Planning Inspectorate
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Hearing Transcript

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TUES, Nov 10, 2026 2:00PM • 1:00:56

Speaker 1 00:05
Good afternoon, everybody. It's 2o'clock, and it's time for this hearing to begin. So, I'd like to welcome you all to this open floor hearing for the Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Project. I think everybody can, but can I just confirm you can all hear me clearly? Excellent. Thank you very much, and can I also confirm with mr. Shearer that the live streaming and the recording of the event has commenced? Excellent. Thank you very much. My name is Adrian Hunter, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application. Just before we go through some housekeeping matters, I'm just going to ask the rest of the panel if they could just introduce themselves, please.

Speaker 2 00:42
Good afternoon. My name is Alex Oyebade. I'm a chartered transport planner and have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

Speaker 3 00:56
Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Guy Rigby. I'm a chartered civil engineer, and I've also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

Speaker 1 01:09
Thank you, both. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. We're also supported by other members of the Planning Inspectorate, some of whom you have probably met as you came in. Our case manager is mr. Matthew Sheard, and we're also joined by mrs. Donnelly's and mr. Will McSporren, and they can be found at the back of the room. And if you need any support or assistance, they're there to to help you. Just a few housekeeping matters, if I could, before we get going. If I ask you to make sure all devices are set to silence, that would be excellent. Toilets are located at the end of the corridor. Should you need them, we are not expecting a fire alarm. We had a practice this morning, so hopefully we're not expecting a another practice. And b if it does go off, the evacuation routes are either end of the end of room, and then we meet in the car park. Just some of the logistics for for this hearing. We haven't prepared an agenda, this open floor hearing, because its purpose is really to hear representations from interested parties who have registered to make oral representations, and these should elaborate on your written submissions that have already been received to date. The order in which we will call you will be based on the list that we've been provided with case by our case team, and basically it's just based on the order of that when you are registered, so there's no no specific order that you're calling you in, other than the list that we have in front of us. Today's hearing is being undertaken in a virtual way, sorry, in a hybrid way, which means some of you are joining us virtually and others are joining you in the venue. However, you're choosing to participate, we'll make sure you get the best chance to to participate and express your views to us. A recording of today's meeting will be made available on the project page of the National Infrastructure website as soon as possible after this hearing is closed, and the transcript will also be made available as well. So, with this in mind, when you do speak, please can you make sure you clearly state your name and who you represent when you start speaking? A link to the planning inspector's privacy notice was provided in the notification for this hearing, and we assume that you've all read this and are familiar with this document. If you're not, the case team again can help you with any sort of issues you have with

regards to data protection. In terms of the purpose of today, let me just sort of briefly run through how we expect it to work. The open floor hearings are very much an opportunity for you to raise anything directly to to us as the examining authority that is important and relevant, and you think that we should know about and consider. It's not about a particular topic; the topic of your representations and is up to yourselves. So there's no hence the reason there's no agenda. We're not intending on setting a strict time limit because we've not got that many people who are looking to speak. However, if you could keep your submissions concise and to the point and be concluded in about 10 minutes, that that would help us. I'd also remind you that we have actually read and seen all the submissions that everybody's made to date, so you don't need to go through those in in some length. By all means, summarise what you've done, and if you do, please give us the examination library reference number as well. That would be enormously helpful. Once you've spoken, we may well have questions for you, so please do do hang around just to see if we have any questions. We would normally give the applicant the opportunity to speak, but I think they've said that they're probably just going to listen for the time being. So we probably may ask them if they do want to speak at the end, but I suspect the answer is probably not, given there's nobody there. But we'll at least check just to be on the safe side.

Speaker 1 04:27
So in terms of people who I've got registered to speak, I've got four on my list, and then I think I've got an additional couple that were just been sort of registered. So if I go through those, and then we can make sure we've got everybody wants. So I've got mr. North Strand. I've got mrs. Helen Christie from Galos Brook, who I don't think is here. I've got mr. Richard Allen. Thank you. I have Councillor Epps. Thank you. And then I also have a mr. Matt Bazell and Dr. George Moncrief. But you don't want to speak. That's fine. Okay. So it's so it's just mr. Bazell's wanting to speak. Okay. That's brilliant. Is there anybody else in the room or online whose name I haven't caused was expecting to to contribute to today's meeting? Nope, not seeing anything. Okay, so in that area, we'll therefore proceed in that area. So if I could start with mr. Nortrand, please.

