

Sent by way of email

Louise Haigh MP
Secretary of State for Transport
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State

HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

Firstly, I would like to express my congratulations on your recent appointment to Government. I appreciate that this must be a busy time for you and am grateful for you taking the time to consider this matter that is so important to the residents of Blaby District.

A key purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI). The proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is in Southern Leicestershire, off Junction 2 of the M69. The 662 acre development is principally located within the borders of Blaby District although a small portion lies within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. The Applicant, Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited, is seeking a Development Consent Order for a large controversial logistics development comprising a rail freight interchange and 850,000 square metres of warehousing. The Examining Authority's Recommendation Report has been sent to you for determination by 12 September. Given the unified strength of concern of residents, all three host Local Authorities (Blaby District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council) and technical consultees such as National Highways, it would be remiss of me not to raise this matter with you given your recent appointment. My principal concerns are:-

- Our track record as a Council demonstrates that we have always been pro-development and had we been convinced that the development was going to be a rail freight interchange our responses might have been different. However, all the evidence supplied shows that a very small proportion of goods inward would come by rail with even less leaving by this method which confirms that this is a warehouse development masquerading as a nationally significant infrastructure project. The legislation for such projects also indicates that they must be connected to a Main Rail Line which this one does not.
- The true severity of highways impacts, especially at the M1/M69 junction and at Narborough level crossing has been poorly assessed so the required mitigation is unknown.
- The proposal is badly designed and would create major adverse landscape and ecological impacts with the loss of wildlife habitat.

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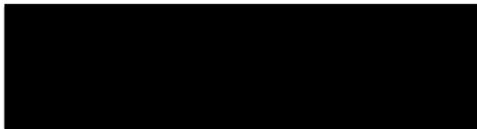
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- Neighbouring settlements would suffer from unnecessary noise and light pollution.
- Expected job creation would not benefit the District as it results in generally low-paid jobs.
- The suggested socio-economic and climate change benefits do not outweigh the adverse impacts.

Southern Leicestershire is a key part of the Nation's logistics sector, but we are experiencing significant issues in relation to our strategic highway network – most notably at the M1/M69 junction at Junction 21 of the M1. The HNRFI, by not properly addressing its own impacts, will overload this already oversaturated junction and will reduce the region's capacity for further economic growth in addition to the impacts highlighted above. I therefore urge you to carefully consider the negative social, environmental and economic impacts of the HNRFI on the residents of Blaby District and give detailed consideration to the highways infrastructure mitigation that is required in this part of the region.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Terry Richardson
Leader of Blaby District Council