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Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Ltd
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5th December 2024

Dear whomever it concerns,

I write on behalf of Network Rail regarding the Secretary of State's letter dated 10th September 2024, extending the decision period for Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI), and publishing the associated Examining Authority Recommendation Report.

Network Rail is concerned with the ExA's commentary and has considered this in further detail. We have prepared and will be submitting our own independent report detailing our assessment and conclusions direct to the Secretary of State.

The report specifically responds to references to Network Rail made in the Secretary of State's letter, as set out in paragraph 36, and provides further information on the viability of a passenger station at or near to the HNRFI site, explanation of which the Examining Authority had considered insufficient.

The report "*Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange - Evaluation of the Viability of Providing a New Passenger Station to Serve the Proposed Development and Local Community Travel Needs*" has been provided to Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Ltd., to enable it to consider its position regarding the Sustainable Transport Strategy, as directed under paragraph 37 of the Secretary of State's letter.

Network Rail authorises Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Ltd., to refer to and submit this report with its own response to the Secretary of State.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

Robert Russell
Senior Sponsor, East Midlands
Network Rail

Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

Evaluation of the Viability of Providing a New Passenger Station to Serve the Proposed Development and Local Community Travel Needs

Version: 1.0
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1. Contents

2. Version Control

Version	Issued to	Date
Draft 0.1	Issued for comment	10.11.24
Draft 0.2	Revised draft for comment	18.11.24
Draft 0.3	Final for review	27.11.24
Draft 0.4	Minor drafting changes	28.11.24
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Final 1.0	Issued	04.12.24

3. Glossary of Abbreviations

BCR	Benefit to Cost Ratio
DCO	Development Consent Order
ELR	Engineers Line Reference
ExA	Examining Authority
HNRFI	Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
LDHS	Long Distance High Speed passenger services
RyR	Restore your Railway
SRFI	Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

4. Executive Summary

4.1 Given there is no policy requirement for the applicant to consider provision of a passenger station as part of an SRFI facility no pre NSIP development work was undertaken by Network Rail as part of its assessment of the rail works required to facilitate HNRFI.

4.2 The report has been produced independently by Network Rail in response to the Secretary of State's letter of 10th September 2024 (Para 36)

4.3 The report has been provided to the Applicant to inform its position regarding its sustainable transport plan as required under the Secretary of State's letter of 10th September 2024 (Para 37).

4.4 As the Applicant needs to draw on findings of the report Network Rail has authorised the Applicant to submit the report to the SoS with its own response.

4.5 The possibility of a station being provided to serve the commute to work needs of employees at HNRFI stems from a specific question raised by the ExA during the HNRFI examination.

4.6 For established SRFI facilities no consideration has previously been given to the need to provide a passenger station for commute to work purposes. Generally sustainable, road based, public transport links have been provided to meet the demand of employees travelling to/from identified employment catchment areas. This type of operation provides a good, flexible, sustainable public transport option. It is proven and works universally well.

4.7 This assessment has concluded that in principle there is no obstacle to constructing a passenger station to serve HNRFI based on initial consideration of engineering and topographical issues, the likely scope of the station facility and the need for the station facility to integrate fully with both the HNRFI works and the interfacing project to create an eastbound freight recessing loop.

4.8 Equally this assessment has concluded that there is nothing in principle based on engineering and topographical considerations that would prevent construction of a passenger station at this location to serve local community needs in line with Policy 5 of the Hinckley Core Strategy Review without the presence of HNRFI assuming a business case could be made and the DfT were to approve provision of the new station facility.

4.9 Network Rail notes the objectives of Policy 5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) Core Strategy adopted in 2009 and extending to 2026 and specifically the Hinckley Core Strategy Transport Review 2007 with respect to the aspiration to provide a station to serve the communities of Elmsthorpe, Earl Shilton and Barwell.

4.10 However, Network Rail, along with East Midlands Railway and Cross Country Trains, considers that in light of significant changes to commuting and retail travel since the pandemic, the consequential and significant downturn impact on the rail industry's OPEX base and in light of recent similar assessment of local station proposals under the Government led *Restore your Railways* programme it is likely to be difficult to construct a business case that would support a new station facility to serve the needs of these local communities. This is exacerbated by the presence of the existing, well established station facility at Hinckley some 2.5 miles distant which has capability to cater for an increase in passenger numbers.

4.11 Consideration has been given to the ExA's specific question as to whether a new passenger station is justified to meet the commute to work requirements of employees at HNRFI. The assessment has considered the forecast employment catchment areas and the approximate overall door to door journey time that would accrue to commute between any one of the forecast employment catchment areas and HNRFI by rail. Without exception the analysis indicates that to complete the same journey via a road based transport link would be significantly quicker and easier than by rail.

4.12 Given that reliability and overall door to door journey times are key to commute to work journeys, rail based commute to work is not considered viable in connection with HNRFI.

4.13 The existing stopping service between Birmingham and Leicester is an hourly clock face pattern service with 1 train/hour in each direction. Turn round times at Leicester and Birmingham New Street are critical and risk being compromised by inclusion of an additional stop at HNRFI. The impact of this would require potentially major adjustments to the working timetable with knock on impacts on other operators, additional rolling stock and additional traincrew. It is unlikely that the additional CAPEX or OPEX costs would be supported in an environment where the rail industry is under significant pressure to reduce its cost base.

4.14 Commute to work travel associated with HNRFI would result in three separate peak travel demands within any 24 hour window and correspondingly little or no demand at any other time. Existing stopping services that this demand would feed into (assuming at some point in future commute to work by rail demand at HNRFI were to become manifest) provides a seating capacity of 202 seats/train or a maximum capacity/train of 273 assuming 135% overcrowding. From this the one east bound and one west bound train/hour each shift change would feed into provide a maximum overall seating capacity of 404 seat or 546 maximum combined capacity.

4.15 Introduction of an additional stop into the hourly Birmingham New Street to Leicester stopping service would potentially impact the pathing of other freight and passenger services operating on the Nuneaton to Leicester line. These impacts would need to be contained as far as possible between Nuneaton and Glen Parva Junction to avoid the impacts affecting operators on other routes.

4.16 The Nuneaton to Leicester line forms part of a key cross-country freight and passenger route with future growth forecast in both sectors. The provision of an additional stop into the hourly Birmingham New Street to Leicester stopping service would potentially necessitate additional works to allow this forecast growth to be successfully handled on the route with consequential risks to the business case of those schemes.

4.17 In overall Network Rail concludes that there is insufficient demand for commute to work by rail to justify provision of a new HNRFI passenger station. While Network Rail wholeheartedly supports the objective of environmentally sustainable commute to work travel it does not consider that rail is always best placed to meet these demands.

4.18 Rather, it takes the view that each case should be assessed objectively on its own merits. In this respect and has been the case with every other SRFI nationally over the last 20 years, Network Rail considers that a good, flexible, sustainable road based public transport option is, in the majority of cases, the optimal solution to meet the commute to work needs at HNRFI.

5. Introduction

5.1 Background

5.1.1 As part of the HNRFI NSIP enquiry the ExA questioned whether consideration had been given to provision of a new passenger station on the Leicester to Nuneaton line to serve both employee travel opportunities expected to be generated by HNRFI and local community travel opportunities.

