

National Infrastructure Planning
The Planning Inspectorate
c/o Quadient
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

My Ref: RH006 / TW

Your Ref: TR050005-001571

Date: 25 September 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

West Midlands Interchange - Application Statement for Proposed Non-Material Change

Thank you for consulting Staffordshire County Council on the proposed non-material change application for West Midlands Interchange (WMI). My Officer's detailed technical response to the application are enclosed and this covering letter should be read alongside it and form part of the Council's representation.

Whilst the WMI has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to Staffordshire, I am mindful of the local community concerns raised at the time of the initial examination of WMI in relation to the rationale for the scheme and associated assurances over the delivery of critical infrastructure. In summary, the applicant advocated that there was a strong need for new rail freight capacity and this was the only site suitable in the sub-region and therefore met the exceptional case for development on land covered by the greenbelt policy designation.

Furthermore, I understand that the delivery of the Rail Freight Terminal is essential for the development to comply with the Development Consent Order (DCO) and the National Policy Statement under which it was granted, with the A5/A449 link road being a key part of the highway mitigation for the development.

Even though this is a proposed non-material change amendment, the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State need to ensure that the scheme remains as a genuine rail freight interchange and not at undue risk of being diluted to a road-based warehousing/logistics type development. The delivery of the Rail Freight Terminal and A449/A5 Link Road needs to be carefully conditioned in the DCO to ensure they come forward at the appropriate time.

I understand that the proposed change to the DCO is largely being brought about by changing economic circumstances and investment decisions that alter the phasing for the delivery of the site. It is hoped that the site progresses as planned and the upper limit floor space limit is the trigger that defines when the terminal and link road are actually constructed, without needing to rely on the secondary time-based trigger.

However, I must emphasise that I will not support the rail terminal or link road being delayed indefinitely. I see the 186,000sqm floorspace trigger as being the upper limit on development ahead of the Rail Terminal and A449/A5 link road being completed and will ask my Officer's to ensure this limit is enforced.

I appreciate that the proposed DCO as amended will still include constraints on build out until infrastructure is provided but it would be beneficial to seek assurances on a more binding delivery programme.

Yours faithfully


Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills
Councillor for Burntwood South

Enc: Technical aspects of the Councils representation.