

Rail Central: Community update

Spring 2017



Rail Central would serve express rail freight from the West Coast Main Line as well as traditional container freight

As we develop the proposals for Rail Central based on feedback and technical surveys, we're keeping you updated on progress.

This leaflet, part of our ongoing series of community newsletters, explains how we've been refining the proposals, progress being made on technical assessments and surveys, and what you can expect to happen next.

We also take a look at the UK rail freight market, what's influencing supply chains and how we move goods around the country.

What we've been doing

Since our last Community Update newsletter (issued in December 2016), the project team has been developing and progressing the proposals together with planning out the next steps for consultation.

The designs for Rail Central are evolving in line with feedback received during Phase One of consultation.

In response, the design team has been working to incorporate changes, make adjustments where they will help to improve the scheme, and to balance feedback with the outcomes of the technical surveys and assessments that are also shaping the scheme.

Our design team is meeting regularly with our consultant specialists feeding into this overall process for design development and evolution.

We are further advanced across all of the technical assessments needed. This important source material will enable us to present both updated proposals and comprehensive supporting information when we come out for Phase Two consultation.

In preparation for the Phase Two consultation, we are updating our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and working to ensure that there continues to be a robust and comprehensive process which enables all stakeholders to represent their points of view into the overall project consultation.

Phase Two of consultation will now take place beginning in September

Rail Central has been conducting a rigorous programme of technical assessments in order to fully inform Phase Two consultation and the Development Consent Order (DCO) application that will follow.

Having up-to-date highways data will result in a better and more accurate assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals on the road network – and how they can be designed for and managed.

As previously reported, we intend to use the new Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) highways model to provide this up-to-date perspective.

Continued over

We are now working with the new model but there has been some delay in the overall process and we have only recently been able to start using it.

Although created by third parties and outside of our control, the result for Rail Central is that our programme has been delayed as we have waited for a fully accurate and validated model to be available.

Consequently the Phase Two consultation is now expected to take place beginning in September 2017.

We believe that waiting for the new model is the correct approach for a scheme of the size and significance of Rail Central.

The Phase Two consultation will take place once we have the comprehensive results of all technical assessments, including the highways model. We will then be in a position to share updated plans as well as a body of supporting information in the form of a draft Environmental Statement (ES).



Rail Central will connect directly to the A43



Phase Two of Consultation

Before Phase Two

Between now and the commencement of Phase Two consultation scheduled for September, Rail Central will be:

- Finalising the information required to underpin a comprehensive Phase Two consultation and ensure that supporting evidence is available in the form of a draft Environmental Statement (ES)
- Setting out the updated consultation process, which will be detailed in a revised SoCC – we will consult local authorities and publish the updated SoCC which will detail the expansion of the S47 (public) consultation (through the additional public exhibitions that will take place locally) and the revised timeframe
- Continuing to engage with the LLG and interested parties locally
- Updating the proposed design, making Rail Central the best development it can be in terms of balancing national need, local impact, consultation feedback and technical survey information

What will Phase Two involve?

The Phase Two consultation will involve detailed information on all aspects of the proposals and a draft ES. This information will also be set out in a non-technical summary and across a series of information panels which will form a public exhibition similar in format to Phase One.

During Phase One, some of the feedback we received concerned how we could improve the process of consultation. Rail Central has taken this on board and changes for Phase Two will include:

- More consultation events in Milton Malsor than during Phase One

- Local information centres to complement the official deposit locations (ie more places where information on the scheme is made available to those who are not on-line)
- Adding Hunsbury Library as a further deposit location
- Creating a more detailed set of scheme visuals and illustrations in line with the overall refinement of scheme design

Additional changes may also be introduced as a result of the discussions with local authorities on the revised SoCC.

Snapshot – the UK Rail Freight Market

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 rail freight routes and inter-connected interchanges (which is set out in the National Policy Statement for National Networks, NPSNN).

In line with this policy, Rail Central seeks **“to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimise some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road.”**

What's the position on market demand?

The nature of the rail freight market is changing in the way that Government policy and industry had already anticipated. In seeking to reduce the impact of emissions and particulates on climate change, the UK has managed to drastically reduce its dependence on coal-fired power stations for electricity generation, in favour of a wider mix of energy sources including renewables. As movement of coal by rail has declined over recent years, so the focus for the rail freight market has been more towards sources of new traffic, principally containerised goods and the wider logistics sector, which now accounts for the largest share of the rail freight market.

