



## **ELMESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Village Hall, Wilkinson Lane, Elmesthorpe LE9 7SP

Sinead Turnbull Planning Director  
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M2 5HT

30 March 2022

Dear Ms Turnbull

### **HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE Burbage Common Road Elmesthorpe**

Thank you for your letter of 27 December 2022 inviting Elmesthorpe Parish Council to comment on your proposals for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) located on land off Burbage Common Road, Elmesthorpe.

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. As you will be aware, between 80% - 85% of the site (excluding the proposed motorway slip roads) is in Elmesthorpe Parish.
- 1.2. The proposal will have by far the greatest impact on the lives of the residents of Elmesthorpe.
- 1.3. With this in mind, Elmesthorpe Parish Council has held two Extra Ordinary Meetings for residents to put forward their opinions and the Chairman has received an extensive number of letters and emails from residents.
- 1.4. The consultation response from Elmesthorpe Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Parish Council") is based on the input received from residents, many of whom feel that this proposal will have a devastating impact.

#### **2. Adequacy of Consultation**

- 2.1. It is proposed to open the Parish Council's response with the adequacy of the Statutory Consultation as it is of major concern to residents that they were unable to obtain basic information at the public consultation events.

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- 2.2. The adequacy of the consultation also impacts on the amount of information that the Parish Council is now requesting to be provided in a form that can be easily accessed and understood by the residents.
- 2.3. We would refer to the Planning Inspectorate's comments on flexibility at paragraph 2.3.8 of the Planning Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion dated April 2018 and in particular in relation to the Rochdale Envelope approach. Whilst the Parish Council understands that there is some flexibility expected in any planning application, particularly where the "end users" of the development are yet to be identified, it is considered that the degree of certainty in the information provided in this consultation exercise was inadequate.
- 2.4. The Parish Council would also refer to the content of the letter of 14 January 2022 from Terry Richardson, Leader of Blaby District Council, and to Leicestershire County Council's representations asking that the consultation be postponed until such time as the highways/traffic modeling had been completed. The Parish Council understands that the proposals presented at the public consultation, and in particular, the likely mitigation measures, had not been agreed with Leicestershire County Council.

In the event of there being any changes to the information that has been presented to the public, the Parish Council believes that a further consultation on highways/traffic matters should take place.

- 2.5. Some of the information contained in the online documents appears to be factually incorrect. In one case, the error relates to the availability of public transport for the proposed workforce, and we would suggest this has a very considerable impact on the calculations used to work out how many workforce vehicles will be using the roads in the area.
- 2.6. Some of the information provided at the consultation events was also apparently incorrect. The Parish Council does not consider this to be acceptable where the mis-information relates to who bears the cost of certain off site works.

Residents to the north west of the site in the Bridle Path Road /Billington Roads East & West areas were advised that the cost of any work to the ordinary watercourses necessitated by increased flow of water from the application site would be borne by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency has confirmed to the Parish Council that this is incorrect, and the cost of work would be borne by the landowner(s) adjoining a watercourse, in this case, Elmesthorpe residents.

The Parish Council does not intend to dwell on whether this error was due to lack of knowledge or otherwise, however we would wish to make it clear that we do not expect any resident of Elmesthorpe to be placed in a position where they have to bear the financial cost of accommodating any part of the development. We would ask that you clarify whether or not there is any expectation that residents will do so.

- 2.7. It is both inappropriate and unacceptable for the residents of Elmesthorpe to have been faced with "don't know" as a response from your consultants at the Statutory

Consultation events, particularly bearing in mind that the Parish Council understands that the proposed application is to be made in a matter of months.

- 2.8. The Parish Council understands from residents that the materials on the database are not searchable across all documents so it has been difficult for them to locate items.
- 2.9. Please find attached at Appendix 1 some of the comments received from residents regarding the consultation.

