The Rail Central Rail Freight Interchange and Highway Order 201[x]

Phase 2 Consultation Overview

Ashfield Land Management Limited and Gazeley GLP Northampton s.à.r.l.

March 2018

Turley

Contents

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Phase 2 Consultation Overview Document has been prepared to provide a summary on the emerging proposals for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), at land to the south of Milton Malsor, Northampton, referred to as 'Rail Central'.

1.2 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are large scale developments (relating to energy, transport, water or waste) which are determined under a specific consenting process as defined by the Planning Act 2008 (the 'Act'). Certain SRFIs of a certain scale and size, such as these proposals, are defined as NSIP development. They are considered as being vital to meet the country's needs and to support a prosperous economy.

1.3 Ashfield Land Management Limited and Gazeley GLP Northampton s.à r.l. (Ashfield Land and Gazeley GLP) (the Applicant) intend to make an application to the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Act for the Rail Central SRFI.

1.4 A SRFI is a large multi-purpose rail freight interchange and distribution centre linked into both the rail and strategic road network. It includes rail-connected warehousing and container handling facilities and may also include manufacturing and processing activities. The aim of a 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 (final delivery) 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.

1.5 The Proposed Development comprises the following aspects:

- The 'Main SRFI Site' (including the A43 access and all rail infrastructure);
- Works to J15A of the M1 motorway; and
- Other highway works.

1.6 A schedule of the documents that have been made available for consultation are enclosed at Appendix 1 of this Report. As draft documents, their content is subject to change following this consultation process and prior to the submission of the DCO application, anticipated in mid-2018. The key consultation material includes:

- Preliminary Environmental Information (PEIR) which assesses the proposals from an environmental impact perspective;
- Draft Planning Statement which sets out the case for the proposals and assesses the scheme against planning policy;

- Draft plans and drawings including parameter plans which seek to control the scale and extent of development;
- Draft Design and Access Statement which provides overarching design principles for detailed design;
- Draft Rail Operations Report which provides information on rail connectivity and capacity; and
- Draft Transport Assessment which assesses the proposals from a highway perspective.

1.7 The intention of this document is to provide a brief summary of the proposals and the consultation process. In doing so, this document has the following content and structure:

- Summary of Proposals;
- Overview of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange;
- Need for Development;
- Why an SRFI in this Location;
- Illustrative Masterplan;
- Key Mitigation;
- Summary of Key Impacts;
- Overall Conclusions; and
- Phase 2 Consultation Process Summary

1.8 This document can inevitably provide only a short summary of the information, so please do review the full documentation via our project website for more details.

2. Summary of Proposals

Site and Surroundings

2.1 A detailed overview of the Site and Surroundings is provided within Chapter 2 of the PEIR, which forms part of this Phase 2 Consultation.

2.2 The SRFI Potential Development Area (the 'Order Limits') is located in Northamptonshire in the East Midlands region of England, approximately 20km north-west of Milton Keynes and approximately 6km south of Northampton.

2.3 The Main SRFI site, including access from the A43, and associated infrastructure falls within the administrative boundary of South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). Other highway improvement works are also required away from the main site, these fall within the boundary of Northampton Borough Council (NBC). The site at Junction 15a of the M1 Motorway (the 'J15a' site) is spread across the two administrative boundaries.

2.4 The Main SRFI site comprises a total of approximately 291ha. The A43 passes through the site to the west. Northampton Road/Towcester Road runs through the site from north to south. A number of farms, small holdings and associated development are located within the east of the site. All of these existing developments are accessed from Barn Lane, which runs south from Milton Malsor and comes to an end within the Main SRFI Site.

2.5 The Main SRFI Site largely consists of large-scale arable farmland, with some smaller scale pastoral fields, and semi-improved grassland more common in the south-western and north-eastern parts of the site. Field boundaries generally have some hedgerow or intermittent tree cover, however this is limited. The fields are mostly separated by relatively species-poor hedgerows probably dating from around the beginning of the 19th Century, although there are a few more species-rich and older hedges along Towcester Road and elsewhere.

2.6 To the north of the Main SRFI site is the village of Milton Malsor, which is designated as a Conservation Area. Gayton Road runs from east to west along the northern boundary of the site and intersects with Towcester Road/Northampton Road.

2.7 The Northampton Loop Line (NLL) defines majority of the site's eastern boundary, although some land to the east of the NLL is also included in the Order Limits for habitat creation purposes. Beyond the NLL lies agricultural land and the M1 Motorway. Junction 15 of the M1 motorway is located approximately 1.17km from the eastern boundary of the Main SRFI Site.

2.8 The West Coast Main Line (WCML) directly abuts the length of the southern boundary of the site running from east to north-west. Beyond this lies the village of Blisworth, which like Milton Malsor, is designated as a Conservation Area. The Grand Union Canal (originally named the Grand Junction Canal) runs from north to south and forms part of the south-west boundary of the Main SRFI Site.

2.9 The A43 is adjacent to and crosses within the Main SRFI Site. The western boundary is defined by Arm Farm and a spur/branch of the Grand Union Canal known as 'the Northampton Arm'. Gayton Marina, which is connected to the Northampton Arm, is located beyond the Main SRFI Site boundary to the west.

2.10 Also within the Rail Central Order Limits are works at Junction 15a of the M1 and various other highways works. The J15a works comprises the immediate roads for J15a of the M1, and adjoining land parcels which contain farmland and industrial buildings. Because of the scale of the highway mitigation proposed, these works constitute a NSIP in their own right.

2.11 The junction itself comprises two roundabouts with a passageway under the M1 and associated slip roads to the motorway to the west, passing industrial buildings comprising the motorway services (Northampton Services). In addition to the roads feeding directly to the junction, the local road network comprises Banbury Lane to the west of the junction, passing on a bridge over the M1, Towcester Road to the east, also crossing the M1 by bridge, and other local roads such as Northampton Road, Milton Road and Kislingbury Road joining together the surrounding villages of Milton Malsor, Blisworth and Rothersthorpe.

2.12 To the north of J15a lies the southern suburbs of Northampton (Shelfleys), to the east is agricultural land with Towcester Road and the West Coast Main Line approximately 1 km away. To the south is agricultural land, rising to the village of Milton Malsor approximately 1 km to the south-east, and to the west is the village of Rothersthorpe, and industrial buildings close to Northampton Services.

2.13 A full summary of all 'other highways works' included within the Order Limits for Rail Central can be found in the draft Planning Statement and the draft PEIR.

Description of Development

2.14 The Proposed Development comprises the following aspects:

- The 'Main SRFI Site' (including the A43 access and all rail infrastructure);
- Works to J15A of the M1 motorway; and
- Other highway works.

2.15 The Proposed Development comprises the following principal elements:

The 'Main SRFI Site'

- Structural earthworks and demolition of existing buildings and structures;
- An intermodal freight terminal with direct connections to the Northampton Loop Line, capable of accommodating trains of up to 775m long, including up to 3 gantry cranes, container storage, a train maintenance depot and facilities to transfer containers to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV);

- An express freight terminal with direct connections to the West Coast Main Line, capable of accommodating trains of up to 240m long, a freight platform with associated loading and unloading facilities;

- Up to 702,097 sq m (GEA) of rail connected and rail served warehousing and ancillary service buildings including a lorry park, terminal control building and bus terminal;

- New road infrastructure including a new separated access point on the A34 (T), an internal site underpass (under Northampton Road) and necessary utilities infrastructure; and

- Strategic landscaping and open space including alterations to public rights of way, the creation of new ecological enhancement areas and publicly accessible open areas, flood attenuation, and the partial diversion of the Milton Malsor brook.

