Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited

HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Non-Technical Summary

January 2022

This document is a summary of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange project.

A PEIR presents environmental information to assist consultees to form an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development and provide feedback.

This PEIR has been prepared by the project promoter, Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited. The Proposed Development is described in Chapter 3 of the PEIR and is the subject of a public consultation running from 12 January to 9 March 2022.

Details of how to respond to the public consultation are provided at the end of Chapter 1 of the PEIR and on the project website:

http://www.hinckleynrfi.co.uk/

This feedback will be taken into account by Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited in the preparation of its application for a Development Consent Order for the project.

Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited

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Contents

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited is promoting proposals for a new strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) on land east of Hinckley, in Blaby District in Leicestershire. A SRFI is a multi-purpose freight interchange and distribution centre linked to both the national rail and road networks. SRFIs reduce the cost of moving freight and encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail. The current project is known as the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI).

The Applicant

2. Tritax Symmetry is a leading developer of large logistics buildings, with sites primarily along the M1 and M40 motorways in the Midlands and on the M6 and M62 motorway corridors in northern England. Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited ('TSH' or 'the Applicant') was established for the purpose of promoting the HNRFI project.

The planning process

3. Under the Planning Act 2008, a SRFI development qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that, instead of applying to the local council for planning permission, TSH must apply to the government for a Development Consent Order (DCO). DCO applications are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which will examine the DCO application on behalf of – in the case of a SRFI - the Secretary of State for Transport. The Secretary of State then decides whether to grant consent for the project.

4. Before applying for a DCO an applicant is required to undertake extensive public consultation and use the feedback obtained to refine the development proposals. TSH undertook public consultations for the HNRFI project in late 2018 and summer 2019. The latest round of public consultation began on 12 January 2022 and TSH intends to submit a DCO application later this year.

This report

5. To help inform the determination of the DCO application, the Applicant is undertaking an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of its proposals. EIA is a process that aims to improve the environmental design of a development proposal, and to provide the decision maker with sufficient information about the environmental effects of the project to make a decision.

6. The findings of an EIA will be described in a written report known as an Environmental Statement (ES). An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to ameliorate any adverse effects. The Applicant will submit an ES with its DCO application.

7. Design and assessment work is still in progress but to inform the current public consultation a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) has been prepared by TSH. The purpose of a PEIR is to present the environmental information gathered by the Applicant to date, to help consultees to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and provide feedback. This current document is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the PEIR.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Location

8. Chapter 2: *Site description* of the PEIR provides a description of the proposed HNRFI site and its surroundings. The **Main HNRFI Site** is on land between the M69 motorway and the Leicester to Hinckley railway, as shown in Figure NTS-1.

9. The site boundaries for a DCO application are called '**Order Limits**'. As Figure NTS-2 shows, the draft Order Limits that contain the Main HNRFI Site also include three corridors of land extending to the north-west, south and east. Taken together, these are called the **Main Order Limits**. As will be explained, the corridor to the north-west is for a proposed link road (called 'the A47 Link Road') that would cross the Leicester to Hinckley railway and connect to the B4668/A47 Leicester Road near the Greene King Stadium. The corridor to the south is intended to accommodate works to Junction 2 of the M69 motorway, and the corridor to the east follows a section of the B4669 Hinckley Road from the M69 motorway towards the village of Sapcote, for which traffic management measures are proposed.

10. The draft Order Limits also include additional areas of land at roads and junctions for which highway enhancements and traffic management measures are proposed, along with some pedestrian level crossings on the Leicester to Hinckley railway that are subject to proposed works and restrictions.

Council areas

11. All of the land inside the draft Order Limits is in Blaby District in Leicestershire except for the north-western end of the A47 Link Road corridor, which is in the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth in the same county. Supporting highway works are proposed in Blaby, Hinckley and Bosworth and Harborough Districts in Leicestershire and in the Borough of Rugby in Warwickshire.

Local features and characteristics

12. The locality is generally rural in character with gently undulating farmland, crossed by small watercourses. The fields are defined by hedgerows and with deciduous trees. As well as farms, businesses in and near the Main HNRFI Site include a farm shop and livery stables.

13. The closest settlements to the Main HNRFI Site are the village of Elmesthorpe along the

B581 Station Road to the north and a mobile home park and a separate gypsy and traveller settlement off Smithy Lane to the south-west of M69 Junction 2. In the wider area and generally at a range of 2-3km from the Main HNRFI Site are the settlements of Stoney Stanton and Sapcote to the east, Earl Shilton and Barwell to the north and north-west, Hinckley and Burbage to the west and south-west and the village of Aston Flamville to the south.

14. The Burbage Wood and Aston Firs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI - a nature conservation site) lies close to the south-western boundary of the Main HNRFI Site and outside the DCO Site. This SSSI is designated for its mixed ash, oak and maple woodland and adjoins the Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

15. Burbage Common and Burbage Wood to the south-west of the Main HNRFI Site are a popular recreational resource managed by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, providing woodland and open meadows for informal recreation, with car parks and a visitor centre. Hinckley Golf Course lies beyond Burbage Common, on the edge of Hinckley itself.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Purpose

16. Chapter 3: *Project description* of the PEIR describes what TSH proposes to build and explains how it would operate. The purpose of a SRFI is described in a government document called the *National Policy Statement for National Networks* ('the NPS'), which was approved by Parliament in 2014, as follows.

'The aim of a strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimising some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road, through co-location of other distribution and freight activities. SRFIs are a key element in reducing the cost to users of moving freight by rail and are important in facilitating the transfer of freight from road to rail, thereby reducing trip mileage of freight movements on both the national and local road networks' (paragraph 2.44).

17. A SRFI generally has the following main elements:

- an intermodal area where containers are lifted between rail freight wagons and container lorries;
- rail-connected buildings either with their own dedicated rail siding or sufficiently close to the rail terminal to allow containers to be moved from the rail wagons into the warehouse by overhead cranes or reach stackers without the need for them to be loaded first onto a HGV or 'tugmaster' yard tractor vehicle;
- rail-served buildings which allow containers to be moved from the rail wagons into the

warehouse by means of a HGV or tugmaster vehicle.

- rail-accessible buildings with the potential either to be rail-connected or rail-served.

Main elements

18. The Proposed Development has the following main components.

Development on the Main HNRFI Site including:

a) the demolition of Woodhouse Farm, Hobbs Hayes, Freehold Lodge and the existing bridge over the Leicester to Hinckley railway on Burbage Common Road;

b) new rail infrastructure including points off the existing Leicester to Hinckley railway providing access to a series of parallel sidings at the HNRFI, in which trains would be unloaded, marshalled and loaded;

c) an intermodal freight terminal or 'Railport' capable of accommodating up to 16 trains up to 775 metres (m) in length per day, with hard-surfaced areas for container storage and HGV parking and cranes for the loading and unloading of shipping containers from trains and lorries;

d) up to 850,000 square metres (m^2) of warehousing and ancillary buildings with a total footprint of up to 650,000m^2 and up to 200,000m^2 of 'mezzanine' floorspace [1]. These buildings might incorporate ancillary data centres to support the requirements of HNRFI occupiers and operators. They would also have roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels with a generation capacity of up to 38 megawatts (MW), providing direct electricity supply to the building or exporting power to battery storage in the energy centre;

e) an energy centre with an electricity substation connected to the local electricity distribution network and a gas-fired combined heat and power plant with an electrical generation capacity of up to 10 megawatts (MW), supported by 20MW standby generation capacity and 20MW battery capacity to provide electrical supply resilience. Total electricity generation capacity would not exceed 50MW;

f) a lorry park with welfare facilities for drivers and HGV fuelling facilities;

g) a site hub building providing office, meeting space and marketing suite for use in connection with the management of the HNRFI and ancillary car parking;

h) landscape works, amenity water features and planting;

[1] *A mezzanine floor is an intermediate level built between the main floor and ceiling of a double-height building. A mezzanine floor does not extend across the whole area of the building and might have partly open sides. In B8 logistics buildings, mezzanine floors are often used to provide office space and staff facilities or additional storage space.*

i) noise attenuation measures, including acoustic barriers up to six metres in height;

j) wildlife habitat creation and enhancement and the provision of publicly accessible amenity open space at the south-western edge of the HNRFI near Burbage Wood and to the south of the proposed A47 Link Road between the railway and the B4668/A47 Leicester Road;

k) pedestrian, equestrian and cycle access routes and infrastructure, including a new dedicated route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders from a point south of Elmesthorpe to Burbage Common;

l) utility compounds, plant and service infrastructure;

m) security and safety provisions inside the HNRFI including fencing and lighting;

n) drainage works including groundwater retention ponds, underground attenuation tanks and swales.

Highway and railway works including:

o) works to M69 Junction 2 comprising the reconfiguration of the existing roundabout and its approach and exit lanes, the addition of a southbound slip road for traffic joining the M69 motorway and the addition of a northbound slip road for traffic leaving the M69 motorway at Junction 2;

p) a new road ('the A47 Link Road') from the modified M69 Junction 2 to the B4668 / A47 Leicester Road with a new bridge over the railway, providing vehicular access to the proposed HNRFI from the strategic highway network. The A47 Link Road would be intended for adoption as a public highway under the Highways Act 1980;

q) modifications to several junctions and amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders on the local road network in response to the different traffic flow pattern resulting partly from the trips generated by the HNRFI development and principally from the change in movements as a result of the M69 Junction 2 upgrade. Proposed modifications to roads are shown in table NTS-1 below, and a list of roads subject to Traffic Regulation Orders, which include changes to speed limits and clearway restrictions, are provided in Tables – 3.3-3.7 in Chapter 3: *Project description* of the PEIR;

r) works affecting existing pedestrian level crossings on the Leicester to Hinckley railway at Thorney Fields Farm north-west of Sapcote, at Elmesthorpe, and at Outwoods between Burbage and Hinckley. In addition, pedestrian level crossings serving footpaths that connect Burbage Common Road to Earl Shilton and Barwell are proposed for closure with the associated footpaths being diverted;

s) off-site (outside the Order Limits) railway infrastructure including signals, signage and electricity connections.