Speaker 4 05:47
Thank you very much, sir. So, I'd like to make a few additional comments this afternoon, in addition to the written submissions that that I've already made and add a few points. And point number one is about Artley Station and the future prospects for reinstating that station. This the issue of rail was discussed in the in the previous hearing, but since that hearing, I have been able to obtain a copy of this report, which was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council from a consultancy called SLC, that discusses the potential reinstatement of the station, and as you may recall from the earlier discussions, the applicant's position is that that this project does not preclude or even to some extent benefit the prospect of reopening Artley Station, but in making those conclusions, the applicant is assuming that Ardley Station should be only a small stopping station that serves the local area, and and not a station that has a broader strategic importance. And I want to I want to share a few quotes here from the SLC report that talks about Artley's potential role as either a small station or a larger strategic station, and one of them is that a wider parkway or strategic access road could serve a broader catchment area than a proposed Ardley Bypass via the proposed Artley Pass, M40 Junction 10, and the A43 corridor, and could also support access to emerging visitor destinations in the wider area, including the pretty few attractions near Bicester. This wider role could strengthen the demand, revenue, and funding case, but would require a larger footprint, stronger access arrangements, and careful management of environmental and local traffic impacts, and also that these dependencies that is described mean that the next stage should preserve optionality and test a range of station roads, rather than prematurely defining Artley as either a local station or a wider strategic parkway facility. So I'm not going to read out the whole the whole report today, but and I believe that Oxfordshire County Council has offered to file the the report with you, and I'm also obviously happy to file the the copy that I have. But I do want to draw attention to this because with the current proposals, they they would preclude this larger artly footprint that is being discussed in these reports. It would lock the station to

this small local role. So I think that is is one quite important new piece of information to add to this. I'm happy to take questions now, or move on to the second point. If if if

Speaker 1 09:36
you just carry on, then we'll pick up questions at the end if we've got any. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 4 09:40
So the second point that I would like to address is to build a little bit on the discussion we had this morning about the need for compulsory acquisition and the question of whether that could be avoided by. Making reasonable modifications to the to the scheme, I already briefly addressed the BIFA facility and the surprising ability of the applicant to maintain the water treatment facility right next to the BIFA facility, while the BIFA, while at the same time considering it essential to to to effect compulsory acquisition of the BIFA facility, and the applicant previously pointed out that the they have an agreement with the owners of the land, but obviously BIFA is a tenant on that land and also has rights and interests in in this. And the examining authority obviously also needs to consider the interests of of tenants on the land before authorising compulsory acquisition. Another example of the opportunities to make adjustments to the programme is the example of Ashgrove Cottages, that is Plot Five Slash Four, where again the applicant is asserting that there is a compelling case for compulsory acquisition, and that no reasonable alternatives exist. They need to. They say that they need this land for redevelopment as rail and estate management offices and welfare facilities, and just for the examining authorities to see the the property that we're talking about. It is it's a residential building, and my understanding is that there are currently tenants in there, and that the applicant is asking to asking the authority to recommend that those rights are extinguished, and again, a reasonable modification that could avoid the need for compulsory acquisition and vacant position of ashgrow cottages would be to accommodate rail and estate management offices and welfare facilities elsewhere within the OX SRFI site, and the applicant must explain why such a small amount of office space could not reasonably be provided elsewhere within the very large SRFI site. I mean, this is this is a small residential building. I don't know, but two, 300 square metres, perhaps, which seems quite small in in the context of a project that is that covers several square kilometres. And the final example that I would like to highlight is the Dorchester drainage facility that is plot 418, as was as became clear this morning, the negotiations between the applicant and Dorchester have not reached a conclusion, and and the applicant is again asserting a compelling case in the public interest for authorising compulsory acquisition, and they also claiming that no reasonable alternatives exist. They need the land for construction of rail serviced warehousing, including ancillary offices and other buildings. And just to show plot number 418, it is this yellow area here, very close to the boundary. You can see the site boundary over here, marked in red. And by my estimates, and and essentially they need this land for warehouses in Zone 5A, A5, and it seems that it would be possible to avoid compulsory acquisition by reducing the warehouse estate in that zone by approximately 10,000 square metres, and again, 10,000 square metres is less than 2% of the overall site footprint, and so the applicant will need to explain why the OXSRFI site could not serve its essential rail freight purposes with marginally less warehousing space in Zone A five. So, in conclusion, as these examples show, it appears that the request for compulsory acquisition has not. Adequately considered quite reasonable modifications to the to the scheme. It seems that commercial necessity or commercial convenience has been the driver rather than operational necessity, and and the applicant has not explained why the site could not function as a strategic rail freight interchange if this land were not acquired or given in in vacant position? Thank you.

