

Rail Central: Community update

Summer 2018



Where we are – timetable

In April 2018, we completed our second phase of formal consultation on the proposals for Rail Central. This involved consultation with a range of technical consultees, local authorities, landowners, the local community and others with a specific interest in the land potentially affected.

As part of this, we held six public exhibitions in locations near the site, including Milton Malsor, Blisworth, Roade and Towcester, which were attended by around 600 local residents and other stakeholders with an interest in the project. Over 150 responses were received, with approximately 100 of these coming from the local community. We are working through the comments and considering all feedback as we develop and refine the proposals. The consultation was carried out in line with the published Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and the Report to Inform the SoCC, which detailed how our consultation would be robust and compliant with relevant planning legislation and guidance.

Over recent months, we have continued with our technical assessments and undertaken further design refinement, which has resulted in minor changes to the project. As a result, we carried out a phase of further targeted consultation to ensure that those potentially affected by the changes had an opportunity to review the updated plans and provide their feedback on the proposed alterations. This phase of consultation commenced on 25 June 2018 and closed on 23 July 2018.

We are now considering the feedback received and will be reporting on it in the Consultation Report, which will be submitted this summer along with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.



Phase Two Consultation: what people told us

We received a wide range of feedback to the Phase Two consultation including assessments of the proposals for Rail Central, how we could improve certain aspects of the scheme and views on how consultation and the refinement of the proposals has been carried out.

We have looked at each response in detail and the specific issues raised have been identified and are being considered.

Approximately 100 responses were received from the local community and these have been categorised thematically. The remainder of the responses – received from statutory authorities, landowners, Members of Parliament, local authorities and others – are being assessed separately and will be summarised in the Consultation Report.

We have grouped the feedback from the local community into seven themes. For each theme, there are additional sub themes, but this summary provides an overview of the aspects of the proposals that were consistently raised during consultation. This is a summary of the comments raised during the consultation and does not include an explanation of how we have responded to the feedback at this stage.

The specific ways in which we have had regard to the feedback will be detailed in full in the Consultation Report, which will be submitted with the DCO application later this summer.



Theme	Summary of concerns and comments most frequently raised
Principle of the site and proposed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the development is inappropriate for the site and local area • Concern that rail links will be underused by occupiers
Need for SRFI in this location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about the suitability of the site location on the rail network and concern over 'clustering' of SRFIs • Questions about the need for Rail Central with other facilities nearby, including DIRFT
Visual and landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the development cannot be sufficiently screened and that the proposed approach is inadequate • Concern over the loss of green landscape of the site and the surrounding area
Rail connectivity and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about the extent of occupiers' use of rail links • Questions about the capacity of the West Coast Main Line for additional freight movements
Traffic and the road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over current congestion and additional traffic worsening the situation, especially if there is a breakdown or accident • Belief that the proposed highway improvements are inadequate to cope with increased congestion • Concern over vehicles using routes through villages, causing congestion and / or pollution • Concern that congestion could worsen at M1 Junction 15A and whether the approach to improving this junction is adequate
Potential changes to the character of the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over the impact on local communities, countryside and rural lifestyle • Objections over the loss of agriculture and farmland • Belief that there are few or no benefits to the local community • Jobs not needed in South Northamptonshire due to low unemployment rates and concerns that employment will come from outside the local area • Concern over the impact of construction on the local community and environment, particularly with regards to increased travel times • Concern over the potential impact on house prices • Concern over profit and / or commerce being valued over local communities and the character of countryside
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the impact of Rail Central on the environment cannot be fully mitigated and the proposed approach to managing the environmental impact is inadequate • Concern over increased noise, air and light pollution • Concern over potential impact on wildlife and loss of local habitat

Updated draft illustrative masterplan



Recent changes

Since Phase Two consultation closed, an ongoing process of developing and refining the proposals has been taking place in response to engagement with the local community and other consultees, and the findings of the technical work undertaken over this same period.

A number of these minor changes respond to opportunities to minimise adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development and have been introduced to improve flexibility of the development, support the overall deliverability of the project and reduce certain impacts in response to consultation.

Localised Consultation took place on the aspects of the proposals that have changed since the Phase Two consultation. In accordance with the Government's guidance on the pre-application consultation process, consultation was undertaken on a basis that was proportionate to the proposed changes and took place with potentially affected parties.