Table NTS-1: List of proposed modifications to roads proposed in connection with the HNRFI development

No.	Location	Works proposed
	Blaby DC	
B1	Junction of B581 Station Road / New Road and Hinckley Road, Stoney Stanton	The existing mini-roundabout would be replaced by traffic lights with signalised crossings for pedestrians.
B2	Junction of B4669 Hinckley Road and Stanton Lane, west of Sapcote	Traffic lights would be introduced with a phase to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross.
B3	Stanton Lane / Hinckley Road, south-west of Stoney Stanton	Reduction of the speed limit to 40mph from the national speed limit; traffic calming features and formalisation of on-carriageway parking.
B4	B4669 Hinckley Road/ Leicester Road, Sapcote	Traffic calming features, creation of cycle infrastructure and wider footways, public realm and junction improvements and a bus stop relocation at the junction of Church Street and B4669. A new pedestrian crossing is included.
B5	Junction of B4114 Coventry Road and B581 Broughton Road at Soar Mill, south-east of Stoney Stanton	New traffic lights are already scheduled to be introduced as part of the Broughton Astley S278 works (Planning Ref: 19/00856/OUT). The Applicant proposes to widen the carriageway on the northbound approach to the B4114 Coventry Road and on the B581 Broughton Road to provide additional capacity for left-turning traffic on both arms. The left turn on Broughton Road would be provided as separately signalised phase to enable it to run at the same time as the right turn into Broughton Road from Coventry Road to improve the efficiency of the junction.
B6	Junction of B4114 Coventry Road and Croft Road, south-west of Narborough	Lane widening on junction approaches.
	Hinckley and Bosworth BC	
HB1	Junction of A47 Normandy Way and A447 Ashby Road, Hinckley	It is proposed that the approach roads to this junction would all be widened to accommodate additional traffic. Indicative right turn and two lanes would be provided through the junction in a westbound direction.

No.	Location	Works proposed
		Formal signal-controlled pedestrian crossing points would be introduced.
HB2	Junction of A47 Normandy Way / Leicester Road, the B4668 Leicester Road and The Common, south-east of Barwell	Widening of the entry arm on the B4668 Leicester Road.
HB3	Junction of B4668 and New A47 Link Road, north east of the site access (Access Infrastructure)	Provision of a three-arm new roundabout access to the B4668 Leicester Road, including a segregated left turn lane southbound from the A47.
	Harborough DC	
H1	Cross in Hand roundabout at the junction of the A5 Watling Street, A4303 Coventry Road, B4428 Lutterworth Road and Coal Pit Lane, west of Lutterworth	Increased roundabout radius and widened lane entries, with two lanes marked for longer distances for traffic approaching the junction on the A5 Watling Street southbound and on Coal Pit Lane.

Illustrative master plan

19. An illustrative master plan of the proposed HNRFI development is shown in Figure NTS-3. Noteworthy features include the Railport next to the existing Leicester to Hinckley railway, rows of B8 logistics buildings with space for lorries and car parking, the proposed link road between M69 junction 2 and the B4668 / A47 Leicester Road to the north-west, with a new bridge over the railway, and new areas of open space to the south of the A47 Link Road on both sides of the railway.

Development 'parameters'

20. Because the detailed needs of individual building occupiers cannot be anticipated at this time, the DCO application for the HNRFI will be similar in concept to an application for outline planning permission. The DCO application will fix the outer envelope or 'parameters' of the Proposed Development including its position, land uses and the overall maximum dimensions of built features such as buildings, roads and landscape areas. If the DCO is granted or 'made', the Applicant will be required to submit details of individual buildings and development phases to Blaby District Council or Hinckley and Bosworth Council for approval prior to construction of those elements. These design details would be within the assessed and approved parameters.

21. The draft parameters plan for the proposed development is shown in figure NTS-4. The parameters reflect the development shown in the illustrative master plan (Figure NTS-3).

Six main development zones are proposed, identified as Development Zones A-F in Figure NTS-4. In each development zone a maximum number of buildings is proposed. For example, Development Zone B might contain five smaller buildings or anything between one and four larger buildings, in all cases not exceeding a total footprint of 115,000m^2. In all cases the EIA for the Proposed Development is assessing the maximum parameters.

Development phasing

22. The proposed development would take place in five main phases over a ten year period, subject to market conditions. Phase 1 includes site earthworks and preparation, landscape and planting work, the upgrades to Junction 2 of the M69 motorway and the A47 Link Road. Phase 2 includes a first phase of the rail terminal and completion of the first B8 logistics buildings. Phases 3-5 would see the completion of the full rail terminal and the construction of the remaining B8 buildings with related internal access roads and landscape works.

The HNRFI in operation

23. Trains entering the site from either direction would move either directly into the one of the four Railport sidings served by gantry cranes or into one of four reception sidings running alongside the main line. From the reception sidings, trains might continue on to rail-connected buildings via the run-around chord on the northern edge of the Main HNRFI Site.

24. Up to 16 train visits a day are provided for (i.e. up to 16 trains arriving and 16 departing, giving a maximum total of up to 32 train movements a day).

25. Gantry cranes or reach stackers would be used to remove and load containers from the train. These cranes would run on rails and move up and down the terminal. They would be powered by electricity for clean and quiet operation. The main benefit of gantry cranes is that they allow a faster operation with more space to stack containers. A reach stacker is a large mobile lift truck which can pick up containers and move around flexibly. While reach stackers are flexible, they require more manoeuvring space.

26. Containers unloaded from a train would be transferred by the crane to a temporary stockpile nearby or, more often, transferred directly onto a flatbed trailer pulled by a lorry or a ‘tugmaster’ yard tractor vehicle. These vehicles would then:

- transport the container directly to one of the B8 buildings on the Main HNRFI Site for processing. From there the contents of the container will be batched and forwarded to customers, who might include manufacturers, retailers and private individuals, using vehicles ranging from HGVs to vans.
- transfer the container to a storage area where it can be held until needed;
- if lorry-hauled, deliver the container to a business elsewhere in the region, generally within 80km of the HNRFI.

27. The HNRFI would operate on a 24 hour / seven days a week basis. Staff at the Railport and in B8 buildings would generally work in shifts. the Applicant proposes to implement a site-wide green travel plan to provide the workforce with alternatives to private car use.

4. SITE SELECTION AND PROJECT EVOLUTION

28. Chapter 4: *Site selection and project evolution* of the PEIR explains how TSH identified a site for a SRFI. It begins by looking at the regional context and outlines the options that the Applicant considered in terms of alternative locations.

29. Most intermodal freight interchanges are located in the Midlands and North of England. These are hub regions both for the strategic road and rail networks and the UK economy that these networks serve. These regions also enjoy direct rail access to a range of large ports through which containerised goods pass.

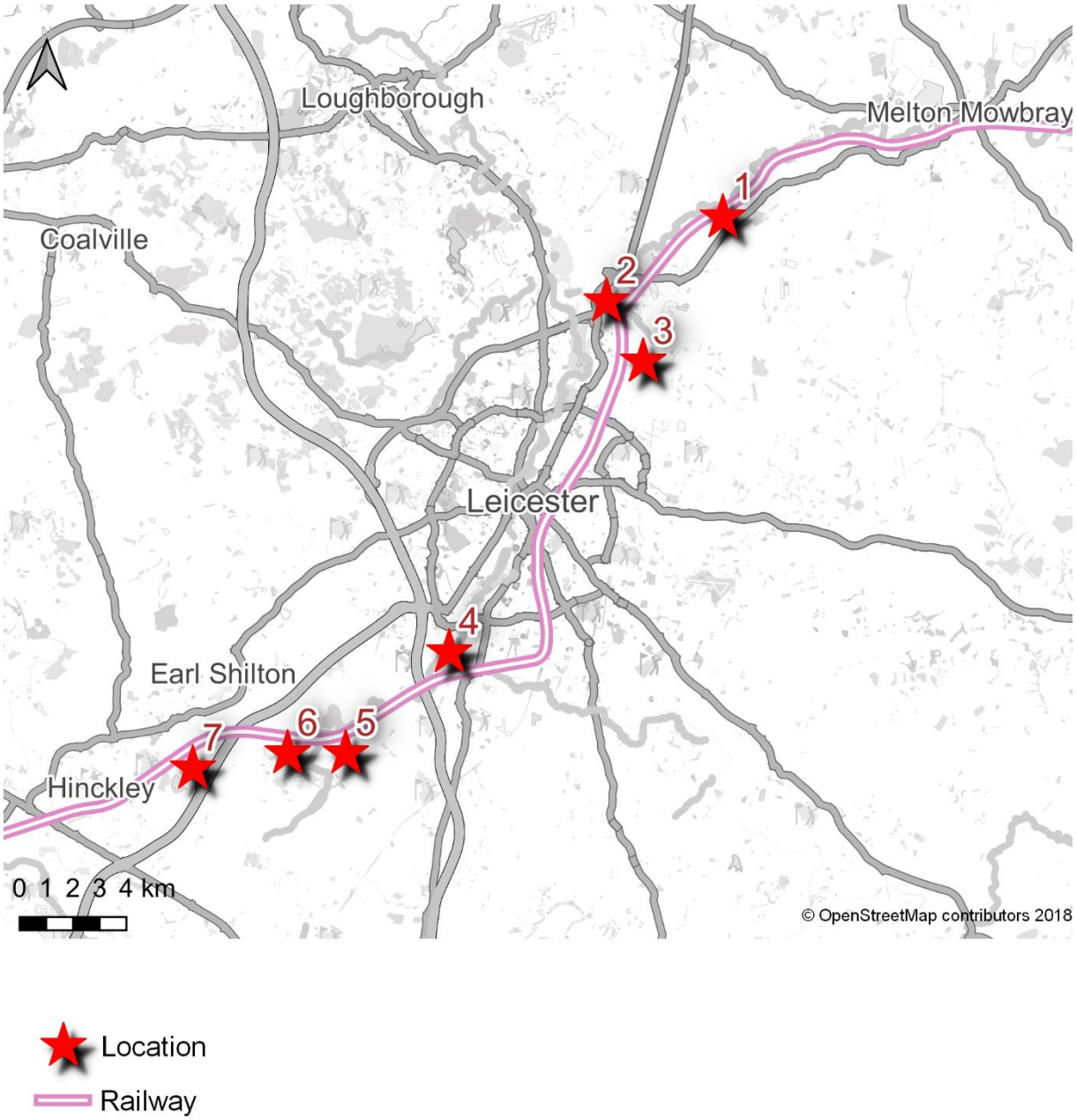
30. Studies undertaken for the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) established that there remains a significant need for rail-related logistics development in the county. The LLEP's Strategic Economic Plan identified five growth zones and TSH took these into account in its site search.

