



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 8, Speaker 13, Speaker 3, Speaker 1, Speaker 12, Speaker 2, Speaker 10, Speaker 15, Speaker 7, Speaker 9, Speaker 5, Speaker 14, Speaker 16, Speaker 4, Speaker 11, Speaker 6

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you. The time is now quarter to four. Let's resume this hearing, if I could, please. And I think probably I'm passing straight over to the applicant to take us through the next parts.

Speaker 2

Thank you, sir. In terms of where we are going to move to next, I'm going to ask mr. Tom Kilmester, who is the senior development director at Mount Park, to address Mount Park's commitment to delivery of this development, and also the question of market demand in the area that mr. Holmes has already spoken to, and also an issue that you raise in the agenda is the question of whether or not there is any dialogue with potential users or occupiers. He is going to speak to that issue, and then mr. Alex Kirk, who is the commercial director at GB Rail Freight, is going to speak to effectively the market for rail freight in the UK. So I'll just pass over to them now. Thank you, sir.

Speaker 3

Afternoon, sir. mr. Tom Kilmester, Senior Director of Mount Park, speaking on behalf of the applicant. The examining authority will be aware that Oxus Refi is not a speculative landholding exercise. It represents one of the most significant strategic projects within Mount Park's UK business, and is a flagship investment for the company and our investors. Sorry, is that better?

Speaker 1

Just we can hear you, but it's just for the recording, really. But yeah, if you could, would you like me to start again? Just just in case. Yeah, then we've got it all. Thank you. Okay,

Speaker 3

brilliant. The examining authority will be aware that Oxyrify is not a speculative landholding exercise. It represents one of the most significant strategic projects within Mount Parks UK business, and is a flagship investment for the company and our investors. From the outset, we have approached Oxfordify with a very clear objective, and that's to bring forward a nationally significant rail-served logistics development that addresses both current and future deficiencies in the logistics infrastructure along the M40 and the wider South East markets. Our commitment to delivery is unequivocal. Significant capital and resource has already been invested over a long period, as has been referred to earlier, in site assembly, design, promotion to get to where we are today. This is not a scheme that has been

promoted in the hope that demand may emerge in the future. It is promoted because demand already exists today, and it's expected to continue to strengthen. The level of investment to date is over 25 million, and demonstrates our confidence in the project and our clear commitment to the commercial intention for this scheme, and that is to implement the consent if and hopefully when it is granted, we've already discussed the constituent part. Yeah, we've already discussed the constituent parts of the of the scheme, and we will come on to the the programme in in more detail. But certainly, following a positive consent, initial works are expected to commence in 2028, following discharge of relevant conditions, and then first occupation of buildings from early 2031. The site's location is fundamental. It is a fundamental component for our commitment and conviction of this scheme. The M40 is a 90-mile strategic route linking London to Birmingham, the UK's two largest cities, which typically serve as a less congested and much more reliable logistics transport link when compared with the the M1. Oxford Surface is located at its midpoint between junctions nine and 10, as we've talked through earlier, and with the A 43 and the A 34 giving the ability of the east west connections alongside this, and provides an opportunity to combine excellent highways access with the rail freight capacity. In terms of catchment and accessibility, 92% of the UK's population is accessible within a four and a half hour HGV drive time of the site, with 17 million people within 90 minutes. This makes Oxus RFI one of the most accessible locations in the country for different. We often talk about the Midlands Golden Triangle being the epicentre for logistics, given its ability to reach 90% of the market within a four and a half hour drive time, and this is better than that. The market analysis report and the rail report are set out in documents seven one and seven two. That is APP 311 and APP 312 respectively, with GB rail rates supporting statement in seven point. which is APP313, warehousing has become critical to UK infrastructure in meeting modern consumer demands. Whilst demand for large-scale distribution space continues to grow. The availability of sites capable of delivering buildings of the scale required by modern occupiers is becoming increasingly constrained. I point to national availability of what we deem to be XXL units- that's units above half a million square foot currently stands at approximately six months' supply against the the annual take up figures. This is a critically low level. This is even more stark for the the M40 corridor, which currently has a 0% vacancy of units over 300,000 square foot, 30,000 square metres. So you can apply it to to the numbers that have been mentioned beforehand. But whilst other motorways are now very well provided for, particularly the the m1 that mr. Norstrand referred to earlier, many operators are recognising a significant gap along the the M40 in their local logistics network, and this and this is because there is just simply no available stock of scale that's either existing, consented, or coming forward that is that's allocated, and that modern logistics operators require to deliver on their operations. Importantly, this deficiency is even more pronounced in relation to rail-served logistics facilities. The government's freight and decarbonation objectives require a significant increase in the movement of freight by rail, and that objective cannot be achieved without a corresponding supply of rail-served warehouse capacity. Occupiers cannot transfer rail transfer freight from road to rail, or vice versa, unless suitably located and configured rail freight interchanges exist.

Speaker 3

There are relatively few opportunities nationally to deliver new strategic rail freight interchanges of a meaningful scale. And as Ben Holmes has alluded to and referenced earlier, there are fewer still that are capable of serving Oxfordshire, Thames Valley, M40, and the wider southeast markets. Mount Parker, one of Europe's leading logistics developers, and based on our experience, there is occupied demand for high-quality logistics space, and that is continuing. And as it continues, it's also evolved towards them wanting larger facilities in order that they can maintain greater operational efficiencies and also stronger sustainability credentials to accommodate their modern consumer demands. Occupiers are increasingly seeking locations that can support modal shift, reduce transport time and cost, and also improve supply chain resilience. Furthermore, many occupiers also recognise the M40 as a significant gap in their UK logistics network coverage. Oxys RFI is perfectly suited to meet the demand and fill the gap of a market area that currently has no rail freight option. Talking to the the demand point more specifically, we believe that there is currently 10 to 12 million square foot of known

XXL requirements that would be interested in Oxsorify if it was available, and they are at sort of different. They need that space more immediately. Or over a course of time, and clearly at the moment we're in a position where the site isn't consented. But what we do have, and what I can talk to, is the substantive live conversations that we have ongoing already with with a handful of occupiers. In fact, there's four occupiers that we're speaking to, which would accommodate approximately, or come to approximately two and a half million square foot of build suit warehouse space that would be located at Ox SRFI, and this is at a stage where there is still the uncertainty of planning. So I think that's a real, a real key key point to take away there. I can't disclose for commercial sensitivities the nature of who they are or who they are, but what I can say is that they are global occupiers who are existing users of rail and users who see rail as a key area for their expansion of their logistics networks. The other point that has been asked is is around whether this site Oxustrafi will serve a national or a regional demand, and the answer to that is both, as part of the design, which will run through or has been run through, and we'll come on to in more detail. The parameters are such that it allows for flexibility to accommodate to the needs of of both types of operators, and we have we have seen, and it's evidenced on on other schemes at Northampton Gateway, East Midlands Gateway, Durfd, that they have attracted both national and regional requirements.

Speaker 2

Thank you very much, mr.

Speaker 3

So I was just going to finish on one final thing.

Speaker 2

I've stolen your thunder.

Speaker 3

confidence and suitability of this site as a an SRFI isn't just with us; it's also shared by GB Ralph Rate, and I'm at that point hand over to to Alex, who'll pick up.

Speaker 1

Thank you very much, mr. Collister. So yes, that's the market position. What I was proposing to do was have mr. Kirk speak to the rail freight market position and then invite questions. But if you want to jump in now, there is, if that's all right, because it may not be rail freight related. It was just some of the points that you made. If I could, two questions really. One, you refer to 4.5 hours. If you could explain that in a little bit more detail, because I don't quite understand how that works. In the second one, if you want me to give you all my questions, you also refer to sort of no vacancies over 30,000 square feet, and by that you meant nothing built, nothing constructed, nothing allocated. I just want to know over what area, because I'm not sure where you're sort of taking that from, because I'm wondering the councils may have allocated land and bits and pieces. So just just to help us understand what you mean by that. So firstly,

Speaker 2

on that point, as I understand it, certainly as I heard it, that wasn't 30,000 square feet. We're talking about XXL space. That's 300,000 square feet.

Speaker 1

I've obviously missed a note off my numbers. Then, so we're talking a particular size of of unit.