The proposed changes include, but are not exclusive to:

- Raising landscape bunds as a direct response to concerns about visual impact raised at Phase Two consultation
- A minor realignment of the main access from the A43 into the site

- Minor adjustments to the Parameters Plan, including reducing the maximum building height in certain areas of the site from 18.5m to 15m to respond to concerns raised at Phase Two consultation regarding visual impact
- Minor alterations to the red line boundary at the south-western boundary of the site, beside the A43

A presentation including information on the proposed changes was given to the Local Liaison Group on 17 July 2018. Further information on these proposed changes is available on the project website at: www.railcentral.com/project-library/phase-two-a-localised-consultation/

This phase of targeted consultation closed on 23 July 2018 and we are now considering all feedback received. As with the Phase Two consultation feedback, we will be reporting on the feedback received during the targeted consultation as part of the Consultation Report, which will be submitted with the DCO application.

The process of amending and refining the proposals is ongoing and some of the proposed changes are currently being developed and finalised. Further information on these will be included in the Consultation Report.



Project overview

Rail Central is a proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) that responds to market demand and Government policy for the creation of a strategic network of new rail freight interchanges (which is set out in the National Policy Statement for National Networks, NPSNN).

Rail Central would be a major new logistics and distribution hub with direct rail connections to the West Coast Main Line and Northampton Loop Line alongside road access

to the A43 and M1, with approximately 7.4m sq ft of rail-connected and rail-served commercial space. Considered as an NSIP under the Planning Act 2008, it will be submitted to and examined by the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) and ultimately determined by the Government.

The plans also include highway improvements, with a major upgrade to J15A. There are significant improvements proposed for J15A and as such it will be considered as an NSIP separate to the main site.

Wider development proposed in the area – Northampton Gateway

There is a proposal for a separate Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) that has been brought forward by developer Roxhill for land on a site to the east of the Rail Central site.

The Roxhill scheme (called 'Northampton Gateway') is unrelated to the proposals for Rail Central. The Planning Inspectorate (PINs) advised that we should have regard to the Roxhill proposals and should carry out cumulative impact assessments, which we have done throughout the process as we prepare to submit the DCO application. However, PINs has advised that the examination of each DCO application will be done separately.

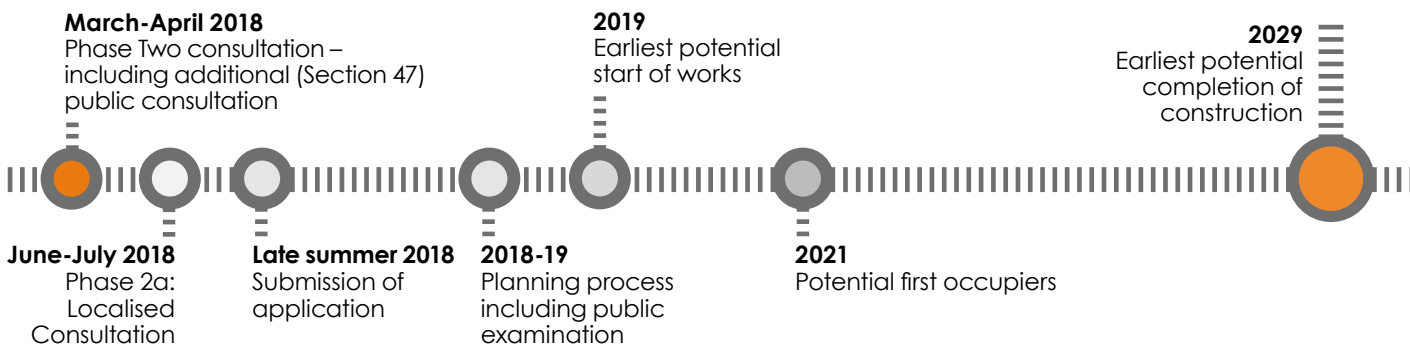
Submitting the DCO

We are now developing the Consultation Report – which will contain further information about how we have had regard to all feedback received during consultation – along with the necessary technical information that will be submitted as part of the DCO application, in line with the NSIP process.

We will be submitting the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) later this summer. PINs will then review it and determine whether it goes forward for examination (this process is known as acceptance). If the application is accepted, it will then be examined and a decision on whether it is approved or refused is likely to be made in 2019.

You can find out more at the National Infrastructure Planning website at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

Timeline



Contact us



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(please note calls are charged at local rates)



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There is further information on the planning process on the National Infrastructure Planning website at: www.infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk