

Meeting note

Project name	Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
File reference	TR050007
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	28 June 2022
Meeting with	Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited (the Applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams meeting
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project update

The Applicant shared with the Inspectorate a copy of the Location plan, showing the red line boundary of the proposal and the local authority borders. This map was used during the consultation period, which closed on 8 April 2022. The map showed the relationship between the development and the M69 motorway. Works proposed to the M69 comprise the reconfiguration of the existing roundabout and its approach and exit lanes, the addition of a southbound slip road for traffic joining the M69 motorway and the addition of a northbound slip road for traffic leaving the M69 motorway at junction 2. In addition an A47 Link Road is proposed from the modified M69 junction 2 to the B4668/A47 Leicester Road with a new bridge over the railway providing vehicular access to the proposed HNRFI from the strategic highway network.

The main part of the site is located in Blaby district with a small area located in Hinckley and Bosworth district; both of which are inside Leicestershire County Council (LCC). Outside of the site, the Applicant has identified several highways works around the M69 junction 2; such as local junctions, level crossings and slip roads that will form part of the application. Modifications to several off-site junctions and amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders on the local road network are also proposed. Off-site railway infrastructure including signals, signage and electricity connections have also been identified as part of the proposals.

The Applicant presented to the Inspectorate a version of its Illustrative Masterplan, which has evolved since the one presented during non-statutory consultation in 2018-2019; and noted the main changes that have happened since. There has been a reduction to the west of the site, which is now open space and adjacent to the proposed A47 link road. Another change is the removal of the Eastern

Villages bypass, east of the M69, which after traffic modelling from LCC, confirmed that the bypass wouldn't be required.

Statutory consultation

Statutory consultation took place between January and April 2022.

Discussions about the remodelling of the bypass are still ongoing with the transport working group. This group consists of LCC and National Highways (NH) as well as other adjoining highway authorities. The main reason for the removal of the bypass is that, after studying select link analyses around the Eastern villages, it was concluded that 65%-70% of the destination trips through the Eastern Villages were coming from and travelling to the villages of Sapcote and Stoney Stanton, therefore removing the need for a bypass. The Applicant confirmed that the decision was taken in Q3 2021, meaning that this change informed their statutory consultation. The Inspectorate queried the extent of agreement in the transport working group towards this decision. The Applicant confirmed that LCC have verbally confirmed their position and it is waiting for a formal sign off. The Applicant clarified that the main concern arising from the consultation for locals was the impact of traffic on villages.

The Inspectorate asked how many Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) would be included as part of this application. The Applicant confirmed that the proposed development includes one NSIP in the form of a strategic rail freight interchange. The Applicant also re-assured that it will be sharing a paper with the Inspectorate explaining its justification behind this, and why the works on Junction 2 of the M69 motorway do not constitute an NSIP.

The Applicant summarised the main issues arising from the statutory consultation stage:

- The main topic of discussion was impact on local traffic and associated air quality and noise concerns.
- Locals questioned the need for a Rail Freight Interchange facility and suggested different locations.
- Concerns were raised around exacerbating existing congestion at the Narborough level crossing.
- Issues regarding employment and the migration of workers into the area. The Applicant responded by including a precise analysis of employment in the area as part of its Preliminary Environmental Inflation Report (PEIR).
- Queries around climate change.

The Applicant also outlined some positive feedback it had received during the statutory consultation including support for investment and employment and support for the southern slip roads.

The Applicant noted two local action groups; Save Burbage Common and Elmesthorpe Stands Together Action Group.

Submission and draft document submission

The Applicant confirmed that it aims to submit its DCO application at the end of November 2022, ensuring that the 28 days acceptance period falls before the Christmas break. The Applicant

confirmed that if they were unable to meet the November submission date, they would submit in early January 2023.

The Applicant explained that it would aim to submit draft documents at the beginning of September 2022. The Inspectorate explained that the review of draft documents can take up to 6 weeks. Some of the documents that could be reviewed include the draft DCO, explanatory memorandum, statement of reasons, consultation report, funding statement, Habitat Regulations No Significant Effects Report, and some chapters of the Environmental Statement (ES) including project description, alternatives and summary of the scope changes.

The Inspectorate noted that the figures in paragraphs 3.80 and 3.69 of the planning statement in their consultation information, regarding climate change and removal of vehicles from the road may contradict each other. The Applicant ensured that it would look back at the document to make the appropriate clarifications.

Post consultation

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate about the changes being actioned as part of the feedback received during the statutory consultation period including adding a buffer area between the southwest edge of the site and the ancient woodland. The Applicant is working closely with Natural England (NE) which is seeking to have the buffer extended by 10 meters. The landscape strategy at the freight interchange is currently being reviewed by the Applicant, to determine whether the current strategy is appropriate or whether there is a need to acquire additional land. The Applicant confirmed that the Illustrative Masterplan identifies how four of the nine units could be directly rail connected.

A secondary access for the rail port is being proposed, as an alternative to bringing building materials through the A47 link road. Building heights and the visual impacts of facades are being reviewed. The Inspectorate asked if these changes would involve a further round of consultation. The Applicant confirmed that since all of the changes being considered are in response to consultation, it is considered that further consultation would only be necessary if more land needed to be acquired in respect of the landscaping strip to the north of the site. However, the Applicant confirmed that there is currently no new land interest but if needed, it will liaise with the appropriate landowners directly.

The Inspectorate queried the existence of common rights of ways or common land within the site boundary. The Applicant confirmed that there is minimal common land and that most of it is included to the west of the site and it forms part of the green space. As such this would not entail a loss of common land as the aim is to blend the development boundary to the green spaces. The Applicant highlighted that there is a drainage ditch in the green space but cannot confirm whether it forms part of the common space. On a precautionary basis, it may be included as part of the DCO.

The Applicant confirmed that there are 3 Gypsy and Traveler sites adjacent to the site, two to the south, adjacent to the M69 and one off the B4668. These communities were notified through the newsletter and a presentation was made for the residents. Additionally, the Applicant has considered

the noise and light impact on these sites and plans to introduce noise mitigation methods into the proposal.

The Applicant confirmed that there are no designated heritage assets within the order limits but that there are 13 scheduled monuments within a 5km radius. A further study will be included in the ES.

Local authority liaison

The Inspectorate queried whether there have been any Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) being progressed with Local Planning Authorities (LPA). The Applicant confirmed that no SoCG have been agreed but that it is progressing towards confirming with some statutory bodies, such as Network Rail. The Applicant is aiming to have several draft SoCG ready for submission from NH, Environmental Agency, LCC and NE.

Compulsory Acquisition

The Applicant confirmed that it will be seeking Compulsory Acquisition powers (CA). Although the Applicant has entered into voluntary agreements to acquire the vast majority of the site, CA will be used in those cases where agreements have not been achieved with landowners.

AOB

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate will organize an update meeting prior to the submission of draft documents.
- The Inspectorate will send the Case Team's contact details for correspondence.