Speaker 1 15:42
Thank you, mr. Nostrand. I just have one point, rather than anything else, actually, and rather than a question, which was just to make sure that the report that you referred to, regardless of whether the council submitted, if you could make sure that that comes in, that would be that would be enormously

helpful to us, and that means that we can then get comments from from other parties on that. But before you go, I just want to check whether any of the members of the panel have got any questions. No, thank you very much for that. Thank you. So next on my list is mr. Richard Allen.

Speaker 5 16:39
My name is Richard Allen. I would like to talk today about the forever chemicals, often known as PFAS issue.

Speaker 3 17:05
Excuse me, mr. Allen. Could you speak a little closer to the microphone so recording comes out well? Just put it quite close. You can move the the red end so it's closer. You can move the asset if you get it closer to your mouth. Thank you.

Speaker 5 17:20
Is that better? Thank you. So the major issue about forever chemicals is the urgent need for comprehensive soil and water testing for PFAS, PFOS, and PFOA, all known as forever chemicals. These are complex toxins that do not break down; they last for decades, if not centuries, in soil and waterways. They are carcinogenic, leading to kidney and testicle cancers, fertility problems, low low birth weight, thyroid disease, weakened immune response in children and other illnesses. They are now predominantly banned worldwide. The origins come from the former Air Force base, both U.S. Air Force and then RAF Air Force Base at Upper Hayford, where PFAS is in the form of aqueous film floating foams A triple F were used extensively in firefighting training. This site of the base is on top of the great oolite limestone plateau, beneath which is the principal aquifer, which is a massive underground reservoir from which streams spread to many miles around, potentially contaminating a wide area. Callum Miller MP recently confirmed from the had confirmation from the MOD that these chemicals would merely wash down the drain. Two of the contaminated streams flow through the OXSRFI site, namely the tributaries of the Padbury and Gaggle Brook. So my request is there should be Extensive testing, very extreme remediation required, if this is even possible, before any building work can start. Otherwise, the application should be denied. To put it in perspective, a comparison of this issue, and I think it was mr. Rigby who raised the question in an earlier hearing when I was attending. Was this equivalent to an asbestos type of crisis? I would say absolutely, it is causing asbestos crisis. Obviously, caused. Lung cancer and other respiratory illnesses. However, these forever chemicals are worse than asbestosis, as it is spread for miles and cannot easily or so easily be removed. What form does this issue take? PFAS are waterborne, both ground and surface water, but they are also distributed up to 10 kilometres in the air, disturbing the soil to build warehouses and new railway lines deeper than normal agricultural ploughing will stir up contaminated soil and expose the public and site workers. Another point, mr. Rigby asked at an earlier hearing. This is further accentuated by local flooding, which leaves a toxic sediment. Local examples of concern is I personally know an eminent doctor who stopped growing vegetables and stopped his grandchildren playing in his local stream, and a lady reluctant to sell eggs from her nearby farm because they're both concerned about contamination. What local testing has been done? You can see the article in yesterday's Times of the the London Times, where it was reported that 61% of samples tested for PFAS from freshwater sites across the UK across the UK contain PFAS chemicals, and they were only testing for four strands of these PFAS, and there are about 40. And the eminent professor from Imperial College London said he expected that 61% of sampling to be positive to go up massively. Was his quote in the Times article? Hayford Park's own testing revealed results which were 11 times greater than the previous UK worst hotspot in which was in Bentham in Yorkshire, over 4,000 milligrammes per kilo, compared to a mere 359 at Bentham. And even worse, Sabada Consulting for the Gallus Brook Group, who I think will be presenting tomorrow, their tests have revealed results that are 43,000 times. I repeat that 43,000 times higher than the recognised UK limit. What concerns have previously been expressed. Potential PFAS contamination

was acknowledged by the 2021 Hydroc ground conditions report produced for for OXSRFI, and also by Cherwell District Council in an email from mr. Sean of the Fleet. Furthermore, the fire training area has never been remediated, despite this being recommended by the Planning Inspectorate in 2009 at the Planning Appeal for the initial redevelopment of the RAF Upper Heyford site. Other UK PFAS hotspots mentioned Bentham in North Yorkshire and Thornton Cleveland, who both have elevated levels of PFAS, where the residents have been proven to have elevated levels of PFAS in their blood. RAF Fairford, recently in the news and the National Fire Service College. What's been happening in the EU? As one example, I'd like to quote: Albi sued Salzburg Airport in Austria for PFAS contamination in their new headquarters building.