5.1.2 Although Network Rail provided written responses to the ExA through the inquiry process confirming that a passenger station to serve both the travel needs of the local communities of Barwell, Earl Shilton and Elmsthorpe and commute to work opportunities in connection with the proposed HNRFI development was not considered viable the issue was further raised in the Secretary of State's letter of 10th September 2024 (Para 36).

5.1.3 This report has therefore been prepared independently by Network Rail to specifically address the issue raised in the Secretary of State's letter.

5.1.4 The report has also been provided to the Applicant to inform its position regarding its sustainable transport plan as required under the Secretary of State's letter of 10th September 2024 (Para 37).

5.1.5 As the Applicant needs to draw on findings of the report Network Rail has authorised the Applicant to submit the report to the Secretary of State with its own response.

5.1.6 In the case of local community travel opportunities this referenced to Policy 5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) Core Strategy (CS). Policy 5 identifies 'transport interventions' as detailed in the Hinckley Core Strategy Transport Review 2007. In addition to these measures the Policy States:

'The Council will support the re-opening of the Elmesthorpe passenger railway station to serve Earl Shilton and Barwell' comprise two urban extensions within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth'.

5.1.7 This report sets out how the viability of this proposal has been assessed.

5.1.8 In assessing viability of a station located to HNRFI it is important to note that the assessment has considered:

i. The ability to physically accommodate a station at the proposed location were HNRFI to be constructed.
ii. The ability to physically accommodate a station at the proposed location were HNRFI and the proposed eastbound freight recessing loop to be constructed.
iii. The viability of a station positioned at this location to serve the travel needs of the local communities.
iv. The viability of a station at this location to serve the commuting needs of employees at HNRFI taking due account of forecast HNRFI employment catchment areas.
v. The impact of an additional station call on the existing stopping services services.
vi. The knock-on impact of an additional station call on other existing freight and passenger operations on the route.

vii. The potential impact of an additional station call on potential further freight and passenger growth.

5.2 Precedent for considering stations linked to an SRFI

5.2.1 SRFI facilities have the potential to be major employment generators.

5.2.2 The applicant has advised that job numbers would be between 8,400 and 10,400. There would be a need for around 4 people to fill one role to cover all shifts as well as annual leave.

Jobs are broken down by:

49% Warehouse staff

25% Office staff

12% Managerial

8% Driver

6% Other

At 8,400 divided by 4 persons to cover a role = 2,100. For shifts say 60% of 2,100 (60% made up of warehouse staff and a proportion of managerial and other roles). 60% = 1,260 staff coming on shift and 1,260 going off. Office staff will be in office hours.

5.2.3 It is therefore perhaps not unreasonable for the ExA to have questioned whether rail could address a proportion of the commute to work travel need. However, it should be noted that there is no policy requirement that constrains the applicant to do so.

5.2.4 Network Rail has been happy to support this assessment in conjunction with other rail industry partners in order to address the ExA's specific questions and the point raised in the Secretary of State's letter of 10th September but in doing so notes the following:

i. That there is no policy requirement to provide or consider provision of a passenger station as part of an SRFI proposal
ii. In over 20 years of working with promoters to develop and deliver other SRFI proposals nationally there has been no previous requirement to either consider or provide a passenger station as part of an SRFI proposal.
iii. While Network Rail and the rail industry whole heartedly supports development of sustainable transport options the rail industry recognises that rail isn't always the most appropriate solution to addressing every individual need.
iv. In the case of SRFIs, sustainable bus links to the local areas where employment is drawn from very often offers a much greater level of flexibility and adaptability to commuting needs than rail, with its fixed network infrastructure could. This is borne out by experience to date with other SRFI developments.
v. Where commuting demand is focused on three distinct shift change times this has the potential to cause short term peak demands that, if rail were a viable commuting option, may well result in overcrowding of the services immediately following the shift change. Correspondingly there would be little or no demand between shift changes.

5.3 Approach to Addressing Viability of the Proposal

5.3.1 In order to assess the viability of the proposal for a station to serve both HNRFI and the adjoining local communities the following specific factors have been taken into consideration:

i. Employment forecasts for HNRFI.
ii. Shift patterns associated with HNRFI employment.
iii. The forecast catchment locations for HNRFI employees and the degree to which rail provides a viable commuting choice.
iv. The degree to which sustainable travel opportunities for HNRFI employees are better met by rail or road based public transport options as a means of reducing car-based travel to/from work.
v. Likely levels of demand for travel to/from the local communities.
vi. Proximity of the proposed station to other stations, particularly Hinckley and Narborough.
vii. The physical works and associated costs to construct the new station facility.
viii. The impact of additional passenger loadings on the existing stopping service between Nuneaton and Leicester.
ix. The impact of the additional stop on the pathing and platforming of trains at both Birmingham New Street and Leicester.
x. The impact of the additional stop on rolling stock and traincrew provision.
xi. Department of Transport approach to the provision of station calls in close proximity to each other.

5.3.2 Although the assessment was led by Network Rail as the UK national rail network owner the assessment has been undertaken in conjunction with the following rail industry partners:

East Midlands Railway:	Station lessee for intermediate stations between Nuneaton and Leicester
Cross Country Trains:	Operator of passenger services between the West Midlands and Leicester

5.3.3 Due consideration has also been given to the DfT's approach to the provision of new local stations within the context of *Restore your Railways* proposals. Specifically, this considered the DfT's approach to station facilities on the RyR proposals to re-open the Leicester – Burton (Ivanhoe) line and to restore passenger services between Chesterfield and Sheffield via Beighton.

6. Physical Considerations

6.1 Network location and proximity to existing stations – Hinckley, Narborough, South Wigston, Nuneaton

6.1.1 A new passenger station at HNRFI would be located on the Leicester – Nuneaton line (ELR: WNS)

6.1.2 It is assumed that this station facility would be sited broadly between 6miles 04chains and 6miles 40 chains. The reasons for assuming this location are:

i. It is adjacent to the proposed new A47 link road bridge. This is required to provide good highway access for station users.
ii. It is closer to the envisaged catchment of Elmsthorpe, Barwell and Earl Shilton (see Section 7.1).
iii. Siting the station to the Hinckley side of the proposed A47 link road bridge has a potential to adversely impact on Burbage Common and Burbage Common Woods Country Park
iv. It is assumed that the main station entrance would be to the northwest side of the Leicester to Nuneaton railway as the rail terminal associated with HNRFI runs along the entire length of the southeast Network Rail boundary. This restricts available space to providing no more than a simple second platform to the southeast side.

6.1.3 The proposed HNRFI connections into the Leicester to Nuneaton line are situated as follows:

West End connection 5miles 66chains

East End connection 7miles 09chains

6.1.4 Hinckley Station is west of the proposed west end connection at 4m 00chains and therefore lies between 2 miles and 2.5miles west of a new passenger station at HNRFI.

6.1.5 Narborough Station is east of the proposed new station at 11 miles 66ch and is therefore approximately 5 miles to 5.5 miles east of a new passenger station at HNRFI.

6.1.6 South Wigston station is east of the proposed new station at 14 miles 68chains and is therefore approximately 8 miles to 8.5 miles east of a new passenger station at HNRFI.

6.1.7 Nuneaton Station is situated approximately 6 miles west of a new passenger station at HNRFI and provides interchange facilities with services on the West Coast Main line with connections to local stations at Atherstone, Tamworth and Rugby.