2.16 A series of key parameters which provide certainty over the Proposed Development at the Main SRFI Site are provided in draft **Parameters Plans** submitted alongside this Phase 2 Consultation. As part of the DCO application, these parameters will be fixed. Furthermore, the Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates a means of bringing forward the proposed development, whilst being in accordance with the proposed parameters.

Works to J15a of the M1

- Pre-development works to facilitate carriageway widening and configuration, including development of a construction compound to the east of the junction and partial demolition of existing carriageway;

- Widening and signalisation of existing northern roundabout;

- Widening of A5123 approach; widening of M1 southbound off-slip approach;

- Widening of A43 northbound approach to northern roundabout;

- Reconfiguration of existing southern roundabout to provide signalised T-Junction;

- Provision of two-lane free flow slip on A43 South Bound;

- Provision of new link road between southern junction to M1 northbound on and off-slips;

- Widening of A43 northbound approach to southern junction; and

- Provision of ecological mitigation to the south-west of J15a, to mitigate habitat loss at the Main SRFI Site, and landscaping around the junction.

2.17 Parameters for the works are shown on the **J15a Green Infrastructure Plan** which shows the extent of the highway works and ecological mitigation proposed.

Other Highway Works

2.18 The Proposed Development includes a range of additional highway improvements to the following junctions. These works will involve minor pre-development works, largely located within the existing highways land, as follows:

- Junction 16 of the M1 (M1/ A4500 (east to Northampton)/ A45 (west to Daventry));
- A4500, Weedon Road (east)/ Tollgate Way/ A4500, Weedon Road (west)/ A5076, Upton Way;
- A5076/ A5123/ Upton Way Roundabout (Pineham Park) (Dane Camp Way);
- A5076 (west)/ Hunsbury Hill Avenue/ Hunsbarrow Road/ A5076, Danes Camp Way/ Hunsbury Hill Road;
- Towcester Road/ A5076, Danes Camp Way/ A5123, Towcester Road/ Mere Way/ Tesco Access;
- A45 (south)/ Eagle Drive/ A45 (north)/ Caswell Road;
- A45, Nene Valley Way (south); A428, Bedford Road (west)/ A5095, Rushmere Road/ A45, Nene Valley Way (north)/ A428, Bedford Road (east);
- A45, Nene Valley Way (south); A43, Lumbertubs Way/ A45, Nene Valley Way;
- Junction 15 of the M1 (M1/ A45 (north to Northampton and Wellingborough)/ Saxon Avenue/ A508, Northampton Road (south to Milton Keynes));
- Tove Roundabout (A43, Towcester Bypass (southwest)/ Towcester Road/ A5, (north)/ and A43 (northeast)/ A5, Watling Street (southeast));
- Abthorpe Roundabout (Abthorpe Road/ A43, Towcester Bypass (north)/ Brackley Road/ A43, Towcester Bypass (south));
- A5076, Upton Way (south)/ Telford Way/ A5076, Upton Way (north)/ Walter Tull Way/ Dustan Mill Lane;
- A5076, Upton Way (south)/ High Street/ A5076, Upton Way (north)/ Dustan Mill (Stub);
- A508, Harborough Road (south)/ A5199, Welford Road/ A508, Harborough Road (north)/ Cranford Road/ Kingsland Avenue;
- A43/St John's Road (signage and road surfacing scheme on the A43);
- A43 Northampton Road (signage scheme); and

- Pedestrian/Cycle Way along Northampton Road and between Barn Lane to the junction of Collingtree Road (widening of existing footpaths, provision of new footpath and dropped kerbs, and realignment of the carriageway).

3. Overview of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

3.1 SRFIs are 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.

3.2 It is widely acknowledged that for the majority of freight movements, rail is unable to undertake a full end-to-end journey for the goods concerned. Rail freight interchanges (RFI) enable freight to be transferred between transport modes, to allow rail to be 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.

3.3 The aim of an 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 therefore important in facilitating the transfer of freight from road to rail.

Operation of the Rail Central Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

3.4 The Rail Central SRFI will operate to provide fast, efficient processing of containers and other intermodal units, between trains, road vehicles and intermediate storage areas. To facilitate this, the scheme will take rail access from two strategic lines on the national rail network.

3.5 Based on the current patterns of activity at existing SRFIs, it is anticipated that the majority of rail traffic would comprise deep-sea containers moved from a network of major port facilities (such as Felixstowe, Southampton, London Gateway, Purfleet, Bristol, Liverpool, Teesport and Grangemouth). The next largest component is likely to be domestic intermodal services, the site being well-placed on the main North-West to South-East national freight corridor within Great Britain. The balance of traffic would then comprise European intermodal services, conventional wagon services and express freight services.

3.6 The intermodal terminal would be equipped with multiple sidings capable of handling maximum length (775m) freight trains. All of the non-electrified sidings within the terminal would be accessible for overhead gantry crane operation, providing more efficient (and electrically-driven) interchange of containers between road and rail.

3.7 Space would be provided alongside the sidings for containers to be stored temporarily if required between road and rail interchange (each train typically processed within a 2-4 hour window depending on the number of containers and handling equipment involved).

3.8 Once berthed inside the intermodal terminal, trains will be unloaded and reloaded, each train typically being processed within a 2-4 hour window, depending on the

number of containers and handling equipment utilised. Once reloaded, the trains would then be prepared to await departure.

3.9 The intermodal terminal would also accommodate short-term storage of containers awaiting call-off by trains or HGVs. This would provide a total storage capacity of around 4,700 containers.

3.10 As trains are unloaded and reloaded, containers will be moved to and from the terminal by road, either serving occupiers on site or those in the wider hinterland. Goods received by warehouses on site will be processed, stored and resorted for onward distribution by road or rail as required.

3.11 Following the unloading of the trains, goods will be separated out, some of which will be distributed directly onto HGVs for onward travel. Other goods will be unloaded to the warehousing units provided on site, where items can be sorted for subsequent storage and distribution.

3.12 Uniquely for an SRFI, the scheme also includes a freight intermodal terminal in addition to the intermodal facility. Connected to the WCML, this will facilitate mainly accommodate a number of express freight services, similar to those used by the Royal Mail between London, Warrington, Glasgow and Newcastle (and more recently used by Eddie Stobart, Sainsburys and TNT). The express facility would allow high speed trains to arrive on site, quickly discharge and load roll cages or palletised goods (within windows as short as 20-30 minutes) before departing again in the same or opposite direction.

3.13 Please refer to the draft **Rail Operations Report** for a more detailed summary of the core functions of an SRFI and a summary of a 'day in the life' of an SRFI.

4. Policy Need and Market Context

4.1 The following section provides an overview of the national policy and guidance which inform the development of the proposals and which guide the consultation and decision making processes going forward and why SRFIs are identified as being as nationally significant.

4.2 The 2008 Act is the primary legislation that establishes the legal framework for developments which are identified as 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects". These projects are considered as being vital to meet the country's long term needs and to support a prosperous economy. The 2008 Act confirms that SRFIs are NSIPs.

4.3 The procedure for determining NSIPs is very different to a normal planning application.

4.4 NSIPs require a type of consent known as a Development Consent Order (DCO). DCOs are intended to simplify and speed up the planning process and are decided by the Secretary of State, following a recommendation from the Planning Inspectorate. The DCO not only provides planning consent for the project but can also incorporate other consenting regimes and include authorisation for the compulsory acquisition of land. The DCO would specify details of the development consented, its location and any requirements (similar to planning conditions) that must be met in implementing the consent.