Speaker 5 24:59
In Salzburg, they had to cancel plans to build a multi-storey underground car park because of concerns about the contamination, and they were awarded 4 million euros for the impact of the delays and the extra costs. What's been happening in the U.S. by further way of comparison, 3M agreed to pay up to 12.5 billion dollars for contaminated drinking water with forever chemicals in June 2023. A Wall Street Journal article on the 22nd of June refers to that. The same company, 3M, also agreed to pay 7.4 billion to 120,000 plaintiffs over nine years in 2026, and that's a recent article in the Times dated the 4th of November 2026. DuPont, different company, reached an 875 million settlement with New Jersey in August 25, and a further $455 million settlement with North Carolina in September 2026. Massive 27 U.S. states are suing the U.S. Department of Defence over a FFF. that's the foam suppressant contamination at military sites. So I think you will agree with me that there is a lot of precedent outside of the UK, and we've been rather complacent to wake up to this issue. In conclusion, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires developers, as I understand it, to show that risks from contaminations are not unacceptable prior to permission being granted. Not sure we can say that. So, in order to decide on risks, very extensive testing for PFAS, including an intrusive ground investigation and controlled waters assessment, will be absolutely necessary. That concludes my presentation on PFAS. I would like to also address another point, if I may.

Speaker 1 27:29
You can just before I move off PFAS. I'll just see if there's any questions, and then we can move off to anything else. No, I think that's that's fine. So thank you for that. Yes, if you want to move on to move on to your your next, thank you.

Speaker 5 27:43
My second point is on a different topic: is the massive cumulative impact on traffic and infrastructure? It's going to have the cumulative impact of all these major developments in the area are going to clog up our local roads and infrastructure. These roads, according to Cherwell District Council's own measurements in their in their existing local plan, are already the worst in the whole of well, particularly the Baynars Green roundabout, which is currently well, which was in several years ago, was at 160% of capacity in the morning peak rush hour. That's obviously got considerably worse subsequently. I go through that roundabout pretty much every day. Whenever there are road problems on the A43 or the M40, which regretfully happen far too frequently, the knock-on effect is immediate. They cause even worse congestion in the area and dangerous rat running through the local villages. In the future, traffic traffic flows will be made even worse by the advent of the several very large development proposals in the immediate area. In particular, the Puy de Fou French theme park, pulling in potentially nearly one and a half million visitors per annum onto the B 4100 road. The Hayford Park housing development for an additional 9,000 houses, plus the Baynards Green Warehouse proposal operating 24 hours a day, on top of this current topic, the OXSRFI rail depot at Ardley. Potentially employing 9,600 employees. In the future, the cumulative effect from all these major developments in the immediate area is exceptional, according to their own documents of these developers, not my figures, their figures.

There's a staggering 50 million extra vehicle movements per annum. I repeat that: 50 million extra vehicle movements per annum in a very tight geographical area, about three or four kilometres wide. That's 136, 136,000 extra vehicle movements per day. I can share this detailed analysis with you if required. And the proposed traffic fix for these warehouses and developments is a mere tinkering by comparison to what is needed. So I would submit that just merely judging an individual development on its merits, is no longer sufficient. I'm a businessman. I'm used to looking at strategic plans. These are micro plans, looking at individual things, not understanding what's going on elsewhere. In the context of so many very large development schemes being proposed in such a small area, we respectfully ask the inspectors to seriously consider the combined effect from these cumulative schemes and reject the proposal. This is an exceptional situation requiring exceptional consideration and judgement. I would submit. Thank you.

Speaker 1 31:46
It's great. Thank you. If I could just ask one one question or clarification, you referred to 50 million extra vehicles per annum, and you said their figures. Do you know where that reference is from? No, it's not. But if you could make sure we have that, just so we can see that in in context, that would be helpful. We

Speaker 5 32:01
have a subsequent analysis that shows how that figure is made up, development by development, taking the figures from the developer's own submissions.

Speaker 1 32:09
So, is that something you can provide?

Speaker 5 32:11
Absolutely.

Speaker 1 32:12
Yeah, that'd be really helpful. So we can see that in in context. Yeah, that's great. No, thank you for those submissions. No further questions. Thank you very much. Next on my list is Councillor Apes.