Speaker 2

Yes. Yes. So that would be for large scale accommodation of a strategic nature, 300,000 square feet. And then, sorry, mr. Comerstall, just wanted to clarify that for you.

Speaker 3

As as mr. Booth said, yes, 300,000 square foot units or greater. And what I was referring to in the zero vacancy is there is zero vacancy of existing buildings along the M40 corridor. There's in terms of the sites that are either consented or coming forward as an allocation, we do not believe that there are any sites that can deliver units of scale, and that's the even larger unit sizes of half a million square foot plus. So that's what I was referring to in terms of the allocations.

Speaker 2

In relation to your second point, or I think it was your first point, four and a half hours, and you will, I'm sure, have dealt with other logistics development elsewhere. And I mean, for mr. Kilmester within the industry to speak to, but typically there is a a market yardstick used to identify what is a reasonable or what is the sort of maximum reasonable distance from a particular facility on the basis. I think it's to do with drivers will need to brake for rests and so on. Is that is that not the position?

Speaker 3

Yeah, that's correct.

Speaker 2

So, mr. Holmes is going to assist on this one.

Speaker 4

Ben Holmes, I'm sorry, just just to help you with reference, there there is an explanation, specific explanation of that in paragraphs 718 and 719 of the market analysis report.

Speaker 5

And

Speaker 1

thank you. That I'll look that up and check that. But what we're referring to four and a half hours-that's hours drivers drivers time. That's an HGV driver's time. That's the longest,

Speaker 4

yeah, longest period a driver can go without stopping.

Speaker 1

So, so, so what you're saying is the the market, the way that it works, is that that's how far a driver would pick up a piece of freight from a said rail terminal, and drive it for four and a half hours. That's that's the way that that's the maximum.

Speaker 3

Yeah, but then what I also refer to is the in terms of the more immediate, so within a 90-minute drive time, there's access to 70 million population, which is again significant compared to other locations around the UK.

Speaker 2

Thank you, sir. On that basis, I'm going to ask Mr. Kirk to introduce himself and then to address you on the question of the demand for rail freight capacity, having regard to the documents that you will have already seen. Firstly, a supporting statement from GB Rail Freight and also the rail report.

Speaker 6

Thank you. Good afternoon, Alex Kirk, commercial director at GB Rail Freight. GB Rail Freight is the largest rail freight operator in the UK, approximately 30% of the market. We are supporting SRFI because we believe it represents a genuine commercial opportunity to grow rail freight, support the government's modal shift objectives, and provide a rail-connected logistics capacity in strategically important part of the country. Put simply, I would not be standing here for this proposal if we did not believe it could work. From our perspective, one of the biggest constraints on rail freight is not demand, locomotives, or waggons; it's the lack of appropriately located rail-connected terminals. The southeast remains one of the most significant.

Speaker 2

Mr. Cook, I'm going to ask you to read ever so slightly slower because the XA is trying to take a careful note of what you're saying. So just

Speaker 7

Before you continue, can I just ask please straighten your microphones out and speak clearly into them? I'm being told we have a problem with recording because you're not speaking loudly enough. Thank you very much.

Speaker 6

Sorry, I'll start back on my southeast point. So, the southeast remains one of the most significant logistics markets in the UK. Yet, there are relatively few rail service locations capable of supporting the scale of growth sought by the government and the industry, which we've obviously heard about today. The terminal is well located to serve Oxfordshire, the Thames Valley, London, and the Midlands, providing access to a substantial customer base that is currently not well served by rail freight. As a commercial operator, this is exactly the type of location we look for when assessing opportunities to develop new rail freight services. Our detailed reviews on suitability and attractiveness of this scheme are set out in the supporting statement. For reference, is APP313. The suitability of the Chiltern Mainline has come up a couple of times, so with permission, I will quickly cover that. The Chiltern Mainland is already part of the strategic rail freight network. Freight trains operate over the route today and have done so for many years, both as regular freight services and as diversionary routes when required. Therefore, from GB Rail Freight's perspective, the ability to operate rail freight on this route is not theoretical; it is an established operational reality. The question for us is whether this route can support a successful strategic rail freight interchange. Our assessment is it can. The appendix to our supporting statement include a question and answer paper, which specifically seeks to answer questions about the suitability of the Chiltern Main Line, including relation to gauge, parving, access to ports and markets, and the interaction with passenger services. Should the examining authority wish to explore detailed operational or timetable matters associated with this route, my colleague Ian Kapoor, head of Strategic Access Planning at GB Rail Freight is better placed to answer those points. And just to close, ultimately, GB Railfreight only succeeds when customers choose rail. We assess opportunities like this on a commercial basis. We look at whether the customer will use it. Whether trains can operate reliably and whether it supports long-term freight growth, our view is this scheme meets those tests. The Chiltern Mainline is an established rail freight route. Capacity exists to serve the terminal. More importantly, there is genuine opportunity to create new rail freight flows and deliver modal shift from road to rail. And as I say, we wouldn't be here committed to operating the terminal and supporting it today if we did not believe it could be a long-term success. Thank you.

Speaker 2

So those were the points that we were looking to make in answer to some of your agenda items relating to sort of market demand, both logistics generally and rail freight in particular. So I don't know if you have any questions for Mr. Kirk there. But what I was proposing to do, if you didn't, because they come as something of a double, is to ask Mr. Kapoor to speak to this w8 gauge issue, which you flag as a technical issue in the context of the agenda.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I think I think that would be helpful. But I've just got. Do you have a question? Just just before you ask yours, one of the questions just in terms of GB Rail Freight, I sort of understand the relationship between the applicant and GB Rail Freight. But what I also understand is that the terminal will be available for other operators to use as well. So it's not solely for GB Rail Freight, and we understand the submissions you've just made to us. And I suppose the question I have is probably an unfair one that you may not be able to answer, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Would other operators come to the same conclusion that you do? I.e. would it still be as attractive to other operators as it is to you? Therefore, is it something that the other, the rest of the market, rest of the market operators would be looking and as enthusiastic as you appear to be about using it? So, so can I just say that

Speaker 2

I mean, in terms of, and it may be that I fundamentally misunderstood the position, but to be clear, my understanding is that this terminal will not be operated by anyone else. As for example, at East Midlands Gateway, the terminal there is operated by Maritime, as I recall. Here at Oxfordshire SRFI, the terminal will be operated by GB Rail Freight. It will be their terminal in the sense that they will operate it. There will be nobody else operating it. What would be right to say is that occupiers of logistics floor space further afield, not occupying this particular development could potentially make use also of the rail terminal, so it's not use of the terminal wouldn't be constrained simply to the occupiers of this logistics park. But in terms of who operates the terminal, it will just be GB rail freight.

Speaker 6

Yeah, and just to build on that, in terms of parties that are able to access the rail freight terminal, it's a well-established regulatory requirement that you're not permitted to effectively block entry into a rail connected site. So, all operators who have a rail freight licence would have the ability to access the site. That's just an accepted practice in the industry in relation to the question around other operators. I would expect the general feeling to be the same as ours, but obviously you would have to ask them. The only other thing I would offer up is I do sit on the board of the rail freight group, which is the lobby group for the rail industry. And from with that hat on, I would also endorse the fact that there is a strong need for inland rail freight terminals across the UK.

Speaker 4

So, sorry to put in just to help Ben Holmes Oxalis planning. That point about open access, open access for users is covered in paragraph 12 of the GB rail freight supporting statement.

Speaker 1

Thank you for that reference. What we'll do is we'll take that away. We'll take that away and have a look. And it may well be, if we need any further information, that could be a particular written question that we'll pose. If we just need some further clarification on on that point.

Speaker 2

Thank you, sir. In which case, if that was the only matter arising, oh no, sorry. If that was the only matter arising, then I'm going to ask Mr. Kapoor to speak to the W8 gauge issue. I mean, we've got rail, I think, also slated for tomorrow. So, in terms of looking at the time, I'm probably going to leave pathing and so on to tomorrow capacity and pathing to. Tomorrow, but the W8 gauge matter was flagged for today, so he could address that now.

