



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
<b>File reference</b>	TR050008
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	20 July 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

### ***General Project Update***

Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited (the 'Applicant') outlined progress since the last meeting with the Inspectorate including land referencing, surveys and development of the highways mitigation strategy.

The Applicant explained that its first round of non-statutory consultation closed on 04 July 2022. The Applicant explained that it will use Summer and Autumn 2022 to further refine the scheme, progress traffic modelling and continue engagement with statutory bodies and others.

The Applicant explained that due to the timeframes associated with the highways modelling, the programme for the application has changed and it now anticipates commencing statutory consultation in February or March 2023. The Applicant explained that it also anticipates submitting a suite of draft application documents for feedback from the Inspectorate in February or March 2023. It was agreed that the timing of submitting draft documents to the Inspectorate, and which documents should be submitted, would be discussed at the next meeting. The Applicant anticipates a Development Consent Order application to be submitted in June 2023.

### ***Outline of consultation responses/themes***

The Applicant provided an overview of the non-statutory consultation responses and arising themes. Five in-person exhibitions were held within the eight-week consultation period. The Applicant explained that the events were well-attended, and allowed people to gain an understanding of the scheme. The Applicant explained that it is currently reviewing comments and emails received from the consultation, with a view to providing a summary report on the key issues to be published on the Applicant's website, in accordance with its commitment in the Statement of Community Consultation. The Applicant added that transport was the biggest theme. The impact on the local road network was often referred to and landscape and visual effects, and noise, were referred to a lesser extent. The responses were wide ranging and included some requests to consider the inclusion of a passenger rail station within the development or not to prejudice its future provision.

The Inspectorate queried how the outcomes of the non-statutory consultation were likely to shape the scheme design. The Applicant explained that the scheme has not yet reached scheme fix and all responses are being considered and adjustments will be made to the scheme where felt appropriate.

### ***Engagement with local authorities/PPA***

The Applicant stated that it continues to engage with the Local Planning Authority and County Authority. It has had briefings with its members and key officers on an ongoing basis.

The Inspectorate asked about the nature of engagement with Oxfordshire County Council. The Applicant confirmed that a Planning Performance Agreement was in place with the County Council as well as Cherwell District Council, to help with resourcing and engagement. The Applicant added that a transport working group including National Highways and County Highway Authority attendees had been established and has been meeting for the past 15 months.

The Applicant noted direct communication with other specialist functions of the Councils, including, for example, meetings with archaeologists.

The Applicant stated that it had fortnightly meetings with Network Rail.

The Inspectorate queried whether the transport modelling process had been agreed with the council. The Applicant explained that the approach to traffic modelling and the methodology used was agreed by the transport working group.

### ***Offsite highway junctions – potential for new local authority – SoCC implications?***

The Applicant noted that, as a potential impact of traffic modelling, there may be a need for additional highway mitigation on junctions within the administrative boundary of West Northamptonshire Council. The Applicant queried whether a new Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) would need to be agreed including West Northamptonshire Council depending on the results from the traffic modelling. The Applicant agreed to inform the Inspectorate once the modelling was complete, and the Inspectorate agreed to look into whether highway mitigation in Northamptonshire would require a new SoCC to be agreed.

## ***Highway works***

The Inspectorate explained that it could not confirm whether the Applicant's approach to the identification of highway NSIPs in its highway NSIP paper provided in February 2022 is correct, but advised the Applicant to clearly explain the justification within the Planning Statement and to explain how they have calculated the area of each work and which works have been included in these areas (for example site compounds).

## ***Current themes***

The Applicant asked whether the Inspectorate could share any new advice or themes. The Inspectorate stressed the importance of frequent communication with the Inspectorate with regards to programme updates. The Applicant referred to the National Networks National Policy Statement (NN NPS) and the Future of Freight document published by the Department for Transport recently. The Inspectorate indicated it would look into the timing of the review of the NN NPS and advise the Applicant if they became aware of any likely timing.

## ***Confirmation of digital submission only***

The Applicant asked for confirmation regarding submission of digital copies of application documents. The Inspectorate advised that electronic submission was acceptable and further advised that the Examining Authority may request hard copies of some documents in due course.

## ***AOB***

The Applicant asked if it was expected to provide an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) with the Application. The Inspectorate confirmed that EqIA are not expected as a matter of course but noted that the Applicant should be aware of its duties in respect of persons with protected characteristics.

## ***Specific decisions/ follow-up required?***

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant and the Inspectorate to schedule a meeting during October-November 2022.
- The Inspectorate to update the National Infrastructure webpage with the new expected submission date of Q2 2023.
- The Inspectorate to comment on whether the highway mitigation strategy would mean a new SoCC would need to be agreed.
- The Inspectorate to comment on whether the Applicant needs to provide an EqIA.
- The Inspectorate to look into the timing of any review of the NN NPS