Speaker 6 33:46
I'm sorry I wasn't able to join previous sessions, but I'm particularly grateful for the opportunity to attend today. I'm keen to cover four main subjects. Firstly, the challenge of cumulative impacts in this area. Secondly, some of the residential impacts on behalf of residents of Hayford Park. Thirdly, matters related to the Ardley Station, and then finally some points about heavy goods vehicle movements off the strategic road network. So, if I start with some remarks about the context and cumulative impacts in the area, which build on what you've heard from from previous speakers. The communities in the Cherwell Valley and around Ardley are currently the subject of quite unprecedented planning pressure, barely any of which forms part of a strategic and planned approach. As you'll have heard, there are a number of speculative planning applications, including the Albion Land Tritax warehouses at Baynard's Green, the proposed Puy du Fou theme park near Bucknell, and three applications totalling 9600 new homes and other development at Hayford Park. The ability. To control impacts in light of this unprecedented situation is must be an enormous challenge for the examining authority here, and combined with the impact of this proposal, not to mention the PFAS situation, this is causing significant levels of local concern. And as Hayford Park Parish Council put it in its written representations, the cumulative impact of all these developments on the road network is likely to far exceed the road modelling figures used by this rail freight interchange. On PFAS, I can do no more than stand alongside the excellent work that has been done by the Gallusbrook campaign and the points mr. Allen has has

just made. I chair a forum set up by Oxfordshire County Council after some pressure from myself and others that's run jointly by the county and Cherwell District Council, focusing on these major planning applications in the in the area, and formed as a result of a roundtable I held last September with about 15 parish councils as these major planning submissions emerged, there's a clear question of precedent around this because there is there appears to be no formal precedent within the UK for addressing the cumulative impacts of planning applications which fall out with the local plan and are by their nature speculative, so the forum, the Hayford Park and Junction 10 forum, as we've termed it, remains an advisory body, which gives it challenge in terms in terms of building local confidence that we are able to to examine, define, and limit the cumulative impacts of this this submission and all the others that that may be taking place in the area. Now, I've spent some time looking at the ways in which such impacts have been addressed elsewhere. Whereas there's a threshold at which an environmental impact must be produced for a single application, and if you have a local plan process, there are ways in which you can manage cumulative impacts. In the circumstances we find ourselves in in the area around Ardlene Hayford Park, there is no such facility or process in the UK. Indeed, the regular town and country planning act process stipulates that applications must be dealt with in isolation. Now, on Crossrail, where there were significant cumulative impacts, albeit in an area of a very different nature, these were generally dealt with by condition through the hybrid bill process, and typically through a decision made of the parliamentary select committee, which would require bilateral or trilateral discussions. There was a particular precedent that took place on High Speed One, going back to the Channel Tunnel rail link days in the London borough of Camden, in an area which I think was called Cooper's Green, and that was a trilateral body that was set up by request of the Houses of Parliament, Crossrail used a similar mechanism. On HS2, for example, at Euston and at Arden Cross near Birmingham Interchange, a similar process has has arisen. Now, at present here, there are particular issues of concern around the impact of the highway network, particularly the strategic road network, the M40, A34, A43 under the jurisdiction of National Highways, and also in terms of utility capacity, notably on the grid and in terms of water.

Speaker 6 38:31
And there are genuine concerns, as you'd expect, when you have around 70,000 additional vehicle movements per day in in the area, which is more or less a tripling of current volume of traffic, of which around 20,000 would come from this development, I would encourage the examining authority to either address these cumulative impacts within the powers that you have directly, or to think creatively of how we can find ways to address these within a formal structure rather than something advisory, which is what we've set up at the moment. I don't know if if you have any questions on that, or whether you'd like me to to carry on.

Speaker 1 39:11
No, I suggest if you just just carry on, and then if there are questions, we'll we'll pick those up at the end. Okay,

Speaker 6 39:15
no no problem at all. I want to just turn very very briefly to the residential impacts, which is a particular impact on residents in Hayford Park, which is a fast-growing community. There's significant emerging science about the effects of noise pollution and other environmental impacts on residents, and particularly on children, on their development. The environmental impacts on residents and Hayford Park, particularly the east of Hayford Park, as things stand, is particularly negative. And as I've said in my submissions, the mitigation against light pollution, in particular, and noise, is inadequate. In that there would be a significant negative impact if these plants were to go ahead, compared. To the environment in which these residents are living now, and there are demographically there are a lot of school children within within Hayford Park. It is very much a younger demographic than the rest of my