6.1.8 Stopping services on the line currently consist of 1 train per hour in each direction between Birmingham New Stret and Leicester.

6.2 Existing site - physical and topography considerations

6.2.1 The proposed HNRFI site lies in largely open country beyond the eastern boundaries of Hinckley with adjoining local communities at Barwell, Elmesthorpe and Earl Shilton.

6.2.2 The Leicester – Nuneaton line is a two-track railway which runs through the entire length between the proposed east and west end connections on a constant rising gradient east – west at 1 in 162.

6.2.3 The existing public rights of way associated with the foot crossings at *Barwell* (6 miles 21 chains) and *Earl Shilton* (6 miles 37 chains) will be closed as a result of the HNRFI development and do not therefore provide a constraint to provision of a new passenger station at HNRFI.

6.2.4 The three span, masonry arch Burbage Common Road Bridge located at 6 miles 03 chains is due to be demolished as part of the HNRFI works and replaced with the new A47 Link Road Bridge. A new passenger station at HNRFI is assumed to be to the Leicester side of this structure for the reasons set out at 6.1.2.

6.2.5 A 2' brick under track culvert is located at 6 miles 36 chains and would require works to either extend the culvert or stop up and divert the water course to facilitate construction of the proposed new station.

6.3 Physical and topography considerations resulting from the construction of HNRFI

6.3.1 The HNRFI development is predominantly located to the south east side of the Leicester – Nuneaton railway line.

6.3.2 The full length of the Network Rail/HNRFI interface between the east and west end connections on the south east side is taken up by:

i. The connections
ii. Rail links to/from the terminal roads
iii. The terminal pad itself
iv. Passive provision clearances for both future provision of reception lines and electrification

6.3.3 As the terminal pad, iii) above, needs to be level this results in the need for the rail link between the connections and the loading pad needing to be graded. This in turn means that significant earthworks will be required along the full length of the southeast Network Rail boundary.

6.3.4 The at grade foot crossings at Barwell and Earl Shilton (see 6.2.3) will require to be closed and the public rights of way stopped up.

6.3.5 The existing Burbage Common Road Bridge will be demolished and replaced by a new concrete road over rail bridge to accommodate thew A47 Link Road (see 6.2.4)

6.3.6 To the northwest side of the railway works are proposed as part of the HNRFI development to facilitate a bridleway, bunding and landscaping works that form part of the DCO application.

6.4 Interfacing projects: Midlands Rail Hub Up Loop

6.4.1 *Midlands Rail Hub* is a project aimed at increasing passenger services between the West Midlands (Birmingham and Coventry) and Leicester via the Leicester to Nuneaton line. The primary aim is to improve connectivity and journey times between the East and West Midlands through the provision of more frequent and fast (non stopping) services

6.4.2 The Leicester to Nuneaton line is a mixed traffic(freight and passenger) line and operates with speed differentials.

6.4.3 Line speeds between Nuneaton and Glen Parva Junction (just south of Leicester) are:

- Passenger: 90mph
- Class 4 freight (intermodal): 75mph
- Class 6 freight (aggregates etc): 60mph

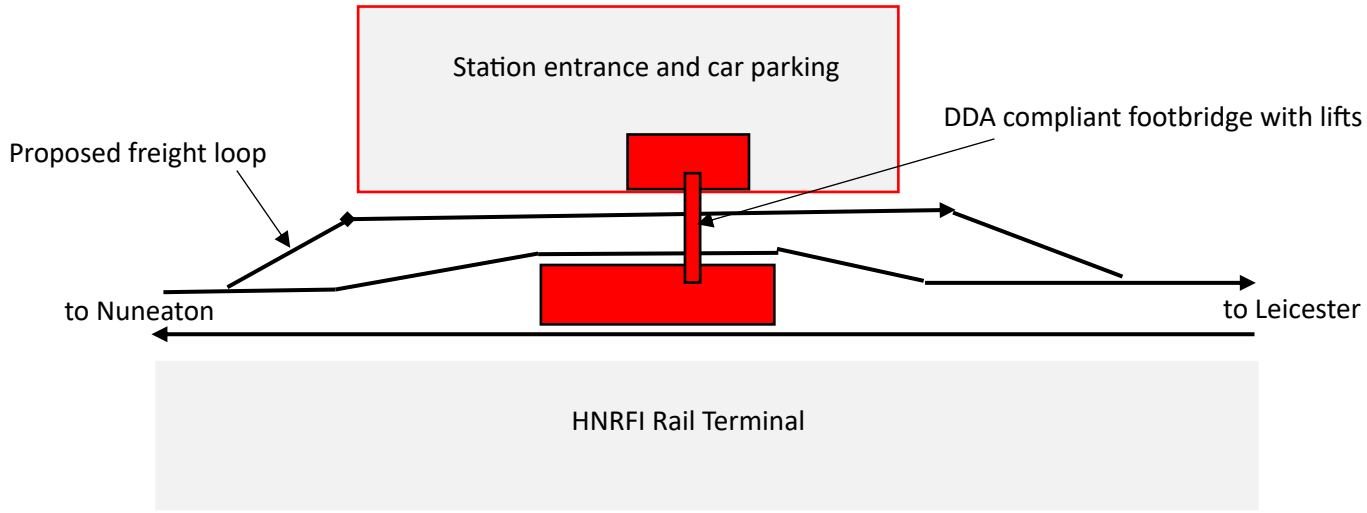
6.4.4 *Midlands Rail Hub services*, as with all existing non stopping passenger services on the route, will be timed to run at 90mph throughout between Nuneaton and Glen Parva Junction. However, the additional passenger services may result in conflicts with slower running freight services (regardless of HNRFI) and for this reason the *Midlands Rail Hub* project are proposing to provide new regulating freight loops.

6.4.5 In the west bound direction these are proposed on the approach to Nuneaton while in the east bound direction the preferred location of the loop is directly opposite HNRFI on the north side of the existing railway formation broadly between the proposed new A47 link road bridge and the east end connection. These proposals have been developed to preferred option status.

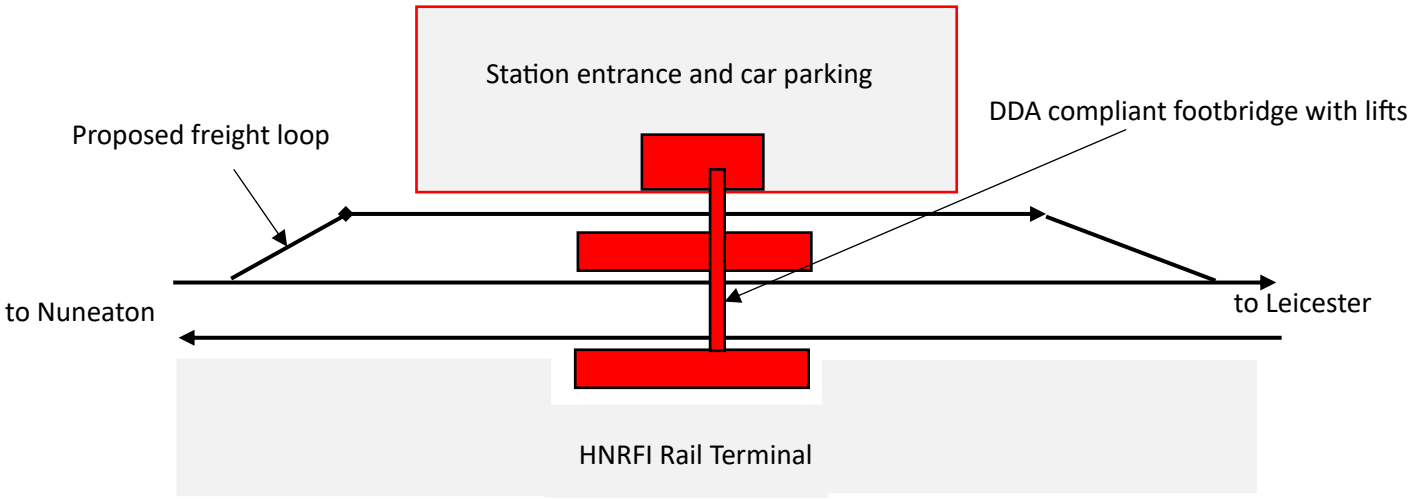
6.4.6 The interface of the *Midlands Rail Hub* east bound loop and HNRFI works is understood and both Tritax Symmetry Limited and Network Rail are content that the interfacing works can be managed without detriment to the aims of each project. However, there would be a direct conflict between the Midlands Rail Hub loop works and the siting of a new passenger station at HNRFI

