



Report to Inform the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC)

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

April 2016

Introduction

This document is a Report to Inform the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for the Rail Central proposals. It should be read in conjunction with the main SoCC document within which the principal consultation activities and approach is set out.

The purpose of this Report to Inform is to provide additional information, background and context.

Rail Central: the project

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

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

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

The Rail Central project is likely to provide up to 743,200 sq m (8,000,000 sq ft) of storage and distribution space with ancillary office accommodation, rail infrastructure (to include new sidings), service depot, HGV facilities, training/innovation centre facilities, hotel and public

house / restaurant, associated access, ground works, highways, landscaping and other accompanying infrastructure works.

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

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

THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THIS DEFINITION OF A SRFI:

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

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

Why this location?

The National Planning Statement for National Networks sets out the Government's policy support for new strategic rail freight infrastructure, capability and capacity.

Location is critical to the potential operating capability of any new SRFI – the ability to act as a multi-modal terminal shifting goods from road to rail underpins the operating case for SRFI.

The proposed location for Rail Central combines three of the most important factors for SRFI operations:

1. Direct connections to the national rail network – with Rail Central offering connections to both the West Coast Main Line and the Northampton Loop Line.

2. Direct connection to the strategic road network – with Rail Central offering direct access to the A43 dual carriageway within just two miles of the M1.

3. Centrality within the UK – the site is in the UK heartland for distribution/logistics with Northampton's centrality within the UK giving it advantages in terms of travel time/miles to connect to end user markets.

In addition to the key transport infrastructure and site location which make this site suitable for SRFI use, the site also benefits from a number of other attributes including its topography (it is generally flat and provides a suitable footprint for the uses and form of development proposed).

Ashfield Land

Ashfield Land is a UK commercial property company with a strong track record of delivering successful projects and developments.

With more than 25 years' experience, Ashfield Land has demonstrated its capability in bringing forward successful investment, development and regeneration projects.

Ashfield Land is the promoter for Rail Central and will submit the Development Consent Order (DCO) application following a pre-application consultation process and preparation of the DCO application documents.

The legislative framework

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

This is because, in accordance with paragraph 4.89 of the NPS NN 2014, the Rail Central project (the Proposed Development):

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

An application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs). PINs will examine the application and will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make the final decision on whether consent for Rail Central should be granted or refused.

Ashfield Land anticipates submitting a DCO application to PINs in early 2017.

Providing the DCO is accepted for examination, the application will then be subject to public examination during a period lasting up to 6 months.

In determining the application, the Secretary of State will have regard to the National Networks National Policy Statement 2014 (NPS NN 2014), which explains the Government's national policy towards SRFIs.

The consenting process

Where a National Policy Statement (NPS) has effect in relation to development of the description to which the DCO application relates, the Secretary of State must have regard to that NPS in determining the application.

In the case of Rail Central, the relevant NPS is the National Planning Statement for National Networks.

The NPS can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-networks-national-policy-statement>

Pre-application consultation – Non-statutory consultation stage

In line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and the requirement for pre-application consultation by the applicant, Ashfield Land has been undertaking a structured and comprehensive programme of pre-application consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

The purpose of this pre-application consultation has been to raise awareness of the proposals for Rail Central and provide initial information on the project and the planning process.

Ashfield Land has therefore carried out a series of activities to meet this objective and to ensure that people with a potential interest in the project are aware and informed.

The informal pre-application consultation process has made people aware of how and when they can get involved in the statutory consultation process.

With project awareness widely established and dialogues in place between the project team and a full range of stakeholders (community/public and technical/statutory), the foundation for an effective and meaningful statutory consultation has been set.

This statutory consultation can now be carried out in line with the methodology set out in the SoCC and in this Report to Inform.

SUMMARY OF PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Ashfield Land has been in dialogue with a number of stakeholders over several years as it has investigated the potential for Rail Central. These discussions have taken place in order to establish basic scheme feasibility and so that Ashfield Land could bring forward an application for a DCO in line with the requirements of the NSIP process and the Planning Act 2008.

These discussions included engagement with Network Rail to assess feasibility, capacity and viability matters (the opportunity to connect into the existing rail network being a core aspect for the scheme).

Ashfield Land also entered into discussions with South Northamptonshire Council and Northampton Borough Council at that time so that the opportunity and potential for the scheme could be recognised.

Similarly, Ashfield Land commenced discussions with Northamptonshire County Council and Highways England with regard to highways matters.

The benefit and outcome of these early engagement meetings was to establish awareness of the scheme and start a dialogue which could then continue into the formal, statutory consultation stage.