4.5 A further significant difference is that the Act requires applications for NSIPs to be determined in accordance with the relevant National Policy Statement. National Policy Statements guide the decision-making process for applications for Development Consent. Sector-specific National Policy Statements are produced by the relevant Government Departments and set out national policy for NSIPs. They provide the framework within which the Examining Authority will make their recommendations to the SoS and include the Government's objectives for the development of NSIPs.

4.6 In the case of SRFIs, the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS), published in December 2014, sets out the need for and policies to guide and deliver NSIPs on the national road and rail network in England, including SRFIs. It notes that the need for SRFI's is driven by a combination of:

- The changing needs of logistics industry;
- Growth within the Rail freight sector;
- Environmental benefits, primarily relating to the reduction of carbon emissions and removing freight from the UK's strategic road network; and
- Economic benefits, including job growth.

4.7 The NPS confirms that the Government's vision for transport is for a low carbon sustainable transport system that is an engine for economic growth. This is whilst making the transport system safer and improving the quality of life in communities. The Government therefore believes it is important to facilitate the development of the

intermodal rail freight industry. Furthermore, it is noted that the transfer of freight from road to rail has an important part to play in a low carbon economy and in helping to address climate change. In this regard, the NPS confirms the following:

> *"Rail transport has a crucial role to play in delivering significant reductions in pollution and congestion. Tonne for tonne, rail freight produces 70% less CO_2 than road freight, up to fifteen times lower NO_x emissions and nearly 90% lower PM10 emissions. It also has de-congestion benefits – depending on its load, each freight train can remove between 43 and 77 HGVs from the road."*

(Paragraph 2.35)

4.8 In order to achieve the transfer of freight from road to rail, a network of SRFI's is needed across the regions. The NPS therefore sets out a compelling need for an expanded network of SRFI's advising:

> *"The Government has concluded that there is a compelling need for an expanded network of SRFIs"*

(Paragraph 2.56)

4.9 This position is predicated on Government forecasts which demonstrate the scale, pressure and urgency in delivering new SRFI facilities to accommodate and foster the long term growth in rail freight and to respond to market demand. The scale of SRFI expansion is evident in comparison with total distribution floorspace available:

- Over the last 14 years, take up of new build floorspace in large units over 9,000 sqm has been in the order of 1 million sqm per annum;
- Over the last twenty years, around 2.2 million sqm of new floorspace has been supplied on SRFI and RFI – an average of 0.13 million sqm per annum (i.e. just 14% of the above total);
- Network Rail's long term freight forecasts to 2043 are derived from an assumed increase in total rail served warehousing from the current level to some 5.9 million sqm by 2023, 9.6 million sqm by 2033 and 13.3 million sqm by 2043. This suggests a development rate of around 0.4 million sqm per annum – considerably more than has been achieved over the last 20 years.

4.10 Retailers such as Morrisons, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's are all citing the need for more rail facilities[1]. The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has recently has indicated a need for a 400% increase in the capacity of SRFI and rail connected warehousing, as being crucial to expanding access to the rail freight network and achieving Network Rail's freight forecasts[2].

4.11 The NPS doesn't seek to identify specific sites of locations for SRFI nor does it place a restraint on how many SRFIs should be developed across the regions. It is explicit that

[1] See draft Rail Operations Report, page 4

[2] See draft Rail Operations Report, page 4

it expects the market to determine the viability of the proposals. The NPS does however identify specific locational criteria for SRFIs are set out in paragraphs 4.84 to 4.87 of the NPS. This confirms that SRFIs should comply with the following provisions:

- have good connectivity both with the road and rail network, in particular the strategic rail freight network;
- are near the business markets they will serve – major urban centres, or groups of centres – and are linked to key supply chain routes;
- are located alongside the major rail routes, close to major trunk roads as well as near to the conurbations that consume the goods; and
- should ideally be located on a route with a gauge capability of W8 or more, or capable of enhancement to a suitable gauge.

4.12 Because of the specific locational characteristics, the NPS confirms that the number of suitable locations for SRFIs will be limited (paragraphs 2.56) and that:

"*Due their requirements, it may be that countryside locations are required for SRFIs.*"

(Paragraph 4.84)

5. Why a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Rail Central?

5.1 The proposed location of the Rail Central Site is considered to have ideal characteristics for the siting of a SRFI. The rationale for Rail Central is driven by its strategic location to markets and direct connections to key rail and road networks. Rail Central positively combines three of the most important factors for SRFI operations:

Direct Connections to the National Rail Network

- Rail Central is located on the existing rail freight network, connected via the Northampton Loop line which handles most freight services at present with the ability to facilitate the movement of freight traffic regionally, nationally and internationally.

- The additional provision of an express rail freight interchange, directly connected to the WCML, enables Rail Central to capture and accommodate this emerging market. Access would again be provided from both directions for travel for diesel and electricity-hauled express freight trains. As a result, all conventional wagon and express freight services would be able to operate between Rail Central and virtually the entire national rail network.

- All four lines are electrified and cleared to W10 loading gauge. This would provide onward access at W10 gauge to the principal deep-sea ports of Felixstowe, Southampton and London Gateway, as well as other ports and (S)RFI at W10 gauge in London, the Midlands, North West, Yorkshire & Humberside, North East and the Scottish Central Belt.

- Rail Central offers comprehensive resilience and flexibility on the railway network having four separate (and fully electrified) main line access points onto two separate branches of the West Coast Mainline and which are inter-connected. This means that should the Northampton Loop line be closed for maintenance or incidents, Rail Central can continue to operate and access the fast lines of the West Coast Mainline.

- Rail Central provides additional dedicated facilities for locomotive and wagon maintenance and servicing.

- The draft **Rail Operations Report** confirms that an analysis of the network capability for additional freight traffic has been undertaken on both the slow lines and fast lines by Network Rail and specialist timetable planners PRA. This confirms that on the slow lines south of Northampton, between 28 and 38 daytime paths for intermodal freight trains were identified in each direction, with additional capacity being available overnight. On the fast lines, between 14 and 19 paths were identified in each direction per day for express freight trains, with up to 50 paths for intermodal freight trains being available overnight. Whilst in combination the total number of paths available on fast and slow lines would be considerably less than this in practice, the joint analysis confirms the

overall capability of the main line to cater for the initial requirements of the site, at 4 trains per day in and 4 trains per day out.

- In the longer term, the development of the wider network, including phase 1 of HS2, will release capacity on the existing network to support further growth in freight services.

Direct Connections to the Strategic Road Network

- Rail Central officers direct access to the A43 dual-carriageway and lies in close proximity of the M1 which serves as the key north-south motorway link in the UK.

Central Location in the UK and Close to Markets

- Northamptonshire is part of the UK's 'centre of gravity' for the distribution and logistics, with excellent access to national and regional markets. Rail Central is located at the southern end of what is sometimes referred to as the 'golden triangle' for national distribution activity which is an area stretching along the M1 corridor from Milton Keynes to Leicester and across to Birmingham, with Northamptonshire at its heart. Rail Central is proximate to existing clusters of warehouse occupiers and other companies which currently do have accessibility to the rail network but, with rail access available, can facilitate the gradual conversion from road to rail into their supply chains.

- This location is attractive because around 75% of the national population can be reached within a day's round trip, and 90% can be accessed within a four hour drive.

- The scale of the site enables a large amount of distribution floorspace (either directly rail connected or rail served to be provided which immediately increased the amount of floorspace available to businesses wishing to benefit from rail access and integrated interchange facilities.

5.2 The draft **Market Demand Statement** identifies that there is a paucity of supply of warehousing currently available within East Midlands and Northamptonshire for logistics facilities.