### 3. Location

- 3.1 The residents consider that there is no justification for this development to be built at Elmesthorpe, taking into account the proximity and capacity of the existing Rail Freight Interchanges in the area.
- 3.2. The residents also believe this development will operate primarily as a road based warehousing facility with a disproportionately low amount of freight actually being transported by rail. This concern was not addressed at the public consultations, with varying responses being provided to residents about the amount of rail freight. The most common response given to residents was “up to 16 trains per day”, but no hard facts as to the actual number.
- 3.3. Sixteen trains per day is comparable to the operating level at East Midlands Gateway which the Parish Council understands operates six services daily serving the ports of Felixstowe, Southampton & Liverpool, and London Gateway. By comparison, the Parish Council understands that HNRFI will not be serving this number of ports, and accordingly, the Parish Council would ask how the figure of “up to 16 trains per day” has been arrived at.
- 3.4. The Parish Council questions the need and justification for the HNRFI in the first place. One of the main national policy criterion for a NRFI as described in Chapter 5 of the PEIR “Need and Policy” documents 5.23 is that “It is important that SRFIs are located near the business markets they will serve and linked to the key supply chain routes (NPS paragraph 2.56)”.

We understand your consultants advised residents that HNRFI is intended to serve the local automotive industry, and the example of MIRA Technology Park was given as an end user in the automotive industry. The Parish Council would point out that whilst MIRA boasts “35 major companies on site forming Europe’s largest automotive research and design cluster”, none of the 35 companies are undertaking large scale vehicle production at the Technology Park and therefore we assume have no requirement for large volume parts deliveries. As far as the Parish Council is aware, there is no large scale vehicle production on sites near Elmesthorpe.

- 3.5. The residents believe that there is capacity at existing Rail Freight Interchanges in the area, and accordingly the proposed development at Elmesthorpe is unnecessary.

To illustrate this, please find below a table of the other sites brought to the attention of the Parish Council, their proximity to HNRFI (by road based on AA data) and whether they are currently advertising availability of space:

Rail Freight Interchange	Distance in miles	Space available
Prologis RFI DIRFT	19.2	Yes
Birch Coppice Tamworth	19.7	Yes
Hams Hall	23.9	Yes
East Midlands Gateway RFI	29	Yes

- 3.6. In January 2019, GB Freightline service launched a new service from Birch Coppice described as transporting “a mixture of intermodal boxes from Birch Coppice to Felixstowe, passing through Hams Hall, Leicester, Peterborough and Ipswich on the way.” As there is now an existing service based less than 20 miles away which serves Felixstowe, the Parish Council would ask why it is considered that another rail freight interchange is needed at Elmesthorpe.
- 3.7. Similarly, looking at the market for warehousing, the residents consider that further warehousing is not necessary because there is warehousing available at Hinckley Park, Hinckley, where Amazon have recently taken up 532,500sq.ft alongside the existing DPD site, and Magna Park at Lutterworth.

#### 4. Workforce / need for jobs in the area

- 4.1. It is suggested that this development will result in 8,500 new jobs. Unemployment in this area is not high, and therefore it is considered that most of the workforce will need to travel into the area at present.
- 4.2. The site is very poorly served by public transport. The Parish Council understands that the section in PIER Chapter 8 Transport & Traffic – item 8.256 onwards regarding the current availability of public transport is materially incorrect. This needs to be corrected to prevent an unduly favorable view of the potential use of public transport in relation to this site. The 48 and 158 buses do not pass anywhere near the site and they go north from Hinckley on the Ashby Road to Barwell and then onto Earl Shilton. The X6 bus only stops near the site five times a day, the first being around 09.50am and the last at 16.28, not as stated in the PIER document.
- 4.3. If it is the intention to provide new subsidized public transport services to the site, this information should be provided, together with confirmation of whether these new services will also be available for use by the general public.
- 4.4. The Parish Council is given to understand that some employers at Magna Park are transporting their workforces to the site by private bus. If there is a green travel plan to this effect, please confirm if this will be implemented at the construction phase or later.

