

Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited

## **HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE**

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### **The Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order**

Project reference TR050007

### **Written Statement of Oral Cse ISH2 [Appendix A - Note regarding impacts of HS2 decision for HNRFI]**

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Planning Act 2008

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

## IMPLICATIONS OF CANCELLATION OF HS2 NORTH OF BIRMINGHAM ON THE NEEDS CASE FOR HNRFI

1. This note is in response to the ExA's request for a note on the ramifications of the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2a and 2b, on the Needs Case for HNRFI. This response is to be read in the context of the practical issues and policy direction as announced by the Prime Minister and contained in Command Paper 946 published on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, called, Network North: Transforming British Transport.
2. It should be noted that Network Rail in its capacity study for HNRFI did not take into account any future potential capacity created by HS2 in order to reach the conclusion that there is sufficient capacity in the Strategic Freight Network, for HNRFI to be able to service up to 16 trains per day.
3. HS2 was being estimated to complete c2041. Until that time, it would have provided little benefit and was absorbing virtually all major investment in rail (amongst other schemes). The release of some of the funds into new rail infrastructure with shorter term deliverability is welcomed. Enhancing and improving the track layouts at Ely to future proof the capacity demand of this junction has been a long term ask of the intermodal rail freight sector and demonstrates intent to see rail freight grow. It should be noted that HNRFI is not reliant on improvements at Ely. It also increases capacity through to Felixstowe and London Gateway.
4. HS2 Phase 1 is still being developed through to Handsacre, Staffordshire and, potentially Euston, from Old Oak Common. This would, if completed, provide a useful addition to passenger capacity releasing some capacity for freight on the southern section of West Coast Main Line (WCML). However, HNRFI is not predicated on a need to use the southern sections of the WCML, as it sees its core market as predominantly East Coast and South-East ports, the North West (including Liverpool); and Scotland. There is capacity through to the WCML and the South West and Wales for HNRFI, which remains unaltered by this announcement.
5. The northern section of HS2, phases 2a and 2b combined had already been curtailed to Manchester, having had the Goldbourne Link dropped, which would have provided better connections through to Liverpool and Scotland. The industry is already working with the DfT

to look at ways of improving the Handsacre to the North West capacity, which has been the one of the most publicly expressed concerns. The development of capacity from Liverpool, through Warrington to Manchester should release capacity to link to other existing and planned SRFI's in the North West, which HNRFI could serve, when it is built.

6. The release of funding to be used in part to strengthen the East West rail links through the Pennines, will include W12 Gauge cleared routes for freight. This will bring the very useful opportunity for access into Manchester etc., via the East Coast Main Line through the new Trans Pennine route, to and from the East Coast and South-East Coast ports. This alternative to the North London Line / WCML and indeed the Felixstowe to the Midlands and the North Strategic Freight Route beyond Peterborough, would provide additional capacity for HNRFI; as well as alternative routes providing increased flexibility to the various northern and Scottish markets it can serve.
7. The Midlands Connect two trains per hour additional services announced have already been assumed by the Applicant and Network Rail, in terms of capacity, and there is no constraint on HNRFI arising from this coming forward. Whilst the Birmingham to Leicester service was announced, Midlands Connect are still only at the stage of developing their Outline Business Case, and it has therefore yet to be proven viable, so still may or may not proceed. It is not a committed project.
8. In conclusion, the deliverability, benefits and the costs of HS2 have all been called into question just as the rail sector moves to accommodate different passenger demands and a real need to move more freight by rail to achieve Net Zero. There will be considerable benefits for HNRFI and rail freight generally, if some of that saved HS2 investment is used to successfully deliver the above and more.
9. However, it remains the case that HNRFI was not and never has been HS2 dependent as a scheme. Its core markets and its opportunity to act as a rail-based logistics hub in the centre of Network Rail's Strategic Freight Network, remain.