

Consultation into £550m Hinckley rail freight interchange extended following public criticism

The developer behind a £550 million rail freight and warehousing complex in the Leicestershire countryside is extending its consultation into the proposals following public criticism.

Tritax Symmetry is extending the statutory consultation for the 440 acre [Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange](#) until Friday, April 8. It began on January 12 and had been due to conclude on March 9.

Earlier this month South Leicestershire MP Alberto Costa, who had [already raised serious concerns](#) about the plans, said he had been contacted by a “large number” of constituents alarmed at what he said was a lack of detail at public exhibitions.

He said issues had also been raised about Tritax employees being unable to answer questions about the number of trains entering the site, the increase in HGVs and the impact on a level crossing at the railway station in the nearby village of Narborough.

Tritax Symmetry wants to build on [land near Hinckley in the west of the county](#), close to the village of Elmesthorpe, with a slip-road onto junction 2 of the M69.

The developer said the site could contribute an estimated £316 million to the economy each year and generate around £24.65 million of annual business rates. All buildings would be built to net zero carbon standards.

It said there would be more than 9 million sq ft of warehouse and logistics space – 7 million sq ft at ground level and 2.1 million sq ft at mezzanine level.

The developer wants the 14-warehouse industrial estate – including one 1.5 million sq ft warehouse – to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It has said it could eventually create 8,400 jobs.

The buildings would go up on fields south of the existing railway Leicester to Hinckley railway track and to the west of the motorway.

There would be new sidings and freight transfer facilities on a 34 acre plot alongside the track – which is part of Network Rail's 'F2N' freight route between Felixstowe and Nuneaton.

Tritax Symmetry says it is strategically placed on the UK rail network to provide direct links to and from major cargo terminals at Southampton, Liverpool and the Humber estuary.

The local MP also expressed concern about residents in the village of Sapcote being approached by the developer trying to buy their land – despite the application not yet having planning approval.

Mr Costa said Dr Luke Evans, MP for neighbouring Bosworth, as well as Leicestershire County Council and Blaby District Council, had also raised concerns about the extent of the consultation, the traffic modelling used for the plans and the lack of an appropriate bypass for nearby Stoney Stanton and Sapcote.

He said: "Given the size, scale and level of disruption this development will bring to my constituents, it is quite clear that the consultation for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange has been nowhere near good enough."

The statutory consultation follows two non-statutory

consultations in 2018 and 2019 and Tritax Symmetry said the fresh round included what it said was “greater clarity on infrastructure and mitigation requirements”.

It said it had held nine public exhibitions and two webinars as part of the current statutory consultation.

Sinead Turnbull, planning director at Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley), said they were “committed” to undertaking a comprehensive consultation.

He said: “We have been informed that some technical consultees did not receive the consultation material on time.

“To allow those particular consultees to reasonably engage and make their representations we have decided to extend the consultation until April 8, 2022, however, not just for those parties but for all consultees.

“The extension will ensure all those who are interested in finding out more have the fullest opportunity to participate in the statutory consultation process and to let us know their views on the proposals.”



Plan of the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

After the consultation there will be an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Transport under the Planning Act 2008.

Tritax Symmetry said all feedback will be considered to refine and finalise the plans and a consultation report prepared to document how local people's views have been taken into account.

It said the consultation report, along with other application documents, will be made available on the project website once the DCO application has been submitted and accepted for examination.

It is expected the application will be submitted in the summer or early autumn.

For details visit the project website at www.hinckleynrfi.co.uk.

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