- 4.5. There are concerns that if the jobs are to be filled by people from outside the area, this will result in additional vehicle movements. It would also impact on the potential green benefits of this development.

## 5. Highways and Traffic Issues

- 5.1. The Parish Council has very limited expertise in matters relating to traffic modeling. However it is concerned about the impact of fleets of distribution vehicles at the M69/M1 junction at peak times when there is already congestion from existing traffic, and it is concerned to be advised that the data being used for the traffic modeling for this development is considered to be out of date.

The Parish Council notes that there is a knock on effect from the traffic/highways work being incomplete at the time of the commencement of the consultation period, namely that air pollution from vehicle movements cannot currently be properly assessed.

- 5.2. There are widespread concerns amongst residents regarding the following issues:
- that the traffic modeling was not agreed with Leicestershire County Council before the consultations took place, and therefore the information presented as part of the consultation process may be subject to change
  - congestion on the roads surrounding the site caused by HGVs or the workforce
  - an increase in traffic using the B581 through Elmesthorpe, bearing in mind that the pavements through the village are so narrow that it is not possible to walk two abreast and there is a history of pedestrians on the pavement being injured by passing vehicles
  - an increase in HGVs and other large vehicles using the B581 through Elmesthorpe as they struggle to pass each other at various points in the village, resulting in vehicles mounting the pavement especially on the railway bridge
  - the proposal to install an uncontrolled crossing on the B581 which currently has a speed limit of 40mph
- 5.3. The Parish Council considers the number of HGV miles that it is alleged will be removed from the roads as a consequence of use of rail freight is unlikely, and would welcome having sight of how this figure was calculated.

## 6. Access to Site & Parking Issues

- 6.1. There are widespread concerns amongst residents that whilst it is proposed Burbage Common Road will not be used for access either by HGVs or workforce vehicles, the measures that are being put in place may be insufficient to prevent this happening.
- 6.2. The Parish Council assumes that a new postcode will be obtained for the site and accordingly, the likelihood of a HGV driver's satnav directing him to access the site via the B581/Burbage Common Road junction should be limited. However concerns remain that mistakes will be made by HGV drivers, and residents would like details of how such mistakes will be handled in practical terms – is it the intention to allow such vehicles access via the gate on Burbage Common Road, or is it proposed that any

such vehicle will be required to reverse back along single track Burbage Common Road onto the B581?

- 6.3. The site boundary plan shows an area at the junction of Burbage Common Road and Stanton Road/Station Road as being incorporated in the proposed development. The Parish Council has opposed any alteration to the road layout at this point from the outset. We received assurances from DB Symmetry that no alteration to the road layout was being proposed but signage would be erected at this junction to show no access to the site via Burbage Common Road. We should be grateful for confirmation that this is also the proposal from Tritax Symmetry as well.
- 6.4. During initial discussions, DB Symmetry indicated that it would put in place a “fines system” to deter drivers from using unapproved routes to access the site. The “unapproved routes” were to include B581 through Elmesthorpe. Please confirm whether Tritax Symmetry proposes to adopt a similar system, and if so, how this will work in terms of the residents of Elmesthorpe reporting “stray” HGVs causing issues in the village.
- 6.5. Of greater concern is the likelihood that members of the workforce who do not wish to queue to get on or off site at shift changeovers, will choose to park their vehicles in Elmesthorpe Village and to walk along Burbage Common Road to gain access on foot via the gate on the north eastern boundary. This would cause chaos in the village.

There are only six public roads in Elmesthorpe, namely the B581 which is a busy thoroughfare; Burbage Common Road which is a single track road with passing bays; Bostock Close at the base of the B581 railway bridge (which is an accident black spot); The Roundhills where there are already difficulties accommodating residents’ cars; Leighton Crescent which is very narrow, and again there are already difficulties accommodating residents’ cars; and Wilkinson Lane where the junction with the B581 is an accident black spot due to poor visibility and the speed of vehicles coming off the A47. Bridle Path Road and Billington Roads East & West are single track private roads with no access for the general public.

