



Meeting note

Project name	Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange
File reference	TR050007
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate (the inspectorate)
Date	9 March 2021
Meeting with	Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited (the Applicant) and the following Local Authorities: Leicestershire County Council, Blaby District Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Venue	Microsoft Teams meeting
Meeting objectives	Project update by Applicant and introduction of the process to Local Authorities
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 Outline

The Applicant explained that the proposed development required various off-site infrastructure works which involve a wider number of local authorities being involved in the process as Host Authorities. The proposed development would contain a rail port which would receive freight in the Midlands by rail from a number of major the ports. The site would contain logistics buildings and associated freight handling facilities. The need for the scheme has been outlined in the National Policy Statements (NPS) for national networks.

The site location is North-East of Hinckley. On the West side lies the Leicester to Hinckley and Nuneaton line and on the East lies the M69 with junction 2 of the M69 at the corner of the site.

The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should ensure, when using pre-existing data in the Environmental Statement, that it remains current and relevant to the project.

Consultation

The Applicant advised that non-statutory consultation had taken place between October and December 2018 to introduce the concept of the project. This led the Applicant to

decide further consideration should be given to the effects of the scheme on traffic. A further non statutory consultation was undertaken between July and September 2019 concerning off-site highways options, including a link westward from the main SRFI site to the A47, and two options for an eastern villages bypass - one around Stoney Stanton and the other around Sapcote.

Forty-thousand consultation letters were sent by the Applicant for both of the non-statutory consultations. Additional consultation measures included placing adverts on social media where the content reached more than 30,000 on each occasion. A community information telephone line had also been established to discuss the project.

Local Authority Engagement

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council advised that little engagement had occurred with the Applicant while technical surveys had been taking place.

Leicestershire County Council had written to the Inspectorate with concerns over a lack of information on the program and the impact on the Local Authorities (LA) ability to undertake its statutory responsibility particularly around highways. The Inspectorate advised these concerns should be raised directly with the Applicant. During the pre-application stage the Inspectorate has limited statutory power beyond offering advice.

A working group had been created by the LAs to engage and discuss the proposed development. The Inspectorate advised that should they decide to join up on any matters, then this may help in them sharing workloads and produce joint Local Impact reports if the application is accepted for examination.

The Applicant informed that a transport working group had been set up to create a forum to discuss the transport issues associated with the project and the LAs are members of this. The Applicant advised that the major challenge at this stage of the project is ensuring that the transport modelling is correct.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure discussions taking place are being had with all the correct members of each of the LAs. The Applicant was further advised to consider having an appropriate plan of engagement in place with the LAs so it is clear what engagement is required and to allow for appropriate resourcing.

The LAs raised concerns about the level of support they are likely to receive from the Applicant going forward. The Applicant advised that funds had been committed to Blaby District Council for historic work that had been undertaken and that they will work with the LAs to discuss support requirements and any potential Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The Inspectorate advised that support for community groups and parish councils may also be sought from Planning Aid.

Project Programme

The Applicant anticipated a Q4 2021 submission for its Development and Consent Order (DCO) application. It advised that there had been some changes to the project programme due to the additional traffic modelling which had taken place and allowing for this to be included in the consultation.

The Applicant advised its statutory consultation would take place in mid-June and run for a period of 6 weeks. The Inspectorate informed the Applicant that the temporary regulations regarding changes to certain publicity requirements that were published last year have now been made permanent and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had released guidance¹ regarding this. The Applicant was also encouraged to look at projects that have recently come in and that are expected to come in between now and the DCO submission to help inform its approach. The Inspectorate advised that Advice Note 14² had recently been updated and was a useful resource for both the Applicant and LAs.

The Applicant stated it is publishing an updated statement of community consultation (SOCC) and advised a Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) had also been prepared and will form part of the statutory consultation.

The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant that part of the 28 day acceptance period requires LAs to provide its Adequacy of Consultation Response (AoCR) and therefore it may be helpful to share any timings of the DCO application with the LAs.

The Applicant was further advised that if it intends to submit draft documents for the Inspectorate to review, this would need to be factored into its proposed programme for the project.

The PA2008 process

The Inspectorate advised the LAs on their responsibilities for each of the stages of the process and explained how they play a vital role throughout. During the pre-application stage the LAs and Applicant were encouraged to create Statements of Common Ground (SOCC) including any areas where common ground has not been reached.

The Inspectorate advised the LAs that their AoCR is a key criteria when assessing whether a DCO application should be accepted for examination. The Inspectorate advised that a number of examples can be found on the National Infrastructure (NI) website and guidance is also set out in Advice Note One³. The LAs were advised to consider what this means for their authority as if it is something that requires approval from members, they are advised to ensure that a scheme of delegation is set up as the 28 day acceptance period is statutory.

The Inspectorate advised that prior to the start of any Examination, a draft timetable is produced. This provides deadlines for when submissions are required and the dates when any potential hearings will be held.

The NI website provides a range of resources for the process including advice notes⁴, guidance documents⁵ and examples from previous applications.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-procedural-requirements-for-major-infrastructure-projects>

² <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-fourteen-compiling-the-consultation-report/>

³ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-1v2.pdf>

⁴ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>

⁵ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/guidance/>

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant to share the response sent to Leicestershire County Council
- The Inspectorate to arrange a further meeting with the LAs to discuss the process in more detail

