

COMMENTS FROM MR. D.C. BILL MBE CC, MR. M. MULLANEY CC, AND MR. S. BRAY CC

Proposed Hinckley Rail Freight Terminal

I write to express concerns about Agenda item 7 at Cabinet on Friday 5th February.

The paper for the agenda item appears to be a holding paper which alerts Cabinet members to a supplementary report which will be either tabled at the Cabinet meeting or shortly before. This gives members very little, if any, opportunity to review the “identified risks” as mentioned to comment on whether these risks are covering the breadth or depth of the many concerns members in this quarter of the County fear.

We recognise that Hinckley is at the heart of the country’s road distribution network and this makes it an attractive location for operators to relocate. We also recognise the **potential** benefits of rail freight terminals in removing long-distance lorries from the strategic road network.

However, we have serious concerns about this proposal which will include the loss of valuable countryside and habitats, but will also place thousands more lorries on our local road network.

The current policy assumes that the market will drive the locations. However, as we know developers and investors are principally driven by profit and may not ensure that these terminals are located in the most sustainable or strategically beneficial locations.

A 2016 government commissioned ARUP report, to understand the future growth potential in the UK rail freight market and the transfer of freight from road to rail. The report concludes the importance of rail terminal to rail terminal carriage to achieve a reduction of road carriage, however, such uptake will require that new SRNIs are **strategically** located. Currently the focus of SRFI developments are for carriage from ports to central locations in the East and West Midlands, where **road delivery** is then used for the next leg of the journey.

The Planning Inspector’s comments in the Scoping Opinion for the Environmental Assessment sets out where the applicant’s plans are deficient in a number of areas, particularly around roads and transport works and the assumptions for traffic and intended operations. Further the Inspector has specifically highlighted the need for the applicant to provide more details of **“reasonable alternatives studied and the reasoning for the selection of the chosen option(s), including a comparison of the environmental effects.”** Given the potential impact on this area of the County and the close proximity to Burbage Common and Woods, which are particularly important to the public in this area, we welcome the inspector’s direction that this site location **must** be subject to a credible site selection process which considers the harm which could result from this development.

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