Speaker 8

Good afternoon. Good afternoon. My name's Ian Kapoor, head of strategic access planning at GB Rail Freight. On the very specific points raised of W8 gauge, I mean there has obviously been some considerable discussion regarding gauge clearance and what that means for the operation of the terminal. From GB rail freight's perspective, W8 gauge is not a barrier to the success of Oxford SRFI. National policy recognises W8 as the minimum appropriate gauge requirement for an SRFI, and the Chiltern route can achieve that standard. Neva Rail and the technical work submitted as part of the application have confirmed that W8 clearance is achievable with limited intervention. More importantly, the traffic markets we expect to serve can operate effectively and commercially on a W8 cleared route. We do not see W8 gauge as a factor that undermines the attractiveness or viability of this proposed terminal.

Speaker 2

So there are other technical issues, but we are proposing, as I say, to leave those to tomorrow. But I mean,

Speaker 9

what I just like to clarify is that the loading gauge is an important aspect of what we're going to discuss tomorrow. But while you're here, I just like to know why the W8 loading gauge is considered adequate, and if there is opportunity, because there had been survey carried out that potentially that could go. That could be bigger, like W9, and so on. So I just like to clarify: if that opportunity is there, why is the development not capitalising on that opportunity?

Speaker 8

So the, if I understand you correctly, so the the are you asking why you wouldn't necessarily look to enhance the gauge of the route? Or

Speaker 9

yes, yes. If I can clarify, a survey was carried out that the route is capable had actually accommodated higher than W8 loading gauge, so with that some of the problems along the route can be rectified, but the development has elected this W8 loading gauge. So if there's an opportunity to have a higher loading gauge has that been considered, and why hasn't it been considered? If it's not been considered,

Speaker 8

so the short answer is yes, it has been considered absolutely. Loading gauge is just just being brief here. Loading gauge is a way of describing the the waggon and box combination. I'm sure you're aware. Every line in the country will have a gauge, will be assigned a gauge on on the physical aspects of it. So it has tunnels, it has bridges, which will be cleared to a certain dimension. Currently, the route up through High Wycombe to Banbury is W8. That means anything that fits within a W8 gauge, any type of waggon or box combination that fits within W8 or lower can run, so the route is able, for example, to take larger boxes, larger containers, but they would sit on a different type of waggon. They would sit on a waggon which is which which is like a well waggon where the box can sit lower down, so it doesn't. Being W8 gauge does not confine you to one particular size of container. You can run larger

contain trains with larger containers on different types of waggon, and we at Jibby Rail Freight would obviously look to invest and use those as the market dictates, as we do now. Does that does that answer the question? Have I?

Speaker 9

If I could, if I could, you directly. You said that's the minimum from the conversation that that w8 satisfied. Minimum requirement, but if there's opportunity to make it better, so why can't that be considered? That's my question.

Speaker 2

I'm just going to jump in very briefly, Alexander Booth for the applicant. I suppose, in the first instance, what I would point to is the national policy statement, which is to say that, insofar as the National Networks NPS addresses strategic rail freight interchanges, it makes various points in relation to the need for an expanded network of SRFIs and states in terms that an SRFI should ideally be located on a route with a gauge clearance of W8 or more, or capable of an enhancement to a suitable gauge. So what we are saying, and what we would say government policy says, is that W8 is a suitable gauge, and indeed national policy expressly recognises that. And so, in those circumstances, absent an exceptional consideration, there are to uprate the gauge just doesn't apply because national policy is telling us this is this works, and I suppose what we would say, and what GB Railfreight are saying, as I understand it from Mr. Kapoor, is that this operates, it's suitable, and on that basis, there is a strong market demand for that capacity. So, we would say that the question of whether or not the gauge could be increased is not a matter which plays against the development. I don't know, Mr. Kapoor, you have anything further to say on that?

Speaker 8

No, thank you. No, that's absolutely incorrect.

Speaker 9

Thank you.

Speaker 2

Is that well? In which cases, I'm going to. Unless there was anything further, then I was going to move on to that, because we're getting through the process. The next item was going to be construction, in particular programme and phasing. And as I indicated a moment ago, I'm going to ask Mr. Holmes of Oxalis to speak to that issue, assisted by Mr. Simon Hilditch of BWB Consulting, who is going to address the highways-related elements of the project?

Speaker 1

That's that's fine. What I'm conscious of, again, similarly to have before, there may be questions that the interested parties may have. So that, to me, seems like a logical point to see if there's any questions on what's just been. Yes, absolutely. That's okay with you. Yes. Again, yeah, I think if there are points you wish to make, and I can work my way around the room. So if I can start with the the host authorities.

Speaker 10

Thank you. Yeah, George Gurney speaking on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. We've heard a lot about the the identified market for XL warehousing and that there is a market for rail served warehousing. But there was a point that you raised yourself at the start of this session, which is just linking that justification for the quantum of floor space to freight that is capable of being delivered through this terminal. So, section 26 of the Planning Act outlines that the rail for interchange should

include warehousing. So, I don't think we, as the authorities, are challenging that point. What we'd like is a better rationale as to how the quantum of 600,000 square metres has arrived at, and Section 26.6 specifically says that it should be linked to goods that we can deliver from the rail network. So what we would like to see is a justification for that 600,000 square metres based on the quantum of freight that is anticipated to come through the rail terminal, and we know that assumptions must have been made with that regard, because your transport assessment and your greenhouse gas assessment makes assumptions on the number of HGVs which will be serving the terminal directly, and some which will be serving the warehouse. So I think we would like to see a sort of a more bespoke rationale linking to this particular terminal and the freight that's anticipated to come through it for the quantum of the warehousing. I think the reason that we think that's important is because there's been points made previously towards the start of this session about the fact that the environmental impacts have been minimised. Now I think the council's local impact report is going to indicate that there are certain environmental impacts which we don't think have been minimised and potentially could be reduced by a reduced quantum of warehousing, so that's why we think it's important to get that bespoke justification for the quantum for this particular site on the freight that is anticipated to come through

Speaker 1

it. I think I think that that's a reasonable, and I'm going to pass that over to the applicant. I think one of the other things that that whether that's helpful to look at the different stages of the development as well, where that's sort of you know what it would be like on unopening, on first connection at 50% or whatever. So at least there's a bit more of an understanding of how that might come through at certain stages as well.

Speaker 2

Wrong button. Thank you, sir, and thank you. What I can say is that we'll take that request away and give that due consideration. I mean, what we do say is that, in the first instance, quite apart from the geographical position, which, as Mr. Holmes indicated this this earlier this afternoon, has informed the position in relation to the floor space proposed, we do say, and we don't understand it to be disputed. We say there is comprehensive evidence before the examination of a. I mean, I hesitate to descend into colourful terminology, but a gargantuan need for logistics floor space of significant scale, and the point that Mr. Kilmister made a moment ago was that there is not a single unit in the M40 corridor which is of a scale greater than 300,000 square foot. So some way short of the XXL, the XXL footprint of 500,000 square foot. So we say there is a very significant demand. We say that the development is appropriate to this location, and we say that government policy directs that there needs to be an expanded network of SRFIs. And we say in those circumstances, and having regard to the fact that, as you've just heard, say at East Midlands Gateway, every single occupier utilises the rail terminal. We say that is a strong and extremely persuasive and compelling argument for an equivalent floor space. I think it's 550,000 square metres at East Midlands Gateway, and we are proposing 600,000 square metres. But of course, one should recall that at East Midlands Gateway, and to reassure those on this side of the room, that's not what's proposed here. But at East Midlands Gateway, a second phase, East Midlands Gateway 2, also served by that rail terminal, is being promoted, and a DCO examination was held earlier this year. So we say that there cannot sensibly be, having regard to past precedent, any question as to whether or not, actually, if this rail freight terminal is built, that the accommodation will be occupied by those seeking to make use of the rail terminal. That is just what past precedent points to, and in circumstances where we have this dearth of space, where we have this dearth of rail serving facility—that is to say, there isn't a single one—we say that this will necessarily follow. But that said, I note what's said by Oxfordshire County Council. We will take that away, and we'll come back to you. Anything else?

Speaker 1

Thank you. Yeah, I think. Thank you. I think it would be helpful to take to take those comments away. Is there any further comments that Oxfordshire Council or any of the host authorities have?