6.4.6 This potential conflict only affects the east bound (Up) platform and could be addressed in one of three ways:

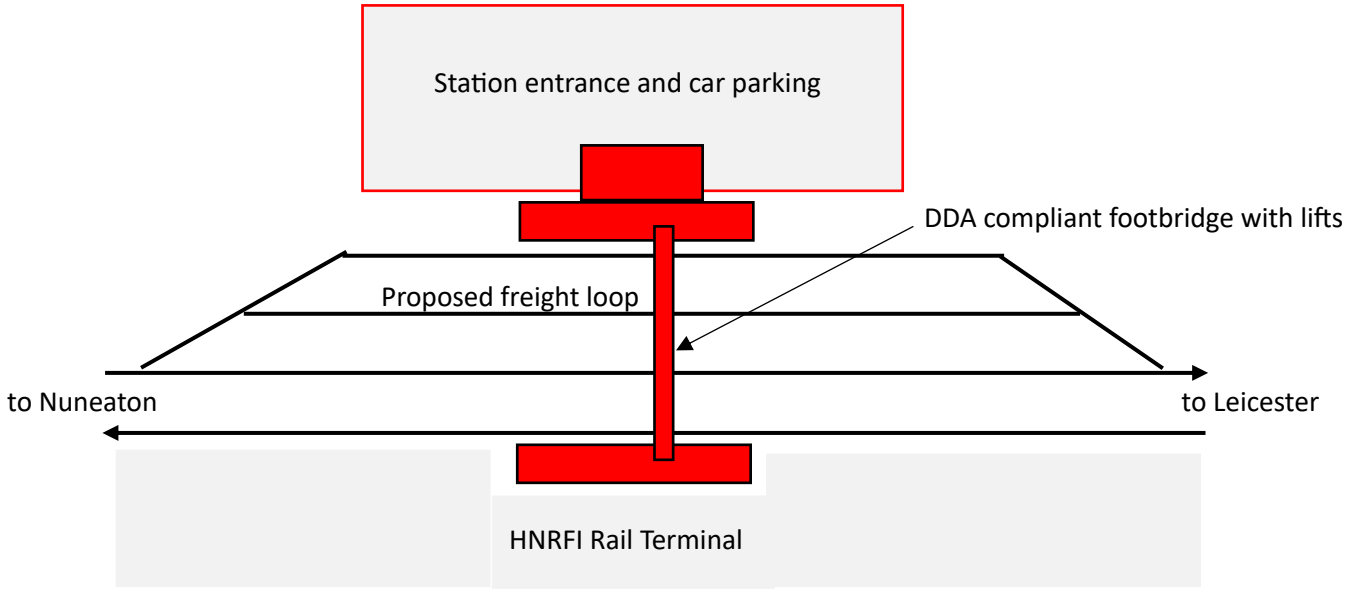
i) Construction of the station as an island platform configuration with the proposed freight loop being sited to the northwest side of the east bound (Up) line. This has no impact to the HNRFI/Network Rail boundary on the south east side but would involve significant boundary changes to the existing northwest boundary. It would also significantly impact on the currently planned HNRFI works to the northwest of the current boundary comprising the landscape bunding and the route of the bridleway and adjoining agricultural land



ii) Construction of a conventional two platform station facility with the proposed freight loop routed behind the eastbound (Up) platform. This would impact on the HNRFI freight terminal unless both existing lines are slewed to the northwest to accommodate the new station. Similar impacts to i) northwest of the Network Rail boundary.



iii) Creation of the new freight loop with a new eastbound (Up) platform line to the northwest of the loop line. It should be noted that the platform could not be located on the loop line as the loop needs to be dedicated for the recessing of freight trains. This option would have additional impacts beyond the northwest boundary to either i) or ii) above as well as additional cost.



6.5 Physical works required to create the new station facility.

6.5.1 As the Leicester to Nuneaton line is a two-track railway any new station facility would (at minimum and ignoring the potential impact of the proposed freight loop) require two platform faces. This could be achieved by providing a new platform face to the outside of each line (Fig 1) or via an island platform situated between both lines (Fig 2)

Fig 1

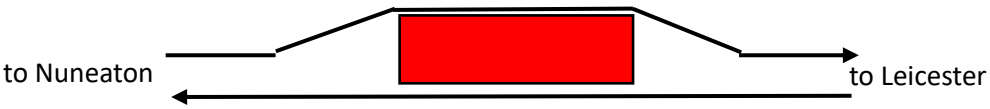


Fig 2

6.5.2 Generally the layout at Fig 1 is more usually adopted as it avoids the need for track slewing to create a space between tracks to site the island platform.

6.5.3 New secondary station facilities such as envisaged here consist of:

- 2 x 100m long platforms
- A cross platform interchange footbridge with lifts to ensure DDA compliance
- Platform lighting, seating, information displays and waiting shelters to rail industry standards
- Car parking (size appropriate to likely usage levels

It should be noted that this is a minimum scope.

6.5.4 For intermediate stations where the stopping time is short duration, and with the train under the control of the driver at all times, the ruling gradient through the station has no formally prescribed limits. Generally, however, it is desirable for the gradient to be as shallow as possible. In this respect the ruling gradient at the proposed site as noted at 6.2.2 is 1 in 162.

6.5.5 Although this gradient is not without precedent at other existing intermediate stations on the network, as a new station facility it would be preferable for the gradient to be eased if practicable.

6.5.6 Whether this is required in practice would need to be tested as part of the early stage design and development process. It may be the case that a derogation could be granted by the ORR for retention of the existing gradient on the following basis:

i. A new passenger station at HNRFI would be an intermediate station.
ii. Station dwell time would be minimal.
iii. Trains stopping at the station would remain under the control of the driver throughout.
iv. There is a precedent for other intermediate stations elsewhere on the network to be sited on gradients equal to or more severe than 1 in 162.

6.5.7 Ultimately however there is no guarantee that the ORR would be willing to grant a derogation. In the event of a refusal the impact in terms of physical works would necessitate increasing the gradient on the approaches to the station.

