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Network Rail

Your Ref:

cc Office of Rail and Road

Our Ref: TR050007

Date: 20 February 2024

Dear Sirs

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 17

Application by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

Request for further information

On 28 November 2023 we, as Examining Authority (ExA) for the above project, wrote to all Interested Parties, including Network Rail (NR), to advise them that we would be holding an Issue Specific Hearing into, among other matters, Traffic and Transport on 24 January 2024. We requested attendance from NR and specifically from someone who would be able to answer questions about operational matters associated with the Proposed Development.

In early January 2024 we were advised that due to the personal circumstances of the person at Network Rail who had been most involved in the project, attendance this would be unlikely; this proved to be the case.

That being the situation, on 19 January 2024, we issued our second set of written questions including the questions for NR we would have asked at the hearing (although we considered that these would have been better answered orally, as we may have had further points for discussion).

Unfortunately, at the deadline set (9 February 2024) for responses to our second set of written questions no response to these questions was received from NR, although we did receive via the Applicant a signed Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and NR [[REP5-053](#)] and the latest version of the Rail Report [[REP5-087](#)].

In our view it is essential that we have the following information from NR to allow us to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Narborough Level Crossing

1. Could NR set out what would be the minimum 'clear' time for the Narborough Level Crossing. In other words, what is the minimum time between when the barriers would rise and the beginning of the warning siren/ lights indicating that the barriers are to close, so as to mean that the barrier would not be raised, but rather would remain down awaiting the next train path.
2. In its Rail Report NR [REP5-087] refers to a "rail industry barrier down time limits for a town centre level crossing down time of 45 minutes maximum".
 - a) Could NR please set out the derivation of this figure.
 - b) The implication of the answer is that there are different times in different locations.

Could NR please set out a comprehensive list of all such situations and, if there are any defined criteria for identifying such locations set these out along with their published sources.

Nuneaton to Leicester line

3. Various representations to the Examination have made comment about the lack of passing loops and similar facilities along this length of railway line. The provision of the Proposed Development would provide off and on facilities at the Application site bypassing the main line.

While appreciating that the site would be private, could NR please provide views as to whether the facilities on the site could be used to relocate disabled trains off the main line should trains break down.

Potential Passenger Station near site

4. NR indicates [REP5-087] that one of the reasons why a passenger station could not be provided in the vicinity of the Application site is the gradient and the implications for the overall line. The Applicant in its response to Action Groups ([REP4-125] response 14) notes that "the rail terminal design includes a virtually flat (at no more than 1:500 gradient in accordance with Network Rail standards)".

Could NR please set out the maximum gradient for platforms at passenger trains at stations and why, if this is no greater than 1:500, can this be provided for the Proposed Development but not a passenger service on the same stretch of line given the need to tie the Proposed Development into the main line?

5. In its Rail Report submitted at Deadline 5 in paragraph 9.3.3 [REP5-087] NR refers to an "hourly stopping service". Interested Parties to the Examination have repeatedly referred to the passenger service between Nuneaton and Leicester being increased in frequency to two trains per hour. Could NR comment on whether this is the case, and if so, what implications it may have as regards both the Proposed Development and any business case for a station near the Application site.

The response should be submitted by 23:59 hours on **27 February 2024**. This is to allow us to publish them and allow Interested Parties to comment upon them before the end of the Examination on 12 March 2024.

Information should be submitted via the Planning Inspectorate's Infrastructure webpages, <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/hinckley-national-rail-freight-interchange/>

We are copying this letter to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) as the regulator for Network Rail. This is for two reasons. Firstly, so that it is aware of the situation and secondly, we would welcome any information direct from the ORR that it may have so as to answer the questions.

Yours sincerely

Robert Jackson

Robert Jackson
Lead Panel Member of the Examining Authority

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