county division, for example. The visual impact of the proposed warehouses is hugely significant from the existing properties in each of Hayford Park, and I hope you're you're able to to visit that, and of course there could potentially be far more residents in in that area. The other residential amenity that has arisen and has arisen particularly over the summer is around eastbound vehicular access for residents of Hayford Park, and the impacts particularly during the construction process. Should the plans go go ahead, it's absolutely vital that that eastbound vehicular access for residents of Hayford Park is retained throughout the construction period, and I haven't seen now it may be buried in the hundreds of documents we have before us, but I haven't seen confirmation that access via Camp Road onto the b4 B 430 will continue when the existing link between Hayford Park and the B 430 is is rebuilt as it would be under these plats. Now, since June, we've seen a six month rolling road closure along Camp Road, which is the spine road that runs through Hayford Park, which is the busiest road by volume in my county division. That rolling road closure has been caused by a housing developer. It's essentially utility works, but it has resulted in absolute chaos, affecting lorries, buses, and has caused significant disruption to the bus network and regular traffic jams of 3040 minutes delay, and I don't I don't want residents in Hayford Park to be put under that level of of inconvenience. The bulk of traffic flow out of Hayford Park is eastbound, and so regardless of the current hybrid application, it's highly likely the village will have significantly grown by the time construction is underway, and that traffic impact, I think, is is is very important. I'll move on to the proposed Ardi passenger rail station, which is something that's very very close close to my heart, and I wanted to respond to some of the remarks made by promoters in response to the recent pre feasibility study carried out by Oxfordshire County Council, and those were the remarks that they had in what their document 10.3 B, which is PINSREF TR 050008. As you know, the feasibility study makes it clear that the relationship between an Ardley passenger station and the SRFI is a key immediate issue. The proposals could materially improve the strategic accessibility of the station area through the proposed Ardley bypass and highway works. However, that benefit will only be realised if a suitable station access connection is delivered or safeguarded. Without this, the station would remain severely constrained. With vehicular access continuing to have to rely on routes through through Ardley Village, there's an additional complication there in terms of the quantum of car parking. Now, there's strong local support for the need to ensure this application doesn't compromise that Ardley Station proposal, which is in my view absolutely essential to keep the area moving, should any of these major developments go go ahead, and the station proposal is also fully aligned to the county council's transport policies to avoid rapid expansion of Oxfordshire ending up in complete gridlock. In particular, allowance needs to be made for a station car park, and this under this proposal, the land immediately south of the station on its former pre-beaching footprint appears to be taken by the rail freight interchange. I'm very concerned that the application constrains that future performance of a station, whatever any future pattern of service, and at the very least, access must be facilitated. mr.

Speaker 6 44:05
Nordstrand's made that point very, very well this morning. I would suggest that land at the eastern corner of the site, closest to the current B430, could and should facilitate car parking, and that application should be designed to allow for that for this flexibility, and that specifically car parking related to a future passenger station, whether it's a shared use or otherwise, substantial developer funding is likely to come forward to fund a station, and it seems to me to be slightly illogical to attest, as the promoter does in section 2.4 in the document I referenced earlier, that you build a rail station next to a major employer, as this would be, and pretend then that nobody would use it to travel to work. That that simply doesn't stand up. The pre-feasibility study has been published and a public update given at the October cabinet meeting of the county council. I know that document has been offered to the. Vectors, and I'd commend them to you to have a look at that. The final point I wanted wanted to make, which is a quite narrow point, but again, I think it's important in this context, is around HGV movements and the local road network. Now, the promoters have firmed up the protection for Ardleigh, Fritwell, and Somerton in the form of an area weight restriction enforced by ANPR cameras. This is very welcome,

