

I wish it to be recorded that I am totally against the plan to develop the area adjacent to Burbage Common, Hinckley into a National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI),

There are already 5 such interchanges in the West and East Midlands and there is significant overlap of these sites - which can be expanded, if demand requires it. Therefore there is no need for additional capacity. Indeed, Magna Park (the largest industrial estate in Europe) and the DIRFT site are less than 10 miles from Hinckley.

Government policy on this issue is clear that any site should be situated close to the market it is intended to serve. With such an overlap already, it is extremely difficult to understand where the space for new markets would be found and therefore the freight interchange is not required.

Whilst I am in favour of reducing our National carbon footprint, my detailed analysis, below, will outline how this will actually be increased if this development were allowed.

Additionally, on a national level, since all local markets are covered by the current rail freight interchange sites, it is more likely that goods would need to be transported to and from sites further afield, thereby negating the government directive to serve a local community.

Further, Tritax have made no attempt to ensure reduce emissions from HGVs or diesel trains. Although there is a proposal by Tritax that this line will eventually be electrified, as there are no timescales given, one can, therefore, draw the conclusion that this won't be any time soon. Without electrification from day one, this scheme should be a 'non-starter'.

My detailed analysis of their plans and repercussions follow:

ROADS

The developers assert that traffic from the villages and roads to the north of Hinckley will use the road through industrial estate to access the M69 rather than continuing through the town.

However, there is no mention of signage indicating M69 access via the road through the estate in both directions or attempts to make the road system through the estate user - friendly for such motorists. My experience says that it's unlikely that normal road users would choose to drive through an industrial estate - especially one decanting heavy machinery from trains.

Road at the side of Burbage Common:

With up to 2 - 1/2 mile long trains an hour decanting and accepting loads plus vans, lorries and worker's cars travelling along this link the result will be non-stop traffic day and night right along the northern side of the common - with the attendant noise and pollution and risk of accidents with loose dogs and children running and playing.

Use of perimeter road to A5 for lorries to and from areas to the west and north of Hinckley:

This road is already heavily congested - particularly at the Dodwell's Bridge end going to the A5 as this area is already the site of large industrial estates on either side of the road. Mile - long queues are a daily occurrence . In the opposite direction, there are very long queues at peak times from the Morrison's turn up to the Ashby Road junction.

Residents in these areas already struggle to access the perimeter road from their estates. More houses are also planned along this route with the attendant additional traffic which will make this road an impass.

What is needed is for the perimeter road/ Normandy Way to be made a dual carriageway. Additionally, the roundabout on the A5 junction needs addressing to allow for a better flow of traffic in all directions. The developers have no intention of any involvement in these areas.

Access to the A5 via M69:

The developers told me they expect some lorries, vans and workers' cars to access the A5 via the M69 (and vice versa) but the A5 between the M69 and the turning for Nuneaton, The Longshoot, is already another bottleneck with stationary traffic a numerous times each day along the entire section.

Again a dual carriageway together with increasing the height and widening the railway bridge on this section is needed. When this was pointed out, this does not appear to be within their scoping area and the developers told me that it wasn't their problem, it was for Highways England to sort out.

The residents of Hinckley have been waiting 40 years for this to be actioned but it has never happened. I have no reason to believe that this will happen any time soon. In the mean time, surely we are not expected to live with permanently grid - locked roads in our area? This has got to be a major stumbling block to siting this site at Barwell Common.

It is inconceivable to think that a proposal such as this should be allowed to go forward without incorporating solutions that cover the total road network surrounding Hinckley.

In the mean time, the additional traffic, estimated by Tritax to be 10,000 HGVs a day and 8,400 worker movements each day would catastrophically add to the stresses on this already grid-locked section of road.

Access to the M1 via the M69

Another reason behind the positioning of the estate is said to enable lorries to carry heavy goods to the M1 motorway via the M69. However, the M69 has stationary traffic for miles at peak times of the day waiting to leave via either the M1 or roads into Leicester.

The same is true of the M1 for most of the day, where there is stationary queueing traffic to leave at the Leicester junction. Therefore, the situation of the estate in this position is bound to exacerbate this problem with such a high volume of additional traffic.

To the developers, these are merely logistical problems for others to sort out over time. They are merely interested in making money. All of this is astounding. We live here and are expected to put up with a development ruining our roads, increasing our travel times and affecting our health until 'someone' gets round to spending the money to solve these major issues.

Traffic through Hinckley:

The developers were honest about saying that the development will inevitably mean extra road traffic travelling into Hinckley - the obvious route would be along the Leicester Road.

Again, this brings huge issues for residents. There is heavy traffic turning onto the Leicester Road coming from Asda to the junction between the Leicester Road and Stoneygate Drive.

Effect on Pedestrians

Children cross the Leicester Road at this point also at the Trafford Road junction, at De Montfort Road and Butt Lane bound for John Cleveland College.