Speaker 11

May I just pick up on the gauging point that we discussed? Paragraph 82 of the MPS makes clear that W8 is the minimum requirement, and then he goes on to say, or capable of enhancement to a suitable gauge.

Speaker 1

Thank you. I think we've probably. I think you answered. I think we got that. But yes, thank you. Yeah. Anybody else? Yeah. Okay. So, if we move to Midsure World Neighbourhood Plan

Speaker 11

Forum,

Speaker 12

Jonathan Boyce Midchill Neighbourhood Planning Forum. First of all, I'd like to compliment Oxalis and ORL for their responsiveness in some some of our questions prior to these hearings, they've been very helpful. Thank you very much. One of the questions we posed was in terms of users of the warehouse, which was that, given obviously the controversy over data warehousing applications, they did say to us in in written response, that there would be no users contemplated that would have that application at this site. So, really, the question is: Is that going to be a restriction in the development consent order to enforce that that the not using that application?

Speaker 1

Yeah, and I think that's certainly something that we can we can look into in terms of questions to the applicant, perhaps tomorrow on the DCR. But whether you've got any immediate response, I'm not sure I've got an immediate response. I just wanted to clarify the point that was being taken, as I understand it, what was being said is: is the applicant prepared to accept a requirement which would preclude the use of the logistics park for data centres? Or if I misunderstood, that's that's the point. I'm grateful if that's something, and I can take away then. Thank you. Yeah, tomorrow there will be a discussion on on the DCO itself. One of the things in the DCO, I think, there is a definition of the word warehouse, so there might be some options around the definition of the word that might mean that that we can have a discussion around that tomorrow. So, if you're in attendance tomorrow, we perhaps we can we can sort of cover that off tomorrow when we look at look. I do have

Speaker 12

very one quick supplementary question: Is there any data associated with the past data associated with the real freight traffic movements on the Chiltern Line? Because from my research, it's of a minimal quantity for Wrecks on the Chiltern Line. Can we have some hard statistics, please, from from you folks.

Speaker 1

Yeah, so I think I think thinking again on the point I think was the use of the the Chiltern Main Line, and that would be useful to get information in terms. I think you said it was part of the the national network. Just how many trains use it? How often is it used? Again, whether that information is available, but that would be useful to to get an indication of that,

Speaker 2

Sir Alexander Booth, for the applicant. I can certainly take that away. I'm not quite sure what format that sort of data is available in. I don't understand there to be any dispute as to the principle that the line is currently used and has been used for rail freight. I'll see what I can find in terms of data as to numbers of trains and throughput. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you, mr. Broad. Did I see your hand up as well, or did? Yep.

Speaker 13

Yes, thank you, sir. John Broad, CPRE. A couple of couple of questions. One one is kind of connected with the Hardly Station. because one of the things I've heard from others, and I don't know whether this is true, so it needs clarifying, is that if you tried to put Ardley Station in there for passengers, it would cause an issue with the timing Of various, well, particularly particularly the present passenger line as it is at the moment, and so it would be difficult to instal it. Whether that's true, I don't know. And if I could add another quick one to it, another point that has been raised by another number of people outside, and again, I don't know whether this is true, is one of the reasons you can only go for W8 on the size is because it won't go through Ardley Tunnel. So, if Ardley Tunnel is a limitation, you're never going to be able to make it bigger unless you redo Ardley Tunnel. So, I was just intrigued to know whether those two points are real, or whether they're just hearsay, and I've got another one, if I may.

Speaker 1

Yeah, if I if I sort of deal with deal with those, I think think in terms of the Ardley Tunnel aspect, I think we're aware of that because I think that's already in in the the documentation that we've got. So I think that's a point that that the applicant has already made. And again, I think the capacity angle, as well, may well also be covered in some of the documents. But perhaps the applicant can point, mr. Broad, to those those particular documents. Or

Speaker 2

I'm taking the second of those first. The Ardley Tunnel point is one, as you say, that's addressed. It's in the rail report, I believe, isn't it? And it's right, and that that is that operates at W8 gauge. I'm not sure it would operate at anything beyond that, and but of course W8 gauge is expressly recognised as suitable in the national policy statement for rail freight. So I have to say I'm not entirely sure where that point goes. So far as Ardley passenger station is concerned. I mean, insofar as mr. Broad is saying, he's heard on I don't know on the grapevine that the passenger station wouldn't or couldn't operate. It's hard to respond without knowing without knowing the genesis of the data that mr. Broad is relying upon, but what I can point to is, for example, again the rail report and more particularly the statement of common ground concluded between ourselves and Network Rail, which indicates that there's what we're proposing to do would not provide any bar to the operation or the effectively the reintroduction of an orderly passenger station. I can't really answer gossip and rumours.

Speaker 13

Thank you, sir. Just very quickly, I mean, one of the reasons for it.

Speaker 2

I should just say a more knowledgeable answer may come from mr. Kapoor. It

Speaker 13

was timing that was the problem.

Speaker 8

So, in Kapoor, G. B. Relfrate. Yeah, I was expecting, as we said, to go through the detail of this tomorrow now, which is what you said, which I can do, but very, very briefly. As part of this scheme, there are more signals being put in between a known bister, which makes it even easier to accommodate current passenger operations, some future passenger operations, and the freight operations. So that is exactly the stuff we've been through, and I'll go into more detail tomorrow, if if that's that's the place to do

Speaker 1

it. I think yeah. So I think that no,

Speaker 13

it's the kind of answer I was expecting. So it does allay the the fears that people have had. I think, but if I could be a little bit facetious in a sense, it was mentioned that obviously drivers of HGVs can only drive for four and a half hours, and it just crossed my mind that if you've got something on a train and we want to try and get as much rail freight as possible, don't stop at this SRFI if it's going to end up further north, just take it further north and then drop it off up there. Keep it on the railway, and don't take it off. So it starts to make you wonder about this four and a half hour thing, because you can still do four and a half hours coming back if you needed to for some of the freight. And of course, it's it's another aspect that comes on, which again I suppose we're going to talk about tomorrow. But if if you look at the thing, it's storage and distribution. So storage is okay. Take it to one of these giant warehouses further north. Don't stop off on the way, and the distribution. Don't put it on an HGV. You put it on a light van to distribute it locally. In other words, you keep it on the rail for as long as possible. And those sites are already in existence. And I just wondered whether that that four and a half hours is quite interesting in the sense that it negates this site.

Speaker 1

Thank you. I don't pose to make any response to that. No, I think we've sort of, but but I think the four and a half hours is an interesting point that I think we we've explored, and I suspect, without giving too much away, this point we will probably continue to explore in written questions for some of the reasons that you've asked to help our to help our understanding of it. I think. Is that all your points, mr. Broady? So I'll move on to mr. Nostrand.

Speaker 14

Thank you. Thank you very much, mr. Chairman. My name is mr. Philip Nostrand, and I'm the founder of Stop the Trojan Horse, and I'd like very much to follow up on something that the council's representative mentioned, which was the bespoke justification for the quantum of warehousing, because obviously we have not seen that yet. What we've heard today, if I paraphrase the the arguments of the applicants, is that we found a large site, and there's a lot of warehouse demand, and then we've heard some let's call it superficial comparisons to other other sites. That's really the justification that we've received so far. So I'd like to just highlight or go back to the national policy statement and try to get a little bit closer to a justification for how big should this site actually be, and because the question is, is 604,000 square metres really the right quantum here? And if you look in the national policy statement, it explains that SRFIs exist to maximise the long haul chunk journey by rail while minimising the final road distribution leg, as the gentleman next to me mentioned a moment ago. So, in other words, if you look at an SRFI with a maximised ingoing rail and minimised outgoing road distribution, it would have a one-to-one volume ratio between the inbound train movements and the outbound lorry movements. So, so as this diagram illustrates, the goods would would enter the warehouse by by rail. There would be a certain warehouse capacity, and then the site it would leave the site by by lorry. That, in essence, is what the policy document requires for a an SRFI. So the applicant has designed a rail terminal that is able to to handle up to 12 trains a day, with four trains expected per

day in the opening year. And let's just take that as face value. I mean, we've we've discussed rail gauge and and Chilton line suitability, but let's leave that apart and just assume that is correct. Now, if I look at the applicant's transport assessment, there are estimates. On the road impact, which is 4,920 HGV movements every single day, and that is in the environmental statement. And also, the applicant has calculated that the 12 trains would replace the equivalent of 1,104 HGV movements. So, if we look at those figures, we are essentially looking at a logistics development that generates 5,000 HGV movements, and that saves 1,100 HGV movements maximum through rail journeys. So, in other words, the associated road freight activity will, even in the in the best case scenario of the applicant, be five times bigger than the rail activity into the site. So, if we assume, even even if we assume the overwhelmingly optimistic assumption of 12 trains coming in per day, that would mean that the picture would look like this. So here's here here is a train that comes in with goods, offloads in the warehouse, and a lorry takes it out. And then you've got two lorries coming in here.

