

Rail Central: Community update

Winter 2016 / 2017



This April we started our formal community consultation on the draft proposals for Rail Central (Phase One) and the period for providing feedback closed on 21 October 2016.

This leaflet, part of our ongoing series of newsletters, provides an update on the consultation, the feedback we received, and how that feedback will be used as we develop the proposals.

A Phase Two consultation will take place next year providing further opportunities for people and organisations to contribute to the overall consultation process before Rail Central makes an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs). The Phase Two consultation will include full scheme details and a draft Environmental Statement.

Ashfield Land and its project team is carrying out further surveys and discussions on the technical elements of the project – such as highways and the environment – to help inform the development of the plans. We have provided some updates in this leaflet.

What we've done

Our programme of consultation was developed and approved with the local authorities at the start of the year and is set out in our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).

As is required for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) like Rail Central, we have consulted with the community and members of the public through a programme designed to ensure that people who wanted to get involved could do so.

We're grateful for the responses that we have received and for people taking the time to visit our public exhibitions, review our emerging proposals and/or contact us with their feedback.

Approximately 1,000 people attended our eight public exhibitions held during April and May and we have received a significant amount of feedback during our Phase One consultation.

In line with the SoCC, we:

- Held eight public exhibitions at local venues close to the site and advertised these locally
- Wrote to households and businesses around the site, providing details for the consultation and public exhibitions (and other ways to get involved)
- Wrote to elected representatives and local representative organisations including county, district/ borough and parish councils
- Provided relevant consultation documents and project information via the project website, as well as an online feedback form
- Made documents available at agreed deposit locations including libraries and council offices

In addition, we established a Local Liaison Group (LLG) to share and coordinate information and we have continued discussions with statutory stakeholders such as local councils.

As a result of the Phase One consultation, we have approximately 300 individual pieces of feedback which we have logged and are analysing.

This feedback – alongside the results of ongoing technical work, surveys and other assessments – is being considered as the design progresses. It will help to influence how we refine the draft proposals and enable us to make adjustments where they can improve the scheme and/or design appropriate mitigation where it is required in order to balance the potential scheme impacts.

What people have told us

The feedback we have received has included detailed assessments of the proposals and comments on them through to short submissions and opinions.

We have looked at each of the responses in detail and the specific issues they raise have been identified and are being considered.

Of the total responses received in Phase One, 28 of these responses were from organisations, statutory authorities or Members of Parliament and are being assessed separately.

The other approximately 260 responses received from individual members of the public have been categorised by themes raised, an approach that helps to identify the specific issues which people consider to be important and which our design team will address as the design process continues.

We have grouped the feedback into eleven 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 in feedback:

THEME	CONCERNS OR COMMENTS MOST CONSISTENTLY RAISED (SUMMARY)
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing traffic in local villages including HGVs and staff cars Concerns over the possibility of access from Northampton Road Concerns that the local road network will struggle with additional traffic or when major roads are closed
Site infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing footpaths will be lost and not sufficiently replaced Concerns that other paths and rights of way will be lost
Visual impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visual impact of the buildings will be negative for local residents and will be difficult or impossible to mitigate
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should have been more information available before and during the consultation More and better quality visualisations need to be provided Questions over the transparency of the process
Development across the A43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no need for or no local benefit to this development Concern over competition to local businesses
Community benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country park does not provide the same benefit as current green space Need to mitigate impact as there is little or no local benefit
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over noise, light, air and other pollution, and the possibility of these being present 24 hours a day Negative impact of the loss of green space, and the habitat it provides for wildlife or plants
Access and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions over the capacity of the rail network or existing demand for rail freight Concerns over staff access and questions regarding how they are reaching the site
Economic concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for the new jobs that Rail Central would create Concern about loss of agricultural land Concern about impact on house value
Construction phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over construction traffic, pollution and the mitigation of its general impact
General and other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not necessary due to other sites such as DIRFT Concern regarding the impact on rural / village identity and way of life

The most frequently arising themes included highways, consultation and perceived impact on the environment.

Highways: The solution in terms of highways design and mitigation measures will be informed by the new Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) highways model (called SATURN). This is an up-to-date model through which all traffic on the local and county-wide network can be seen and the impacts of introducing new vehicle movements can be understood. There will be comprehensive information on our proposed highways works in Phase Two consultation.

Environment: Surveys and technical assessments are ongoing concerning noise, light and air pollution, the results of which will be part of the draft Environmental Statement that provides the core material for the Phase Two consultation.

Consultation: Phase One was the initial part of a staged process, as recommended by PINS, to ensure all issues can be properly addressed. Phase Two of consultation will provide another opportunity to feedback on revised plans and completed technical information, allowing people to be involved throughout the development of the scheme.

Changes so far

No proposed development west of the A43: our outline proposals that this part of the site could be used for hotel, commercial or other linked uses have been dropped respecting concerns raised with us about the potential impact of development in this part of the site.

Underpass not roundabout: the scheme design will include an underpass where the main site access and 'spine road' crosses the Northampton Road, rather than a roundabout as first considered. This means HGVs have no contact with the Northampton Road once into the site and that vehicles (and pedestrians) travelling on the Northampton Road can also continue uninterrupted. These two roads are kept entirely separate.

Adjusted access arrangements at Northampton Road: there will be no HGV or vehicle access to the site from Northampton Road, with the exception of emergencies. The specific details of how the emergency access will operate will be detailed in line with the work being done with NCC's new highways model (SATURN). Pedestrian and cycle access will be possible and designed into the junction layout.

We anticipate making further changes to the scheme and its design for mitigation in response to the feedback received.



What will be covered in Phase Two?

