



Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC)

Rail Central is a proposed new strategic rail freight interchange in Northamptonshire

Introducing this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

Rail Central represents a significant planning and investment project – it is a proposal for a new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and associated logistics / warehouse buildings that could provide up to 8,000,000 sq ft of commercial space to the south of Northampton and between the villages of Blisworth and Milton Malsor.

The proposed site has strategic connectivity to key transport infrastructure – namely the West Coast Main Line, the Northampton Loop Line, the A43 and the M1.

Rail Central is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. This means the process for determining consent to construct and operate Rail Central is different from a conventional planning application.

This document is a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and it sets out how Ashfield Land, as the applicant for the Rail Central proposal, intends to inform, engage, consult with and have regard to feedback from members of the public and a wide range of stakeholders during the

process of developing its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Consultation is scheduled to take place during 2016 ahead of an application for a DCO being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) during the first quarter of 2017.

The SoCC and the information that follows is intended to assist anyone who wants to find out more about the draft proposals, setting out how, when and where there will be opportunities for doing so within the overall consultation process as defined by the NSIP planning process.

For more information on Rail Central, visit www.railcentral.com (and see also other ways to contact the project in this document).

For more information on the NSIP planning process, visit the PINs website at <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

For more information on this SoCC, please refer to the accompanying Report to Inform the SoCC.

What is Rail Central?

Rail Central is a proposed new SRFI that would be developed where the West Coast Main Line meets the Northampton Loop Line. This is a key transport junction in the middle of the UK.

Rail Central would connect into the West Coast Main Line and the Northampton Loop Line as well as into the A43 trunk route within approximately 2 miles of the M1 motorway with associated improvements likely to be required to Junction 15 and Junction 15A of the M1.

It will see the creation of a UK leading logistics and distribution capability on a site between Milton Malsor and Blisworth in South Northamptonshire.

The Rail Central project is likely to provide up to 743,200 sq m (8,000,000 sq ft) of storage and distribution space with

ancillary office accommodation, rail infrastructure (to include new sidings), service depot, HGV facilities, training/innovation centre facilities, hotel and public house / restaurant, associated access, ground works, highways, landscaping and other accompanying infrastructure works.

Rail Central will support the Government's agenda for moving more freight on rail and support the strength and competitiveness of UK business and the UK economy.

The Government's policy on SRFIs is set out in the National Planning Statement National Networks. This states that there is a compelling need for new rail and road infrastructure in the UK. Rail Central responds to this need and would also deliver a number of further benefits to the local, regional and national economy.

THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THIS DEFINITION OF A SRFI:

“A Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) is a large multi-purpose rail freight interchange and distribution centre linked into both the rail and trunk road system. It has rail-connected warehousing and container handling facilities and may also include manufacturing and processing activities.”

National Planning Statement for National Networks (NPS NN), 2014

The planning process and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

Rail Central will comprise a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 ("the Act").

This is because, in accordance with paragraph 4.89 of the NPS NN, the Rail Central project (the Proposed Development):

- is located within England;
- is in excess of 60 hectares in area;
- will be capable of handling consignments of goods from more than one consignor and to more than one consignee;
- will be capable of handling at least four trains per day and will be capable of increasing the number of trains handled;
- will be capable of handling 775 metre trains with appropriately configured on-site infrastructure and layout;
- will be part of the railway network within England;
- will include warehouses to which goods can be delivered from the railway network in England either directly or by means of another form of transport; and will not be part of a military establishment.

Therefore an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (PINs). PINs will examine the application and

will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make the final decision on whether consent for Rail Central should be granted or refused.

Ashfield Land anticipates submitting a DCO application to PINs in early 2017. Providing the DCO is accepted for examination, the application will then be subject to public examination during a period lasting up to 6 months.

In determining the application, the Secretary of State will have regard to the NPS NN, which explains the Government's national policy towards SRFIs.



Classification as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development

The proposals for Rail Central are considered to be an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development as defined in The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended). This means an Environmental Impact Assessment is required to assess whether Rail Central is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

An Environmental Statement will be produced which will set out the findings of the environmental impact assessment.

The Environmental Statement will accompany the DCO application and be submitted as an application document. Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) will be prepared and made available for consultation as described later in this SoCC.



What are the benefits and potential impacts?

Rail Central responds to two main drivers:

- 1) **Government policy supporting investment into and expansion of the UK's capacity and capability in terms of Strategic Rail Freight – this is set out in the NPS NN.**
- 2) **Market demand for improved efficiency, sustainability and security of supply chains – with businesses and consumers looking for ever-improving ways of moving goods from the point of supply to the point of demand.**

Rail Central's primary benefits will therefore be to respond to those high-level requirements and, by so doing, provide national and regional benefits.

