



6 February 2025

Secretary of State for Transport  
Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State

**APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED HINCKLEY STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER**

**NETWORK RAIL CONSULTATION RESPONSE AS AN INTERESTED PARTY**

Further to the Secretary of State's invitation to Interested Parties to comment on the further submissions made by the Applicant for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) Development Consent Order, I am writing on behalf of the Network Rail Freight Team in the light of the rail freight growth target announced by Government in December 2023.

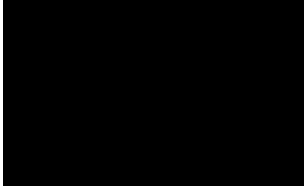
The national research and call for evidence previously undertaken by the GBRTT Freight Team that helped inform the Government rail freight growth target served to highlight that achieving sustainable growth of rail freight required maximising the use of private sector investment in developing rail freight terminals (including Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges – SRFI's) whilst focusing potentially scarce public sector funding on appropriate improvements to the freight capacity and capability of the rail network. In combination these established and complimentary private and public investment areas have delivered growth in modal shift to rail in recent decades.

Growing rail freight demands expansion in rail freight terminal capacity; that is both in the number and market relevant location of privately funded inland intermodal terminals (SRFI's such as HNRFI). Without this private investment in the very 'stations' that rail freight traffic requires, rail freight cannot grow to the level it should, and rail freight's ability to help decarbonise the economy will be significantly restricted.

Network Rail commits considerable resources to enable the rail connectivity of those SRFI developments that have a proven strategic network and market fit; such work being funded by scheme promoters. Our engagement with the HNRFI project to date is on the basis that it has such network and market fit, that it will play a role in supporting rail freight growth and in the expectation that its rate of modal shift realisation will match that of other recently developed facilities nationwide.

With a national focus on stimulating economic growth and a requirement for delivery of SRFI's that enable growth in modal shift toward Net Zero, HNRFI represents an opportunity to leverage the opportunity of private investment. There is an understood need for this SRFI and the applicant has engaged with Network Rail on the requisite network mitigations such as level crossings upgrades, we therefore hope for a positive determination for HNRFI.

Yours sincerely



**Guy Bates**  
**Head of Freight Development**