Network Rail has recently noted how this change in the profile of traffic, along with wider initiatives with train operators to make more efficient use of the network, has enabled over 4,000 train paths per day to be freed up to allow for further growth in traffic – even before the effects of HS2 are then factored in as the new route is opened to traffic.

The NPSNN pointed out that this shift would result in the necessity to improve the country's rail freight capability:

“A network of SRFIs is a key element in aiding the transfer of freight from road to rail, supporting sustainable distribution and rail freight growth and meeting the changing needs of the logistics industry, especially the ports and retail sector”.

The move towards retail was shown in GVA's Industrial Intelligence (Spring 2017) report highlighting activity in the logistics and distribution property market: **“Retailers continue to be the most active sector making up 62% of all take-up of modern distribution units”** during a year which saw this logistics demand **“25% above the five year average.”**

This is particularly the case in the Midlands for obvious geographical reasons – where GVA shows that big shed occupier demand is increasingly retail focused.

With this being equally split between retail and e-commerce, the rapid change which technology will have on the way the sector operates will exacerbate demand, according to Savills' report **“Logistics Real Estate: At the Heart of Modern Life”** which points out that **“the impact of technology combined with changing consumer habits means that increasing amounts of warehouse space is required.”**



Combined with this, retailers continue to prove their **“ever increasing desire to improve the efficiency of their supply chains”** (GVA) increasing requirements for more efficient ways of moving goods.

With Prologis research showing that **“for every additional €1 billion spent online, an additional 72,000 sq m of warehouse space is required,”** the UK's ability to distribute is becoming an even more significant facet of its economy.

In an increasingly interconnected freight market, the UK leads Europe in terms of its online retail penetration (Savills). However, 75% of freight in Europe is currently transported by road, despite governments seeking to shift the increasing number of consumer goods which move within and across countries and continents to more efficient methods of delivery.

Anticipating future demand

Beyond demand in 2017, future demand to move consumer goods using highly efficient distribution systems is forecast to expand rapidly.

According to Savills, **“an increasingly ageing population will start to demand the same delivery services they have become used to in earlier life”** and **“grey power logistics” will entail the delivery of medicines and other services.”**

As various other sectors discover the need to cope with the same demands as retail, there is a compelling case to continue investing in what the South East Midlands LEP describes as **“one of the region's key performing sectors.”**

To cope with this rapidly increasing demand, the UK needs to build the network of SRFIs defined in the National Policy Statement.

Rail Central is about planning responsibly for the future operation of an effective rail freight capability, supporting the economy, meeting consumer demand, and building effective, secure and sustainable supply chains.



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.

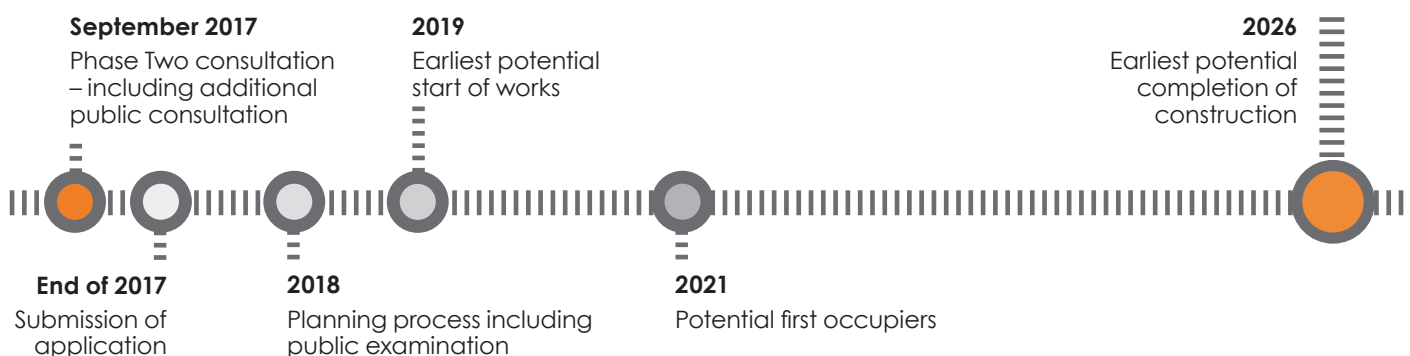
If the application is accepted a decision on whether it is approved or refused is likely to be made in 2018 after a clearly defined examination process.

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

Since Phase One of formal consultation for Rail Central took place last 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



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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