

To the Secretary of State for Transport

Interested Party Reference no 20040062

Dear Secretary of State

Application by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Ltd seeking Development Consent for the proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange Project

As a County and Borough Councillor with over 50 years involvement I have closely followed this project from the outset and have been engaged in all the consultation exercises and hearings. The concept of transference of freight from road to rail is to be applauded and is one I have supported as a life-long rail campaigner however there is no guarantee that the promised rail connection will ever materialise as confirmed by the expert witness for the applicant at the final hearing.

It is worthy of note that there is no immediate prospect of the rail improvements at Leicester or at Nuneaton which would be essential for the effective operation of this site. What is promised is approximately 8000 employee cars using the site every day and about 5000 HGV movements in and the same number out. The impact of these movements on the strategic road network and the local road network has to be the major concern.

I have had these concerns from the outset and I am therefore fully in support of the recommendations of the Planning Inspector.

With reference to the specific questions raised by the Secretary of State

M69 Junction 2

The Secretary of State invites comments from the Applicant to address the safety concerns raised in respect of this junction

I have not seen any evidence that agreement has been reached with National Highways over the obvious risk of traffic backing on to the motorway as a result of the sheer overloading of this junction. It is difficult to envisage how this junction can operate safely when the bulk of employee cars and HGVs will use this main access and egress facility. Some traffic

will of course use the new relief road but the road will also be used in the opposite direction by drivers seeking to avoid congestion elsewhere.

M1 Junction 21

The Secretary of State invites comments from the Applicant on the concerns raised by the relevant highways authorities on the lack of adequate modelling and safety concerns at this junction; The Secretary of State invites the Applicant to submit any further evidence in light of these concerns and in particular requests that it provides NH with the signal specification used in its M7 J87 Modelling Note".

I am not aware of any appropriate evidence being submitted or any agreement having been reached. In practice, of course, queues into Leicester on the M69 from the Hinckley direction are a twice daily occurrence and navigating the roundabout under the M1 is fraught with danger. The situation deteriorates whenever an accident occurs. Despite the constant pressure by all involved to bring about improvements to Junction 21 there are no plans to implement any scheme and none is offered by the applicant in this submission.

With 8000 employee cars and the HGV movements already mentioned congestion can only get worse between M69 Junction 2 and M1 Junction 21. The proposed relief road will not prove an adequate solution to northbound traffic as there is no obvious route around the south of Leicester.

Sapcote Village

The Secretary of State invites comments from the Applicant on the ExA's conclusion on the increased safety risk at Sapcote and also invites the Applicant to submit any further evidence in light of these concerns;

The dangers to pedestrians in the village have long been of concern and these proposals will only add to the problem. Simply widening pavements where there is room and moving a bus stop does not answer the problem of when two HGVs meet in the centre.

HGV Route Management Plan and Strategy (HGVRP)

The Secretary of State also invites comments on the ExA's suggested amendments to the HGVRP

The effectiveness of the imposition of fines for drivers using prohibited routes will depend on the adequacy of any implementation. The strategic route network is interrupted on an all too regular basis and prohibited routes are then opened up to all traffic. Bans imposed by operators using the HNRFI will not apply to all other road users.

It will not be possible to fully mitigate the impact to tranquility and landscape issues raised by the ExA as is evident from the massive growth of warehousing which has taken place over recent years.

With reference to the main questions raised by the Secretary of State and bearing in mind the inadequate responses by the applicant I urge that planning consent is refused.

Yours faithfully

David Bill MBE

County Councillor, Leicestershire