Speaker 1

Sorry, I don't want to interrupt what you're saying. That's fine, but I think they're having a problem picking you upon the microphone. I think every time you hold a piece of paper, I think I'm sorry about that. Yeah, that's it. So it's just

Speaker 14

sorry. So we would see one one train coming in, two lorries coming in, and three lorries coming out with the five to one ratio. So if you look at this diagram, it's immediately clear that the warehousing is oversized by a factor of three, even in the most optimistic scenario, and if we if we look at the scenario with four trains per day, which is perhaps a little bit more more realistic, this is what it looks like. There's one one freight train that comes in, offloads in the warehouse, and one lorry goes out, and then there's another six lorries coming in, offloading in six warehouses, and six lorries coming out. So this was why I asked the people who came in earlier to try to spot the 13 lorries. Here are the 13 lorries and one rail car. That is the reality of the operations that are proposed, assuming four trains per day. So, so in in short, if you look at the key, what we also see is that inbound freight traffic remains purely speculative, and there's no firm commercial commitments made by any party to run any trains. At lower levels of train traffic, the disproportionality between the warehouse estate size and the expected train traffic will be even greater than we saw here. A key planning requirement for a site to be designated as an SRFI is that it is technically capable of receiving at least four trains per day. While the national policy statement does not explicitly give a maximum size for the accompanying warehouse facilities. The mere existence of rail facilities must never become a carte blanche to pave over an unlimited area with warehouses. A project should not be approved under the SRFI framework unless there is clear evidence of proportionality between the rail traffic and overall project scope. The applicant has not demonstrated that a 604,000 square metre logistics escape date, supported by extensive highway infrastructure, is proportionate to likely rail freight to the site. In fact, the applicant's own analysis shows that the proposed warehousing is at least three times larger than what is required for rail freight distribution needs. It is precisely the project-level proportionality test that the national policy statement requires this examination to apply, and the evidence before this examination points to a clear conclusion: the the plan is not a strategic rail freight interchange as envisioned in the national policy statement. It is a Trojan horse for an extra large warehouse estate overwhelmingly served by lorries. So, on this basis, I urge the examining authority to stop the Trojan horse and reject the proposed development. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you for that. I will ask the applicant if there's anything in particular you want you want to pick up on. Although conscious that some of the matters that were highlighted may well swap into tomorrow's transport discussions and bits and pieces. Yes. But again, it may well be this. Thank you, Sir Alexander

Speaker 2

Booth, on behalf of the applicant. I'm not going to engage with the detail of that because, as you say, those matters to some degree will be addressed tomorrow in the transport section of ISH2. What I will just say is this: four trains per day. That's what mr. Nordstrand is speaking to four trains per day is the statutory requirement for a strategic rail freight interchange, and I have to say, insofar as mr. Nordstrand is quibbling with the amount of freight, the amount of HGV movements that an SRFI will secure modal shift from road to rail, he does indeed. Well, he must necessarily, and indeed is contesting the very principle of an SRFI, as endorsed expressly by the national policy statement, and as endorsed expressly by government policy, which is seeking an expanded network, four trains per day is the minimum. That is what is required. We anticipate that there would ultimately be a greater volume of traffic, and indeed, there is capacity for we say for a greater number of trains to run East Midlands Gateway, it's well in excess. I believe it's 10 or 11 now that are running at East Midlands Gateway. Though I'll be corrected if I'm wrong on that point. And the fundamental issue which mr. Nordstrand fails to grapple with, I'm afraid, is this: the freight that is being transported by rail and the freight that is transported otherwise by road is going to be transported one way or the other. That is the market. That is consumer demand. Freight is going to be transported. In circumstances where an SRFI isn't consented, all of that freight will be transported by road. In circumstances where that rail freight is an option by way of the SRFI, then the 1104 HGV movements anticipated to shift in modal terms from road to rail. I mean that is 1,000 HGV movements which will not be on the road network, and which otherwise would be. That is what government policy is directed towards. So we say that, insofar as mr. Nordstrand criticises and contests the principle of SRFI, he is at odds and paddling upstream in terms of government policy and indeed legislation which applies that government policy. And we say that the manifest benefits, in line with that policy, that this development would deliver in terms of stripping freight traffic off the roads and putting it on the rails. I mean, that quite whether or not you'd want even more freight to be stripped off the roads onto the rails is beside the point. This development will make a significant material contribution to that purpose, that objective, and it's consistent with government policy. But in terms of the points of detail, so I'm going to have to leave those for tomorrow.

Speaker 1

Yeah, thank you. That that's fine. I think I think the detail will be tomorrow because I think I think. So there was just, if

Speaker 2

I may, there's just one final point. What was said is that well, this is this is inappropriate, and this is not what was envisaged by the by the NPS. And what I do say is that is fundamentally wrong. And the reason I say it's wrong is because we have a series of other rail freight interchanges which have been consented by the Secretary of State pursuant to this NPS. In particular, by way of example, we have the West Midlands Interchange. That was a project with which I was concerned. That was actually a green belt proposal, sir. And in those circumstances, the total warehouse was 743,000 square metres, a very significantly greater than the 603,000 we are proposing in the current

Speaker 1

instance. And East Midlands Gateway at 557,000 is a proposal which sits slightly below, but in the same ballpark as what we are now proposing. Those were developments which were consented pursuant to this NPS or equivalent, and in those circumstances, sir, we say this is what we are proposing is precisely what government policy anticipates, and with the greatest respect, it is simply misconceived of mr. Nordstrand to say otherwise. Thanks, sir. Okay, thank you, thank you for that, mr. Booth. I think what hopefully we'll find is that tomorrow we can get into some of the more detail. Whereas this is sort of quite high level and quite strategic. It may well be that, and hopefully tomorrow

and in other discussions as well, is some of the actual environmental benefits versus the environmental impacts, and we can start to sort of balance and understand those in a little bit in a little bit more detail. Thanks again. As you'll appreciate, that's part of the the test that we're required and the and the role we have to play into. Of reporting to the Secretary of State in terms of balancing all those issues up as well. So, what I was going to suggest is that perhaps we move on to the next part of what we do. But I'm also looking at a rather large clock in front of me as well. So I'm just conscious of time, and I'm just wondering sort of how long.

Speaker 2

Well, sir, what we're going to do is deal with programme and phasing relatively swiftly. I hope. We've then got mitigation and surrounding development to deal with. Now, in terms of surrounding development, we've already dealt with Arley Station, I think. And insofar as a question was raised by Charles District Council, well, in terms of the surrounding development, I mean, the point there, sir, in a sense, is a short one because I anticipate that your question or your agenda item is concerned essentially with the cumulative assessment, and we have agreed the cumulative assessment position with Charwell District Council and Oxford County Council. We've already liaised with them and agreed what developments should be considered in that context. So I would hope that that would also be a relatively straightforward, swift discussion. So, what I'm going to suggest-I mean, you indicated that you would wish to draw stumps at half past five. I think we should be done by then, and hopefully before to allow for the other agenda items. I know the AOV that comes after.

Speaker 1

Sounds fine. Yes, thank you. That sounds good. Thank you.