Following those early meetings and engagement activities, Ashfield Land commenced (from November 2015) open meetings and briefings with relevant stakeholders as part of an increasing programme of informal, non-statutory consultation.

Activities included:

1. Local stakeholder briefings (2015 – early 2016)

Ashfield Land provided informal, introductory briefings to key stakeholders in 2015 / early 2016, which provided an opportunity to inform stakeholders about the proposals and explain the overall approach to consultation planned for spring 2016.

Briefings were held with:

- South Northamptonshire Council, Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council – following a sequence of meetings and other contact with officers, emails were sent to relevant councillors in November 2015 to introduce them to the proposals
- Chris Heaton-Harris MP (Conservative, Daventry) – a briefing meeting was held on 24 November 2015
- Milton Malsor Parish Council – a briefing meeting was held with parish councillors on 8 December 2015 (this was open to the public)
- Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership – a briefing meeting was held on 17 December 2015
- Andrea Leadsom MP (Conservative, South Northamptonshire) – a meeting was held on 17 December 2015 (with assistant only) and 29 March 2016
- Blisworth Parish Council – a briefing meeting was held with parish councillors on 4 January 2016 (this was open to the public)
- South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership – a briefing meeting was held on 28 January 2016

In addition, in January 2016, summary telephone briefings were provided to a representative of each of the parish councils near the site including: Tiffield Parish Council; Shutlanger Parish Council; Stoke Bruerne Parish Council; Collingtree Parish Council; West Hunsbury Parish Council; Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council; Rothersthorpe Parish Council; Grange Park Parish Council; Courteenhall Parish Council and Wootton & East Hunsbury Parish Council, as well as Easton Neston Parish Meeting.

Awareness of the project locally was raised through media briefings and updates which have helped to ensure local communities are aware of the project and the planned consultation, and the contact details and website address for further information.

The project team has provided and continues to provide regular information and comments to support local press reporting on the proposals (print, broadcast and on-line media). A briefing was also provided to the Northampton

Pre-application consultation – Non-statutory consultation stage (Cont'd)

Chronicle & Echo on 9 February (with reporter Nick Spoor). Engagement with local media will continue throughout the process with an expectation that media reporting and coverage will assist in making people aware of the proposals for Rail Central and how they can participate in the planning process should they wish to.

2. Introductory project leaflet (January 2016)

A summary introductory leaflet ('An introduction to Rail Central') was produced and sent to more than 2,500 local addresses near the site in January 2016. Recipients included Royal Mail registered postal addresses in Milton Malsor, Blisworth and Roade. The leaflet was also available via email on request and published on the project website, www.railcentral.com

The leaflet provided introductory information to local residents and businesses about the project and the national need for SRFIs, as well as identifying the site being brought forward. It also explained the approach to consultation and promoted the planned consultation in the spring. The contact details for the project team were provided for any questions.

3. Initial landowner and occupier briefings (January – February 2016)

Ashfield Land is currently identifying all landowners and occupiers with an interest in the application site. As members of the local community, these individuals and organisations will be able to participate in the Section 47 consultation and will, in due course, be separately consulted as part of the Section 42 consultation currently planned to be undertaken in the autumn of 2016.

Ashfield Land has already hosted a briefing for landowners and occupiers, which was held on 3 February 2016.

4. Local Liaison Group (from February 2016)

A Local Liaison Group (LLG) was established in February 2016. It is envisaged that the LLG will remain in place throughout the pre-application, submission and examination period and, if the application is granted consent, into construction and operation.

The following stakeholders were invited to become members of the Local Liaison Group: a representative from at least 15 local parish councils immediately surrounding the site including Milton Malsor Parish Council, Blisworth Parish Council and Roade Parish Council, the four South Northamptonshire Council representatives for the two site wards, the Northamptonshire County Council electoral division representative of the site, the seven Northampton Borough Council representatives for the four local site wards adjacent to the M1, and representatives from the community group 'Stop Rail Central'.

At the initial stage, the LLG has two primary responsibilities that serve as the core areas of focus, though flexibility has been built in to allow other appropriate matters to be discussed. The purpose is to:

1. Provide a forum for discussing detailed issues relating to the proposals, enabling questions and matters to be raised with Ashfield Land so that answers can be provided and solutions achieved
2. Provide an appropriate and effective structure through which information about the emerging proposals can be shared and information coordinated

An initial LLG discussion workshop was held on 16 March. This was the first meeting of the LLG. The purpose of the workshop was to establish the LLG and how it will operate as well as to discuss and seek views from LLG representatives on aspects of the potential scheme design where there is scope to adjust the design in line with feedback.

Context of the consultation – formal consultation stages

Ashfield Land will consult with the local community (defined as people living in the vicinity of the land to which the proposed application relates) in accordance with Section 47 of the Act.