6.5.8 This increase in gradient either side of the station would need to be accommodated between the proposed HNRFI east and west end connections as it is assumed these need to remain on the existing vertical alignment of the network at the connection points. This is necessary to avoid an unacceptable increase in the gradient of the link lines within the terminal between the connections and the loading pad which must be on a level plateau.

6.5.9 It is important to note however that if a new station were to be provided in the same location without the need to legislate for the HNRFI connections the gradient “run out” either side of the station would still occur within broadly the same geographic limits. This is necessary to minimise the extent of the gradient re profiling work and the associated disruptive impacts on the Leicester to Nuneaton line.

6.5.10 It is assumed that the station facility would adopt the configuration indicated at Fig 1. This being the case it is unlikely a new west bound platform could be accommodated adjacent to the west bound (Down) platform without compromise to the reservation for future reception lines in HNRFI or the electrification clearances passive provision. For this reason the existing tracks of the Leicester to Nuneaton line would need to be slued to the north west onto a new track formation to create clearance for this platform.

6.5.11 These slues would need to be accommodated in full to the east of the proposed new A47 link road bridge and the proposed east end connection.

6.5.12 Creation of the new formation to accommodate the slued tracks and the proposed east bound (Up) platform would involve significant earthworks and would compromise:

- The Network Rail Boundary line
- The preferred siting of the proposed Midlands Rail Hub Up Loop
- The bridleway, bunding and landscaping works proposed by the applicant in the DCO application.

6.5.13 Additionally new road access and car parking for the station facility would need to be located on the northwest side. This would involve major changes to the red line boundaries contained in the planning submission and have a potentially significant impact on existing agricultural land currently unaffected by the HNRFI proposal. While these issues may not of themselves be "showstoppers" were the station to be considered viable in other respects they are considerations that would need to be taken into account.

6.5.14 Any changes to vertical and horizontal alignment of the existing Leicester to Nuneaton line would need to be achievable without compromise to:

- Existing line speeds for nonstopping freight and passenger services as referenced at 6.4.3
- Signal sighting in both directions

6.5.15 Typical costs for providing similar minimum scope facilities considered under the DfT's *Restore your Railways* programme are set out in Section 9.

7. Needs Case

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 Any station facility exists for two primary purposes:

i. To serve the needs of the local community in providing increased/improved travel options (commuting, business or leisure)
ii. To facilitate travel choice for those wishing to travel into the area.

7.1.2 In assessing the viability of a new station proposal against the above it is also necessary to consider the proximity of the proposed station to other existing stations.

7.1.3 In the case of this proposal these are:

Location	Distance from the Proposed New Station Facility	Travel Opportunities
Nuneaton	6 miles	Direct links to Birmingham and West Midlands Stations, London and stations in the North West and Scotland.
Hinckley	2.5 miles	Direct link to Nuneaton and Birmingham New Street. Onward connectivity as listed above. Direct link to Leicester with connectivity to East Midlands, East of England and South Yorkshire stations.
Narborough	5.5 miles	Ditto
South Wigston	8.5 miles	Ditto.

7.2 Proximity to local communities and likely trip generation

7.2.1 The proposed station would be sited between Hinckley and Narborough and as far as local community outward travel is concerned offers no additional travel opportunities.

7.2.2 Intermediate stations on the Leicester to Nuneaton line are served by one stopping service/hour in each direction terminating at Birmingham New Street and Leicester.

7.2.3 Although *Midlands Rail Hub* plans to increase the number of trains/hour on the West Midlands to Leicester corridor these are primarily aimed at providing competitive end to end journey times between Coventry/Birmingham New Street and Leicester and are not focused on providing additional stopping services to any of the intermediate stations between Nuneaton and Leicester.

7.2.4 Passenger usage of the existing stations at Hinckley and Narborough between 2017 and 2022 is as set out below:

Year	Hinckley (Million)	Narborough (Million)	Commentary
2017/18	0.337	0.392	
2018/19	0.349	0.399	
2019/20	0.350	0.383	
2020/21	0.054	0.057	Covid 19 Pandemic impact
2021/22	0.198	0.173	
2022/23	0.302	0.240	

7.2.5 These figures show steady growth in usage through to 2019/20 for Hinckley albeit with some falling off at Narborough in that year. Both stations enjoy broadly similar levels of use.

7.2.6 There was a significant decrease in passenger numbers resulting from the pandemic in 2020/21 with passenger numbers at both stations remaining comparable.

7.2.7 Post pandemic passenger recovery for both stations remains below pre pandemic levels.

7.2.8 Analysis by Messrs *Steer* for the ORR and published on 20th November 2024 confirmed the following key post pandemic passenger travel issues:

- **Stabilisation after sharp fluctuations**: While rail demand grew by 16% in 2024, this is slower than the recovery seen in 2022 and 2023.
- **Changing travel patterns**: Pre-pandemic, year-on-year growth averaged 3% across flows. Post-pandemic recovery rates have varied widely, driven by market shifts.
- **Journeys made within London drove much of the demand increase last year:** The opening of the Elizabeth Line has contributed substantially to this recovery, with a 21% year-on-year rise in journeys within the London Travelcard Area.
- **Commuter trips plateau**: Shorter trips outside London and the Southeast to London market have levelled off at 80% and 79% of 2019 demand, respectively, underlining the lasting impact of hybrid work practices.

7.2.9 Network Rail along with both East Midlands Railway and Cross Country Trains note the objectives of Policy 5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) Core Strategy adopted in 2009 and extending to 2026 and specifically the Hinckley Core Strategy Transport Review 2007 with respect to the aspiration to provide a station to serve proposed residential developments within the communities of Elmsthorpe, Earl Shilton and Barwell.

7.2.10 It should be noted here that Elmsthorpe was previously served by its own station facility this being constructed in 1863 and serving the community until closure in 1968. Closure was in common with many other intermediate stations on the network that were closed as a result of the Beeching Report - *The Reshaping of British Railways* published in 1963.

7.2.11 Policy 5 was drafted in 2007. This therefore not only precedes the pandemic by 13 years but also the financial crash of 2008.

7.2.12 Given the significant changes to travel demographics identified above these will undoubtedly have an impact on the envisaged demand assumed when preparing the Hinckley Core Strategy Review.

7.2.13 Network Rail has not assessed the likely impact of these changes in the context of this assessment. However, Network Rail has worked closely with the DfT over the last 4 years on the Government led *Restore your Railways* (RyR) programme.

7.2.14 Under that programme and at the behest of several local authorities, several of the proposed schemes were asked to consider similar provision of new stations to serve local communities to that envisaged for Elmsthorpe in the Hinckley Core Strategy Review. Very often the proposed stations under the RyR programme were in close proximity to each other with the objective of serving individual local communities.

7.2.15 Evaluation of the overall viability of schemes with this level of station provision concluded the following:

i. The CAPEX cost/station facility could not be justified in business case terms.
ii. The frequency and interval between stations was such that overall end to end journey times became non-viable.

7.2.16 Ultimately the DfT (who are the final arbiter on new stations on the network) decided on several RyR schemes that the originally proposed level of station provision should be reduced to concentrate on a smaller number of strategically well positioned station facilities.

7.2.17 This position is reinforced by the factors identified at 7.2.7 and 7.2.8 above. These have resulted in a significant worsening of the financial position the UK rail industry faces following the Covid 19 pandemic.

7.2.18 While the specific financial case for provision of the proposed station at Elmsthorpe has not been re tested as part of this assessment the overall view of Network Rail, East Midlands Railways and Cross Country Trains is that the CAPEX cost of providing the proposed station facility would be high (see Section 9) and the impact on ongoing OPEX costs difficult to support based on likely levels of usage and proximity to an existing well developed station facility at Hinckley.

7.3 Employee Travel Opportunities – HNRFI

7.3.1 The Promoter has assessed that employment at HNRFI will be drawn from the following locations:

Leicester
Narborough
Harborough
Hinckley
Surrounding villages
Nuneaton
Coventry
Rugby
Tamworth
NW Leicestershire - Ashby, Coalville etc

SE Derbyshire

7.3.2 In evaluating the viability of commuting to/from HNRFI by rail the following factors have been taken into consideration:

i. Human factors
ii. Accessibility of each catchment area to a rail head.
iii. Shift patterns
iv. Frequency of rail service

7.3.3 Studies into commuter satisfaction have identified the following key considerations when assessing commuter wellbeing:

i. Stress can be induced by congestion, crowding and unpredictability.
ii. Lower levels of satisfaction with commuting by public transport
iii. Satisfaction decreases as the duration of commute increases.
iv. National Travel Survey data for England indicates that the average one-way commute duration is 31 min.
v. Workers in England spend an average of one hour per day commuting and one in seven spend at least two hours commuting.
vi. Commute stress also depends on personal characteristics. Women have been found to experience greater commute stress than men and some studies show that women are more sensitive to stress factors.
vii. Delays were the most important factors contributing to negative experiences of commuters.
viii. Longer duration commutes are associated with worse *mental health* for women but not men.

7.3.4 Material to commuter satisfaction is a need to change either between trains or transport modes as part of the commuting journey. The primary risks from this area are increased journey time, delays and unreliability risks. These mode change impacts have been factored into the assessed commuting times at 7.3.12.

7.3.5 Shift patterns for HNRFI are expected to be:

06:00 – 14:00

14:00 – 22:00

22:00 – 06:00

7.3.6 Were rail to be a viable public transport option for HNRFI, or indeed any other SRFI facility, the impact of the shift change times would be to result in three distinct “peaks” of passenger demand in any 24 hour period with correspondingly little intermediate demand to/from the SRFI.

7.3.7 The impact of this demand on the ability of existing services to safely and effectively manage it would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis but presents a risk of existing services being unable to safely handle peak demand loadings.

7.3.8 For HNRFI the assessment at 7.3.12 suggests that rail does not provide a realistic commute to work choice. To that extent wider issues of commuting by rail in respect of HNRFI are, therefore, immaterial.

7.3.9 However were that to change on train capacity has the potential to be a limiting factor for the following reasons:

i. 1 train/hour in each direction
ii. No realistic prospect of additional trains
iii. A theoretical maximum capacity of 273 on each train (seating capacity 202 +135% maximum overload capacity)

7.3.10 Times for west bound services are assumed to be the current Hinckley departure time – 3 minutes. So, for trains departing Hinckley at 38 minutes past the hour the assumed departure time at the new station would 35 minutes past each hour.

7.3.11 Times for east bound services are assumed to be the Hinckley departure time +3 minutes. So, for trains departing Hinckley at 30 minutes past the hour the assumed departure time at the new station is 33 minutes past each hour.

7.3.12 These assumptions have been used where appropriate in analysis of the viability of commuting by rail to the forecast centres of employment and as set out in the table below:

Employment Catchment	Rail Commute Time Calculation (minutes)	Commentary
Leicester	Wait time at station: 33 Journey time to Leicester: 17 Onward travel within the city: 25 **Total Time: 75**	Direct rail link but the wait time between the end of the shift and the assessed time of departure of the train plus mode shift change (train/bus) and onward travel time add significantly to the overall door to door time. By contrast drive time from the site to Syston (extreme northeast of the city) is c25 minutes. Human factors plus travel time door to door make it unlikely rail would be a preferred choice except possibly from central Leicester
Narborough	Wait time at station: 33 Journey time to Narborough: 5 Onward journey time: 10 **Total Time: 48**	This location is too close to site to be viable as a rail commute when the wait time is factored in. Journey time by road is only 12 minutes.
Harborough	Wait time at station: 33 Journey time to Leicester: 17 Wait time at Leicester: 25 Leicester – Mkt Harborough: 14 Mkt H'borough to Harborough: 16 **Total Time: 105**	This location has no rail head. Nearest station is Market Harborough. Total estimated commute time by rail including waiting time at HNRFI and at Leicester, change of trains at Leicester and mode change at Market Harborough is 105 minutes. Journey time to site by road c39 minutes. Human factors plus travel time door to door therefore make it highly unlikely rail would be a preferred choice for commuting.
Hinckley	Wait time at station: 35 Journey time to Hinckley: 3 Onward travel to home: 10 **Total Time: 48**	This location is too close to site to be viable as a rail commute when wait time is factored in. Journey time by road is only 10 minutes.
Surrounding villages	Not applicable	No rail head at any of them. Easier to cycle or drive.
Nuneaton & Bedworth	Wait time at Station: 35 Journey time to Nuneaton: 6 Onward travel to home: 20 **Total Time: 61**	This location is too close to site to be viable as a rail commute when waiting time is factored in. Journey time by road is only 19 minutes.
Coventry	Wait time at station: 35 Journey time to Coventry*: 85 Onward travel to home: 20 **Total Time: 140**	*Involves a change of train at Nuneaton with extended waiting time. Journey time by road c33 minutes. Human factors plus travel time door to door make it highly unlikely rail would be a preferred choice.

Rugby	Wait time at station: 35 Journey time to Rugby* 55 Onward travel to home: 20 **Total Time: 110**	Involves a change of trains at Nuneaton. *Typical journey time. Journey time by road c32 minutes. Human factors plus travel time door to door make it highly unlikely rail would be a preferred choice.
Tamworth	Wait time at Station: 35 Journey time to Tamworth*: 36 Onward travel to home: 15 **Total Time: 86**	*Involves a change of trains at Nuneaton. Journey time by road c39 minutes. Human factors plus travel time door to door make it unlikely rail would be a preferred choice.
NW Leicestershire	Not applicable	No viable rail head
South Derbyshire	Not applicable	No viable rail head

7.3.13 The majority of SRFI facilities to date rely on dedicated bus links to take employees from the local catchment to the site. These links have the benefit of being far more flexible in terms of pick up and drop off points within the employment catchment areas and, in terms of arrival and departure times from the SRFI, can be infinitely more flexible in terms of timing than rail services that are required to operate within the constraints of the Working Timetable, pathing constraints etc.

7.3.14 Commuting by rail to/from an SRFI is only likely to be viable where the SRFI connects into lines with a frequent passenger service and where the employment catchment areas are also well served. In this context and given the low level of stopping services on the Leicester – Birmingham corridor and the employment catchment areas identified, commuting by rail to/from HNRFI is not considered likely to have any significant demand.

7.3.15 The defined shift patterns identified at 7.2.5 coupled with the current timetable and assessed departure times from the proposed station mean that waiting times for east or west bound services is likely to be extended. The opportunity to change the time of these services is limited by pathing and platforming constraints at both Birmingham New Street and Leicester (see Section 8). These factors further act to make the viability of commuting to and from HNRFI by rail unlikely were a station to be provided.