Speaker 2

So, in terms of the next item, programme and phasing, I say, mr. Holmes dealing with part of the picture, mr. Hilditch dealing with the road highways related items, and I suppose before, as part of that, what I'm going to ask mr. Holmes to speak to is the issue that was flagged earlier on? I think by the forum, which was that question of the spur and when will that be provided, and so on. And just to provide that headline, sir, the spur which would run immediately alongside those three facilities is not part of the initial provision. What's anticipated is that, and there will be earthworks there that will preclude that. But ultimately, that corridor is going to be preserved to enable that provision. But, and it's important that the XA and indeed the examination more broadly understand this. That provision, i.e. a single a rail line actually rail connecting a particular unit, that is in no way commonplace in terms of strategic rail fate interchanges. There is no such unit at Northampton Gateway. There is no such unit at East Midlands Gateway, or indeed at West Midlands Interchange. At Durft, there is a single unit that is rail connected in the sense that a rail spur goes into its yard. There is only one unit in the entire country that is served in that way, and the reason why there isn't that provision is because ultimately the market doesn't want it or need it. And what you would need in order to justify the construction of a spur like that is a particular occupier who would say that the rail terminal, such as it is, say, 500 metres to the north, that that rail terminal isn't enough for me. I actually need a spur to land in my yard, and there is a single operator in the country that has that requirement at present. So that's really why it's not something that we'd anticipate. But I mean that's my superficial, overarching summary. mr. Holmes will clarify to the extent I've got anything wrong. Otherwise, he's then going to speak to programme and delivery.

Speaker 1

Can I just can I ask sort of that? That's fine, and that that explanation is really good, and helps sort of clarify what we've got. I suppose the one question, and it might not be for now, but it's one just to sort of put out there, is how much have you in your documentation relied upon that as a benefit of the scheme? That's actually now not going. What you're saying actually isn't, or may not come forward.

Speaker 2

It's a may not. So, what we're doing, and what others have not done in every instance, is what we are doing is preserving the ability to provide a rail-connected unit should the market want

Speaker 4

it. Yeah, I was just going to add that we don't seek to rely any more than that on it's it's providing the opportunity if there were to be an occupier coming along who wanted that that we were able to deliver that that connection into into a yard. The only the only additional point I would say is we we deal with that that point about the market and and the number of of terminals and a number of occupiers that have a direct rail connection to their yard in the rail report at paragraph 6.25. That's library reference APP 312. Sir, I'm very. Conscious of time, I was intending to try to describe the anticipated approach to construction phasing with reference to the construction phasing plans that are appendix two of the construction environmental management plan. There are eight of those plans, so it will take a little bit of time to talk through about, and I will try to do it quickly, without rushing too much. But but I'll try and I'll try to stick to the key headlines. And if you've got questions and want some more detail, perhaps you stop me. I

Speaker 1

think that's. But I was just going to say, if you can stick to the key things and the sort of the major the major points, that would probably be helpful to us. Yeah.

Speaker 4

Can those be brought up on screen? They are being. So what these what these phasing plans are intended to show is the sequence, the broad sequence of works, year by year, on the main site. So you'll see that what they show in year one is that earthworks will commence in both the northern-that's the yellow areas-the northern part of the site and the southern part of the site. The main access works will commence, and works will commence to construct the the spine road through the centre of the site. That's the that's the green route. Ecological mitigation works are also underway and being delivered in that first year, and they're the blue highlighted areas. What what and just coming back to the the point that mr. Booth raised about the rail spur, clearly the rail spur and the opportunity to deliver it is is related directly to earthworks, and the earthworks that are required to create that corridor. So those earthworks will commence in the north. So that corridor will be being formed, and it will it will travel as the central and southern parts of the site, earthworks earthworks proceed, so it it couldn't be delivered in the first year, as it were, or the second year because earthworks don't proceed into the central part of the site until later years. We can flick onto year two. So what you're seeing in year two is that the earthworks are complete both in the northern part of the site and the and the southern part of the site, and alongside those earthworks, the landscaping in those areas is in place. So that's all of the grey areas to the south and the grey areas around the the western edge of the northern part of the site. So landscape earthworks are in landscaping is in, and you'll also see that the ecological mitigation works are complete by year two. You'll see the yellow is the earthworks then being undertaken in the central part of the site, and the purple is indicating that works proceed to construct the rail terminal, and begin to construct plots in the northern part of the site, ready for buildings to be constructed. If we can, I don't think I've missed anything. If we can flick to year three. And what you're seeing in year three, just adding adding to what has already been done, you'll see that the earthworks, the earth, the landscape mounding along the western part of the central bit of the site, are completed at that time, together with the landscaping that is in place. Earthworks generally continue along that central part of the site. The development of the rail terminal and the northern plots continues as well. In addition, you'll see that the Hayford Link Road is under construction at that time. That's the yellow dashed area, and I actually should have said earlier on the Arduly bypass bill in the construction, but the arguably bypass is

actually complete in this year. And we'll come on later. I think mr. Hilditch will talk about the phasing and delivery of the highway infrastructure. If we can flick to year four, so year four is 2031. At that point, we anticipate that the rail terminal will be complete, and first buildings in the northern part of the site will be occupied. At this stage, the plots.

Speaker 1

Just just a quick, just a clarification. Actually, when you say complete, do you mean complete and operating, or connected, or as a change built but not? We well

Speaker 4

certainly we anticipate complete on site, and we might come back later to the timing of the delivery of the connections, which is which is the bit that is partly outside of our our control, but certainly in. Terms of anticipated programme. That's that. That's the that's the aim. Whether that can be achieved or not is is clearly due to the processes with Network Rail post consent that will need to be followed. But but on site works certainly we would anticipate the works would be complete at that point. So the purple is showing that that the plots in the central part of the site are under construction in this year, and you'll see that the earthworks and landscaping along on either side of the Hayford Link Road corridor are complete, or where the construction of that road and the final construction of that road continues, but the landscaping around it and the corridor is complete at that time. If we can then flick to year five, which actually is very similar to year four, the only real change there is that the Hayford Link Road is completed at that at that point. Construction continues in the central part of the site. In year six, the earthworks then commence in that southern development zone, zone one on the parameters plan. Now, the timing of works there relate to the Thames Water main diversion, the closure of the Investel Composting facility and the closure of Camp Road, so the Hayford Link Road being open and the Camp Road closure. That's why that parcel is earthworks start much later than than elsewhere. And then if we flick to year seven, what we're seeing there is that the entirety of the scheme is complete, other than the development of the plots within Zone A1, and then flick over to Year Eight. We see, we anticipate the team being completed. I think yes. If that, if that's okay, I'll pass over to mr. Hilditch, who will talk through the phasing of highway works.

Speaker 15

Thank you, mr. Holmes. So yes, I'm Simon Hilditch for the applicant, and I'm going to talk through the highway works. Hopefully, mr. O'Reilly has the highway works overview plan, which is Appendix 2.2 of the Environmental Statement at AWP-187, in terms of the examination library reference. So, as mr. mr. Holmes did, I will attempt to give a brief canter through through the hiring works. Obviously, there's a lot of detail in there which we may come back to in future future hearings. Well, the plan is loading as an overall principle for the highway works. There are three substantive drivers. One is providing suitable highway access from the SRFI to the strategic road network. Then there's a driver to ensure we mitigate impacts on the road network, and then there's also a very important driver to make sure we provide suitable and sufficient active and sustainable travel to the site. So that's what the three of those together is what has driven the overall highway solution. So if I may sort of just sort of talk through some of the interactions between the various elements of the the hierarchs and the phasing. I'll perhaps come back to the phasing towards the end of the of the overview. To start with, then we have the principal access to the main site, which is hopefully mr. O'Reilly will put his cursor on it. There we go at the the northeast corner of the main site, and that will also be the so that's in the form of a roundabout on the existing B430. The pink, purple dashed lines there are the access into the site itself. Then that will connect to the Ardley bypass, which then connects up to Junction 10, because we recognise very early on in the process that we need to provide suitable mitigation in the form of avoiding taking significant amounts of additional traffic through through Ardley Village, and of course by providing a bypass, it will also then provide relief to Ardley Village at the same time. That then connects into