5.3 Placed within its locational context, it is one of the best sites in the region for a Rail Freight Interchange which is also located within an area of strong demand which is expected to continue and grow in the future.

Alternative Sites

5.4 A draft **Alternative Sites Assessment** has been produced. The assessment has included several distinct stages of work to identify possible alternative SRFI sites across a broad search area employing a sieve mapping technique using a GIS system over the East and West Midlands. This was used to identify sites with good rail access, close to motorway junctions and with very few environmental constraints.

5.5 The sites were then scored using a common scoring matrix, which was designed to identify the best performing potential rail freight sites. The scoring prioritised factors including proximity to motorways, access to high gauge rail lines, local access routes, site levels, shape, size and proximity to sensitive land uses.

5.6 The scores achieved by each of the sites identified were then reviewed and the highest scoring sites selected for comparative analysis. This process was subjective and focussed around the topics identified as important in the scoring matrix. The comparative analysis not only assesses the locations in terms of SRFI operations and environmental impacts, but also concludes with an understanding of the possible role each site would perform in terms of catchment area, operating in a network of SRFI facilities as required by the NPS.

5.7 The assessment has demonstrated that, despite the large area of search, the development opportunities for SRFI proposals are limited. A total of 25 locations were identified as satisfying key SRFI characteristics as defined by the NPS. Of these, only five locations present realistic SRFI opportunities and were identified for further comparative analysis.

5.8 Indeed, this in itself demonstrates the rigour of the assessment methodology and is a reflection of the East and West Midlands being a significant area of developer interest to deliver a network of SRFI to meet burgeoning demand. It is also reflective of the NPS which makes it clear it is for the market to determine the viability of particular proposals. All shortlisted sites comprise greenfield and all would result in the loss of agricultural land and various elements of biodiversity. Comparison of environmental benefits is difficult due to the size and scale of SRFI development and the individualistic nature of each candidate site. Environmental impacts vary but are of broadly the same magnitude and it is not the case that one site is clearly preferable to another, in terms of development effects. Three of the short-listed locations are the subject of SRFI DCO proposals which, if consented, are considered to operate and serve a different core catchment area of the East and West Midlands to that of Rail Central.

5.9 The study concludes that there are two clear top performing sites – Rail Central and Northampton Gateway that would seek to serve broadly the same core catchment area. They score the same using the scoring matrix. There are differences in performance between these two sites which allow them to be distinguished.

5.10 Northampton Gateway is a strong SRFI site with very good access to the strategic road network. However, whilst it is closer to the motorway than Rail Central, this in itself is not a major distinguishing factor between these two sites. Environmental impacts, whilst varied, are broadly of the same magnitude. Rail Central does however, have the ability to directly connect to the WCML, as well as the NLL and this presents, along with its additional infrastructure, enhanced operational and technical advantages over Northampton Gateway which make it more resilient, flexible and more adaptable to the changing rail freight market.

5.11 On this basis, it is concluded that the Rail Central site is the better performing SRFI site. However, it is recognised that there is potential for Northampton Gateway to be pursued in addition to Rail Central. This scenario has therefore been the subject of preliminary cumulative impact assessment in the PEIR.

5.12 Four of the five sites which present realistic development SRFI opportunities are the subject of developer interest and are being pursued through the DCO process. Three of these locations would serve a different core catchment area to that of Rail Central and do not present realistic alternatives. They would, however, provide complementary facilities to Rail Central and contribute to the required network of SRFI facilities as required by the NPS with the overriding objective of securing access to the rail network and fostering the transfer of freight from road to rail to support economic growth in an environmentally responsible manner.

6. Illustrative Masterplan and Parameters Plans

6.1 This section explains the design work undertaken to date, setting out what details of the proposed development are being applied for as part of the DCO application. This section covers the scope and purpose of the parameter plans, how the design has evolved (taking into consideration both comments and feedback from previous consultation and the results of additional survey and technical work), and describes the indicative detail now shown on the Illustrative masterplan.

The Parameters Plans

6.2 The extent of the Proposed Development on the Main SRFI Site is limited by a defined series of parameters which are fixed or controlled as part of the DCO (i.e. the location of development plots. This approach is often used across a range of large infrastructure projects in order to ensure that the potential impacts of the development are identified and can be properly assessed and controlled while also leaving sufficient flexibility in terms of the detailed design to allow the future refinement of the scheme at the detailed design stage.

6.3 For the Main SRFI Site, the parameters are set out in the following plans:

- **Parameters Plan (Figure 1 below)** – sets out extent of maximum development that can achieved on site including minimum floor levels, building heights and building limit lines.

- **Green Infrastructure Plan (Figure 2 below)** – sets out the framework of green infrastructure embedded mitigation including landscape strategy and minimum bund heights/maximum plateau heights and retained vegetation.

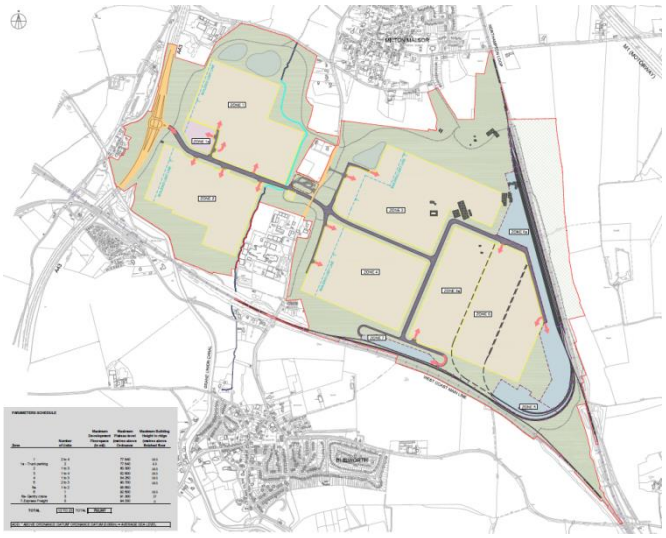

Figure 1 Parameters Plan

Figure 2 Green Infrastructure Plan

6.4 For the J15a works, parameters have been used to guide detailed development; this is set out in the **J15a Green Infrastructure Plan**. This shows the current extent of the adopted highway and location of particular areas of works, for example, the

construction compound, areas to be used for ecological mitigation and areas used for highway works. This identifies where there will be flexibility for works to extend. The nature of the works will be defined during more detailed project design. There are no parameters set for height of the junction, as works will not be high level, but will be designed to follow the current height of the junction, as works will not be high level, but will be designed to follow the current height of the roadway, with allowances made for safe and efficient operation of the highway.

The Illustrative Masterplan

6.5 The feedback received from the first phase of consultation was reviewed in detail by the project team. This has informed the further work now progressed and design of the masterplan option now being consulted on as part of the Phase 2 Consultation. An extract of the latest Illustrative masterplan is shown at **Figure 3** below.

Figure 3 Illustrative Colour Masterplan

6.6 As set out above, it is the parameters for the development proposal that are being applied for as part of the DCO process. The Illustrative masterplan demonstrates one way that development on the site could be achieved within the established parameters, but is not the finalised detailed scheme.