The Statement of Community Consultation explains how Ashfield Land proposes to conduct the consultation.

An indicative project timeline is provided overleaf:

Context of the consultation – formal consultation stages (Cont'd)

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

Fig: Project timeline (indicative)

Ashfield Land has identified a "Consultation Zone" around the site, which includes all household and business addresses in Blisworth, Milton Malsor and Roade in an area that extends at least 500m either side of the proposed development site. The extent of the zone was established taking into account the potential effects to residents, businesses and others in the immediate vicinity of the project. Please see Appendix 1 for the consultation zone map.

Addresses within the Consultation Zone will be contacted by letter with a project summary and details of the planned public exhibitions. The Consultation Zone will be kept under review and may be extended to include alternative or additional areas as necessary. An advertisement will be placed in two local newspapers across two weeks and further local publicity will be used

to promote the consultation and other publicity avenues including through parish councils.

The project website will also be used to disseminate information.

The first formal period of our consultation with the community is scheduled to commence on Thursday 28 April 2016 and will be open all summer, closing on Friday 30 September 2016.

All feedback should be received by midnight on Friday 30 September 2016. Please note comments may be made public and the personal details of respondents may be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and other third parties.

Section 42 and Section 48 consultation

In due course, following this Section 47 ('Phase One') consultation, Ashfield Land will be conducting consultation under Section 42 of the Act ('Phase Two') with:

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

Under Section 48 a notice will be publicised in a local newspaper inviting members of the public to respond with their comments on the project. This will also form part of the Phase Two consultation.

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

Approach to preliminary environmental information

Ashfield Land will be consulting on preliminary environmental information at two periods:

- As part of the Section 47 Consultation, Ashfield Land will carry out consultation on available 'baseline' environmental information. This will be made available at consultation events, on the project website and at identified public viewing locations throughout the consultation period;
- As part of the Section 42 and Section 48 Consultation, to be held subsequently, Ashfield Land will be consulting on further details which are expected to include the preliminary conclusions of the environmental impact assessment, including any likely significant effects of the project on the environment and any mitigation which is proposed. A non-technical summary will also be produced at this stage which will be available to the public.

What we will consult on

The purpose of the consultation is to provide the local community and other interested parties with an opportunity to understand and influence the proposals.

During the consultation, Ashfield Land will make available at events, information and non-technical preliminary environmental information relating to the proposals. This will include available 'baseline' environmental information (please see above) for further details of the approach to this. The consultation materials will include information about the NPS NN 2014 which explains the Government's policies towards SRFIs.

Who Ashfield Land will consult with

Ashfield Land will consult with affected local communities and other interested parties. Identified consultees include:

1. All postal addresses within the **Consultation Zone**. As explained above, the consultation zone captures all addresses within a minimum of 500m of the proposed development site and includes the villages of Milton Malsor, Blisworth and Roade
2. All **Parish Councils** representing parishes within the Consultation Zone and adjacent to these parishes. This includes Milton Malsor Parish Council, Blisworth Parish Council, Roade Parish Council, Gayton Parish Council, Courteenhall Parish Council, Rothersthorpe Parish Council, Collingtree Parish Council, East Hunsbury Parish Council, West Hunsbury Parish Council, Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council, Grange Park Parish Council, Kislingbury Parish Council, Bugbrooke Parish Council, Pattishall Parish Council, Tiffield Parish Council, Stoke Bruerne Parish Council, Shutlanger Parish Council, Ashton Parish Council, Quinton Parish Council and Hardingstone Parish Council, as well as Easton Neston Parish Meeting
3. All **county, district and unitary local authorities**, as defined by the Act. This includes South Northamptonshire Council, Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, Aylesbury Vale Council, Cherwell Council, Stratford-on-Avon Council, Wellingborough Council, Milton Keynes Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Rutland Council, City of Peterborough Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Bedford Borough Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council
4. **Members of Parliament** and **Members of the European Parliament** representing constituencies within or bordering the Consultation Zone. This includes Daventry, Northampton South and North Northamptonshire parliamentary constituencies and East Midlands European constituency

5. All individuals or organisations identified as having an **interest in the land**, as defined by the Act. This will include all landowners, occupiers and others with an interest in the land that is located within the application site
6. Other identified local, regional and national stakeholders, technical consultees and relevant interest groups

As part of the project, **improvements to Junction 15 and Junction 15A of the M1** are planned. Notifications will also be sent to local stakeholders that cover this area. Ashfield land will consider taking a similar approach to consultation in areas outside of the Consultation Zone which it considers may be affected by these junction improvements or by any other highway improvements required for Rail Central.

