

Subject: FW: Hinckley National Railfreight Interchange
Date: 30 July 2024 08:06:25

From: Barbara Lees [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2024 6:12 PM
To: HAIGH, Louise [REDACTED] >
Subject: Hinckley National Railfreight Interchange

Dear Louise Haigh,

I realise you have only just arrived in the department and acknowledge the many communications and decisions you will have to make. I am writing concerning the National Infrastructure Planning application currently at the Decision stage for Hinckley National Railfreight Interchange submitted by Tritax.

1. The site's location is unsuitable for a rail freight terminal and warehouses - the area is described as 'Aston Flamville wooded farmland' and 'Elmesthorpe Floodplain' (Blaby District landscape and settlement character assessment 2020) which forms part of the rural landscape surrounding Burbage Common and Woods.

Burbage Common and Woods is a SSSI and an important local resource for leisure, health and wellbeing (particularly during the pandemic) not only for local residents in Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton, Elmesthorpe and surrounding villages but also for people from further afield such as Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham - the development would have a very negative effect on the Common and Woods. Hinckley and Bosworth Walking for Health group meet on Burbage Common on a weekly basis. There would be a loss of 5 footpaths/bridleways and also Burbage Common Road used by pedestrians and equestrians, the proposed bridleway, adjacent to the M69, is not accessible to the majority of people using the current footpaths and would be an unpleasant experience with horses and dogs. The other replacement footpath runs along the railway itself.

2. There are 5 other rail freight terminals within 30 miles of this area of South Leicestershire - 3 of which are built on 'brown field' sites DIRFT, Birch Coppice and Hams Hall - the other, East Midlands Gateway, is immediately adjacent to East Midlands Airport and is part of the Freeport area. The other site currently under construction is in Northamptonshire and a further 6th site is proposed near Toyota on the A50 near Derby - again part of the Freeport area. All of these already serve the port of Felixstowe among others including Southampton and Tilbury. This site is therefore not strategically placed and merely adds HGV's to an already congested road network.

3. The proposed rail operator (Maritime) already operates Birch Coppice, East Midlands Gateway, Hams Hall and will operate the Segro site in Northamptonshire -there would seem to be little strategic value from the rail point of view to having an additional site in such close proximity to their others. The development at Magna Park is already served by the Daventry Railfreight Terminal (operator Malcolm). What are the guarantees this would be used as a rail freight terminal - I refer to the Prologis Park at Coventry built on a brown field site which was proposed in the District Plan for Coventry in 2001 to operate freight via its rail link rather than road - no trains are timetabled to or from here.

4. At least 1500 acres of farmland has been lost to warehouse development in south west Leicestershire along the A5 corridor already. The loss of another 600 acres (when only 150 acres are quoted as necessary for a rail freight terminal in government guidance) in a

landscape immediately adjacent to Burbage Common and Woods would be very detrimental to local people, the wildlife that lives in the fields, the Common itself, the 19 kms of hedgerows, over 100 mature trees and the wildlife using the area as a wildlife corridor. There are at least 4 species of red listed birds - tree sparrow, grey partridge, lapwing and skylark, owls, badgers, a variety of bats, brown hares, slow worms, water voles, great crested newts, rare moths, sightings of otters on occasions in the watercourses and surroundings.

The rail line runs through the Common and the increase in freight trains to 32 a day on a crosscountry rail line, constant illumination and noise created by a warehouse site and railfreight terminal in operation 24 hours a day will disturb the circadian rhythms of these species and have a detrimental effect on their survival by interfering with foraging patterns, reproduction and communication (Stone, E..L., 2009, p,1123-1127. and Da Silva, A. 2015),

Sir David Attenborough remarked in his most recent series 'Wild Isles' on the loss of over 90% of wildflower meadow habitats since he was a boy, I sincerely hope we will not lose this farmland habitat for the sake of our children and future generations to say nothing of the loss of land for growing crops and grazing animals

This is not a mainline and operation of more freight trains will cause delays to passenger trains and impact severely on the level crossing in the Leicester suburb of Narborough.

5. I have lived in Elmesthorpe for 32 years in that time I have used all the footpaths, bridleways and Burbage Common Road with my children, grandson and on daily dog walks to access Burbage Common and Woods. I would not walk down the B581 to access the new bridleway as the pavement is narrow and the road too busy to walk safely with dogs or children nor would I walk immediately adjacent to the railway line. I would therefore have to use my car daily to take the dogs for a walk and I would not go to Burbage Common as the area would be next to a noisy industrial site. The additional land adjacent to the new link road proposed as mitigation is not really a suitable replacement for what would be lost and amounts to an extended verge. The 24 hour operation of this site in the countryside but adjacent to several settlements would cause light and noise disturbance for people living locally. The roads are already very busy and the siting of the new link road alongside the Common and joining Leicester Rd immediately opposite the Rugby, Tennis, Squash, Football and Cricket clubs will make it dangerous for everyone using the facilities. There have been several fatal accidents along that stretch of road. The planned Hinckley Crematorium is situated at the roundabout adjacent to Normandy Way and slow funeral traffic could cause traffic congestion throughout the day along the route to the development.

Finally I attended several consultations at different locations and I do not feel my questions were answered either satisfactorily or consistently- for example

1. No response to the fact that there is no direct southbound access to either the M6 or M1 from the M69 a point of severe congestion at anytime of the day.
2. Discrepancy in the number of predicted HGV daily journeys ranging from 8000-12000
3. We were told the identifiable customers would be the Midland automotive industry at the consultation (not situated within the area) but now it would appear the customers would be Magna Park -already served by DIRFT and resulting in even more HGV's using the A5 in a very small area.
4. The information sent out by post contained several maps which were difficult to follow and keys that were too small to be read without a magnifying glass. I sent an email to Tritax Symmetry nregarding this and received no acknowledgement or reply - it was impossible for

my elderly mother to read this communication

5. When we attended the consultation meeting held at Elmesthorpe Village Hall on Wednesday 19th January 2022 there were no hard copies of any of the PEIR consultation documents available other than the Statement of Community Consultation. I would consider the availability of a hard copy of these documents essential to the consultation process in order for us to question the applicant on specific points - we requested the rail report in order to refer to a point we wished to make and question the consultants and it was not available.

6. No specific details of timing of train movements as regards even night or day and no knowledge of nearby rail freight interchanges either proposed, functioning or although planned to use as rail freight operations not operating as such (Logis Park, Coventry).

I appreciate your consideration of all these factors in reaching a decision - South Leicestershire already has more than its fair share of warehouse developments and whilst transporting goods by rail is not without its benefits, it would not seem logical to offload the goods onto an already over congested Highways network when there are already so many interchanges close by and more suitable locations around the country on brownfield sites where they could be developed closer to the end point of the goods.

Yours Sincerely

Barbara Lees

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