In summary, the project benefits include:

- A purpose-built, state-of-the-art SRFI;
- Creation of new jobs;
- A distribution hub serving the whole of the country for primary / national distribution, with connections to major ports and mainland Europe via the Channel Tunnel (and onward landbridge connections to China);
- Delivering significant long-term investment into South Northamptonshire;

- Comprehensive rail freight facilities on site to create a national hub for intermodal, conventional and express freight services;
- Significantly reducing the number of long-distance trips by heavy goods vehicles on the highway network;
- Attracting new businesses to the area that do not currently transport goods by rail;
- Helping to reduce carbon emissions.

The project also has a number of potential impacts including on agricultural land, air quality, archaeology and cultural heritage, ground conditions, hydrology, drainage and flood risk, utilities, biodiversity, landscape and visual amenity, noise and vibration, highways and transportation, and effects on the socio-economic environment.

Through the EIA process, these potential impacts will be identified and assessed. Mitigation will be outlined in response to the assessed impacts as appropriate.

It is also anticipated that feedback through the consultation process will enable scheme design to adjust in line with feedback, potentially mitigating impacts and delivering benefits to match locally expressed priorities (for example, the possibility of creating public open space).

Consultation

Ashfield Land will consult with the local community and a full range of stakeholders as defined and required by the NSIP planning process.

Consultation is proposed to take place in a clear and sequential way, involving members of the public (Section 47 consultation) within a first phase of consultation (to take place during spring / summer 2016) and statutory and technical stakeholders (Section 42) within a second phase of consultation to take place during autumn 2016. The second phase of consultation will also give the wider

public an opportunity to comment on the proposed application (Section 48 consultation).

The purpose of consultation is to ensure that Ashfield Land (as applicant) has an appropriate knowledge and understanding of specific issues and concerns as held by stakeholders and the community. Through understanding any issues and concerns via the consultation, Ashfield Land can have regard to comments made and, where appropriate, amend, adjust or improve the draft scheme design.

The **indicative consultation timeline** is set out below:

TIMESCALE	ACTIVITIES
Spring & Summer 2016	Phase One: Statutory Consultation with the local community (Section 47 Consultation)
Autumn 2016	Phase Two: Statutory Consultation with prescribed consultees and publication of press notices (Section 42 and Section 48 Consultation)
Winter / Spring 2017	Application to be submitted
2017 – Autumn 2018	Examination and determination of application
2019	Earliest potential start of construction

Fig: Project timeline (indicative)

How consultation will be carried out

The consultation programme has been specifically designed to ensure that people who want to get involved can easily do so.

The way that Ashfield Land will consult will ensure that information is available via a mix of different approaches. The emphasis is on making the proposals accessible to people who want to participate in the planning and consultation process and ensuring that the way people can get involved is clear.

In the **Phase One consultation** (ie **Section 47 consultation**) there will be:

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS: Ashfield Land is proposing to hold a series of public exhibitions at local venues close to the site. Events are planned in the specified locations for the following times and dates:

VENUE	ADDRESS	DATE	TIME
Walnut Tree Inn	21 Station Road, Blisworth NN7 3DS	Thursday 28 April 2016	12pm-8pm
Walnut Tree Inn	21 Station Road, Blisworth NN7 3DS	Friday 6 May 2016	12pm-8pm
Blisworth Village Hall	19 Stoke Road, Blisworth NN7 3DB	Saturday 7 May 2016	11am-4pm
Roade Village Hall	Bailey Brooks Lane, Roade NN7 2LT	Friday 13 May 2016	11am-5pm
Collingtree Village Hall	The High Street, Collingtree NN4 0NQ	Saturday 14 May 2016	11am-4pm
Towcester Town Hall	The Town Hall, 86 Watling Street, Towcester, NN12 6BS	Wednesday 18 May 2016	12pm-8pm
Milton Malsor Village Hall	High Street, Milton Malsor, NN7 3AS	Friday 20 May 2016	12pm-8pm
Blisworth Village Hall	19 Stoke Road, Blisworth NN7 3DB	Saturday 21 May 2016	11am-4pm

Fig: Planned consultation events:

If it becomes necessary to change any of the details above, where possible, Ashfield Land will publish a notice on the project website and at the venue to be used at least 72 hours before the original planned event. If appropriate, Ashfield Land will also consider whether further consultation events should be planned in such a circumstance.