31. As PEIR Chapter 4 explains, a list of site selection criteria was drawn up, covering rail, road, environmental and commercial and economic considerations. Seven site options were identified and studied. These are shown on Map NTS-1 below and described individually in Chapter 4.

32. The chosen site to the east of Hinckley is considered to offer an optimum balance of advantages, including:

i). an ample area of open level land, most of which has low flood risk;
ii). sufficient at-grade rail frontage for rail connections to the main line, and the ability to accommodate trains up to 775m in length;
iii). the potential for direct road access to the strategic highway network from M69 Junction 2, with scope to add southbound slips to the junction;
iv). separation from existing residential settlements sufficient to avoid significant adverse effects on noise and visual amenity after mitigation;
v). a comparatively low level of environmental constraint, with no designated features of landscape, ecological or cultural heritage interest inside the site;
iv). a location within the LLEP's designated South-West Leicestershire Growth Area.

Map NTS-1: Location plan of the seven potential SRFI locations appraised by the Applicant



1. **Brooksby**
2. **Syston Junction / Fosse Way**
3. **Barkby Lane**
4. **Whetstone**
5. **Littlethorpe**
6. **Croft**
7. **Hinckley / Burbage**

33. Chapter 4: *Site selection and project evolution* of the PEIR also explains how the content and layout for the proposed development has evolved. Considerations taken into account include:

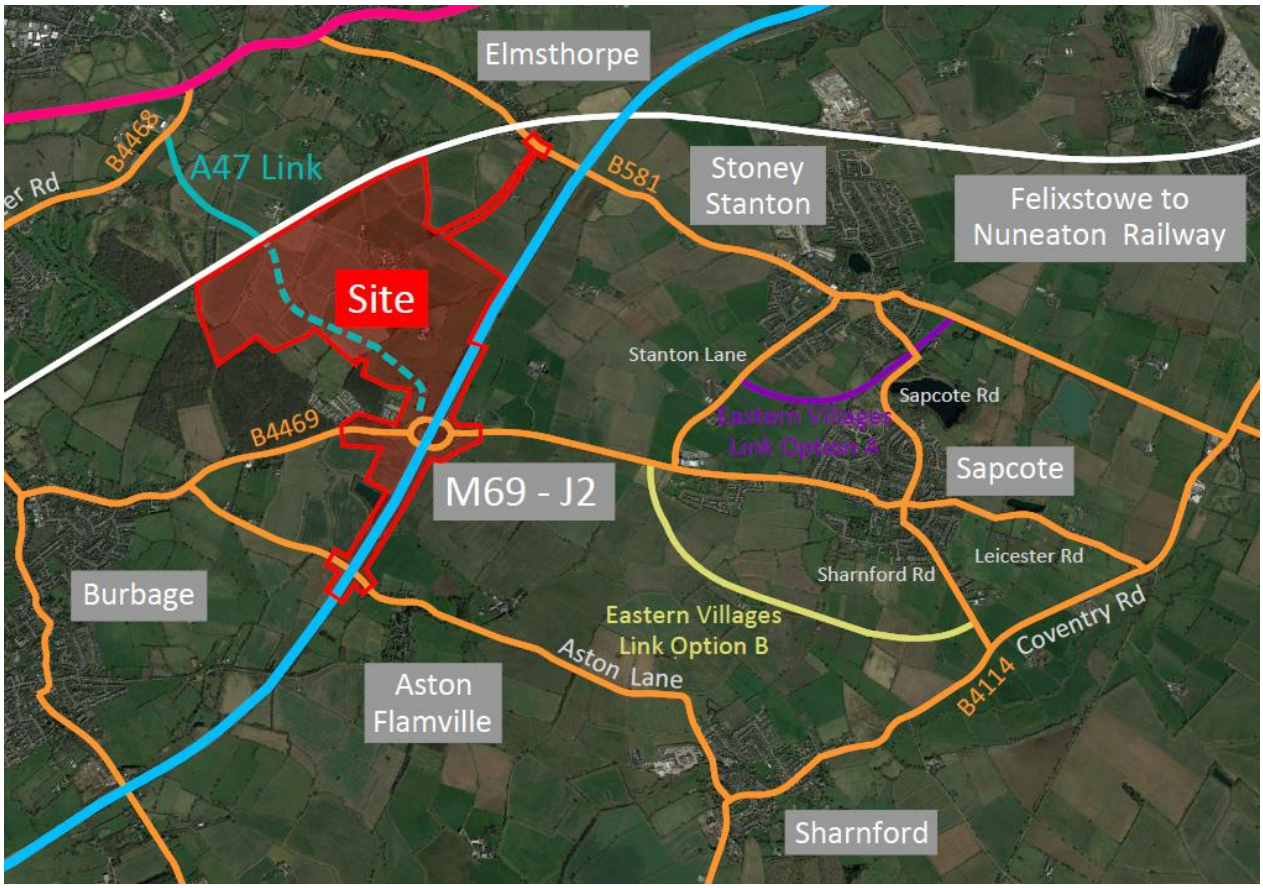
- ground levels
- site access and rights of way
- residential amenity
- ecology and biodiversity
- cultural heritage and archaeology
- landscape
- drainage and ground conditions

34. A range of layout options has been tested, guided in part by the feedback from earlier public consultations. A substantial amount of feedback from the first informal consultation in autumn 2018 concerned the effects of the proposals on the local road network. In response, and guided by further road traffic modelling, the Applicant undertook a further informal consultation in summer 2019 specifically on the issue of off-site highways effects. Views were invited on three road improvement options, shown on Map NTS-2 and described below. These options were a link road from M69 Junction 2 to the to the B4668 / A47 Leicester Road and two by-pass options to the east of the HNRFI – around Stoney Stanton and Sapcote.

35. Since the 2019 consultation, TSH has undertaken substantial traffic modelling work in consultation with Leicestershire County Council, the local highway authority. The traffic modelling indicates that the proposed A47 Link Road would provide clear reductions of traffic on routes in and around Hinckley. However, the level of through traffic doesn't justify the economic, social and environmental impacts of building a new by-pass for villages to the east. Instead, the current proposals aim to reduce speeds and improve routes and junctions in Sapcote and Stoney Stanton, with public realm improvements including improved cycle and pedestrian connectivity proposed in Sapcote. These works are assessed in Chapter 8: *Transport and traffic* of the PEIR.

36. In addition to these major off-site highways works, traffic modelling has identified a need for modifications to several junctions on the local road network in response to the different traffic flow pattern resulting partly from the proposed HNRFI development and principally from the M69 Junction 2 upgrade. These are identified in Table NTS-1 above.

Map NTS-2: Indicative location of the A47 Link Road and Eastern Villages link road options that were the subject of a public consultation in summer 2019. The general location of the Main HNRFI Site and M69 Junction 2 enhancement are indicated in red. It should be noted that these are not the draft Order Limits as now proposed.



Background image: Google Earth

5. NEED AND POLICY

37. Chapter 5: *Policy and need* of the PEIR describes the planning and economic policy context for the HNRFI. A wide range of policy is cited, defying easy summary but including national planning policy, local plans and economic strategies.

38. The primary policy statement for the determination of this proposal is specifically provided by the National Policy Statement for National Networks ('the NPS'), which was approved by Parliament and published in December 2014. The NPS states in paragraph 2.42 that *'Over recent years rail freight has started to play an increasingly significant role in logistics and has become an important driver of economic growth'.* The NPS acknowledges that rail is used to best effect to undertake the *'long haul primary trunk journey with other modes (usually road) providing the secondary (final delivery) leg of the journey'* (NPS paragraph 2.43).

39. NPS paragraph 2.10 states that:

'that at a strategic level ***there is a compelling need for development of the national networks*** *… The Examining Authority and the Secretary of State should therefore start their assessment of applications for infrastructure covered by this NPS on that basis'* (emphasis added).

40. Subject to the detailed policies and protections in the NPS *'there is a presumption in favour of granting development consent for national networks NSIPs that fall within the need for infrastructure established in this NPS'* (NPS paragraph 4.2).

41. The NPS proceeds to identify a range of environmental considerations that should be taken into account when planning and designing a SRFI. These are considered on a topic-by-topic basis in PEIR Chapter 5: *Policy and need* and have been taken into account in the EIA for the Proposed Development.

42. The local plans for Blaby or Hinckley and Bosworth have not provided for any large-scale transport facilities of the form of a SRFI. However, PEIR Chapter 5 identifies local plan policies relevant to the design and assessment of the Proposed Development.