The Phase Two consultation will include a range of different people and organisations. Phase One focused on the local community and residents. In Phase Two, there will again be consultation with the local community and residents and, in addition, with a range of others:

a. Public consultation

We will consult with the public again and this is scheduled for spring of 2017, when the feedback we received this year will have played an important role in shaping the plans. This will allow local residents and businesses to see how the plans have developed, incorporating the feedback we received during Phase One, and offer a further opportunity to comment on the progress of plans as the submission of Rail Central's application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) approaches.

b. Statutory bodies

Alongside this further public consultation, we will be consulting with statutory and regulatory bodies such as South Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Highways England and the Environment Agency. We will also be consulting with utilities (such as National Grid and BT).

c. Persons with interest in land

We will also consult formally with any owners, tenants, lessees or occupiers of the land on the proposed site, and any other persons with an interest in this land.

d. Duty to publicise / wider awareness

In addition to contact with the groups listed immediately above, we will also be publicising

the forthcoming application for Rail Central in line with the necessary requirements (which includes advertising in a national newspaper) so that there is widespread awareness of the proposals and the opportunity to respond to the consultation ahead of submission for the DCO.

This comprehensive second round of consultation complies with the NSIP process to ensure that local people and interested parties are assured of the opportunity to provide input to the plans for Rail Central before the application for a DCO is submitted.

More information on the process is available via the National Infrastructure Planning website at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

We intend to publish information about the Phase Two consultation in the first part of the New Year. At that time, we will produce and issue another 'Community update' newsletter as well as notify the local community and stakeholders through all of our established channels (ie website, news release to local media, advertising, briefing council representatives etc).



How will the feedback be used?

Consultation is carried out for NSIPs to inform and improve scheme design ahead of an application for a DCO being made. Our two-stage consultation process is designed to maximise this impact, by providing two phases of statutory consultation during which the application will be influenced and improved according to feedback.

One of the purposes of up-front consultation required by the Planning Act 2008 is to identify potential issues and concerns early on in the process so that the applicant can have regard to them in bringing forward a DCO application. Now that all Phase One feedback has been received and analysed, the themes and information arising from them is being fed into the design process.

Over the next few months, we will be evolving the scheme design drawing on consultation feedback and additional technical work.

This design review and evolution is ongoing and the changes made will be reflected in the material that is presented for the Phase Two consultation (anticipated for spring 2017).

The information and material we present for the Phase Two consultation will show how input and feedback to the Phase One consultation has been used and where we have had regard to the comments made.

Feedback in Phase One together with feedback from the upcoming Phase Two consultation will combine in an overall Consultation Report. This is one of the main documents contained within the application for a DCO and will include a detailed record of how consultation was carried out, what feedback and issues were raised, and how Rail Central has incorporated them or had regard to them in the evolution of the submitted scheme design and material.

Submitting the DCO

Having completed our pre-application consultation in line with the NSIP process – and developed all of the necessary technical information in conjunction with that – we intend to submit our application for a DCO in the second half of 2017.

Our DCO application will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) which will determine whether it is accepted for examination. Acceptance of the application means that it meets the standards required

to be formally accepted for examination and is not a decision on whether the DCO will be granted.

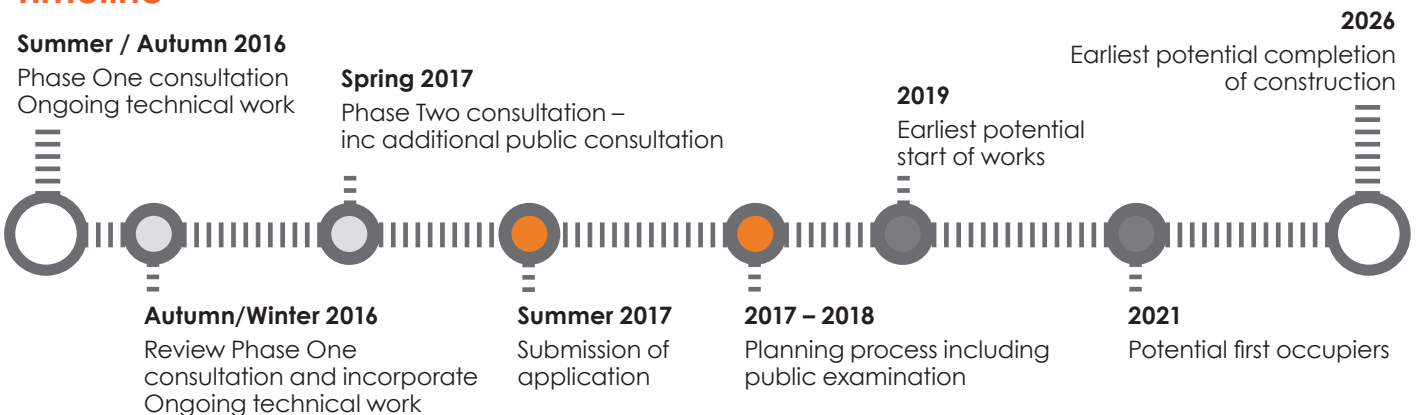
If the application is accepted a decision on whether it is approved or refused is likely to be made in 2018 after a clearly defined examination process.

More information on the process is available via the National Infrastructure Planning website at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

Wider development proposed in the area – Roxhill

Since formal consultation for Rail Central started earlier this year, emerging proposals by developer Roxhill have been introduced for land on a separate site to the east of the Rail Central proposed site. The Roxhill scheme ('Northampton Gateway') is unrelated to the proposals for Rail Central. PINs has advised that we should have regard to the emerging Roxhill proposals in terms of our assessment and technical studies (ie for cumulative impact assessments) but that any examinations of two potential DCO applications coming forward will be separate.

Timeline



Contact us



www.railcentral.com



railcentral@camargue.uk



0845 543 8967 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm
(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