The Parish Council should be grateful if details could be provided regarding how it is proposed to prevent the HNRFI workforce parking in Elmesthorpe, as we understand that the queuing time for similar sized workforces exiting employment sites elsewhere at shift changeover is up to 30 minutes. If there is no phasing of shift changeovers, then the option of parking in Elmesthorpe and walking for 5 minutes to access the site is likely to be attractive.

We understand that your consultants suggested the roads in Elmesthorpe could be marked out with double yellow lines to prevent parking in the village. However such a measure would also prevent the residents of Elmesthorpe parking on their own streets, and accordingly this is not an acceptable solution.

- 6.6. Concerns about the workforce were raised with DB Symmetry in the early stages of discussions regarding this proposed development. The Parish Council was advised at the time that green travel plans would be put in place by the occupiers of the warehouses. Please can you advise whether this will be a requirement for all

companies or organizations buying or renting premises at the site.

- 6.7. The Parish Council notes that proposals for the parking of HGVs on site are under consideration and formed part of the feedback form. The Parish Council has received representations from residents indicating that they do not support the parking of vehicles on site, as this will add to the noise and air pollution. However, there are also concerns that drivers who run out of “tachograph hours” will simply find the nearest place to park up.

The Parish Council would like confirmation of whether the proposed lorry park will be free, or will it work on a similar basis to the facilities at Leicester Forest East where HGV drivers are charged £28 per night to park. In the event that it is proposed to charge for parking, please advise what steps will be taken to prevent drivers who do not wish to pay for the on-site parking from driving off site and parking on side streets in the villages close to the site.

- 6.8. The residents have concerns regarding the adequacy of the proposals for the welfare of HGV drivers using the site. The Parish Council understands that there appear to be insufficient facilities to provide meals to drivers resulting in a greater likelihood of them choosing to park elsewhere.
- 6.9. The Parish Council is advised that the on-site parking provision for the workforce and also for HGVs is not in accordance with the current guidance from Leicestershire County Council and may possibly be based on a now superseded document from 2006.

## 7. Noise

- 7.1. One of the major concerns to residents is the noise that will be generated by the freight trains using the Interchange, and the gantry cranes loading and unloading the trains. Unfortunately, this was one of the areas where information seems to be limited, or not easily accessible by residents.
- 7.2. In the light of the high level of concern about this aspect of the application, the Parish Council would ask for the following information to be provided:
- results for the assessment of the current ambient noise levels in Elmesthorpe
  - details of your forecasts for the noise levels in Elmesthorpe in years 1, 3, 5, 10 and 15 after the granting of any consent, and also the forecast for the level of noise when the site is fully operational
  - details of how you intend to address issues relating to the increase in noise to include, but not limited to, details of the size and precise location of any proposed fencing or bunding intended to reduce the impact of noise levels resulting from the development as currently plans provided are mainly described as illustrative
  - an explanation of why the noise mitigation works as proposed along the north edge of the existing railway line do not extend the full length of the site
  - details of the construction materials to be used for any fencing

- data or other information to show how the fencing will reduce the noise levels and to what extent the noise levels will be reduced
- details of the size of the bunding - height and also the width at ground level. Please note that the Parish Council has the illustrations provided for the presentation to Local Authorities, but these do not provide dimensions.
- details of the landscaping schemes to include the years (post commencement of construction work) in which any trees, bushes or other plants will be planted on the bunding, and the height to which each variety of plant or tree is expected to grow
- proposals for re-planting (including time scales) of any trees, plants or other materials included in the landscaping schemes which fail to thrive
- data or other information to show the extent to which you expect the noise levels to be reduced by the bunding
- what mechanism will be in place to review the noise levels after planning consent has been granted
- confirmation of whether you will be providing the results of post application monitoring of noise levels to Blaby District Council or other statutory authority on a regular and ongoing basis
- what mechanism will be put in place for you to undertake further noise attenuation works in the event that the current forecasts for the noise levels prove incorrect

7.3. The Parish Council understands that when a resident of Bostock Close (which backs onto the railway line) raised the issue of additional noise and vibration from the increased number of trains with the consultant dealing with noise mitigation at the public exhibition, he advised that not only would there not be any increase in noise or vibration, there shouldn't be any now.