6. EIA SCOPE AND GENERAL METHODOLOGY

43. Chapter 6: *EIA scope and general methodology* of the PEIR explains how the scope of the EIA has been determined and then sets out the general methodology for the assessment. Further topic-specific explanations of the assessment methodology are provided in later chapters of this PEIR. This chapter provides an outline of the proposed structure of the Environmental Statement that will accompany the DCO application for the HNRFI.

7. LAND USE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS

44. Chapter 7: *Land use and socio-economic effects* of the PEIR looks at the effects of the Proposed Development on communities, jobs and livelihoods and the local and regional economy. The Study Area for the socio-economic assessment includes local authority areas within a 30km radius of the main HNRFI Site.

Baseline

45. The assessment of existing or 'baseline' conditions in PEIR Chapter 7 identifies the local and regional context in a defined study area, including existing employment, housing supply, skill levels and educational attainment, open space provision, health and crime, along with the scale and skill levels of the available construction workforce. This provides a basis for assessing the effects of the project on:

- ***The local and regional economy*** - including the effects on existing businesses that might be displaced by the Proposed Development and of the construction and operation of the HNRFI, which would represent a very substantial investment in the area;

- ***Residents*** - including the labour market;

- ***Employment, skills and training providers*** - including local schools, colleges, universities and vocational training centres, and the people who depend upon their education and skills offerings;

- ***Housing*** - the stock of homes in the housing market (including private rented, short-term accommodation and visitor accommodation) and the people who reside in them;

- ***Community facilities*** - including open space and public rights of way and the people who use them.

46. The baseline research showed that:

- at present the Main HNRFI Site has a low level of employment, mainly in farming and related businesses;

- there are more residents employed in the construction sector than there are jobs in the sector, indicating the study area is a net exporter of construction workers;

- there are 1,036,900 people in the study area aged between 16-64 (i.e. of working age), of whom 79.7% are economically active. Unemployment in the Study Area sits below the English average of 4.4% at 4%;

- there were estimated to be 58,000 residents employed in the construction sector in 2019. The East Midlands is expected to see the highest growth rate in commercial construction output across 2019 to 2023, with average annual output forecasted at 2.3% per annum;

- the latest *Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study* (LLEP, 2021) identifies a need for 2,751,000m^2 of warehouse floorspace by 2041, including 1,106,000m^2 of rail-served and 1,466,000m^2 of road-served floorspace.

47. New technologies will continue to affect the logistics sector significantly, changing the way tasks are performed and how businesses operate. Technology is replacing the most routine jobs through automation and self-driving vehicles, accelerating the shift towards a higher-skilled labour force in the sector.

Effects

48. The socio-economic assessment has identified a range of potential social and economic effects. Each of these is being analysed to establish whether significant positive or negative effects would be felt by the local and wider community.

49. A construction period of ten years has been assumed for the HNRFI for the purpose of the socio-economic assessment. During this period it is estimated that in an average of 335 full-time equivalent (FTE) construction jobs would be created directly by the Proposed

Development.

50. When new construction jobs are created, the associated business and worker expenditure feeds back into the economy, creating further employment. This is called the 'employment multiplier'. For the HNRFI, multiplier employment effects are estimated to be 2.48 of the on-site employment effects. The positive multiplier effects, results in an estimated average additional 293 FTE jobs created during the eleven-year construction period.

51. This equates to 628 (i.e. 335 direct jobs plus 293 indirect jobs) net additional jobs during the construction period. Overall, construction is estimated to have a low positive impact on employment in the study area, resulting in a minor beneficial effect over the short and medium term.

52. Employment on-site is estimated to be 8,400 – 10,400 workers once fully occupied. This will be split across management, professional, technical, administrative, sales, machine operative and elementary occupations.

53. The assessment assumes that approximately 70% of the occupiers at the HNRFI would be relocated from existing, lower-quality storage and distribution premises in the LLEP area. This being the case, the net additional employment created is predicted to be in the range of 4,400 – 5,400 FTE jobs.

54. To gain an idea of the overall value of the HNRFI in operation to the economy, the gross value added (GVA) has been calculated. This is an estimate of the value of goods and services produced minus the cost of inputs and materials used in the production process. The addition of between 8,400 – 10,400 on-site jobs would generate an estimated £364 million - £449 million GVA per year.

55. Chapter 7 of the PEIR also considers the effects of job creation on housing demand. During the construction stage of the HNRFI it is estimated that most posts would be filled by locally-based construction workers, creating minimal additional housing demand. Similarly and when viewed in the context of housing allocations made by the local councils in current and emerging local plans, it is estimated that the Proposed Development on operation would have a negligible effect on housing demand in the long term.

56. An estimate of the Business Rates for the Proposed Development indicates that this will create a potential receipt of some £24.65 million per year, depending on confirmed rating valuations. Whilst it is not possible to confirm what the overall amount of benefit would be for local authorities, it is clear that the business rates associated with the Proposed Development will represent a substantial addition to their revenue streams.

57. In terms of land use effects, existing farming operations, agricultural and kennel businesses on the Main HNRFI Site would cease permanently, although the landowners would gain financially from the sale of the land.

58. Access to Burbage Woods and Common from the direction of Elmesthorpe would be affected by the Proposed Development. However, this would be mitigated by the

provision of diverted and new links.

Mitigation

59. Adverse land use and socio-economic effects are anticipated for the existing agricultural land holdings. These will be mitigated by the financial gain of the owners from the sale of the land.

60. In view of the fact that, from a socio-economic perspective, the Proposed Development is assessed to have a major beneficial long term effect overall, becoming an integrated part of the local and regional economy.

8. TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC

61. Chapter 8: *Transport and traffic* of the PEIR assesses the effects of the emerging HNRFI proposals on the road network. The central purpose of the HNRFI is to divert existing movements of freight from road to rail so in these terms the project should, in principle, be inherently beneficial. However, at the county level the introduction of the HNRFI and the associated upgrading of M69 Junction 2 has the capacity to change traffic flows significantly, and it is these changes that have been the focus of assessment work.

62. To guide the assessment a Transport Working Group was established comprising representatives from National Highways (formerly Highways England), AECOM (National Highways' term consultant), Leicestershire County Council, Warwickshire County Council , Leicester City Council , Coventry City Council , Blaby District Council , and Hinckley and Bosworth District Council. The Transport Working Group has met regularly and provided guidance on traffic modelling methods and the interpretation of modelling outputs. The assessment has taken into account the feedback from the informal public consultations undertaken by the Applicant in late-2018 and summer 2019.

63. The road traffic generated by the HNRFI has been modelled using a computer package developed for local authorities in the Midlands and known as the Pan-Regional Transport Model (PRTM). PRTM enables the effects on road traffic in Leicestershire and neighbouring counties to be modelled. The assessment work presented in PEIR Chapter 8 and its appendices uses the latest version of the model, known as PRTM2.2.

Baseline

64. The *Baseline conditions* section of Chapter 8: *Transport and traffic* of the PEIR includes a detailed description of the existing strategic and local road network, identifying amongst other things constraints such as vehicle weight limits and the height restrictions on the A5 Watling Street on the edge of Hinckley, and potential future improvements such as those under consideration for the A5. Footpaths across the Main HNRFI Site are also identified.

65. The Baseline conditions section also identifies the current status of the Leicester to Hinckley railway that would serve the proposed HNRFI. This railway forms a section of Network Rail's strategic freight route between Felixstowe and Nuneaton and affords good

access to the east and west coast main lines. At present the Leicester to Hinckley railway is typically used by an average 79 trains a day, of which 42 are timetabled passenger trains and 37 are freight trains.

Effects

66. The interim transport and traffic assessment in Chapter 8 of the PEIR concentrates on operational traffic because volumes of construction traffic at any given time would be very much lower and significant effects would be occasional and temporary.

67. It is predicted that, once the proposed HNRFI is fully developed and operational, it would generate 8,998 two-way HGV movements (4,498 arrivals and 4,500 departures) from the external road network over a 24-hour working day. In the absence of mitigation (see below) the completed HNRFI development would generate 16,438 two-way movements of cars and other light vehicles such as vans over the same period.

68. The Railport is designed to handle up to 16 freight trains a day, amounting to 32 inward and outward train movements. The Leicester to Hinckley railway has sufficient spare capacity to accommodate these additional train movements.

69. As well as modelling the effects of road traffic generated by the HNRFI, the traffic assessment also takes into account changes in the pattern of local traffic flows arising from the proposed addition of a northbound off-slip and a southbound on-slip to M69 Junction 2. These changes are significant, creating additional traffic on some routes and reducing traffic on others. Affected routes are too numerous to summarise individually here, but are mapped and tabulated in Chapter 8 of the PEIR.

70. Footpaths and bridleways inside the Main HNRFI Site would in most cases be closed and require diversion. As noted earlier in this PEIR, the two pedestrian level crossings over the Leicester to Hinckley railway to the north-east of the existing Burbage Common Road bridge would both be closed as a result of the Proposed Development. There is also the potential for trains held on red signals on approach to the HNRFI to block or obscure views from pedestrian level crossings further up and down the railway.

Mitigation

71. A range of measures is proposed to manage the effects of the HNRFI on the highway network, including the following:

- the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), submitted to and approved by the local highways and planning authorities;
- the diversion of footpaths and bridleways to ensure that connectivity from one side of the HNRFI to the other is retained by horseriders, cyclists and pedestrians;
- a HGV Route Management Plan and Strategy to restrict lorry movements to identified routes at all stages of the Proposed Development;

- a 'cut and fill' balance for earthworks on the Main HNRFI Site;
- the approval and implementation of a green travel plan for workers at the HNRFI, containing measure to encourage cycling, car sharing and home working;
- improvements to the existing X6 bus service between Leicester and Coventry so that it can serve the HNRFI;
- the off-site highway improvements listed in table NTS-1 earlier in this document;
- the closure of pedestrian level crossings at Thorney Fields Farm and Elmesthorpe to the north-east of the HNRFI and at Outwoods on the edge of Hinckley to the south-west, and the provision of alternative pedestrian crossing arrangements including a new footbridge at Outwoods.