Vehicle speed display signs have been installed in an unsuccessful attempt to reduce traffic speed to 30 mph along this stretch and to 20mph immediately adjacent to Parks Primary during school arrival and leaving times. Despite this, drivers still travel at high speed along the road.

There have already been accidents involving children along this section of road. In addition to a number of other accidents along this stretch.

Additionally to JCC footfall, families with primary aged children walk along and cross the Leicester Road bound for Parks Primary.

The path alongside the Leicester Road between the Spa Lane traffic lights and Parks Primary is dangerous since it is very narrow and steeply angled. This path is extremely busy and dangerous at school times, when JCC children walk in groups and simultaneously Parks Primary families walk along it. Indeed, there was a fatal accident right outside of the school in the spring of 2023.

These groups also use the cross roads at the traffic lights between the Leicester Road and Spa Lane. This is already an extremely dangerous junction.

Further, classes of children from Parks Primary regularly walk this route, including the traffic lights on their way to and from the leisure centre. V in

Very worryingly, it is impossible for big lorries to turn left from the Leicester Road onto Spa Lane without putting passenger - side wheels onto the pavement. I've seen this happen numerous times, thereby putting all pedestrians at risk.

Additionally, the protective barrier around the central island at this junction has been crashed into many times and caved in - therefore pedestrians are not safe anywhere on this junction - particularly young children who are not always easy to control.

Further, the Leicester Road and side rounds around is blocked by long queues of traffic for half an hour at a time at the beginning and end of the school day.

For all of the above reason, once there is access to the M69 through the industrial estate, it will be crucial for consideration to be given to banning HGVs from travelling along this route on the Leicester Road from the Golf Club up to and including the traffic lights on the Leicester Road/Spa Lane junction.

I was informed by the developers that there would be a policy stating that lorries would not be using this route but human nature tells me otherwise.

The developers told me that no construction traffic would be travelling through Hinckley and that the access to the site would be via the link road from the M69 which would be built first but they will have no control over drivers once plans have been accepted.

Prohibiting through-traffic access to Hinckley for, as a minimum, all lorries and large vehicles should be an essential consideration for this plan.

FOOTPATHS

It is proposed that the right of way across the railway line at bottom of Hinckley Golf Course will be closed and it is expected that walkers will use the bridge between housing along Foresters Road. However, there is no public footpath between the bottom of the golf course and this bridge which walkers are then expected to use - and even if one was introduced this would involve a diversion of at least a half a mile. This closure makes it impossible for walkers to use the right of way into Burbage Woods via Hinckley Golf Course. The proposal to close this 'foot-crossing' of the railway should therefore, also include a footbridge at this point to ensure continuity of public rights of way.

It is also proposed to close the right of way which enables walkers to re-cross the railway close to the small road bridge near to the upper common car park. This prevents pedestrians from walking out into the fields leading to the western border of Elmesthorpe.

When I pursued this with the developers, I was told to walk the whole of the southern perimeter and then the eastern perimeter (the latter has a very narrow path squeezed between the industrial estate and motorway) then up whole of the northern perimeter to the new footbridge further along the line!

Both rights of way need footbridges as they are the closest to the rights of way adjacent to Hinckley and Burbage Common and without them the footpaths are not joined up.

POLLUTION

The developers state that the aim of the development is to reduce pollution .

Clearly, this is not going to happen because the increased traffic (Tritax estimates 10,000 HGVs and 8,400 workers) on already grid - locked roads will result in more idling cars and lorries spewing out exhaust fumes over our town and surrounding countryside - not to mention frustratingly long, costly, waits for local traffic on these roads.

DRAINAGE

Burbage Common is currently a quagmire each winter. If acres and acres of concrete is sited directly adjacent to it, whatever the assurances of developers otherwise, Burbage Common is likely to become unusable during the winter.

I was informed by the developers that Burbage Common had been mis-managed for years which is why the area is so poorly drained. This may be a separate issue needing to be addressed by the borough council.

It is the assertion of developers that the estate will improve the drainage on the common but I am not in a position to verify this. I am concerned that this will not be the case since open ground would be replaced by tarmac and concrete with a few small ponds and that there will be no redress after the event.

Ecology

Burbage Common consists of ancient woodland and open fields which support a huge biodiversity of plants, animals and birds. There can be no absolute assurance that noise, chemical - both airborne and waterborne, dust and light pollution and the most likely invasion of rats, scavenger foxes etc will not adversely affect, reduce or even decimate the wildlife on the common.

Other Areas for siting the development

I asked about other potential sites for the development but this is the developers' cheapest option as other areas have drainage issues.

Other sites, away from towns, villages and already congested roads have been summarily discounted. I suggest the developers should spend time and money to find an area which does not so negatively affect and desist people's, animals', birds', plants' and trees' lives.

Alternatively, to my knowledge, there has been no feasibility study researching the possibility of constructing an additional

branch railway line from the Felixstowe line to join the line from the channel ports and then use the enormous DRFT site which is away from towns and has much better road and rail infrastructure.
This would negate the need for an additional site and would utilise expertises already gained in logistics.