Junction 10, which is in the inset on the right-hand side of the plan. If we're able to zoom in to Junction 10, I think there's a slight delay, which doesn't quite help my my explanation. So when the Ardley bypass connects into the various complex of roundabouts within Junction 10, the roundabout to the west of the M 40 there isn't was known as the Ardley roundabout. The the bypass therefore connects into that roundabout, but because of the existing slip road arrangement, we have to reconfigure the the slip roads at the same time as doing that piece of work, which then brings the new northbound merge slip road on the western side of the M40, and then the reconfigured northbound diverge slip road. All of that work, in terms of phasing, is all part. Of the the first phase of the highway works. Also, while we're still up in the in the area of Junction 10, there's the works at the Baynards Green Junction up on the A43 to the north. They're also in the first phase of the of the highway works for Junction 10. The remainder of the works, predominantly the A43 corridor, the works to the the Padbury Junction, and more substantial works to the Chirwell Junction, are in the second phase of the of the highway works, as well as the the completion and opening to traffic of the the second exit, which is proposing at the Junction 10 complex, which will enable traffic from the M40 to the A43 to avoid having to go through the Ardley and the Chirwe roundabouts, which is effectively creating a step change in capacity of the overall junction, which then allows sufficient capacity for the development traffic to basically get on and off the M40. So effectively, creates a bit of a bypass within the junction itself, or strategic through traffic. An important consideration generally at the junction is maintaining access into the motorway service area, and we've also obviously want to ensure access into the into the local area at the same time isn't completely severed. So hence the the connection retains into Ardley from the north. If we're then able to sort of zoom back out a little bit, please. So on the talk through the other areas shown on on the screen.

Speaker 15

So to the the western side of the site, there's two very small areas of higher works, which are known as works 10 and 28 in the schedule, they are on the Chilgrove Drives Ditch corridor, and you'll see from the layout of the Upper Heyford Airfield that there was a road corridor effectively severed by the construction of the airfield. And as part of the overall active travel and sustainable travel strategy, we're actually providing a bridleway connection between the point at Chilgore Drive there and all around the boundary of the site, and the intention very firmly is, along with the earthworks which mr. Holmes presented, is to provide those bridleway routes around the boundary of the site as early as possible within the construction phasing, and they'll be in place I think by the end of the second year, as presented by mr. Holmes's Earthwixt. We then have on here the Heyford Park Link Road, which is the effect of the diversion of the existing Upper Heyford Drive. That will be implemented in two two stages. So the first phase is the Western section, and in the short sort of sort of temporary period, then the secondary access, secondary access in the long term will be for buses, pedestrian cyclists, and emergency vehicles. But in the interim period, that will be used as a effectively the short term diversion, and that enables the western section of the Hayford Park Link Road to be opened as early as possible, that's not driven by a pure traffic demand. That's driven by wanting to get the earthworks and the screening and the active travel connection into the Hayford Park area in as early as possible. And as part of the second phase of the Harry Works, the rest of the Haveford Park Link Road, as shown there, is is constructed. The Upper Haver Drive is stopped up and closed, and the junction removed from the B430. Then, further on from that, down to the south southeast, we have the Middleton Stoney Relief Road. Again, that is part of the second phase of of the highway works, but and associated with that, basically providing relief within Middleton Stoney, we're then able to provide pedestrian improvements at the crossing within Middleton Stoney, and again that's part of the phase two higher works. And then to the east, within the edge of Bista, not too far from where we are, we have the A4 and R5B4030 junction, which again is part of the second phase of the of the highway works. The the Middleton Road Bridge crossing over the M 40. Sorry, I'll just let it pause on the b4 30 junction briefly. The Middleton Road Bridge there that's part of the first phase of hire works because that's actually part of the wanting to get as much of the active travel provision as early as possible, and that's a small piece of work, but

important to reconnect some of the bridled ways in the local area. There's a bit of a theme with the bridled ways in terms of severance due to the historic severance of the M40 in the airfield that we're we're doing a lot to address through the various parts of the scheme. I think the only substantive piece of work I've not mentioned then is M40 Junction Nine, which is in a little box at the side, which is the capacity improvement for the A34 northbound into Junction Nine to. Improve capacity heading up onto the M40, and the main the main reason for that is due to overall potential for for rerouting, and we want our traffic to and from the SFI to stay on the strategic road network rather than potentially go up the B430. So that's an overview of the highway works. In terms of the highway phasing, as I mentioned, as phases one and phase two, I don't propose, given the time, to go through the detailed phasing plans, but they can be found.

Speaker 15

I believe it is in Appendix 23 of the transport assessment, which is in examination library reference AS-061, but in broad overview summary, the phase one hire works are due to be take place of the first sort of two years of construction of 2029-2030, with the phase two hire works then continuing for around another sort of year and a half period following on from that, so hopefully that's a helpful overview of the higher works. But I appreciate that I've canter through it at a bit of a rate. So if there's any more detail you wish to go into, then please feel free to ask.

Speaker 1

Thank you. Yeah, appreciate that's that's sort of a canter through. There are questions, but it might be that they are more suitable for the DCO because I've got the DCO open in terms of requirements eight, which I think has got the various controls and the triggers for when those measures will be delivered. And I'm not sure some of those tie up with perhaps what you've said, but it might be that it's my understanding of trying to listen to you and read that at the same time. So, but that might be front of the forum, just to sort of understand sort of how that phasing is actually going to be be delivered, and to sort of just just get our understanding of that clearer. Perhaps I'm not suggesting that's perhaps the right forum for this, but I think it's just sort of put you on notice that that might be something we might want to might want to discuss. The other thing, as well, in terms of the development consent order, and particularly requirement five, which has got the floor space figure in and that the triggers in terms of when the the rail interchange would be brought on and how that would work. Again, that's on the agenda for tomorrow. I do have some questions, but I'm thinking that might be more appropriate to pick up tomorrow. Although one question might be helpful today, given the plans that you've just shown, which is I think the numbers 232,000 in the region there or thereabouts. What does that look like in terms of the phasing? What are we talking about? Because you know, where would the development be for that 232,000. How does that sort of replicate and represent those phasing plans that you showed us? Just so we can get an understanding in our own mind as to sort of how big, small the development may well be.

Speaker 4

So we probably need to come back to you because I don't. I don't want to give you an answer that's not right. You were obviously

Speaker 1

listening to my opening when I said please. So that if

Speaker 1

that is the case, I wouldn't want you to particularly in a foreign to sort of. I

Speaker 4

won't. I won't give an answer. I will come back on it. I think better than me. Yeah. What I think is the answer, but yeah, I'm going to. Yeah, that's fine. It may well be. We

Speaker 1

might come back to that, and probably will certainly come back to that requirement tomorrow.

Speaker 2

Sir, on that basis, if you're content to move forward, and I am watching the clock now as you are, I was going to ask Mr. Harley to speak briefly, and I think he can do that really by cross-referencing what you've heard already to mitigation. Thank you, sir.

Speaker 16

Thank you, sir. Thank you, Alex. Steve Harley for the applicant. Yes, I've got pre-prepared notes around the mitigation points, sir. But it strikes me, given given the time, I can abbreviate it. And then, if you've got queries now or later, we can we can go there. I was going to refer you to a number of documents, but I think, following directly off the back of what Mr. Holmes and Mr. Hildege have just said, as they were speaking, sir. So your question in the agenda was about the detail of principal mitigation, and that obviously required us to take a view on what principal mitigation might mean, which we did. And essentially, we decided that the principal forms mitigation that might be of most interest are highways mitigation, the landscape and visual mitigation, which is fundamentally centred on on the earthworks and the and the bunding, the ecology and the BNG measures across the main site, and then construction-related measures to avoid or minimise temporary likely effects during the construction phase. And as Ms Holmes and Mr. Hilditch were talking there, at various points they specifically referred you to the timing of works in those categories. So, if it's okay with you now, I won't repeat what they've said in terms of how some of those works feature in those years. Yeah, that's fine.

Speaker 1

Well, we've certainly got notes of those, and that's it. So, yeah, that that's fine. I think that's that's the right point. Thank

Speaker 16

you. All I was going to say just just very briefly then was that the, and and again, this might be now part. For tomorrow, in terms of how those principal bits of mitigation principle works are secured, there is there are various DCO requirements that clearly bite significantly in that regard. In terms of securing either the approval of further details prior to the implementation, or require the implementation of certain bits of mitigation at a certain time or by a certain trigger, maybe so that's parked as well. But that was going to be the final bit of my my sort of contribution today on mitigation. And so, shall I pause and?

