of the trees have dropped their leaves therefore reducing their effectiveness as a natural noise / light barrier , therefore it would be reasonable to request a period of quiet time to reduce the impact.

10.4.3 Burbage Common and the surrounding woodlands are a local beauty spot and are enjoyed by hundreds of people each week, throughout the year. People visit for many reasons; for tranquillity, to feel closer to nature, to meet with friends and family, to walk dogs, go for a walk or run or just to clear their minds. Now more than ever we need these things. Having gone through a global pandemic that saw us in 'lockdown', our mental health suffered more than we could ever have imagined. Whilst Burbage Common and the surrounding woodlands will still be there for us and additional public space is included to the proposal - the overall feel will be changed forever - the sights, sounds and smells that we associate with such tranquillity will be very different, even with landscaping the HNRFI will be dominate, and the noise generated will be heard constantly.

10.4.4 During the consultation process many local people felt undervalued and not heard, this proposal has been hanging over the heads of many for several years, many questions were left unanswered which added to peoples worry and uncertainty about how this proposed development will change their lives. It has affected people's mental wellbeing, which underpins many areas of our lives including employment, relationships, physical health and much more.

10.4.5 The negative effects on our mental health will continue to be felt during the very substantial construction period of 10 years and long into the operational use of the site.