

**WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**(20040686)**

**Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange**

**Local Impact Report**

**October 2023**

## 1 Local Impact Report

- 1.1. This Local Impact Report is made by Warwickshire County Council in response to the Rule 8 Letter issued by the Examining Authority dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023, for the application made by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) for a Development Consent Order to construct the scheme known as Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange.
- 1.2. The proposed site is located to the north west of M69 junction 2, and located principally within the District of Blaby, with some identified associated works within the Districts of Hinckley and Bosworth, Harborough and Rugby Borough.
- 1.3. The proposed scheme is for new rail infrastructure off the Leicester to Hinckley railway providing access to sidings for trains to be unloaded and loaded, construction of a rail port to accommodate up to 16 freight trains (775m in length) per day, up to 850,000sqm of warehousing and ancillary buildings, associated link road serving the site connecting with M69 junction 2 and A47/B4668, lorry park with welfare and refuelling facilities, site hub building, associated ground works, landscaping, drainage, noise attenuation measures, ecological works, changes to public rights of way. In addition to the spine road serving the site, access provision includes the delivery of south-facing slip roads at M69 junction 2 and other associated off-site transport infrastructure works in mitigation.
- 1.4. This Local Impact Report is made by Warwickshire County Council in its capacity as highway and local transport authority, and would like to highlight three principal areas of concern that could lead to significant local impacts if not suitably addressed:
  - Impacts if sustainable travel targets are not achieved
  - Impacts of HGVs on rural roads and villages
  - Impacts on the safe and efficient operation of the transport network if the delivery of highway works are not correctly controlled and supervised

### Local Impacts if Sustainable Travel Targets are not achieved

- 1.5. If the sustainable transport infrastructure is unsuitable or insufficient in terms of its type, scale, phasing of delivery in terms of accessibility to employees at their place of residence or at work, then it is likely that staff will choose to travel by private car. This will lead to increased road congestion, queues,

delays, noise and air quality issues on the network. There may also be an impact on local amenity for the more local residential areas to the development site if there is insufficient on-site parking for vehicles.

- 1.6. There is a concern that for those residents in Warwickshire most likely living in the northern part of the county, and who may want to work at such a facility, that if suitable sustainable transport provision is not made they either will not be able to take up employment at the facility or will have to rely on private transport in order to take up an employment opportunity.
- 1.7. The focus in the Sustainable Transport Strategy and Travel Plan Framework is to rely on extending the hours and frequency of the X6 bus service. The other bus services considered in the reports are unlikely to be capable of diversion to the site, and no proposal is made for any alternative commercial or private bus services to be funded by the development. The Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) scheme referred to is a three year pilot scheme funded by the DfT and its future funding is unknown.
- 1.8. Therefore, those potential employees living in areas that cannot connect with the X6 bus service, will either not be able to apply for a job, will have to be prepared to walk to/from a bus stop in Earl Shilton, or will choose to drive to work.

#### Impacts of HGVs on rural roads and villages

- 1.9. Warwickshire County Council is aware that at times of congestion, incidents on the network, that HGV drivers (under delivery time pressures, driving hour constraints, following sat navs to avoid congestion) will use local rural roads in order to continue their journeys. Whilst this does not often contravene traffic regulation orders, the local village roads are not designed (width of roads, radius turns, overhanging trees, on-street parking) to accommodate large articulated or rigid HGVs.
- 1.10. HGVs using such roads often cause damage to road surfaces resulting in potholes, kerbs and footways are overrun causing them to be damaged and causing a safety issue for pedestrians.
- 1.11. In some of the villages the properties are close to the roads, and if they are old properties they do not have conventional foundations and Warwickshire County Council has received reports of the 'foundations being shaken apart by large HGVs' as a result of the vibration as they pass by.

- 1.12. Where the HGVs are not within the limits of the villages, often the signed speed limits are 40mph or higher, and HGVs travelling at these speeds on roads where pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians are often walking within the carriageway creates a highway safety conflict.
- 1.13. Therefore, in order to address these types of local impacts, a robust HGV route management strategy would be required in perpetuity. It would also be beneficial to have a community liaison group established to provide a focus for any issues should they arise. In Warwickshire County Council's experience the local residents and Parish Councils are more than capable of explaining issues and impacts and often identifying potential solutions.

Impacts on the safe and efficient operation of the transport network if the delivery of highway works are not correctly controlled and supervised

- 1.14. If the delivery of highway works is not correctly controlled and supervised this is likely to lead to delays to the travelling public and commercial vehicles, and could also lead to highway safety concerns.
- 1.15. All Highway Authorities have a requirement to manage the network they are responsible for. This includes the programming of road space for highway works to be carried out, the duration of those works, the traffic management that is required, the times of day that the works can take place over etc.
- 1.16. Warwickshire County Council utilise two principal processes to try and ensure that when highway works are necessary they are undertaken safely and as efficiently as possible: 1) major highway works are delivered by the Highway Authority on behalf of the developer by way of a section 278 agreement, the schemes are tendered from a select list of contractors known to be proficient for the scheme being delivered, and 2) the traffic management including permits, are planned for and discussed with the Network Management Team well in advance.
- 1.17. Whilst development and highway construction work are important, the safety of the public and those working on the delivery of schemes has to be of paramount importance. Management of roadworks is also essential, poor performance in this could lead to excessive delays resulting in unsafe driver behaviour, and potentially rat running on unsuitable routes to avoid delays.