72. With this mitigation in place, the interim assessment in Chapter 8 of the PEIR is indicating that the Proposed Development would have a direct impact of negligible to minor adverse significance upon severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay, non-motorised users' amenity, fear and intimidation and accidents and safety.

9. AIR QUALITY

73. Chapter 9 of the PEIR considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development on air quality. During construction, air quality can be affected by the release of dust and very fine particles known as 'particulates' and by fumes from vehicles, plant and machinery. Once operational, vehicle and railway locomotive fumes and emissions from on-site energy generation might have a negative effect in the absence of mitigation.

Baseline

74. Chapter 9: *Air quality* explains how the Applicant has assessed air quality to date. In order to understand air quality effects, the people and things affected by air quality (known as receptors) are identified. This includes identifying all locations where members of the public might be regularly exposed to emissions from the HNRFI and nature conservation sites where air quality might affect the ability to support established wildlife.

75. By law, local authorities are responsible for reviewing and assessing local air quality within their jurisdiction. Where national objectives are not being met, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). These areas are typically located where there are significant sources of air pollution along with relevant human exposure.

76. Blaby District Council has declared five AQMAs for the potential exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) objectives across the borough. NO_2 is used as an indicator of a group of gases that get into the air mainly from the burning of fuel. Harborough District Council has declared two AQMAs for the potential exceedance of the annual mean NO_2 objective, however neither of these are located in the vicinity of the DCO Site. Rugby Borough Council declared an AQMA for the potential exceedance of the annual mean NO_2

objective. Rugby AQMA-2 covers the whole urban area of Rugby, including part of the study area. Exceedances of the annual mean NO_2 objective were recorded at two locations. These monitoring locations are not within the study area. Overall, annual mean NO_2 concentrations recorded between 2015 and 2019 demonstrate a downward trend.

Effects

77. Given the scale and nature of the Proposed Development there is potential for temporary adverse air quality effects during construction, as a result of the following activities:

- dust generated through demolition, excavation, construction and departing vehicles;
- exhaust pollutant emissions from construction traffic on the local highway network;
- exhaust emissions from non-road mobile machinery within the construction site itself.

78. The proximity of sensitive receptors to construction activities will affect the potential for such construction activities to cause dust soiling, nuisance and local air quality impacts. Weather conditions and the use of control measures will also contribute to the effects experienced.

79. The Proposed Development is not predicted to lead to any exceedances of the relevant air quality objectives during construction.

80. The operational development would lead to an increase in the number of trains using the Felixstowe to Nuneaton strategic freight railway. Based on the number of trains already on the rail network, additional train movements generated by the Proposed Development, which amount to 32 train movements per day. From an air quality perspective this level of train activity is so small as to be considered insignificant. As such the effects on local air quality from rail emissions as a result of the operation of the Proposed Development are deemed to be negligible.

Mitigation

81. PEIR Chapter 9: *Air quality* identifies a range of best practice measures for managing and controlling air quality effects, particularly during construction. These will be refined as the assessment continues and where relevant, secured through 'Requirements' in the DCO (similar to planning conditions). The measures include the following;

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will set out the mitigation methods to be implemented to minimise any impacts associated with the demolition and construction phases of the Proposed Development;
- A Green Travel Plan will be submitted with the DCO and a comprehensive package of on and off-site transport improvements is proposed. The Green Travel Plan will promote the use of sustainable transport methods such as public transport, walking and cycling to the Main HNRFI Site to reduce emissions associated with the Proposed Development.

- Car parking provision will incorporate charging facilities for electric vehicles (EVs) and would include ductwork provision for future car charging points on all remaining car parking spaces. This will encourage the use of EVs for staff commuting to work. Provision will also be made for covered cycle parking facilities and new cycling routes to encourage cycling to the HNRFI.

82. Measures set out within the PEIR chapter aim to reduce emissions associated with the Proposed Development and encourage the use of sustainable methods of transport. Any reduction in emissions would be beneficial to both human and ecological receptors.

10. NOISE AND VIBRATION

83. Chapter 10: *Noise and vibration* of the PEIR considers how the Proposed Development might give rise to noise and vibration during both the construction and operational phases. Noise and vibration can arise from groundworks, piling and machinery during construction and from traffic and rail movements and operation of the Railport during operation.

Baseline

84. In order to understand the noise characteristics of the Main HNRFI Site and its surroundings at present, noise surveys have been undertaken.

85. At present the Main HNRFI Site is predominately agricultural land. To the north of the site lies the Leicester to Hinckley railway with the villages of Elmesthorpe and Earl Shilton beyond. To the south of the Main HNRFI Site lies the M69 motorway with the villages of Sapcote and Stoney Stanton to the east. To the west of the Main HNRFI Site lies Burbage Wood, Aston Firs and Freeholt Wood with Hinckley beyond. The land to the east of the site is mainly in agricultural use. Chapter 10 identifies the 'noise sensitive receptor' locations (i.e. the places where people and wildlife might experience noise).

86. The noise levels across the Main HNRFI Site are dominated by noise from road traffic on the surrounding road network, notably the M69 motorway. For the noise levels to increase by a perceptible level, there would need to be a doubling of the existing traffic flows.

Effects

87. Different types of noise and vibration will arise at the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

88. Specific details of activities and associated plant are not available at this stage. Therefore, Chapter 10 of the PEIR explains the assumptions that have been made in this interim assessment. In terms of the potential noise effects, excavation, earthworks and regrading using heavy plant machinery is likely to be the source of the main impacts at nearby noise sensitive receptors (NSRs). The construction and fitting out of the new buildings are likely to result in lower noise levels because work would progressively be contained by the shell of the new building.

89. Construction activity would progress on different parts of the Main HNRFI Site and would not take place close to individual receptors for a prolonged period of time.

90. Should any vibration-generating works be undertaken close to the Main HNRFI Site boundary, any effect would be short-term and temporary in nature.

91. In the absence of mitigation, the effect of operational noise associated with the HNRFI is likely to be permanent and major adverse as a worst case for NSRs located closest to the Proposed Development, during daytime and night-time and on a weekday and weekend.

92. Although it is not possible to state the magnitude of effect of vibration as a result of the additional train movements, it is anticipated that rail vibration is currently at levels considered to be low, to the extent whereby the additional vibration generated by the Proposed Development is likely to result in a minor effect.

Mitigation

93. Chapter 10 of the PEIR sets out initial mitigation measures to address the anticipated noise and vibration effects. The preferred approach for controlling construction noise and vibration is to reduce levels at source where possible, but with due regard to practicality. Sometimes a greater noise level may be acceptable if the overall construction time, and therefore length of disruption, is reduced. Proposed measures include the following;

- all work outside normal working hours would be subject to prior agreement with the relevant Council. Night-time working will be restricted to specific defined circumstances, and to work inside buildings. By arrangement, there may be some out-of-hours construction deliveries made to the Site;
- method statements for construction management, traffic management, and overall site management would be prepared in accordance with best practice and relevant British Standards, to minimise impacts of construction works to local residents and businesses during the construction phase;
- consultation and communication with the local community would be maintained throughout the construction period;
- the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would help to ensure that the noise and vibration impacts relating to construction activities are minimised;
- acoustic barriers are proposed along sections of the boundary of the Main HNRFI Site to mitigate noise from train and lorry movements and from container handing in the Railport.

94. The assessment will be finalised and the outcomes presented in the ES. Once the effects are fully understood, appropriate mitigation can be specified in the ES and either designed into the final scheme or enforced through DCO Requirements.

11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

95. Chapter 11: *Landscape and visual effects* of the PEIR describes the landscape character of the Project Site and adjoining areas and considers the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. Landscape and visual effects are independent but related. Landscape effects relate to changes to the landscape and the features that contribute to the landscape character and quality. Visual effects relate to the appearance of such changes within views and the resulting effect on visual amenity.

Baseline

96. No part of the draft Order Limits lies within a nationally or regionally designated landscape. The closest designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the Main HNRFI Site is the Cannock Chase AONB, 43 km to the north-west. The closest designated National Park is the Peak District, 60 km to the north-north-west.

97. The draft Order Limits contain a range of character areas, including rolling farmland, wooded farmland, floodplain, agricultural parkland, quarries, open plateau and urban areas.

98. For the landscape and visual assessment of the Proposed Development, 56 viewpoints have been identified at locations agreed through consultation to date. These views are at locations where there are likely to be sensitive visual receptors, including receptors on public rights of way (PROW) and at residential properties. These views form the basis of the visual assessment, the significance of any effect being assessed in terms of the magnitude of change in the view and the sensitivity of the visual receptor.

Effects

99. At the construction stage the main operations considered to be of importance to the landscape and visual assessment are described below:

- ***Construction-related traffic.*** This includes vehicle movements associated with the import of building materials, machinery and labour using local roads;
- ***Groundworks.*** Cut and fill earthworks including the construction of two development platforms across the Main HNRFI Site, levelling for access roads and ground modelling for landscaped areas;
- ***Noise and vibration effects.*** These have the potential to affect landscape character, visual effects from existing (potentially diverted) rights of way and other routes, and residential amenity; and
- ***Construction activities.*** Subject to the preferences of individual contractors, it is expected that generic methods will be employed in the implementation of the scheme. The use of large cranes and construction platforms (rising above the height of the proposed buildings) will be necessary.