and I fully support that because all three villages are manifestly unsuitable for HGV through traffic. And whenever HGVs do stray into one of the villages, it causes problems because they get stuck. However, there's a broader context which isn't addressed in in the promoters' submission here, but has been addressed by Deadington Parish Council and by others. To the west of the proposed site in Hayford Park, you've got the River Cherwell, and there are very few crossings of River of the River Cherwell, and there are no real modern crossings anywhere near the the site. The nearest three crossings have all got constraints. Somerton Bridge has got both a height restriction and a structural weight restriction, and that's offered protection by the area weight restriction that's contained within the applicant's submission, which is fine. However, the same is not true of the next nearest crossings, the one at Roushman Bridge and the one at Clifton. To the north, Clifton is on the b4 103 one between Anahoe and Deddington. It's got an existing 7.5 tonne environmental weight restriction, which is regularly breached, and that road is at risk of being used in the event of any disruption to the strategic road network. To the south, Roushman Bridge, to the west of Lower Hayford, is Grade Two Star listed, dates back to 1255, probably in its current form dates back to the 14th century, has pointed mediaeval arches and traffic signals. Neither of these are suitable as HGV rolls, even as an emergency route in diversion. Now you've heard that the strategic road network is already at capacity. While the promoters have designed improvements to the road network to mitigate the impact of their development, there isn't a sign of a plan by National Highways to confirm that the capacity at Junction 10 and Baynard's Green, in particular, will be able to cope with the combined impact of not only this but all the other developments. And this is at a point in the in the UK Strategic Road Network Junctions 9 and 10 of the M40, which is the one point if you drive between Southampton and Scotland, when the works at Winchester at Junction Nine and the M3 are complete, where vehicles will have to stop at lights and at roundabouts, that is the extent of the existing bottleneck. To put things in in context, I think there is a very very strong case, given the pressure already exists on that junction, and the risk of significant diversions as soon as anything goes wrong, for there to be ANPR protection at Clifton, and I think for the examining authority to consider what contingency measures there are in the event of disruption on the strategic road network and and where heavy wood vehicle vehicles could be directed. That's all I have to say. Thank you. I'm happy to take any questions.

Speaker 1 48:37
Thank you very much. I don't have any questions, but no, not at this point. So no, thank you very much for that. That's really helpful. Thank you. And finally, on my list, I have mr. Basley.

Speaker 7 49:22
I have a number of observations and questions that I would like to see clarification on or register a position, which I hope the panel will take into consideration. They are, however, relatively tactical, but given my assumption that we will have the SRFI imposed upon us at some point, I ask that the panel feed these issues into the planning and development detail as it moves forward. As I said, I am assuming that it is always dangerous to do that. Sadly, we will have the planning request approved, and that being the case, please consider the following: Can it please be recorded that the proposed Ardley bypass is completed before? Before the SRFI site construction development starts, if this is not the case, the impact on the construction traffic moving up and down the B430 through Ardley will be catastrophic. It is already a ridiculously busy B road, particularly if there are any delays or issues with traffic flow on the A34 or M40, and the B430 becomes a cut through. Therefore, the Ardley Bypass must be completed first, with the B430 then being shut off at the Ardley Railway Bridge, as indicated in the original plan to stop construction traffic seeking to cut through. I also ask that measures are taken to put full sound protection along the bypass with bunding and noise mitigation measures at the same time. Secondly, can you please ensure that the proposed development site will have full noise and light pollution mitigation measures on the north side of the railway line to reduce the impact on the village of Ardley, which is less than one kilometre to the north. For example, I would suggest that all the lighting towers should be orientated to the south, but I accept the point made by an earlier speaker that that just

shifts the problem possibly onto Hayford and surrounding villages. Thirdly, noting that trains moving along the line can already be heard in the village, can you please ensure that measures or limitations are put in place to impose constraints on rail operations as large, noisy diesel freight trains come and go? There should therefore, for example, be a restriction on operation between the hours of 2100 hours and 0700 hours. Finally, as other speakers have mentioned, can I ask that in considering this application, it is specified that there must be full deconfliction undertaken with the other significant developments proposed in the area, namely the Baynards Green mass storage facility and the Puy de Foy amusement park near Bucknell, as well as the nearly 100 car transporters that move between the M40 Junction 10 and the vehicle storage facility at Upper Hayford Airbase on a daily basis, the scale of construction and associated traffic within a three or four kilometre radius will be simply overwhelming for the roads, and from a traffic perspective, it will become an utter mess. Thank you.

Speaker 1 52:36
Thank you. No questions. Just just an observation, which I'll refer to anyway in my closing is that what we'll ask everybody to do is submit their statements that you've made to us by the next deadline, which is Tuesday the 24th of November. The way the process will work is, of course, the applicant in the back of the room hearing what you're saying and presumably watching as well. They will see your comments and hopefully they will then sort of respond to your comments with how they propose to sort of deal with some of those. So if you submit that, keep an eye on on the next deadline, where hopefully they will they'll provide responses to those. So that's that's how the process should work. Missed it twice. I've not heard anything back. Okay. Well, there may well be that there's there's stuff on there that that you need to sort of have a have a look at. But yes, thank you. That's everybody we have on our list who wants to speak. But just before I move to close, can I just check that there's nobody else online or anybody else in the room who doesn't wish to speak? Yes, if by all means, if you just introduce yourself, that'd be great.