6.7 Following Phase 1 Consultation, a number of changes have been made to the scheme. These include those listed below, a full explanation of all changes is set out within the other consultation documents including the draft Design and Access Statement;

- The reduction in overall floorspace and reorientation of warehouse units in the illustrative masterplan to reduce visual impact.
- Enhanced bunding and screening around the development.
- Enhanced green corridor parallel to Northampton Road to create a landscape and cycle footpath linking the villages of Blisworth and Milon Malsor
- The removal of direct access to the site from Northampton Road
- Connecting the east and west sections of the site with an underpass at Northampton Road
- The removal of proposed development at land west of the A43 for a hotel, restaurant or training and innovation centre. The land is no safeguarded to provide ecological mitigation and an informal pocket park.
- Ensuring diverted or re-orientated footpaths preserve their accessibility and character.
- In an effort to reduce the visual impact on the Railway cottages and Northampton Road, the distance between the closest buildings and these receptors has been increased.
- An update to the Intermodal Area and Train Maintenance Depot has been considered to allow for a longer intermodal area and rail accessibility and an electricity substation has been added to the development to serve the power needs of the site.

6.8 A design code which will be developed in due course will take account of the development form, layout and orientation. In establishing this code, the following will need to be considered;

- The operational and commercial aspects of the brief so that buildings and transport infrastructure suit the needs of modern business, and allow flexibility for changes in building use and management by future occupiers;
- That the development should be capable of accommodating buildings both large and small, to cater for a variety of national, regional and local business needs;
- The existing public right of way that crosses the site, and the its connections with the wider network;
- Sensitivities in respect of the development's impact on the adjacent countryside; and

- Views out of the development to neighbouring uses.

6.9 Further details can be found the draft **Design and Access Statement**.

7. Key Mitigation

7.1 Details of embedded mitigation measures are presented in each topic PEIR chapter, which identifies where such mitigation will be secured within any development consent granted. For the purpose of the PEIR, the embedded mitigation includes:

- **Main SRFI Parameters Plan** which seek to control the scale, extent and location of the Proposed Development and provide for embed specific mitigation measures such as bunding.

- **Main SRFI Site Green Infrastructure Plans** provides confirmation of vegetation to be retained on the site, the primary location for the planting of green infrastructure (including woodland and hedgerow planting). The plans also confirm the proposed screening mounds, which are to include woodland and hedgerow planting. Furthermore, the plans provide confirm the areas to be utilised for hydrological attenuation.

- **J15a Green Infrastructure Plan** confirms the various ecological and biodiversity enhancements proposed at the site. This includes confirmation of the ecological mitigation area.

- **J15a Proposals Plan** confirms the proposed works to be undertaken at this site, these include the widening of road and roundabouts and changes to the road lanes to ease congestion and reduce traffic pollution. Further mitigation provisions include a new cycleway and footpath to improve sustainable transport.

- Some measures outlined in the draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (see below).

7.2 A range of additional mitigation measures are proposed comprising:

- **Construction Environmental Management Plan** has been provided as part of the consultation and seeks to control and mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area. The CEMP is made up of a series of documents, including:

  – **Site Waste Management Plan** will be developed to predict the actual quantities of waste arising prior to construction and will also monitor the waste produced during construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

  – **Dust Management Plan** provides a range of dust control and mitigation measures including using enclosed chutes, use of dust suppression facilities and dampening down of potentially dusty areas.

  – **15-year Management and Maintenance Plan** the plan confirms the future and continued management and maintenance of all the individual features that constitute the Proposed Development.

  - **Materials Management Plan** will be followed for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development and will set out how various materials will be managed.

  - **Pollution Prevention Method Statement** will be utilised for the construction and operational works to ensure that measures are in place to prevent pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil or air as a result of the operations.

- **Soil Management Plan** seeks to record the existing soil resources, ensuring that they are handled, stored and replaced according to good practice. This will ensure that soils are re-used within the Order Limits for their most suitable purposes.

- **Archaeology Written Schemes of Investigation** sets out the programme of mitigation to be undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development.

- **Remediation Method Statement** will be implemented, which will contain requirements with regards to unexpected contamination (e.g. patches of oil not identified during the ground investigation, asbestos containing material, ground gases including radon etc.).

- **Tree Management Plan** will be drawn up so that trees can be actively managed for their potential for roosting bats, birds and other ecological interests.

- **Noise Management Plan** will ensure that employees at the Proposed Development site are trained to recognise and reduce any potentially noisy activities that may arise as a result of normal operations, particularly during the night time period.

- **Framework Travel Plan** will be agreed in advance of occupation to promote use of modes of transport other than the private car. Targets will be set within the document, with a monitoring regime in place over a ten year implementation period.

- **Operational Traffic Management Plan** will be implemented which will ensure that during the operational phase of the development, HGV movement will be managed using a number of strategies in line with the Northamptonshire Road Freight Strategy (NRFS), and the policies therein, including signage, vehicle routing and lorry parks.

- **Public Transport Strategy** will be developed in discussion with public transport officers at NCC to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

- **Construction Traffic Management Plan** has been prepared, which sets out details of construction traffic movements, and the proposed methods to manage and mitigate the impacts of the construction phase.

- **Facilities Management Plan** will address how operational mitigation, for example the segregation of waste within the Proposed Development will be managed and how this will function in practice.

8. Summary of Key Impacts

8.1 This section of the document provides a summary of the potential effects and impacts that may arise from the proposed development. A full overview of the assessment undertaken to date and suggested mitigation proposed is included in the PEIR (Preliminary Environmental Information Report).

8.2 As can be expected with any large scheme, the Rail Central development is likely to have a range of potentially positive impacts and some potentially adverse local effects, however through appropriate, proportionate mitigation, sensitive design and careful masterplanning many of the potential adverse effects can be minimised.

8.3 As set out earlier in this document, there are likely to be significant positive effects arising from the development in terms of meeting the changing needs of logistics industry, supporting growth within the Rail freight sector, achieving environmental benefits (primarily relating to the reduction of carbon emissions and removing freight from the UK's strategic road network) and economic benefits, including job growth.

8.4 Full details of the Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken to date are provided within the PEIR. A Non-Technical Summary of the PEIR is included within the consultation materials and summarises the PEIR in a clear and concise manner. The PEIR is a 'work in progress' currently and further information will be gathered and assessed ahead of the submission of the DCO Application. At which point the PEIR will be finalised as a full Environmental Statement (ES).

8.5 The PEIR is structured into a number of topic areas and has been compiled jointly by a team of consultants, each of which are qualified professionals in their relevant topic area. The draft chapters in the PEIR cover the following disciplines:

- Air Quality (Chapter 9);
- Agriculture (Chapter 10);
- Archaeology (Chapter 11);
- Built Heritage (Chapter 12);
- Ground Conditions (Chapter 13);
- Hydrology (Chapter 14);
- Utilities (Chapter 15);
- Biodiversity (Chapter 16);
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 17);
- Noise (Chapter 18);
- Highways (Chapter 19);

- Socio Economics (Chapter 20);
- Lighting (Chapter 21);
- Waste (Chapter 22);
- Climate Change (Chapter 23);
- Human Health (Chapter 24); and
- Major Accidents and Disasters (Chapter 25).

8.6 A summary of those topics which result in key impacts are provided below.

Built Heritage

8.7 The Built Heritage chapter and supporting Heritage Assessment have been prepared in order to assess the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development on the above ground historic built environment of the proposed Order Limits and the surrounding area during the construction and operational phases.

8.8 An assessment of the significance of all designated and non-designated built heritage assets within a 2km radius Study Area for the Main SRFI Site has been undertaken, including an assessment of the contribution made by their setting. For the J15a Works and the other highway works, a 250m Study Area has been pursued.

8.9 There are no designated heritage assets within the Main SRFI Site proposed Order Limits. Within the Main SRFI Site Study Area, there are 146 Listed Buildings, 8 Conservation Area, 1 Registered Park and Garden and 2 Scheduled Monuments. There are no World Heritage Sites or Registered Battlefields within this Study Area. There are 17 buildings on the Historic Environment Record (HER) within this Study Area.