As we understand that there is currently noise and/or vibration in some houses near to the railway line, the Parish Council would question whether the assessment(s) on which the noise attenuation works are based has been carried out appropriately.

- 7.4. In addition to the noise of the moving trains and the motors/engines powering the gantry cranes, there is also the matter of trains currently sounding their whistle as they approach the outskirts of the village (as they are required to do), and often several more times as they move along the track past the proposed location for the rail freight interchange. The Parish Council understands that you will have had discussions with Network Rail about safety matters relating to the rail port, and we would ask for confirmation of whether it will be a continuing requirement for the sounding of train whistles on the approach to Elmesthorpe once the rail port is in operation.
- 7.5. There are concerns about the quality of sleep that residents will get with the increased number of trains throughout the night and the limited noise attenuation proposals, with further implications for the mental health and well being of any affected residents.
- 7.6. In view of the concerns about the increased noise levels, the Parish Council would like information about any circumstances in which it is anticipated that trains will be queuing on the line to enter the rail port for unloading.



7.7. The Parish Council would also like details of how long each train will be at the rail port for unloading before it moves off again as this question was met with “don’t know” as a response at the consultation events.

## 8. Light Pollution

8.1. The Parish Council understands that this development will operate 24/7 giving rise to concerns regarding the impact of overnight lighting on the village.

8.2. During pre-application discussions with the Parish Council, DB Symmetry provided a photograph of the design of the warehousing to be built on this site together with confirmation that they would be lit at the top of the doors/loading & unloading bays only, and specifically the buildings would not be lit at eaves level in order to minimise the impact on the village. The Parish Council would ask for an assurance that this remains the case.

8.3. The Parish Council would also ask for confirmation that the lighting in any vehicle parking areas and on the link road to the A47 will be at the height of normal street lighting.

8.4. Turning to the rail port and gantry crane operating area immediately adjacent to the rail line, and referring to the illustrative sketch labeled “Section 7: Rail Freight Interchange” in the Landscape Strategy section of your presentation, the Parish Council notes that there is no reference to the height at which this area is to be lit and its relationship to the illustrative earth bund and landscaping.

The Parish Council would ask that this information be provided, together with details of any steps being taken to minimize the impact of lighting on residents, particularly those on Billington Roads East & West, and Bridle Path Road.

Please note that the Parish Council is asking for more detailed information here than provided by one of your consultants who responded by advising a resident that the lighting would be “directed downwards”. The Parish Council is specifically looking for information on whether it is possible to “shield” the lighting units in some way so as to provide the lighting required at ground level and for the operation of the gantry cranes but so that the lights don’t shine out over the homes to the north west of the railway line.

8.5. The Parish Council would like to know what is being put in place to monitor the impact of the proposed on-site / A47 link road lighting once construction work is completed and warehouse units are occupied.