8. Impact on Network Operations

8.1 Additional stop impacts on the existing stopping service.

8.1.1 The current stopping service operates one the basis of 1 train/hour in each direction between Birmingham New Street and Leicester.

8.1.2 All services are operated by Cross Country Trains using Class 170/6 diesel multiple units operating as three car sets.

8.1.3 Stopping services typically take in the order of 57 minutes westbound and 59 minutes east bound with intermediate stops at Water Orton, Coleshill Parkway, Nuneaton, Hinckley, Narborough and South Wigston.

8.1.4 Typical layover times at Birmingham New Street are in the order of 37 minutes and 27 minutes at Leicester.

8.1.5 Layover time at both Birmingham New Street and Leicester is extended and is likely to be influenced by pathing/network capacity issues between Leicester and Wigston North Junction at the Leicester end of the route and between South Tunnel Junction and Water Orton East Junction at the Birmingham end of the route.

8.1.6 However, in overall a journey time of <1 hour between Leicester and Birmingham New Street allows the existing service to be a “clock face interval” timetable operation and for efficient use of rolling stock and train crew resources to provision this service.

8.1.7 Consultation with Cross Country Trains on the viability of including an additional HNRFI stop into the existing service (see Appendix B) confirmed the following impacts:

i. Cross Country Trains are effectively tied time wise at Leicester. This is related to network capacity between Leicester Station and Wigston North Junction where the stopping service is pathed on the Up and Down Fast lines and therefore needs to integrate with East Midlands Railway LDHS services. This situation could only change if East Midlands Railways were to re cast their LDHS timetable with the introduction of new rolling stock. There are no known plans for East Midlands Railway to do this.
ii. Minimum turn round times at Birmingham New Street. Any change to the current arrival and departure times would involve fundamental changes to the structure of the Working Timetable.
iii. This change would likely involve separating the Leicester stopping services from the Birmingham – Stansted Airport service in terms of rolling stock and traincrew diagramming. This would potentially cost an additional two rolling stock diagrams with significant CAPEX implications and additional traincrew costs with knock on OPEX implications.

For these reasons Cross Country Trains considers that there is little prospect of introducing an additional stop at HNRFI being viable business case wise.

8.2 Knock on impacts for other existing freight and passenger operations on the Nuneaton - Leicester route

8.2.1 The Leicester to Nuneaton line is a mixed traffic route. That is, it supports both freight and passenger operations.

8.2.2 Existing passenger operations are a mix of non stopping passenger services timed at 90mph and stopping services which although capable of achieving 90mph between stops in practice are likely to be limited in terms of actual 90mph running due to the generally short distances between existing intermediate stations.

8.2.3 Inclusion of an additional stop at HNRFI between Hinckley and Narborough would further limit the ability of stopping services to achieve any worthwhile 90mph running between stations.

8.2.4 Class 4 freight traffic, typically intermodal trains operating between the ports at Felixstowe and London Gateway and inland terminals in the West Midlands and the Northwest regularly operate over this route and are timed at 75mph. This is the upper limiting speed for freight trains with long wheelbase bogie wagons rather than the line speed of the route (90mph).

8.2.5 Class 6 freight trains, typically aggregate traffic and the like also operate over the route but are further restricted to a maximum speed of 60mph. This again is due to the type of rolling stock used.

8.2.6 While the overall train movements in any one hour on the line (both directions) is not significant inclusion of an additional stop into the existing stopping passenger service will introduce the risk of causing knock on delay to following services from the following factors:

i. East bound stopping services departing Hinckley will not achieve line speed before needing to decelerate for the station at HNRFI.
ii. West bound services which can currently operate at line speed between Narborough and Hinckley will need to decelerate earlier to stop at HNRFI.
iii. West bound services departing HNRFI will not achieve line speed before needing to decelerate to stop at Hinckley.
iv. Deceleration delay risk to following services (both directions)*
v. Station dwell time delay risk to following trains (both directions)*
vi. Acceleration delay risk to following services (both directions)*

* these risks may have a more pronounced impact on heavier slower moving freight trains (both class 4 and class 6). Additionally, if these delay risks cannot be managed out within the route section Glen Parva Junction to Nuneaton South Junction the risk impacts may escalate to other parts of the network.

8.2.7 It should be appreciated that the delay risk from an additional station stop is different to that incurred by a train working in/out of HNRFI. Here trains will operate at 75mph throughout other than decelerating to work into the terminal under a pre agreed slot and accelerating away from the terminal to line speed.

8.3 Impacts on service growth aspirations on the Nuneaton - Leicester route

8.3.1 The Leicester to Nuneaton line forms part of a key cross-country route linking the key UK container ports of Felixstowe and London Gateway with terminals in the Midlands, North West England, North East England and the Central Scotland Belt.

8.3.2 It also forms a key corridor for passenger services operating between Birmingham and the West Midlands and the East of England.

8.3.3 The DfT have, therefore, endorsed this corridor as a key rail corridor for both freight and passenger growth.

8.3.4 Works to enhance loading gauge capability between Felixstowe and the West Midlands and connections to the West Coast Main Line at Nuneaton were delivered progressively in the period 2000 – 2011.

8.3.5 Further investment is targeted on improving both reliability and network capacity on the route. This is being targeted initially towards clearing rail network bottlenecks and improving capacity between Ipswich and Peterborough and will then be targeted towards work between Peterborough and Nuneaton as funding permits.

8.3.6 Beyond this *Midlands Rail Hub* Have plans to increase the frequency of fast passenger services between Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester as part of a programme of works to improve rail connectivity between the East and West Midlands.

8.3.7 The Treasury require DfT funded rail network enhancements to deliver a positive business case. At minimum a scheme is expected to deliver a BCR of 2 and ideally higher. The higher the BCR the better the chance the scheme will be committed for development providing funding is available to commit to the works.

8.3.8 The works described at 8.3.4 - 8.3.6 fall within the category of being nationally or regionally significant investment projects and as such are expected to return the best possible business case.

8.3.9 Provision of a new station at HNRFI is not only unlikely to generate a positive business case in its own right but has the potential to require additional works to those schemes described at 8.3.4 – 8.3.6 to ameliorate the impact of the additional station stop on the pathing of other services. The increase in capital costs that would be incurred as a result of any additional works may adversely impact the business case of these schemes.

9. Costs

9.1 Order of magnitude costs based on recent similar sized facilities on the network

9.1.1 Development of the RyR schemes has involved considerable work to develop order of magnitude scope and cost for the provision of new station facilities.

9.1.2 The station facility at HNRFI is assumed to be a two platform station facility capable of serving 3 car Class 170 units or their equivalent.

9.1.3 The base scope for the station facility is therefore assumed to be:

i. Two x 100m long platforms
ii. DDA compliant dispersal bridge
iii. Lighting, seating and simple waiting shelters
iv. Customer information screens
v. Car parking and drop off/pick up areas

9.1.4 In the absence of any location specific survey or design work Network Rail considers, based on typical costs for a similarly scoped RyR station, that the base cost to provide a station facility at HNRFI would have a range of between £19.4m and £23.8m. It is therefore reasonable to work on the basis of a mid point cost of £21.6m at this juncture.