At each exhibition, project information will be presented through a variety of means, including:

- Display panels with relevant information and visuals where appropriate
- Maps
- Non-technical summary: project leaflet summarising the proposals
- Available baseline preliminary environmental information on the proposed approach to land restoration and landscaping, habitats, mitigation and other relevant issues

PROJECT WEBSITE: Ashfield Land has established a project website (www.railcentral.com) that will host all relevant consultation documents and project information, as well as an online feedback form. This will allow local residents and other interested parties to view the consultation materials and provide their comments via an online feedback mechanism. Respondents should be aware that comments may be made public and their personal details may be made available to third parties, including the Planning Inspectorate.

DIRECT INFORMATION LETTER AND INVITATION TO THE PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS:

Ashfield Land will write directly to households and businesses within the defined consultation area around the site (see Appendix 1), providing details for the consultation and public exhibitions (and other ways to get involved). This consultation area includes approximately 2,500 properties. This will build on an 'Introduction to Rail Central' leaflet issued to these same Royal Mail registered addresses in January 2016 which introduced Rail Central and provided forward notice of the public consultation and how people could expect to be invited to take part.

LOCAL LIAISON GROUP CONTACT: during February 2016, a Local Liaison Group (LLG) was established as a means of sharing and coordinating information. The LLG principally involves local Parish Councils who accepted an invitation to participate. This provides an additional and valuable route for sharing information and will be used to keep people informed about and during consultation. Information is expected to be issued via the LLG on a monthly basis (either in writing or through meetings set up when appropriate).

ATTENDING LOCAL MEETINGS: during the pre-application stage, Ashfield Land has met with and briefed a wide range of local stakeholders and organisations from local MPs to the local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). Briefings and meetings have also been offered to a number of

How consultation will be carried out (Cont'd)

representatives. Details are summarised in the Report to Inform the SoCC. Ashfield Land will continue to offer and attend local meetings where appropriate to do so and where the meetings will facilitate input to the consultation process. Briefings and presentations will be offered to Youth Councils and local schools.

ADVERTISING: the consultation and the public exhibitions will be advertised locally. Local press advertisements will be placed in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo and the Northampton Herald & Post. Posters and leaflets will be provided to Parish Councils for use with local notice

boards. Digital equivalents can also be provided for use on local websites and on-line newsletters.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO VIEW AT LOCAL VENUES: in addition to the public exhibitions (at which available baseline Preliminary Environmental Information will be provided), the same documents will be deposited with local authority offices and in suitable local venues for anyone wanting to access them.

These will include:

VENUE	ADDRESS	ADVERTISED OPENING TIMES
Northamptonshire County Council	County Hall, Northampton NN1 1ED	Monday – Friday: 8am – 5.30pm
Northampton Borough Council Offices	The One Stop Shop, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE	Monday – Friday: 10am – 4pm
Northamptonshire Central Library	Northamptonshire Central Library, Abington Street, Northampton NN1 2BA	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm; Saturday: 9am – 5pm; Sunday: 11am – 4pm
Roade Library	Roade Library, High Street, Roade NN7 2NW	Wednesday – Friday: 2pm – 6pm; Saturday: 10am – 2pm; Sunday: 1pm – 4pm
Towcester Library	Towcester Library, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm; Saturday: 9am – 5pm; Sunday: 1pm – 4pm

Fig: Local deposit locations:

The Phase One (ie Section 47 / community) consultation is scheduled to commence on Thursday 28 April 2016 and will be open all summer, closing on Friday 30 September 2016.

All Phase One feedback should be received by midnight on Friday 30 September 2016.

Please note comments may be made public and the personal details of respondents may be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and other third parties.

Phase Two: Section 42 and Section 48 consultation

Following the Phase One (Section 47) consultation, Ashfield Land will be conducting consultation under Section 42 of the Act in a Phase Two consultation and including:

- Consultees identified under Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Application: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 (as amended)
- All relevant local authorities, as defined under Section 43 of the Act
- All Consultees who are within one or more of the categories set out in Section 44 of the Act

Under Section 48 a notice will be publicised in a local newspaper inviting members of the public to respond with their comments on the project.

Ashfield Land will announce details of this consultation at a later stage and notify all Section 42 consultees accordingly.



What are we consulting on?

The purpose of the consultation (both Phase One (local community) and Phase Two (statutory consultees and wider public) is to provide the local community and other interested stakeholders with an opportunity to understand and influence the proposals.

During the consultation, Ashfield Land will make available Preliminary Environmental Information relating to the proposals.

This will include available 'baseline' environmental information during the S47 (local community) consultation.

The consultation materials will include information about the NPS NN 2014 which explains the Government's policies towards SRFIs.

The proposed SRFI will include a number of technical aspects (for example the technical engineering alignment of the terminal connections) where there is limited overall scope for design variation as well as a number of less technical design aspects.

Whilst all aspects of the proposals are open for all stakeholders to comment upon during the consultation process the limited scope for design variation to some of the technical aspects should be recognised.

Comments will be recorded and reported in the Consultation Report that will be submitted with the DCO.

How to provide feedback

The Rail Central team has established a variety of contact methods to help ensure local communities and other interested parties are aware of the project and consultation, and have the opportunity to find out further details and provide their feedback.

This includes:

- **PROJECT WEBSITE:** the project website (www.railcentral.com) will be updated at the start of the consultation stage with project information and core documents detailed above. An online feedback system will also be made available at this time. Project updates will be provided on the website.
- **PROJECT EMAIL ADDRESS:** the project email address (railcentral@camargue.uk) is monitored regularly and can be used to request further information, ask questions or submit feedback.
- **PROJECT TELEPHONE LINE:** for general enquiries relating to the consultation, local residents and other interested parties will be able to request information by telephoning the project telephone line. However, it will not be possible to provide feedback through the consultation line.
- **FREEPOST:** a dedicated project freepost address (**Freepost Rail Central**) has also been established and can be used to request further information, ask questions or submit feedback.

Ashfield Land will establish a variety of means for the local community and other interested parties to provide written

feedback. If respondents cannot provide written feedback, Ashfield Land would be happy to discuss, on an individual basis, alternative ways for recording feedback.

Please note comments may be made public and the personal details of respondents may be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and other third parties.

During the Section 47 Consultation, feedback forms will be provided to visitors to the public exhibitions. An online feedback mechanism will be provided on the **project website, www.railcentral.com**. In addition, feedback forms will be available from the project team on request during the consultation period. Respondents will also be able to provide their feedback in writing via emails to the project email address or post to the project postal address. The deadline for all feedback will be Friday 30 September 2016. Any feedback received after this date may not be considered.

During the Section 42 and Section 48 Consultation, which is planned for autumn 2016, respondents will be able to provide their feedback in writing via emails to the project email address or post to the project postal address. If appropriate, Ashfield Land may also make feedback forms available to assist respondents in providing feedback. The deadline for all feedback will be announced at a later stage.

Ashfield Land will consider and have regard to all relevant feedback. It will also prepare a **Consultation Report**, which will detail consultation carried out, summarise feedback and demonstrate how it has had regard to feedback. This will be submitted to PINs with the DCO application as an application document.

Quick Guide – what happens when and how to get involved

NSIP planning involves a good deal of technical information and it can sometimes be hard to understand exactly what happens when and how you can participate.

The information on the PINs website at <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> is very helpful in setting out how the consultation process works and what happens when.

There are short films and information videos to watch which you might find useful. See more in the 'Application Process' section.

For a Quick Guide to the Rail Central consultation, please see the key stages of consultation listed below:

WHAT?	WHY?	WHEN?
General introduction to Rail Central and contacting / briefing key local stakeholders and representatives	To inform people about the proposals, what they are, and how the NSIP planning process works so that people know how they can participate	Ongoing – active promotion of the project started in November 2015
Phase One consultation: Public / local community consultation (Section 47) including public exhibitions	To provide baseline environmental information on the draft proposals and seek feedback via the public exhibitions and throughout the spring/summer Phase One consultation period	Phase One consultation starts 28 April and runs until 30 September (significantly in excess of the 28 day statutory minimum period)
Phase Two consultation: Statutory Consultees and wider public consultation (Section 42 and 48)	To provide further Preliminary Environmental Information for consultation, in line with the preparation of the Environmental Statement which will be submitted as part of the DCO application	Phase Two consultation will run during October / November 2016
Summarise feedback and draft Consultation Report	To demonstrate that all feedback has been logged and to show how the applicant has had regard to comments submitted through the consultation	December 2016 / January 2017
Publication of Consultation Report as part of DCO application submission	To meet the prescribed requirements of the NSIP process and ensure the completeness of the DCO application	Q1 2017

How to get in touch with us

There are several ways to contact us. Please use the approach that works best for you:

WEBSITE: visit our www.railcentral.com for full details of the project and see supporting documents

EMAIL US: railcentral@camargue.uk

TELEPHONE US: 0845 543 8967 (please note calls are charged at local rates and lines are open Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm)

FREEPOST: Freepost Rail Central



Appendix 1 – Consultation zone map including more than 2,500 registered Royal Mail addresses including Blisworth, Milton Malsor, Roade and the local area