## 9. Air Quality

9.1. The residents consider that this development will give rise to additional air pollution from the following sources:

- plant and equipment used during the building/construction phase
- additional trains once the rail port is operational

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- increased HGV movements to and from the site
  - increased workforce vehicle movements to and from the site
  - the on-site power plant
- 9.2. The Parish Council understands that air quality information in relation to the construction phase has not been made available, despite the construction phase possibly being as long as 10 years. We would ask that this information is provided, with the opportunity for further comment.
- 9.3. In light of the high level of concern about this aspect of the application, particularly amongst residents with asthma, the Parish Council would ask for the following information to be provided:
- a comparison of the current air quality assessments for Elmesthorpe and your forecasts for the air quality during the construction phase and post construction at years 2, 5 and once the site is fully operational
  - details of how you intend to address issues relating to any deterioration in air quality
  - confirmation of whether you will be providing the results of post application monitoring of air quality to Blaby District Council or other statutory authority on a regular and ongoing basis
  - what mechanism will be put in place for you to undertake further work in the event that the current forecasts on air quality prove incorrect
- 9.4. The Parish Council notes that you consider the M69/A47 link road will remove some vehicular movements from the B581 through Elmesthorpe, and once the traffic/highway modeling work is agreed with the Highways Authorities, we look forward to receiving specific details of the forecast reduction of vehicles on the B581 so this can be considered in terms of air quality.

## 10. Visual Impact

- 10.1. There are widespread concerns about the visual impact of the proposed development. This impact was not addressed by the poor visual images provided at the public consultation events on a pre-development and 15 years post development basis. Whilst the Parish Council accepts that the public consultation events were for all local people and businesses, not just Elmesthorpe residents, there were concerns about the quality of what was provided. We would specifically highlight the image apparently intended to show M69 J2 but which did not include the new slip roads on the 15 year image.
- 10.2. Residents felt that none of the images were “close up and personal” in the way that showed what they will face living with in the future should the development go ahead.
- 10.3. There have been various discussions with both DB Symmetry and Tritax Symmetry regarding whether the proposed warehousing can be constructed of materials in varying tones of colour so as to better blend into the landscape, and thereby reduce the visual impact.

To the best of our recollection, it was agreed that this would be possible, however there were no visual images to show this at the consultation events. Computer generated graphics to show what could be done would have been useful.

In order to provide some degree of certainty to the residents, the Parish Council would like confirmation of whether it is intended to construct each building in varying shades of colour to reduce its impact.

## 11. Flooding & Drainage Issues

- 11.1. There is widespread concern amongst residents regarding the likelihood of flooding of the development site, and how any steps taken to alleviate the risk of flooding of the development site will impact on adjoining watercourses.
- 11.2. A number of residents have advised that the fields off Burbage Common Road are regularly flooded, and we understand the site is known to have a high water table. Accordingly, the Parish Council would question whether this land is an appropriate location for an infrastructure project.
- 11.3. There are also concerns that issues with drainage locally will be exacerbated once the site becomes a massive area of hard surfacing.
- 11.4. The Parish Council understands that flood modeling has been undertaken, however certain aspects of the modeling give rise for concern. We are advised that the consultants were unable to gain access to several areas of land to undertake their research and it is therefore assumed that the modeling has included an element of guess work. We also understand that the hydraulic model used was created by the consultants with little independent input from other bodies.
- 11.5. Discussions took place at the public consultation event regarding the impact on the outflow of water to the north west of the site. Residents were advised that there would be a negligible increase in outflow as water was falling on the farmland now anyway. The operation of the tanks under the buildings and the attenuation ponds was described. However, your consultant also stated that following the survey with ground penetrating water radar, two land drains had been identified as not functioning, though the location of the land drains (on or off site) was not disclosed.

The Parish Council would like details of the location of the two malfunctioning land drains so it can be ascertained whether these fall within the development site and therefore will be rectified during the construction phase, or outside the development site and likely to cause ongoing problems.

Your consultant further advised that some of the watercourses outside the development site needed attention due to the levels of sediment, and he went on to say that better maintenance of the brook to the north west of the site was needed. When asked about who would be paying for any improved maintenance in order to facilitate the outflow of water from the development site, your consultant indicated that the cost would be borne by the Environment Agency.

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The Environment Agency has subsequently advised that they will not be paying for this. Accordingly, the Parish Council is seeking reassurance about whether people who are not involved with this project will bear the cost of any drainage improvement works.