To widen engagement further, Ashfield Land will write to local schools (including Elizabeth Woodville School in Roade (Secondary) and local primary schools within or immediately adjacent to the consultation zone as well as schools in Towcester. They will be invited to attend the public exhibition and also offered briefings/presentations in school.

Ashfield Land will also offer a briefing (and engagement) with the Youth Council at South Northamptonshire District Council and Northampton Borough Council.



Notifications and publicity

In advance of the Section 47 Consultation, Ashfield Land will use a variety of methods to advertise the consultation to help ensure wide awareness amongst those potentially with an interest in the proposals. Publicity will include:

1. Production of an **information letter** that will provide a brief overview of the project and details of the consultation. This will be distributed to all addresses within the consultation zone and made available on the project website. A version will be distributed to other individuals and organisations with an interest in the project, including landowners and occupiers of the application site known at this stage, and local authorities, all of whom will be consulted formally during the Section 42 Consultation planned for autumn 2016.
2. **Newspaper advertisements** will be placed in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo and the Northampton Herald & Post (advertising the SoCC and providing details of the public exhibition dates/venues).
3. **Local notices** will be sent to all relevant parish councils for placing in local venues within parishes as well as Towcester Town Council.
4. The **project website** will include information about the consultation and planned exhibitions.
5. In addition to paid for advertising, the **local media** will be notified and press releases will be issued at key junctures to promote the consultation and the planned exhibitions (aiming to secure editorial coverage which will inform the local community about the project and the opportunity to engage in the consultation).

How Ashfield Land will consult

Local residents, stakeholders and other interested parties will be able to take part in the consultation in several different ways.

As part of the Section 47 ('Phase One') consultation stage, Ashfield Land is proposing to hold **public exhibitions** at appropriate venues in the vicinity of the site. Events are planned in the specified locations for the following times and dates:

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

How Ashfield Land will consult (Cont'd)

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

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

Ashfield Land has established a **project website (www.railcentral.com)** that will host all relevant consultation documents and project information, as well as an online feedback form. This will allow local residents and other

interested parties to view the consultation materials and provide their comments via an online feedback mechanism. Respondents should be aware that comments may be made public and their personal details may be made available to third parties, including the Planning Inspectorate.

Project information, including preliminary environmental information, and copies of consultation documents will be made available to view in a digital format without charge at the following local deposit locations during the opening hours indicated. Please note these opening hours were provided by the venue and are subject to change at the discretion of the venue. Visitors are advised to confirm opening times directly with the venue when planning to visit.

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



Project communications

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

This includes:

- **PROJECT WEBSITE:** the project website (www.railcentral.com) will be updated at the start of the consultation stage with project information and core documents detailed above. An online feedback system will also be made available at this time. Project updates will be provided on the website.

- **PROJECT EMAIL ADDRESS:** the project email address (railcentral@camargue.uk) is monitored regularly and can be used to request further information, ask questions or submit feedback.
- **PROJECT TELEPHONE LINE:** for general enquiries relating to the consultation, local residents and other interested parties will be able to request information by telephoning the project telephone line. However, it will not be possible to provide feedback through the consultation line.
- **FREEPOST:** a dedicated project freepost address (**Freepost Rail Central**) has also been established and can be used to request further information, ask questions or submit feedback.

Feedback

Ashfield Land will establish a variety of means for local residents and other interested parties to provide written feedback. If respondents cannot provide written feedback, Ashfield Land would be happy to discuss, on an individual basis, alternative ways for recording feedback.

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

During the Section 47 Consultation, feedback forms will be provided to visitors to the public exhibitions. An online feedback mechanism will be provided on the project website, www.railcentral.com. In addition, feedback forms will be available from the project team on request during the consultation period. Respondents will also be able to provide their feedback in writing via emails to the project email address or post to the project postal address.

The deadline for all feedback during the Section 47 (Phase One) Consultation will be **Friday 30 September 2016**. Any feedback received after this date may not be considered.

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

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



Other and further consultation

Ashfield Land may consider carrying out further consultation beyond what is detailed in this document.

Such further consultation could include activities such as events, meetings and online engagement. If any such consultation is planned, where appropriate, Ashfield will provide appropriate notifications and feedback response periods.

Other major consultations

Ashfield Land is not aware of any other major development consultations planned for the area at this time that could affect its own consultation.

How to get in touch with us

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

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

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

EMAIL US: railcentral@camargue.uk

FREEPOST: Freepost Rail Central



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



More information

In line with the development of the draft proposals, we will be adding more information to our website: www.railcentral.com

You can also e-mail us via railcentral@camargue.uk or telephone our information line (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm) on 0845 543 8967 (please note calls are charged at local rates).

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

April 2016