8.10 There are 4 designated heritage assets full or partially within the J15a and Other Highway Works proposed Order Limits, consisting of the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, two grade II listed locks (No's 11 and 13) and a grade II listed Drawbridge (to Lock No 13) on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal. Within the Study Area, there are approximately 23 Listed Buildings, 1 Conservation Area and 1 Registered Battlefield. There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens or buildings on the HER within the J15a and Other Highway Works Study Area.

8.11 The effects arising from the Proposed Development on Built Heritage will be direct and indirect in nature, having potential to affect the significance of the identified assets through direct works and change within their setting.

8.12 During the construction phase, it has been identified that there are adverse effects on a number of heritage assets relevant to the Proposed Development as a whole. A moderate adverse significance of effect has been identified on the grade II listed Milton House and Manor Cottage, Mortimers, Milton Malsor Conservation Area, the grade II listed Lock No 10-11 on the Grand Union Canal during the construction phase. In addition, a slight adverse effect has been identified to the grade II listed Railway Bridge

over Northampton Road, Lock's 6-9 and Lock No 13 on the Grand Union Canal and the grade II listed Drawbridge to Lock No 13 during the construction phase. This assessment has been undertaken as a worst case scenario without any embedded or proposed mitigation. The identified effect is as a result of the site preparation works, construction of buildings and the construction of and enlargement of road infrastructure on the above heritage assets. The effects are assessed to be 'less than substantial' harm.

8.13 For the operational phase, it is concluded that for many of the heritage assets there will be a neutral effect having taken into consideration their significance, the relative distance between them and the Site, the extent of intervening development and the nature of the Proposed Development. Despite this and the various mitigation measures, it has been identified that there are adverse effects on a number of heritage assets relevant to the Proposed Development as a whole, resulting in a significant environmental effect.

8.14 A moderate adverse significance of effect has been identified on the grade II listed Milton House and Manor Cottage, Mortimers, Milton Malsor Conservation Area, the grade II listed Lock No 10-11 on the Grand Union Canal during the operation phase. In addition, a slight adverse effect has been identified to the grade II listed Lock's 6-9 and the grade II listed Railway Bridge over Northampton Road during the operation phase. The effects are assessed to be 'less than substantial' harm.

Biodiversity

8.15 An ecological impact assessment has determined that effects arising from the Proposed Development will arise from construction activity and during operation. Notwithstanding this, the design of the Proposed Development aims to minimise these effects as far as possible through mitigation embedded into the site design.

8.16 Land-take will be the most important source of impact on the Main SRFI Site. It will cause loss of arable and agricultural grassland, some of which is important for farmland birds. There will be loss of a more-or-less intact hedgerow network totalling c.12.7 km of hedgerow over large parts of the site.

8.17 There will be loss of mixed scrub, tall-herb vegetation and grassland on railway line-sides. Approximately 780m of the Milton Malsor Brook will be re-routed and some wet ditches connecting to it will be lost. There will be a permanent loss of 26 veteran trees, 1 notable and 17 locally notable trees. Six roosts used by small numbers of Common Pipistrelle bats will be lost, as will some barn owl roosts in trees and farm buildings. There will also be a loss of hedgerows and trees that provide commuting and foraging links for bats and other species in the south of site. During construction, temporary effects such as noise, dust and lighting will be reduced to minimal levels acceptable for wider purposes (including health and safety) by measures set out in the CEMP.

8.18 At the J15a Works site there will be impacts on the Grand Union Canal corridor which is important for commuting and foraging bats and otters and is also a Local Wildlife Site. Additionally, there will be a small loss of habitat from an unnamed Potential Wildlife

Site, where some locally rare and important invertebrates and plants uncommon in Northamptonshire were recorded.

8.19 During operation of the Proposed Development there may be some disturbance to animals on the site and in adjacent habitats, especially the canal corridor. This includes effects on flying routes for bats such as the Grand Union Canal, hedgerows and watercourses. Impacts of noise and disturbance may also affect animals and birds on site.

8.20 Notwithstanding this, the design of the Proposed Development aims to minimise any effects as far as possible, through mitigation measures embedded into the site design. This includes:

- Retention of habitat, including certain buildings used by bats, the northern section of the Milton Malsor Brook, some ancient and veteran trees and other areas of woodland and habitat at the periphery of the Main SRFI Site and at J15a.

- Provision of green infrastructure, creating links through the site to the wider countryside and to locally designated sites. There is approximately 116.7 hectares of structural landscape shown on the Green Infrastructure Plan for the main site. Of this 13.8 hectares is retained farmland to the east of the Northampton Loop and 3.2 hectares will be developed as a new pocket park to the west of the A43. Except for ornamental planting around car parks and buildings, the majority of the planting will use native species in grassland, scrub and woodland planting. Stand-alone hedges will form an important part of the planting. In addition to this a further 26 hectares of land to the south of J15a will be developed as an ecological mitigation area.

- Ecological protection measures described in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). These include good practice measures to protect habitats during construction, minimise noise and dust and lighting impacts.

8.21 In addition to the above, adaptive mitigation is also proposed as part of the Proposed Development, this includes the following:

- 39.2ha of scrub and woodland planting.

- c. 2,300 large stature trees will be incorporated into the scheme design.

- Creation of new grasslands using a native and locally appropriate seed mix which mimics typical wildflower meadows for Northamptonshire.

- Veteran trees will be reused in measures such as such as tree resurrection (i.e. using large trunks or limbs of felled trees to provide high-elevated deadwood habitat by using existing trees as supports) and deadwood habitat piles will help to compensate for loss of ancient and veteran trees.

- Development of a Lighting scheme to ensure light on site during construction and operation of the site will avoid spill into ecologically important places.

- Specifications for new hedgerow planting to enhance 'embedded' retained foraging and commuting routes and create more.

- Renovation of barns at the Main SRFI Site and J15a site to provide bat and barn owl habitat.

- Milton Malsor brook diversion will be profiled to provide a variety of flow rates, depth and widths (allowing for Environment Agency specifications), and planted with water-margin species currently found there and in adjacent ditches. The detailed design of the watercourse will be undertaken in collaboration with ecologists, and it is anticipated that the overall quality of the brook will be enhanced for otters, fish and aquatic invertebrates.

- The planting adjacent to the Grand Union Canal and The Arm Farm pocket park beside the Northampton Arm will improve the connectivity of the ecological corridor centred on the canal.

- Detailed design of the 26 ha ecological mitigation area at J15a. The area will be managed as farmland, ideally with livestock in some areas, but will also include a public access track. The site will be designed by ecologists in discussion with the Wildlife Trust, but will include a mixture of field sizes and shapes, new species rich native-species hedgerows with standard trees, wet scrapes and scrub, 'winter bird' fields, and field corner ponds.

- A post-construction Habitat Management Plan (HMP) will protect and promote biodiversity in areas retained for ecology and in newly created habitats. It will cover such matters as pond management, scrub control, hedgerow pruning, and retention of dead or felled trees among others. It will include provisions for monitoring retained and created habitats and key species.

8.22 Overall, although minor adverse effects will remain as a result of habitat loss, especially for farmyard birds and bats, loss of hedgerows and veteran trees, permanent beneficial effects will arise primarily from the provision of green infrastructure. Since a large percentage of both the Main SRFI Site and J15a site is arable, supporting very little biodiversity (on an amount per unit area basis), the green infrastructure and incorporation of ecological mitigation measures as adaptive mitigation will provide a net increase in biodiversity.

Landscape and Visual Impact

8.23 A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to identify the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. The LVIA considers the effects of the Proposed Development on both the landscape and on people's views and visual amenity.

8.24 It is considered that the construction of the Main SRFI Site will give rise to highly significant adverse effects to local landscape character. Visual effects on residential receptors will be highly significant or significant adverse for a small number of residents in individual properties, groups of properties in close proximity to the Main

SRFI Site or in more distant locations where views may be gained from elevated locations overlooking the Main SRFI Site.

8.25 In terms of recreational routes and Public Rights of Way (PRoW), highly significant and significant adverse construction phase visual effects will be limited to users of recreational routes and PRoW in close proximity to the Main SRFI Site and from elevated ground overlooking the Main SRFI Site. Road users will also experience highly significant and significant adverse construction phase visual effects from roads running through the Main SRFI Site or close to it, including Barn Lane, Northampton Road/Towcester Road and Gayton Road.

8.26 During operation, the primary change at the Main SRFI Site will be the introduction of large-scale buildings that would form a highly prominent element within the local landscape. After 7 years it is considered that the mitigation such as screening bunds, woodland and hedgerow planting will begin to mature and will soften the Main SRFI Site and help to screen and integrate it with the receiving landscape. After 15 years of operation the planting will have established and reached a reasonable level of growth and maturity, which would further soften, screen and filter views of the Main SRFI Site reducing its prominence in the local landscape and provide some beneficial effects for both the landscape and ecological character of the Main SRFI Site. It is considered that at Year 15 the Main SRFI site will give rise to a significant beneficial effect to local landscape character.

8.27 At year 15 highly significant or significant visual effects will be limited to residents in individual properties in close proximity to the Main SRFI site or in more distant locations where views may be gained from elevated locations overlooking the site.

8.28 There will be no significant adverse visual effects on road users at Year 15. In terms of recreational routes and PRoW, highly significant and significant adverse operational phase visual effects will be limited to users of recreational routes and PRoW from elevated ground and in close proximity to the Main SRFI Site.

8.29 It is considered that the construction of the J15a Works site will not give rise to significant adverse effects on local landscape character. Highly significant and significant adverse construction phase visual effects would be limited to visual receptors in close proximity to the J15a Works site, to users of the Grand Union Canal recreational route, the Grand Union Canal Walk and PRoW KX2. It is considered that the operation of the J15a Works site will not give rise to significant effects on local landscape character. At Year 15 of operation the proposed structural planting is expected to have reached a level of maturity such that it will provide mitigation of operational visual effects.

Highways

8.30 The Highways and Transportation assessment within the PEIR has been informed through consultation with stakeholders on an on-going basis, including the Secretary of State, local interested parties, Highways England and Northamptonshire County Council.

8.31 The assessment of effects was undertaken with consideration of embedded mitigation. This accounts for any physical mitigation measures provided within the proposed Order Limits and therefore included the proposed works at J15a and the 14 additional minor highways works at identified junctions (Safety schemes and the proposed Cycleway are considered as adaptive mitigation in the PEIR, but will form embedded mitigation for the final DCO submission).

8.32 An assessment of the construction, operational and decommission phase effects was made, assuming embedded mitigation in place. This identified there could be some short term adverse effects on the highway network during construction of the Main SRFI Site, but they would not be significant in EIA terms due to their temporary nature. Construction effects during the J15a works and Minor Highways Works will be assessed for the final DCO application submission.

8.33 At the Operational phase, traffic flows were assessed as having an increase of >30% traffic flows (or >10% in sensitive areas, including residential areas) at:

- The Main SRFI Site (A43)
- M1 Junction 15a
- Junction 4 - A5076 / A5123 / Upton Way
- Junction 6 - A5076 / Hunsbury Hill Avenue / Hunsbarrow Road / Hunsbury Hill Road
- Junction 11 - A45 / A43(T) Ferris Row
- Junction 12 – M1 Junction 15 – M1 / A45 / Saxon Avenue / A508
- Junction 14 - A43 / Towcester Road / A5 (Tove roundabout)
- Junction 19 – A5076 / Telford Way / Walter Trull Way / Duston Mill
- Junction 20 – A5076 / High Street / Duston Mill

8.34 The assessment has also indicated that no impacts greater than minor adverse would occur on any measure other than traffic flow. However, given the forecast increases in traffic flow, further adaptive mitigation would be introduced, which would also apply to the other junctions. These would include a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), a Framework Travel Plan (FTP), an Operational Traffic Management Plan (OTMP), a public transport strategy, pedestrian and cycle improvements and proposed road safety schemes (these latter two will form part of the embedded mitigation/ Order Limits in the final DCO application). Residual effects were assessed as being negligible at the above junctions, with some beneficial effects arising from introduction of the additional adaptive mitigation.

8.35 The assessment demonstrates that the adaptive mitigation measures reduce the significance of the effect of the Proposed Development in the construction, operational and decommissioning phases, ranging from a minor adverse effect to a minor beneficial effect.

Socio Economics

8.36 The chapter in the PEIR assesses the likely significant socio-economic effects likely to occur as a result of the Proposed Development. The assessment considers the socio-

economic effects generated by investment in the construction of the proposed Main SRFI Site, and the effects resulting from its operation once completed. This includes the identification and assessment of likely direct and indirect effects relating to employment, labour force, productivity, crime and business rate revenue.

8.37 Socio-economic effects may also be generated by works at Junction 15a and the minor highways works, which are considered within the chapter where possible. These effects are expected to be primarily generated during construction, with significant socio-economic effects unlikely to be generated by these works once constructed and operational.

8.38 It is envisaged that construction of the Proposed Development is likely to generate significant socio-economic effects that are beneficial in nature, resulting from the creation of jobs and increase in productivity in the local economy. There are therefore no significant adverse socio-economic effects arising during construction that require mitigation. Beneficial effects generated during the construction phase include:

- An estimated 410 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs every year over a construction period of ten years and
- An estimated £20.4 million in gross value added (GVA) to the national economy each year.

8.39 Once completed, operational and fully occupied, significant beneficial effects relating to jobs, productivity and business rate revenue are likely to be generated. No significant adverse effects are identified through the assessment that requires mitigation.

8.40 Beneficial effects generated during the operational phase include:

- 8,100 gross FTE jobs;
- An estimated 12,400 FTE jobs in the national economy when including those which are indirectly generated or induced;
- £555.6 million in GVA nationally; and
- £14.8 million in business rate revenue each year.

8.41 The Applicant is committed to ensuring that a skilled workforce is available to serve the Proposed Development and the labour force requirements of occupiers. As part of its commitment the Applicant proposes to establish a training “spoke” based at the Proposed Development. This would provide an onsite facility for delivery of training and the development of a skilled workforce to service the Proposed Development.

8.42 A Local Employment Scheme will also be developed, which will ensure that employment, skills and training benefits are delivered at key milestones, inclusive of investment in a training “spoke” facility. The Local Employment Scheme will include measures occurring at the construction and operational stages of the Proposed Development.

Climate Change

8.43 A climate change assessment has been undertaken to identify the effect of the Proposed Development upon the contribution of climate change and how climate change may impact the Proposed Development. The Assessment is structured into two specific categories:

(i) Climate Change Mitigation – How the Proposed Development contributes to the cause of climate change through the emission or reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) as a result of the proposed development; and

(ii) Climate Change Adaptation – How the Proposed Development is affected by the projected changes to the future climate and whether measures are required to adapt to this changing climate.

8.44 Our assessment has concluded that there are no significant adverse effects upon climate change mitigation and indeed the total GHG emissions from the different Phases of the Proposed Development are of such a small scale relative to the Carbon Budgets that the Proposed Development does not impact upon the Government's ability to meet its carbon budgets.

8.45 Based on current 2017 emission factors, it is estimated that the operation of the Proposed Development results in a 22% reduction in GHG emissions as a result of modal shift from road to rail. Furthermore, it is estimated that by 2050, the operation of the SRFI may lead to an overall reduction in GHG emissions as a result of modal shift from road to rail and with due consideration to the potential future effects of decarbonisation of the economy and transportation network.

8.46 The climate change assessment has concluded that the Proposed Development has a high resilience to the projected future impacts of climate change. An estimation of the GHG emissions from the Proposed Development has concluded that over the long term operation phase, there will be a positive contribution to the UK Governments carbon budget as a result of the SRFI moving freight from road to rail thereby reducing GHG emissions.

9. Overall Conclusions

9.1 The NPS establishes a compelling need for an expanded network of SRFIs. Rail Central is one of the highest performing SRFI opportunities in the Midlands. It is close to the M1 providing access to a large proportion of the national population and on the core part of the Strategic Rail Freight Network providing access to deep sea ports. At the Regional level it has been demonstrated that there is strong market demand for SRFI which the Rail Central site can meet and this is likely to continue to grow in the future.

9.2 The Proposed Development would make an important contribution to the achievement of the main strategic objectives that the Government has identified for SRFI; namely helping transfer of freight from road to rail and will deliver substantial economic benefits the local and national economy.

9.3 The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to ensure that it has evolved to respond sensitively to the characteristics of the surrounding area and has sought to limit and mitigate the developments effects, as required by the NPS.

9.4 It is concluded that the Proposed Development is compliant with the other assessment principles and generic impacts set out in the NPS. The contribution to Government policy objectives including a creation of a network of SRFI and economic growth – both nationally and locally is significant. Significant benefits would be delivered in terms of transportation, socio-economic, carbon emission and ecological impacts. These would clearly outweigh the adverse effects identified above, which have been avoided, minimised and mitigated as far as reasonably possible.

9.5 With the mitigation proposed, other impacts from the Proposed Development would be acceptable and therefore the need for the proposed SRFI and the significant benefits that the Proposed Development would deliver would far outweigh the adverse impacts.

9.6 Therefore, the Proposed Development is consistent with the NPS, and benefits from the presumption in favour of the grant of development consent.

10. Phase 2 Consultation Process Summary

Introduction

10.1 In line with the requirements of the Act, a structured programme of pre-application consultation with both the local community and relevant stakeholders has been undertaken.

10.2 The Applicant has been in dialogue with a number of key stakeholders over several years to ensure meaningful consultation has informed the development proposals as they have evolved. The discussions have raised awareness of the intentions of the project and sought to provide information on the Proposed Development and the planning process involved to secure a Development Consent Order.

10.3 The formal Phase 1 Consultation was held between April and October 2016. Documents were available at the consultation events, on the project website and at public viewing locations throughout the consultation period.

10.4 Since 2016 further technical work has been undertaken to establish the potential effects of the project on the environment and to establish what mitigation may be required. Further surveys have been undertaken; data gathered and detailed modelling progressed. Ongoing consultation has also been undertaken with statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to the scope of the technical assessments and the methods to be used. As part of the formal Phase 2 consultation the applicant is now consulting on the further details, which include the preliminary conclusions of the ES set out in the PEIR. Information about the proposed scheme is now being consulted on, along with a report setting out the feedback received during the first phase of consultation.

Programme

10.5 Set out below is the anticipated programme and associated timescales for the Rail Central project:

- **Phase 2 Consultation** – This formal phase of consultation will run from 15 March until 23 April 2018. Based on feedback from previous consultations and continued engagement with stakeholders the preferred option for the proposals has now been developed in additional detail. This consultation is an opportunity to comment on the additional technical information and on the PEIR.

- **Preparation of the Development Consent Order Application**: the feedback received during the Phase 2 consultation will be considered and further work undertaken to develop the proposed details for the project. An application will then be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for a Development Consent Order; this is anticipated to be submitted in summer 2018.

- **Post Submission Process**: Once submitted to PINS the Secretary of State has 28 days to decide whether the application meets the required standards to be

accepted for examination. If accepted, there is an opportunity for people to register as an interested party and potentially speak at the public hearing. The Inspectorate has 6 months to carry out the examination. It is anticipated that the examination for this project will take place from late 2018 to early 2019.

- **Post Examination Process**: Once the examination has closed, PINS have 3 months to issue a recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State then has a further 3 months to issue a decision on the proposal.

What we are consulting on

10.6 This Phase 2 Consultation is seeking comments and feedback on the latest documents setting out the details of the proposed development. Since the previous consultation, the additional technical assessments and survey work has enabled further detail to be developed for the scheme and the consultation documents include **Parameters Plans**, a revised **Illustrative Masterplan**, and more advanced environmental information included within the **PEIR**.

Viewing the Consultation Documents

10.7 To ensure ease of access for all who wish to make comment on the consultation documents, these have been made available in the following places;

- Online: All consultation documents can be downloaded from the project website: www.railcentral.com ;

- Public Exhibitions: All consultation documents will be available at the public exhibitions, details of when and where these will be held is on our website: www.railcentral.com , and listed below; or

VENUE	ADDRESS	DATE	TIME
Walnut Tree Inn	21 Station Road, Blisworth NN7 3DS	Thursday 15 March 2018	2pm-8pm
Milton Malsor Village Hall	High Street, Milton Malsor, NN7 3AS	Saturday 17 March 2018	12.30pm-5.30pm
Roade Village Hall	Bailey Brooks Lane, Roade NN7 2LT	Wednesday 21 March	1pm-7pm
South Northamptonshire Council Chamber	The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD	Thursday 22 March	1pm-7pm
Milton Malsor Village Hall	High Street, Milton Malsor, NN7 3AS	Friday 23 March 2018	2pm-8pm
Blisworth Village Hall	19 Stoke Road, Blisworth NN7 3DB	Saturday 24 March 2018	10am-4pm

- Information Points: Copies of this Overview Documents and the Feedback Forms will be available at the designated local information points listed below.

LOCATION	ADDRESS	ADVERTISED OPENING TIMES
Northamptonshire County Council	County Hall, Northampton NN1 1ED	Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5pm
Northampton Borough Council Offices	The One Stop Shop, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE	Monday – Friday: 9am – 5pm
Northamptonshire Central Library	Northamptonshire Central Library, Abington Street, Northampton NN1 2BA	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm; Saturday: 9am – 5pm; Sunday: 11am – 2pm
Roade Library	Roade Library, High Street, Roade NN7 2NW	Wednesday: 10am – 2pm; Thursday – Friday: 2pm – 6pm; Sunday: 11am – 2pm
Towcester Library	Towcester Library, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm; Saturday: 9am – 5pm; Sunday: 11am – 2pm
Hunsbury Library	Hunsbury Library, Overslade Close, Northampton NN4 0RZ	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm; Saturday: 9am – 5pm; Sunday: 11am – 2pm

How to give us your views

10.8 The deadline for responses will be 23:59 on 23 April 2018. Responses received after this date may not be considered as part of the responses to this Phase 2 Consultation.

- **Online Feedback Form**: this can be completed on the project website at www.railcentral.com ;
- **Email**: feedback can be provided via email sent to railcentral@camargue.uk ; or
- **Freepost**: the Feedback form, of any other feedback, can be posted to the Freepost address “Freepost Rail Central”

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Draft Healthy Workplace Features

Draft 15 Year Management and Maintenance Plan
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