9.1.5 This cost includes:

i. Prelims
ii. Overheads and profit
iii. Project management costs
iv. Design costs
v. Land costs
vi. Schedule 4 compensation
vii. Possession Management

9.1.6 Excluded from this cost but likely to be a requirement for the station facility at HNRFI are the following additional works:

i. Track slewing works
ii. Signalling works
iii. More extensive footbridge works
iv. Costs associated with integration with other interfacing projects.
v. Contingency
vi. Inflation

9.1.7 Given the above it is reasonable to assume that a new station facility to serve HNRFI will have a base cost (based on Q1/2024) price levels of between £25m and £30m

10. Conclusions

10.1 Given there is no policy requirement for the applicant to consider provision of a passenger station as part of an SRFI facility no pre NSIP development work was undertaken by Network Rail as part of its assessment of the rail works to the provision of a passenger station facility to serve the needs of HNRFI.

10.2 For established SRFI facilities that have come online over the last 20 years no consideration has previously been given to the need to provide a passenger station for commute to work purposes. Generally sustainable, road based, public transport links have been provided to coincide with shift change patterns to meet the demand of employees travelling to/from identified employment catchment areas without the need to commute by car. This type of operation provides a good, flexible, sustainable public transport option. It is proven and works universally well.

10.3 This assessment has concluded that in principle there is no obstacle to constructing a passenger station to serve HNRFI based on initial consideration of engineering and topographical issues, the likely scope of the station facility and the need for the station facility to integrate fully with both the HNRFI works and the interfacing project to create an eastbound freight recessing loop.

10.3 Equally this assessment has concluded that there is nothing in principle based on engineering and topographical considerations that would prevent construction of a passenger station at this location to serve the needs of the local communities of Elmsthorpe, Earl Shilton and Barwell in line with Policy 5 of the Hinckley Core Strategy Review without the presence of HNRFI assuming a business case could be made and the DfT were to approve provision of the new station facility.

10.4 Network Rail notes the objectives of Policy 5 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) Core Strategy adopted in 2009 and extending to 2026 and specifically the Hinckley Core Strategy Transport Review 2007 with respect to the aspiration to provide a station to serve proposed residential developments within the communities of Elmsthorpe, Earl Shilton and Barwell.

10.5 However, Network Rail, along with East Midlands Railway and Cross Country Trains, considers that in light of significant changes to commuting and retail travel since the pandemic, the consequential and significant downturn impact on the rail industry's OPEX base and in light of recent similar assessment of local station proposals under the Government led *Restore your Railways* programme it is likely to be difficult, under the current constraints the rail industry is working under, to construct a case for a new station facility to serve the needs of these local communities. This is exacerbated by the presence of the existing, well established station facility at Hinckley some 2.5 miles distant which has capability to cater for an increase in passenger numbers.

10.6 Consideration has been given to the ExA's specific question as to whether a new passenger station is justified to meet the commute to work requirements of employees at HNRFI. In assessing the viability of this the assessment has considered the forecast areas of employment and the approximate overall door to door journey time that would accrue to commute between any one of the forecast employment catchment areas and HNRFI by rail. Without exception the analysis indicates that to complete the same journey by a road based transport link would be significantly quicker. This largely results from:

i. Waiting time for trains
ii. Travel time (the rail journey)
iii. Transport mode change timings

10.7 Given that reliability and overall door to door journey times are key to commute to work journeys, rail based commute to work is not considered viable in connection with HNRFI.

10.8 The existing stopping service between Birmingham and Leicester is an hourly clock face pattern service with 1 train/hour in each direction. Turn round times at Leicester and Birmingham New Street are critical and risk being compromised by inclusion of an additional stop at HNRFI. The impact of this would require potentially major adjustments to the working timetable with knock on impacts on other operators, additional rolling stock and additional traincrew. It is unlikely that the additional CAPEX or OPEX costs would be supported by Treasury in an environment where the rail industry is under significant pressure to reduce its cost base.

10.9 Commute to work travel associated with HNRFI would result in three separate peak travel demands within any 24 hour window and correspondingly little or no demand at any other time. Existing stopping services that this demand would feed into (assuming at some point in future commute to work by rail demand at HNRFI were to become manifest) provides a seating capacity of 202 seats/train or a maximum capacity/train of 273 assuming 135% overcrowding. From this the one east bound and one west bound train/hour each shift change would feed into provide a maximum overall seating capacity of 404 seat or 546 maximum combined capacity.

10.10 Introduction of an additional stop into the hourly Birmingham New Street to Leicester stopping service would potentially impact the pathing of other freight and passenger services operating on the Nuneaton to Leicester line. These impacts have not been assessed in detail but would need to be contained as far as possible between Nuneaton and Glen Parva Junction to avoid the impacts affecting operators on other routes.

10.11 The Nuneaton to Leicester line forms part of a key cross country freight and passenger route with future growth forecast in both sectors. The provision of an additional stop into the hourly Birmingham New Street to Leicester stopping service would potentially necessitate additional works to allow this forecast growth to be successfully handled on the route with consequential risks to the business case of those schemes.

10.12 In overall Network Rail concludes that there is insufficient demand for commute to work by rail to justify provision of a new HNRFI passenger station. While Network Rail wholeheartedly supports the objective of environmentally sustainable commute to work travel it does not subscribe to the view that rail is always best placed to meet these demands.

10.13 Rather, it takes the view that each case should be assessed objectively on its own merits. In this respect, and has been the case with every other SRFI nationally over the last 20 years, Network Rail considers that a road based public transport system in this case provides:

i. Faster end to end journey times.
ii. Greater flexibility to serve the employment catchment areas HNRFI will draw from.
iii. Avoidance/minimised mode changes and associated waiting time delays

Appendix A: East Midlands Railway Response on the Viability of the station Proposal

Hi Geoff,

EMR's position on this is limited to being the assumed SFO of any new Station at Elmsthorpe as we do not operate the train services that run along the route between Leicester and Birmingham. If there is no public support for an additional station and residents of Elmsthorpe are happy with travelling to Narborough or Hinckley, I think there is no essential need for what would be expensive in terms of capital investment and create additional long term Opex cost for NR and EMR when we are working to reduce the net subsidy of the railway. I cannot speak for Cross Country but I doubt that any revenue modelling for a new station at Elmsthorpe, a village with a population of less than 1000 and only limited employment opportunities created via the freight interchange would have a positive business case.

Operationally amended timings for services at Leicester and Birmingham New St may also be a risk EMR and XC performance and therefore this would not be supported.

Duncan

Duncan Cale

Infrastructure Interface and Partnership Manager

Operational Planning and Transformation

Operations

Appendix B: Cross Country Trains Response on the Viability of the station Proposal

Hi Geoff,

A few initial thoughts from across various parties within XC:

The location is close to two existing stations and the catchment area isn't particularly heavily populated. A positive business case might be difficult, especially if we can't make the timetable work with additional calls which would require some work.

We are effectively tied at the Leicester end and we are on minimum turn round times at the Birmingham end. Changing the Birmingham times (departing earlier than xx52 and arriving later than xx14) will have to align with a fundamental change to the timetable structure.

This would probably align with separating the Leicester stoppers from the Stansted services in diagrams, and would potentially cost two additional rolling stock diagrams and will have significant train crew impacts. Would be a surprise if this created a positive business case with the extra leasing and resource costs.

The only potential opportunity would be if EMR recast their timetable significantly with the advent of their new rolling stock but this is unknown at this point.

Kind regards,

Nick Allen

Regional Performance Manager