- 11.6. There are concerns that the attenuation lakes are of insufficient size for the extent of the development proposed, and residents would like to know what will happen once the underground tanks and attenuation ponds fill up during any period of prolonged rain. The Parish Council would also like details of:
- how the levels of water in the underground storage tanks and attenuation ponds are monitored
  - who will monitor them
  - how the outflow from the development site is determined at any given time
  - how the attenuation ponds are monitored to ensure that the outflow of water from the development site does not flood the adjoining area.
- 11.7. The Parish Council would draw your attention to the proximity of the stream to the rear of homes in Bostock Close which takes water from the existing farmland and where we understand the water levels in the stream can already be subject to sudden and dramatic increases during periods of heavy or prolonged rain. The residents are concerned that if the measures proposed to control the outflow of water from the site are insufficient, their homes will be flooded.
- 11.8. The Parish Council also understands that properties to the south of the Bridle Path Road crossroads are at a low point in the surrounding area. During high rainfall, they already have standing water in their gardens and adjoining fields. The brook to the north of these homes already struggles to cope with high rainfall, and there are concerns that these properties will flood should the development go ahead.
- 11.9. There are also concerns regarding how the site drainage scheme will feed into the existing drains/sewers in Elmesthorpe. The B581 floods close to Wortley Cottages & Bostock Close during heavy rainfall, and there have been occasions in the last five years where the drain covers have lifted in Bostock Close due to the speed/volume of rising water.

## 12. Wildlife & the Loss of Farmland

- 12.1. The impact of the proposed development on local wildlife has attracted widespread comment from residents. It is generally felt that whilst surveys may have been undertaken, they have failed to translate into any meaningful proposals to offset the extensive damage to the local ecology which is expected to result from this proposal. Furthermore, residents feel that the surveys have underestimated the extensive wildlife in the area.
- 12.2. Accordingly, the Parish Council would question this being an ecologically friendly project. As an example, the earlier site designs included bunding on the north east boundary of the site with Burbage Common Road which the Parish Council understood was to be landscaped in such a way as to encourage flora and fauna to

flourish. The current designs indicate that this bunding is being replaced with an 8 metre high solid fence and railway sidings.

- 12.3. The proximity of the proposed development to Burbage Common and Woods is likely to cause significant damage to the variety of wildlife in the area. There are specific concerns regarding the impact on the migratory routes of the roe deer.
- 12.4. There are also concerns regarding the impact of the construction and subsequent lighting of the A47 link road.
- 12.5. It is generally felt that the provision of a green area as an extension to Burbage Common will not be sufficient to offset the loss of natural habitat for the wildlife as the construction work alone will drive much of the wildlife away and it may never return. Further, the value of a green area close to the new A47 link road is considered to be limited.
- 12.6. It is also felt that the new areas of ecological enhancement will not be suitable replacements for the long established habitats which are being built on.
- 12.7. There are concerns that the land drainage proposals will have a devastating effect on the ecosystems in the existing watercourses as they are sensitive to changes in the water levels. The effects will extend not only to the smaller organisms present in the water, but also the fish, dragonflies and water birds including the kingfishers.
- 12.8. The Parish Council understands that there are water voles close to the development site and bearing in their rarity, we would like details about the steps that will be taken to protect them from any damage to their habitat.
- 12.9. The area is also rich in other native species including:
  - Carrion crow, jackdaw, jay, magpie and rook
  - Collared dove and wood pigeon
  - Bullfinch, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch, linnets and yellowhammer
  - Black backed gull, black headed gull and common gull
  - Buzzard, kestrel, and sparrow hawk
  - Partridge and pheasant
  - Coot and moorhen
  - House sparrow and tree sparrow
  - House martin and swallow
  - Canada goose, mallard, mute swan and teal
  - Blue tit, great tit, coal tit and long tailed tit
  - Blackbird, fieldfare, mistle thrush, song thrush and robin
  - Grey wagtail and pied wagtail
  - Greater spotted woodpecker and green woodpecker
  - Cuckoo, dunnoek, heron, lapwing, nuthatch, skylark, starling, swift, tawny owl and wren
  - Badger, pipistrelle bat, muntjac deer, fox, frog, hare, hedgehog, wood mouse, harvest mouse, house mouse, mole, smooth newt, palmate newt, common shrew, pygmy shrew, smooth snake, rabbit, brown rat, grey squirrel, stoat, weasel, toad, bank vole and short tailed vole.