100. Landscape and visual amenity effects resulting from the construction stages are considered to be consistently adverse, as there are few, if any, aspects of the process that could be considered positive in terms of promoted landscape strategies or visual amenity. These effects will, however, be temporary and restricted by the phased nature of the Proposed Development.

101. Effects on landscape character during construction will arise from lighting, noise, vibration and traffic which extend beyond the Main HNRFI Site boundary. The works would require temporary lighting where previously there was little artificial lighting, away from the existing residential urban edges or major roads. The effects would be short-term and temporary in nature.

102. The Proposed Development, on a 'greenfield' site and at the scale proposed, will result in the unavoidable removal of landscape features, in particular the agricultural field parcels and hedgerows, at a level which materially alters the character of the local context. This change will result in change to the landscape and with visual effects on dwellings, public highways, railway and public rights of way.

103. The 'operational lifetime' of the Proposed Development is measured in decades, resulting in a permanent change to the character of the Main HNRFI Site. Landscape proposals included as part of the Proposed Development will take time to mature. It is therefore often the case that initial (Year 1) effects are more considerable than those at Year 15 due to the limited initial effect of the landscape works.

104. Once the Proposed Development is built and operational, the landscape and visual effects are variable, depending on factors such as distance from the land within the Order Limits and availability of views. Effects on views will evolve as the proposed landscape works, habitat enhancements and tree and shrub planting grow to maturity. In summary:

- development at the Main HNRFI Site would materially alter the landscape character of the site and the receiving environment. There will also be level changes to allow for development plateaux and the introduction of drainage basins. The stream currently crossing the Main HNRFI Site will be diverted;
- the character of the A47 Link Road corridor will be transformed from agricultural farmland to an embanked link road, with field boundaries and mature hedgerows retained as far as practically possible. Newly planted trees and areas of scrub will result in a permanent and beneficial change, including the enhancement of existing areas of ecological habitat;
- views from dwellings surrounding the Main HNRFI Site will be materially altered, with the addition of a bund and planting to soften views of the Proposed Development. The newly planted area of public open space adjacent to Burbage Common would provide a natural, attractive space and potential significant beneficial effects. Views from PROW, public highways and railways would in general be less stark than during construction as a result of planting and landscaping;
- At the sites of highways works, landscape and visual effects would be extremely localised and limited given the nature of the proposed changes (signage or minor

roadway adjustments).

Mitigation

105. Where possible, mitigation will be embedded into the Proposed Development. The current condition and key characteristics of the landscape have been considered throughout the design of the Proposed Development and integrated into the landscape strategy where possible.

106. The Proposed Development benefits from existing dense mature woodland to the south of the Main HNRFI Site which provides natural screen to views from the south. The north-western edge of the Main HNRFI Site would incorporate a bund, planted with woodland species to assist in softening views from the west and north. The northern edge of the Main HNRFI Site will include further areas of woodland planting and areas adjacent to the M69 motorway will feature a new bridleway route, planted with a mixture of woodland, shrub and scrubby species. Areas to the south of the A47 Link Road on both sides of the railway would be laid out as additional naturalistic public access land.

107. A number of strategies and plans would be designed and secured through the DCO to secure mitigation measures, including;

- Landscape and PROW Strategy
- Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP)
- Construction Method Statement
- Arboricultural Method Statement
- Soil Management Plan

108. In landscape and visual terms, the preliminary impact assessment indicates that the greatest scope for significant permanent effects relates to the construction and early years of the operational phase of the HNRFI. This will be subject to further assessment involving more detailed visual studies, the results of which will be presented in the ES for submission with the DCO application.

12. ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

109. Chapter 12: *Ecology and biodiversity* of the PEIR considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development on features of nature conservation value.

Baseline

110. The Applicant has undertaken extensive general and species-specific surveys of wildlife and wildlife habitats inside the Main Order Limits. These surveys are described in detail in Chapter 12 of the PEIR and its associated technical appendices.

111. No part of the Main Order Limits is covered by any internationally important statutory nature conservation designations and there are no such designations within a 10km radius.

112. The Main Order Limits are not covered by any nationally or locally important statutory nature conservation designations. There are five such designations within 5km of the Main Order Limits, namely four designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and a single Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI and the overlapping Burbage Common and Woods LNR are located immediately to the south-west of the Main HNRFI Site.

113. Within 3km of the Main Order Limits are 13 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), of which two lie within the Main Order Limits (Field Rose Hedgerow and Elmesthorpe Plantation Hedgerow), one lies immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the Main Order Limits (Burbage Common and Woods), and one lies immediately adjacent to the southern boundary (The Borrow Pit Grassland). Additionally, two LWS (Billington Rough and Hay Meadow) lie 100m and 250m to the north of the railway respectively.

114. Land inside the Main Order Limits comprises arable, improved, semi-improved grassland, buildings and hardstanding, marshy grassland and tall vegetation on waste ground of limited ecological importance.

115. A full description of the habitats and species present inside the Main Order Limits is provided in PEIR Appendix 12.1.

Effects

116. Based upon the interim assessment undertaken as part of the PEIR and in the absence of any mitigation measures, the following potential effects have been identified.

- There is a low risk that the Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI might be subject to indirect impacts, such as soil compaction and encroachment by machinery or pollution events resulting from adjacent construction works and material storage.
- Burbage Common Road railway bridge, which is a Potential Local Wildlife Site (pLWS), would be lost to the proposals and although further surveys have shown that the pLWS would be unlikely to qualify as a full LWS, it is still regarded as having value at the local level.
- The Proposed Development has been designed to retain as many mature scattered trees as possible. However, the unavoidable loss of an estimated 258 scattered mature and early mature trees is anticipated.
- The Proposed Development has been designed to incorporate the hedgerow network and minimise its fragmentation where possible, particularly around the perimeters. However, large losses are unavoidable given the nature of the Proposed Development.

- Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI and Burbage Common and Wood LNR are considered to be at risk of indirect impacts resulting from increased air pollution as a result of increased traffic relating to the Proposed Development.

117. As a result of mitigation built into the scheme design, much of the retained habitat network and a redirected watercourse fall within areas of open space that contain new drainage features. This helps to minimise the potential for impacts to arise and allows for long-term centralised management through a management company.

Mitigation

118. A nature conservation mitigation strategy will be developed following completion of further technical work to establish the ecological baseline and in response to consultee comments. Provisionally, the proposed mitigation measures to be adopted through the construction phase could include the implementation of an Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS) which would form an appendix to the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This will set out in detail the measures which will require implementation with respect to ecological receptors during the demolition and construction phase of the Proposed Development to include (but not limited to);

- suitable external lighting to avoid impacts to nocturnal wildlife;
- surface water drainage system to improve drainage and water quality;
- soft landscaping to include valuable habitats within the public open space.

119. During the operational phase, wildlife and habitat protection could be secured through the implementation of a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). This would set out the measures for the ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring of the ecological receptors and of those newly created habitats to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and gain.

120. Survey and assessment work is ongoing. However, based upon the impact assessment and consideration of the ecological receptors in the PEIR, it is concluded that the Proposed Development would accord with the legislative protection afforded to these ecological receptors and with national, regional and local planning policy requirements.

13. CULTURAL HERITAGE

121. Chapter 13: *Cultural heritage* of the PEIR considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including sites and buildings of historical, architectural, cultural and archaeological value, based on the current information available as part of the evolving baseline.

Baseline

122. A detailed review has been undertaken of published records of historical and

archaeological sites to identify features of interest and value both within the DCO Site and in the surrounding area. The baseline study has identified that there are 13 scheduled monuments, two Grade I, eleven Grade II*, 128 Grade II listed buildings and ten conservation areas located within the 5km study area around the Main Order Limits. Detailed assessment has identified that the majority of these assets have no potential to be affected by the Proposed Development due to a lack of any visual or functional association with it.

123. No designated heritage assets are located inside the DCO Site. However, a scheduled monument, seven listed buildings, and a single conservation area, although not actually situated within the DCO Site, could potentially experience a change to their wider 'settings' as a result of the Proposed Development.

124. The Leicestershire Historic Environment Records (HER) show only two non-designated heritage assets on the Main HNRFI Site, comprising an undated ditch recorded as a cropmark, and an 18th century barn. Survey work at the Main HNRFI Site and across the A47 Link Road to date has identified few non-designated heritage assets in the form of below ground remains.

125. Whilst the Main HNRFI Site is not situated in a landscape of significant historic landscape value, it still contains a number of internal field boundaries from the 18th century. Nonetheless, the historic landscape of the Main HNRFI Site is considered to be of no more than low sensitivity.

Effects

126. The Proposed Development has the potential to exert direct (i.e. physical) effects on features of interest, mainly at the construction phase, and indirect effects, such as the change in setting in which a historic building is viewed and appreciated. Indirect effects arise mainly during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. The setting may still be affected even if the building lies outside the DCO Site.

127. Construction activities in the bulk of the Main HNRFI Site, which is currently occupied by agricultural land, are considered to have potential for direct effects on heritage assets. The proposals for an extension to the country park across the land south of the A47 Link Road, and the A47 Link Road itself, have similar potential for impacts.

128. There will be no direct impacts arising from the construction of the Proposed Development on the one scheduled monument, seven listed buildings and one conservation area that are identified as sensitive receptors.

129. The Main HNRFI Site contains three non-designated heritage assets, comprising two historic barns and a historic farmhouse. The proposals will require the demolition of these assets, thereby resulting in a large magnitude of change during the construction phase. On this basis, the Proposed Development would result in a direct adverse effect to each of these assets, which is assessed to be insignificant.

Mitigation

130. Work will continue on the assessment and identification of features of historical, architectural, cultural and archaeological interest in and around the DCO Site. This work will help to confirm the mitigation, where required, to protect historical features. Where possible, any adverse heritage effects will be avoided through the overall design of the Proposed Development, through careful siting of the different elements of the proposals and its required infrastructure.