Speaker 8 53:46
Good afternoon, and thank you very much for this opportunity. I didn't come here today planning or prepared to speak, but I'm very grateful for for this time. I have two or three points I'd like to bring to your attention. The first, I suppose, is an observation. I'm intrigued that it's called the Strategic Rail Freight Depot. I I can't see how it's got anything to do with rail. As a local resident, I I realise that the the rail needs to be on a north-south line, and this is an east-west line, and to get rail from the south to this would mean either going around the west side of Bicester, but the gradient the trains would need to climb is too great for a train to manage that, so the trains would have to go as far as Princess Risborough before they can then turn round. And that's a busy commuter line, and will be completely blocked by a train doing that. So I think to call it strategic rail might sound ecologically rather attractive, but I think it's trying to pull the wool over eyes. This is going to be a strategic lorry freight depot, and we're therefore going to see enormous number of lorry movements, and with the infrastructure problems that have been so eloquently described by my previous speakers, really raises enormous concerns as a local resident as to what life in this part of North Oxfordshire is going to become like for the local residents. My second concern is around PFAS, and the levels we've been talking about, and the levels that have been recorded, and the levels recorded specifically even by Dorchester, who've done their own work, are not just high. These are astronomically high levels, and when you talked about the number, how many times they are higher than the safe limit, you need to bear in mind that in countries like Australia, the safe limit is a third of what we are accepting as being the safe limit in the UK. We are behind the times regarding what we consider is safe, so we are talking about extraordinarily high levels, and there's little doubt in my mind that disturbing the ground for the purposes of building warehousing or infrastructure for roads or housing on Dorchester Living's Hayford Park site will be increasing those levels catastrophically into the water systems that not only are supplying as far as Bedford and beyond, but also down to the site of special scientific interest in Western Fens, where where the levels are going to be having catastrophic ecological consequences. I

think to continue disturbing the ground with any further development, any further spades in the ground, will be, I think, in my mind, criminally negligent, and that is something the local residents are increasingly thinking about, challenging in a court. It's been done abroad. We are seriously considering that if any further development is done, this could be so criminally negligent that we will be chasing that up in courts. And then I'd like to echo the concerns about the infrastructure. The infrastructure is not just the roads, and they've already been described as being utterly catastrophic. But it is also the relative lack of water, until we have a reservoir in Abingdon or nearby, I believe the water is only where they're going to handle the need for more water for all these constructions, as well as the ongoing use, will be by lowering the pressure. It is already beyond capacity for water. Electricity is the same problem, and then we got all the other infrastructure issues that come with this sort of development. So I couldn't agree more. We need to have any infrastructure in place well in advance, and that includes also a bypass around Middleton Stoney. Just to name the number of bypasses is going to be considerable, and every time they do a bypass, it's going to be even more complete chaos. Just putting a sewage down the road in Hayford Park has caused carnage, as Matthew absolutely pointed out so clearly, for six months or more, and and the roads around it are absolutely at beyond capacity, and we are seeing already articulated lorries and these lorries carrying multiple cars on them going through the village of Low of Middleton Stoney, totally illegally. They ignore the rules.

Speaker 8 58:53
So it's a passionate plea that one you need to look at all of these development plans in in the round, and secondly to sort out infrastructure beforehand if we must go ahead, and thirdly just to consider the legal consequences of continuing to destroy or disturb the ground in an area that is highly likely to be contaminated because it's in the downstream downwind of the airbase, and that is all I had really to say. But thank you very much indeed. It's from the heart. I'm not prepared, but a highly concerned resident, and I'm sure I'm speaking on behalf of many hundreds of local residents.

Speaker 1 59:36
Thank you. Appreciate that. And I have no questions. No, that's fine. Thank you very much. Don't think there is anybody else in the room who wishes to speak. Given the applicant haven't joined us, I'm not going to ask the applicant if they they want to speak or make any contribution. So really, I think it now just sort of moves. To close the meeting, so thank you for all your participation. It's been sort of very helpful and extremely useful to us to hear your comments and your thoughts. Digital recording the proceedings will be made available on the website as soon as practically possible after the close of this hearing. As I did mention, it would be great if you could submit everything that you've presented to us. The deadline for that is deadline three, which is Tuesday, the 24th of November. Again, if you have any issues or questions about how to submit that, the case team will be able to to help with that. And just a reminder that issue specific hearing three will commence tomorrow in this room at 930, where some of the issues that you've highlighted will also be discussed again. So, by all means, join us if you want. The time is now 3o'clock, and the issue-specific hearing for the Oxfordshire Strategic Railfront Interchange is now closed. Thank you very much.