Speaker 1

Yeah, because I think we'll end up in discussions that invariably are probably better placed tomorrow on the DCO and the mitigation and that side of things. Seems that it's just not worth getting into those at this stage. It feels more of a logical discussion to have those tomorrow. I think. At this point, what I was going to do is sort of do my usual sort of rant and just open it up to see if anybody else has got any particular sort of comments and issues that they want to raise at this point.

Speaker 10

I think we're content. Sorry, George Gurney, Officer County Council. I think we're content to wait until tomorrow to address some of those issues that we just picked up. Then,

Speaker 1

thank you. I'm conscious I keep passing National Highways, but you don't normally put your hand up. But you may well have something to say at this point.

Speaker 10

Vicky Fowler, on behalf of National Highways. No, sir, we're happy to wait till tomorrow as well. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you, mr. Broad.

Speaker 13

Thank you, sir. John Broad, CPRE. That was very interesting on the timing of this project, which is going to take what four or five years or more to try and develop, and it was interesting when when they were just talking about the ecology and the BNG. There's two things, of course. One is that you're taking land which is BMV land, best and most valuable. So from a food point of view, we're going to lose a huge area of land, which should be used for food production, which is much more important than taking stuff to warehouses and then shipping it out. But that's an argument we probably won't agree on here. As to the keeping the the edges of the fields and the trees, the hedges, the trees, which sounds really good. By the end of four years, there will be nothing in the way of wildlife there, because they won't live anywhere near those machines that are going to be digging all this up. So, from a point of view of the ecology, that will take years before anything comes back, and it's not likely to be anything like the wildlife that there is there at the moment. So, I'm afraid, although that you have good intentions with keeping the hedges and the other things, which is good. You will probably end up with something which is as barren as it could possibly be, and I find that very disappointing. And of course, the lack of food is also disappointing. But that comes back to whether you want the SRFI at all, or whether we're going to do a major project on this site. And as I pointed out, I found it quite interesting that the and this probably comes up tomorrow, as you've already led into it a little bit, the slip road onto Junction Nine. I thought it was quite interesting that this was to allow the lorries, the HGVs, to be able to go straight off the A34 onto the M40, go to Junction 10, and then feed the warehouses. I thought this was supposed to be rail freight. That slip road is completely pointless. What I'm more interested in is: Are you going to get the lorries going south from the M40 onto the A34? Because that, at the moment, is gridlocked. So that, and there's no answer to it that's in the process yet. But from an ecology point of view, this is going to be a disaster for a huge area of land. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you for those. Was there anything the applicant wished to pick up on that at this stage? Now, again, reassuring that there'll be matters that we will we will come back to. Yeah, mr. Nostrand, is there anything?

Speaker 14

Thank you. So my name is mr. Philip Nostrand, and I'm the founder of the community group Stop the Trojan Horse. And with your permission, I'd like to make a few comments about the impact on the plans for reopening of Artley Station, which were addressed earlier. So what the applicant stated earlier. Was that there was nothing that would prejudice the reopening of Artley Station in this proposal, but I think it's important to point to that we need this infrastructure to be optimised and not just solve one problem and then create another, and I think that's particularly relevant in in Artley. The county council has concluded that reopening Artley Station would could serve significantly improve rail access for surrounding communities and reduce reliance on road travel. But a viable station is not just two platforms and a ticket machine. A successful station would need to attract enough passengers to attract and justify frequent train services. A local case study is instructive. Hattenham and Tabon Parkway, 20

miles south of Artley, offers 11 direct services to London each morning and serves 900,000 passengers a year. It achieves those frequent chain services by having a strong bus access and over 430 parking spaces. In contrast, King Sutton, just eight miles north of Artley is a station with only 23 parking spaces, 82,000 passengers a year, and just one direct morning train to London. The lesson is clear: viable stations need passengers, and passengers need access. In order to be viable, Artley Station would need to be able to draw passengers from a wide area, including current A43 and M40 commuters. The problem is that the proposed SRFI would occupy precisely the land needed for that access. The fields south of the rail line provide the obvious location for bus interchange, park and ride facilities, and future expansion. Yet those areas would be consumed by the warehouse development. The proposal leaves no credible space for the wider transport hub the new station would ultimately require. Perversely, the applicant proposes a rail development where 88, 88 percent of employees would arrive in passenger cars, while permanently constraining the future passenger station that could reduce car dependence across Oxfordshire. This examination must decide whether this development should foreclose on one of Oxfordshire's most promising future public transport opportunities, once this land is built on, the opportunity to create an artly passenger station with the necessary supporting infrastructure would be permanently lost. This would also adversely impact transportation options for the proposed Pet de Fu Lesure Park and the proposed Baynet Greens logistics escape date just north of the M40 junction 10. That cumulative adverse impact must also be considered. I therefore invite the examining authority to conclude that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development adequately safeguards the future delivery of a genuinely viable Artley station. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you, mr. Nostrand. Thank you. Again, I think we we discussed that in some detail earlier on. There were some points raised, but I appreciate you raising those again and making those submissions. Is there anything the applicant wishes to come back on at this stage on that, or anything else that has been raised?

Speaker 2

I think probably no, sir. Simply to confirm that we reject entirely the proposition that our development will itself frustrate delivery of an Ardley passenger station proposal that's not accepted, and we have to, at the present time, also query whether or not the Ardley passenger station option or proposition is indeed a viable one, as has just been suggested, because there isn't currently a business case in respect of it. But I mean, it's not the development that's before you, sir, and it's no part of this application. All we say is that we don't frustrate it. Thank you, sir.

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you, thank you for that. Well, I think if there's nothing else on on that item, I think that moves us on to the next item on the agenda, which is action points. And I'm just double checking because, in the wonderful world of technology, we have somebody else drafting our action points. I'm just going to make sure that they've appeared where they should do. And I don't think I've got. There is there was a couple of things that you said you were going to take away, but I don't think they're actually action points in in their own right. To be honest, so there are just some clarification on numbers and bits and pieces. But I think they've just so, as far as I'm concerned, actually there aren't any real particular specific action points that I that I identified at this stage, so so yeah, okay. Okay, well, I think if that moves us on to agenda item five, which is any other business, is there anything else in the room that anybody else wishes to to raise on on the matters that we've been discussed or anything else? Did I see mr. Broad,

Speaker 13

if you'll permit me, something was said earlier on which I would like to refute, which is that there is no SRFI anywhere in the country where the railway goes into the warehouse. There is. It's Bicester Military. Bicester Military has been like that for 70 years, where the railway goes into the warehouses and unloads. And you might find it interesting that if you look in a local transport and connectivity plan number four, which is Oxfordshire County Council's local transport plan. That was going to be the SRFI for this area. To the moment, it's a military site, but they were going to move out, and that was going to be the SRFI. It was also in Charwell's local plan as an SRFI, and all you had to do was use it. It's already built; just had to use it. But unfortunately, we're going to do something and wreck a load of countryside again.

Speaker 1

I'm sure that's something the applicant may well pick up and respond to should they should they feel the should they feel the need to. But again, if you submit the information to us, then it's there in front of us, and that's what we'd say. Yep. Is there anybody online who's got any points that they wish to raise? I don't think there is actually anybody online. Nope. Okay. Is there anything final the applicant wishes to raise at this stage?

Speaker 2

Aliana Booth. applicant. No, sir. Thank you very much indeed, and thank you for your attention this afternoon. But no, nothing further from us.

Speaker 1

Okay, thank you very much for that. I think that concludes our business, certainly for this afternoon. As I mentioned before, the recording of the meeting will be published on the National Infrastructure website as soon as possible after this hearing, so you'll be able to watch that back if there's comments you need to review. Just remind you that I think we've mentioned it before. Issue specific two will take place in here at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. The agendas should be available online for you to have a look at. Registration will commence as for the preliminary meeting at 9:30. And again, anybody who's attending online or watching the live stream will need to sort of access that via the specific link that's been sent out for that for that hearing. What I would also remind you is that if there are post-hearing submissions, so that's answers to any further information or statements that you've made, if you could submit those to us in writing by deadline one, which is Tuesday, the 13th of October. So the time is now 5:25, and this issue-specific hearing is now closed. Thank you for your time and your contributions.