131. The landscape strategy for the Proposed Development will include proposed bunding and structured landscaping around the Main HNRFI Site boundary. This will seek to screen development and minimise its visual impact on the surrounding landscape and cultural heritage receptors.

132. To mitigate the permanent direct effects of construction on buried archaeological remains, the Applicant will carry out a further programme of archaeological mitigation works in advance of construction, should a DCO be made.

133. Based upon the interim assessment, none of the predicted adverse effects on designated or non-designated archaeology and built heritage assets, either during the construction or operation phases of the Proposed Development, is deemed to be 'significant' in EIA terms. In policy terms, all the potential adverse effects on designated heritage assets equate to 'less than substantial harm', at the low end of the scale of harm.

14. SURFACE WATER AND FLOOD RISK

134. Chapter 14 of the PEIR considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on surface water and flood risk. It covers matters relating to a number of different aspects of water resources and the water environment, including:

- flood risk;
- surface water drainage;
- surface water quality;
- water supply;
- surface and foul water sewerage capacity.

Baseline

135. The PEIR describes the baseline conditions inside the Main Order Limits. The majority of the Proposed Development is located in the Thurlaston Brook catchment. The River Basin Management Plan establishes a number of requirements that must be met to comply with the Water Framework Directive. Currently, the Thurlaston Brook catchment has a water body quality classification of 'Poor', with an ecological status of 'Poor' and a 'Fail' chemical status. The catchment has an objective of achieving 'Good' overall status by 2027.

Agricultural and rural land management and pollution from waste water are the main issues preventing waters reaching good status.

136. With reference to the EA's Flood Map for Planning, the majority of the Main HNRFI Site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). However, a small portion, adjacent to the northern boundary is located in Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) and Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding).

137. The EA's Flood Risk from Surface Water Map for the Main HNRFI Site shows the potential flooding which could occur when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground. This identifies the Main HNRFI Site to be predominantly at very low risk of flooding from rainwater, with some areas of higher risk associated with the watercourses.

138. Burbage Wood SSSI and Ashton Firs LNR are located immediately adjacent to the south-west of the Main HNRFI Site. However, the landscape slopes, and watercourses flow, away from the SSSI. As such, changes to surface water and drainage are not expected to have any significant effect on the SSSI or LNR.

Effects

139. Chapter 14 has identified the temporary preliminary risks to the water environment from the construction phase, including the following;

- Certain construction activities, such as mounding of materials, have the potential to increase flood risk within the Main Order Limits and in downstream catchments before any mitigation is put in place.
- The use of heavy machinery during the construction phase is likely to result in short term disruption to the rate of drainage into the ground.
- Construction activities can lead to the pollution of controlled waters. Impacts are generally from sediment in runoff, particularly from rainfall during storm events, which can affect water quality, or from pollution by construction materials or fuels.
- There would be a minor increase in pressure on the local foul water network and local water supply due to the temporary presence of construction workers and associated welfare facilities.

140. Once operational, the PEIR has identified the following potential effects:

- the Proposed Development would introduce a significant area of impermeable surfaces onto a currently greenfield area. This has the potential to increase surface water runoff which will increase flows into receiving watercourses which could cause an increase in flood risk;
- once in use, pollutants associated with run-off from the main HNRFI Site and the A47 Link Road have the potential to affect water quality, both in the sewer network and at

local watercourses.

Mitigation

141. Chapter 14 identifies a series of best practice mitigation measures to address the potential risks that have been identified. It is proposed that construction related measures will be set out in the CEMP, enforced through a DCO Requirement. An outline CEMP will be submitted alongside the ES.

142. Once the Proposed Development is operational, a surface water drainage strategy is proposed. This will ensure that surface water will be managed appropriately so that the rate of surface water arising from the Main HNRFI Site and A47 Link Road is not increased and water quality is not compromised. The drainage strategy would take account of climate change. The minor nature of the off-site works mean they will have negligible impact on flood risk and water quality.

143. A Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment will be produced to support the ES, which will assess the impacts and water quality and quantity in relation to the waterbodies potentially affected by the Proposed Development.

144. With appropriate mitigation in place, at this stage, the assessment indicates that no significant adverse effects would arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

15. HYDROGEOLOGY

145. Chapter 15 of the PEIR assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on hydrogeology, which is the study of the distribution and movement of groundwater in soils and rocks. It describes the methods used to assess the effects, the baseline conditions currently existing at the Main HNRFI Site and surroundings, the potential direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development and the preliminary mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset the potential effects and the residual effects.

Baseline

146. A review has been undertaken of the ground conditions present across the DCO Site, assembling information from extensive published data, preliminary site investigations, which will be supplemented by further site investigations. This aids the understanding of the hydrogeology of the area.

147. The Main HNRFI Site comprises an irregular shaped plot of land which is currently utilised for agricultural purposes, comprising fields and farm buildings, and includes sections of the local road and rail network.

148. The Main HNRFI Site increases in height from north-east to south-west, with a slight ridge feature through the centre orientated broadly in a south west to north east direction. The Main HNRFI Site is not located in an area associated with coal mining or within a mineral safeguarding area.

149. Limited historical development has occurred at the Main HNRFI Site. Several farms have been present on site since before the 1880s, with streams and fields crossing the area. A former railway station, electricity substation, tank, scrap yard, small brick works and two landfill sites have been recorded in the surrounding area.

150. The Main HNRFI Site is not located within an Environment Agency designated Source Protection Zone (areas defined to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality). The Water Framework Directive sets an obligation for water bodies to meet 'good ecological status'. In this context the DCO Site lies within the Soar Secondary Combined Groundwater Body, which recorded a good chemical and overall rating in 2015.

Effects

151. Localised contamination might be mobilised during construction where soils are excavated and rainfall washes away soluble contaminants. In addition, earthworks have the potential to increase erosion and migration of particulate matter and suspended solids into water courses.

152. Piled foundations might be required for the proposed buildings, particularly where high loadings are required. This will be assessed on a building-by-building basis and will depend on tenant requirements and final detailed design, with further assessment on this topic to be provided in the ES. Piled foundations have the potential to create pathways between surface contamination and underlying 'aquifers' (a permeable rock that can contain or transmit groundwater). However, any effect is likely to be minor based on the anticipated low levels of contamination and low sensitivity of the underlying aquifers.

153. The presence of significant hardstanding in the Proposed Development will reduce the infiltration of rainfall and subsequent leaching of any soluble contamination in shallow soils into underlying groundwater and surface waters. Runoff from goods vehicles serving the HNRFI has the potential to be contaminated by heavy metals and petroleum hydrocarbons.

154. The sealing of the Main HNRFI Site through the introduction of hardstanding would reduce infiltration and recharge of shallow aquifers, which could lead to reduced groundwater levels. However, significant volumes of groundwater are not expected beneath the HNRFI Site and there are no recorded abstraction that could be affected.

Mitigation

155. The assessment of this topic has a focus on the mitigation and safeguards that can be incorporated into the design and the construction of the HNRFI, including the following.

- An outline CEMP will be prepared and submitted with the ES, setting out the requirements for the management of dust, odours and other sources of nuisance and pollution control measures to be implemented during the construction phase.

- Fuelling areas would be constructed on low permeability ground wherever possible and all tanks would be bunded with a capacity of 110% of the tank volume. Spill kits should

be available at all fuelling locations and regular training provided on dealing with spillages.

- To avoid infiltration of polluted water from vehicles or accidental spillage, vehicles would be inspected regularly and maintained to reduce the risk of leakages. Vehicle wash-down areas would be at least 10m from any surface waters and located in a designated bunded impermeable area. Any runoff would be treated through oil interceptors before being discharged.

- An Operation and Maintenance Plan will set out required intervals for inspection of pollution control equipment.

156. Overall, it is considered that potential effects on hydrogeology from the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development will be negligible to slight adverse following the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

16. GEOLOGY, SOILS AND CONTAMINATED LAND

157. Chapter 16 of the PEIR considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the geology, soils and contaminated land beneath the DCO Site and in the local area.

Baseline

158. The Applicant has undertaken a review of the ground conditions present across the DCO Site, assembling information from extensive published data, preliminary site investigations, which will be supplemented by further site investigations.

159. The local geological conditions represent a possible source of ground gas. However, generation rates are likely to be low. The DCO Site is located in an area where less than 1% of properties are affected by radon and so is not considered a risk.

160. The Main HNRFI Site is not located in an area associated with coal mining or in a mineral safeguarding area. The Main HNRFI Site is classified as Grade 3 (good to moderate) agricultural land which is further subdivided into 3a good quality and 3b moderate quality. The majority is classified as Grade 3b poor with a small pocket (approximately 3 hectares) of Grade 3a land in the north of the Main HNRFI Site.

Effects

161. Localised contamination might be expected around farm buildings, likely to comprise asbestos, petroleum hydrocarbons and agrochemicals such as pesticides, herbicides and insecticides. The preliminary ground investigation has not identified any significant contamination sources at the Main HNRFI Site, and based on the current and historical land use there is a low risk of further significant contamination being identified during the groundworks.

162. Localised contamination might be mobilised during construction where soils are

excavated, and rainfall can release soluble contaminants. In addition, earthworks in general have the potential to increase erosion and migration of particulate matter and suspended solids into water courses. The effect on controlled waters during construction are considered to be of minor adverse significance, confined to a localised area and of short / medium duration.

Mitigation

163. The PEIR assessment has a focus on the mitigation and safeguards that can be incorporated into the design and the construction of the HNRFI, including the following.

- Prior to the demolition of existing buildings a full asbestos survey would be completed to identify all asbestos and enable a plan of work to be prepared to safely remove any asbestos.
- Detailed investigation of the Main HNRFI Site would be completed to ensure that excavated materials are suitable for use and any areas of potential contamination understood and remediation strategies prepared.
- The CEMP would set out the requirements for the management of dusts, odours and other sources of nuisance. Measures will be incorporated to manage run off and protect water courses and prevent erosion and dust generation.
- Designated fuelling areas for plant would be set up with low permeability surfacing, suitable double bunding for tanks, spill kits available and an emergency plan in place for dealing with any spills.
- If elevated ground gases are recorded, suitable gas protection measures might be incorporated into the building design. The measures could incorporate the floor slab, gas impermeable membrane and/or sub sab ventilation in accordance with current best practice.
- Fuel storage facilities required for the Railport and elsewhere would be bunded with appropriate wet stock management and spill management systems. Refuelling areas would be constructed on impermeable cover.
- Further intrusive ground investigation will be completed to confirm ground conditions, assess the presence of any soil or groundwater contamination and obtain information for foundation design. Ground gas monitoring will be undertaken, and a ground gas risk assessment completed to support the design of any required gas protection measures.

164. Overall, it is considered that potential effects from the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development would be negligible following the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.

17. MATERIALS AND WASTE

165. Chapter 17: *Materials and waste* of the PEIR considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the generation and management of waste during construction and operation, and assesses the use of materials during the construction phase.

Baseline

166. At present the Main HNRFI Site comprises a mixture of farmland small holding and private dwellings. There is existing infrastructure in the immediate vicinity, the M69 motorway, including the roundabout infrastructure of Junction 2, and the railway along the north-western boundary.

167. The Main HNRFI Site is a source of agricultural and green waste and potentially small quantities of commercial waste from Hobbs Hayes Farm and Woodhouse Farm.

168. To provide a baseline of information to underpin the assessment, Chapter 17 of the PEIR identifies the existing and future capacity of waste management facilities in the region. The extent of the regional baseline for landfill void capacity was determined to include three landfill sites that are accepting waste, namely Griff No4 Quarry Landfill, Cotesbach Landfill, and Ling Hall Landfill.

169. None of the Main HNRFI Site falls within a Coal Authority reporting area. A number of quarries have been identified in the surrounding area that could provide mineral sources for construction materials.

Effects

170. The demolition of existing buildings on the Main HNRFI Site would produce a variety of waste materials including concrete, masonry, aggregates, ferrous and non-ferrous material, timber, glass, plasterboard and slate. A relatively small quantity of material is expected to be generated from these demolition works. A high proportion of this demolition and site clearance material is expected to be suitable for reuse and recycling. The volumes of non-hazardous waste from demolition works are considered to be relatively low in comparison to the regional capacity.

171. The HNRFI will require a cut and fill exercise to produce a development base in two main plateaux. The majority of excavated material is expected to be reused on site in a cut-fill balance. There are no known contamination sources that would cause the ground to be polluted to levels that could classify soils as hazardous waste.

172. The magnitude of impact from the total quantity of construction waste generated by the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible. The proposed Railport is not expected to generate significant volumes of waste through its operation or maintenance. The replacement of rails on sidings will occur at a frequency greater than 50 years and it is assumed that the rails would be recycled and the ballast cleaned and reused.

173. Aside from the earthwork operations the Proposed Development would require the use

of a range of other construction materials. These include road paving, concrete, precast concrete, steel, plastics and timber.

Mitigation

174. It is proposed that measures will be implemented to collectively mitigate the identified effects from both the use of materials and the management of waste. In relation to construction effects, the proposed CEMP will include measures to manage and control waste arising through construction.

175. Although not required by the regulations, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) would be developed and updated regularly during the lifetime of the Proposed Development. The SWMP would identify, prior to the start of construction, the types and likely quantities of wastes that may be generated. It would set out how these wastes would be reduced, reused, managed and disposed of.

176. Waste generated by the Proposed Development which cannot be reused will have to be taken off-site. With the implementation of a proposed Material Management Plan and the associated reuse of material the quantity of waste would not have a significant impact on the capacity of the landfill sites in the region, with the impact assessed as slight adverse.

177. The Applicant will continue to refine its understanding of the waste management baseline in consultation with the relevant authorities. Alongside this the Proposed Development's demand for construction material and for construction and operational waste management will be defined in more detail to inform the waste strategy for the Proposed Development.

18. CLIMATE CHANGE

178. Chapter 18: *Climate change* of the PEIR considers the likely significant effects of energy and climate change, both upon and from the Proposed Development. The increasing concentration of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane in the atmosphere restricts the Earth's ability to reflect solar heat back into space, resulting in global warming. This affects weather patterns and, amongst other things, is causing a rise in sea levels.

179. These risks prompt an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which arise from sources including vehicle exhausts and the generation of electricity and heat from non-renewable energy sources.

Baseline

180. The baseline assessment in PEIR Chapter 18 takes into account the likely greenhouse gas emissions of existing land uses on the DCO Site. Where information is limited, assumptions may need to be made in the ES. The baseline assessment uses the UK government's data and projections. In 2019, net emissions in the UK of the seven key greenhouse gases (GHGs) were estimated to be 2.8% lower compared to 2018 and 43.8%

lower than they were in 1990. This represents a fall in GHG emissions of 13.3 million tonnes CO_2 equivalent between 2018-19. In 2019, the transport sector was predicted to be responsible for around 27% of all GHG emissions in the UK.

Effects

181. Chapter 18 of the PEIR explains how the Proposed Development might contribute to climate change due to carbon emissions during construction and operation, and how the potential sources of GHG will be identified as a basis for mitigation.

182. During the construction phase, the preliminary assessment identifies that there will be some emissions of CO_2 arising from construction traffic, non-road mobile machinery and small generators temporarily used to power machinery and equipment. However, the assessment at this stage considers that these emissions will be intermittent and temporary and are highly unlikely to make a significant contribution to the overall UK GHG emissions, though they will lead to a net increase in carbon in the short term.

183. Compared to the emissions of HGVs carrying an equivalent volume of freight, emissions of CO_2 from railway locomotives serving the HNRFI are predicted to be 76% lower, which corresponds to approximately 12,000 tonnes CO_2 equivalent per year.

184. The proposed buildings in the HNRFI will require energy for various activities such as electrical machinery and for space heating and cooling. The Proposed Development will be designed to minimise this requirement for energy through buildings being classed with at least 'Very Good' ratings under the Building Research Establishment's BREEAM sustainability assessment method, with roofs designed to optimise the use of solar photovoltaic panels for on-site electricity generation.

185. The GHG emissions from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development are likely to have a minor adverse effect, which is not considered significant. The final assessment will be reported on in the ES.

19. MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

186. Chapter 19 of the PEIR provides a preliminary assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Development in relation to the risk from major accidents and disasters.

187. There are no pathways by which the Proposed Development would increase the risk of significant environmental effects from external natural or man-made hazards.

188. Furthermore, freight carried by rail in the UK has a better safety record than freight carried by road. By enabling a transfer of freight from road to rail the Proposed Development should help to reduce road accidents.

189. During the pre-application stage the Applicant will continue to consult with local police, fire, ambulance and health services and Network Rail and will account for considerations including access for emergency services.

190. The DCO application will be accompanied by the following documents that will include provisions to avoid or reduce vulnerability to accidents and disasters:

- Construction Method Statement;
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Outline Lighting Statement;
- Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan;
- Other Consents and Licences report.

191. The DCO application will also be accompanied by a Rail Operations Report that will include assessment of potential hazards to rail operations and the measures to be considered for their avoidance or mitigation.

192. This integrated approach to control and management ensures that vulnerability to major accidents and/or disasters is being taken into account in the design and environmental assessment of the Proposed Development and the risks identified will be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable.

20. CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

193. It is important for the assessment of a project's environmental effects to take into account other development and activities that are happening in the locality so that a project is not assessed in isolation. Chapter 20 of the PEIR proposes a long-list of local developments that TSL proposes to include in its cumulative assessment.

21. CONCLUSION

194. With the benefit of the Secretary of State's EIA Scoping Opinion and the feedback from the current public consultation, the Applicant will refine its proposals and prepare an application for a DCO. Detailed technical studies will continue to feed into the design and assessment process, assisting the Applicant in its pursuit of an acceptable development proposal.

195. The ES submitted as part of the DCO application will identify the likely significant environmental effects (both beneficial and adverse) of the Proposed Development and the mitigation measures proposed to reduce the likely significant adverse effects. It will then report on any anticipated residual significant adverse effects once the mitigation measures have been taken into account.

196. The draft DCO will include the proposed means of enforcement and monitoring of the proposed mitigation measures in the form of a Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC). Based upon the work undertaken to date an emerging REAC is

provided in table 21.1 at the end of PEIR Chapter 21: *Conclusion*. As the work undertaken to support the application for the DCO progresses, this will be updated to reflect the outcomes of the assessment. An updated REAC will then be presented in the ES that accompanies the DCO application.

TSH welcomes comments on the potential significant environmental effects of the HNRFI Project and the EIA methods described in this report. Comment is invited also on any other matters that should be addressed in the EIA and any sources of environmental information that would assist the EIA process.

Information about the Proposed Development, including the PEIR and other consultation documents, is available at the following website:

http://www.hinckleynrfi.co.uk/

Any questions can be directed to the project team in the following ways:

***e-mail* - hinckleynrfi@lexcomm.co.uk**

***telephone* - 0844 556 3002 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm)**

***in writing* – Hinckley NRFI, Lexington Communications, Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street, Manchester M2 5HT**

A link to the HNRFI consultation website is also available on the Project's social media platforms as follows:

***Facebook / Meta* - 'Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange – HNRFI'**

***Twitter* - @HinckleyRail**

I*nstagram* - 'hinckleynationalrailfreight'