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- 12.10. A number of residents have commented on the destruction of farm land which is currently growing arable crops or being used for the grazing of livestock.
- 12.11. The site adjoins the Elmesthorpe Land Settlement Area which is considered to be a unique area of open countryside, and is one of the few remaining areas in the country set up post second World War under the Land Settlement Acts for the purpose of the provision of food. It has its own unique character and there are concerns that this will be damaged as a result of the proposed development.

### 13. Rights of Way & Access to Burbage Common/Woods

- 13.1. The access via Burbage Common Road to Burbage Common & Woods is well used by walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, horses and riders. Under the proposals, this route is to be closed.
- 13.2. There is currently an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways across the site which the Parish Council understands are to be re-routed.
- 13.3. The various pedestrian level crossings adjacent to the site are to be closed.
- 13.4. The Parish Council understands that the railway crossings for the T89 footpath close to the B581 railway bridge, and the U17 footpath which is some distance from the site are also to be closed with a diversion proposed for U17.
- 13.5. The review of footpath usage was apparently carried out in 2018 and we are now four years on from 2018. During the intervening years, the coronavirus pandemic resulted in many people adopting healthier lifestyles, and the greater use of the rights of way continues today. This is unlikely to be reflected in the out of date information currently being put forward as part of this consultation.
- 13.6. The Parish Council is indebted to two of Elmesthorpe's keen walkers, who have provided up to date photographs which indicate that the accuracy of some of the footpath analysis seems questionable.
- 13.7. In the summary table in Annex 2 of Appendix 11.2 Public Rights of Way Appraisal & Strategy, for footpath T89/1, it states that in both winter and summer "Overgrown field vegetation. Stile from Station Road impassable, very little sign of use".

The Parish Council would refer to the first and second photographs in Appendix 2 of this letter which were taken earlier this year. In neither photograph would the route be describable as "impassable", and the route is clearly in use as it can be seen running across the field to the pedestrian level crossing on the railway line.

The Parish Council understands that the V23/1 has been similarly mis-described as "Poorly worn desire line/vegetation suppression defines some of the route. Parts entirely waterlogged."

The Parish Council would refer to the third photograph in Appendix 2 where the path can clearly be seen going from right to left across the field.

- 13.8. The walkers who have reviewed the information provided for this consultation advise that undue emphasis also seems to be put on the fact that the signage of the footpaths is poor, as if this indicates little usage of the path which is not the case. The paths are predominantly used by local people from the surrounding villages and Hinckley who know the paths well without needing recourse to signage. Any self respecting walker who happened to be from outside the area would be using an OS map or GPS, so again would have scant interest in the quality of the signage.
- 13.9. There are a number of equine businesses on Burbage Common Road and it is estimated that there are approximately 100 horses kept at the various liverys in Elmesthorpe. The Parish Council understands that the proposal to re-route horses and riders along a new bridle path along the side of the M69 will add hugely to the time needed to exercise the horses and is generally considered to be unworkable due to risk of the horses being spooked by the vehicles on the M69.
- 13.10. The pedestrian level crossings for the T89 footpath close to the B581 railway bridge, and the U17 footpath, which is some distance from the site, are also to be closed with a diversion proposed for U17. Both proposals give rise to very specific concerns.
- 13.11. Dealing firstly with the T89 footpath, it is understood that it is to be closed from Stanton/Station Road across the railway line and to the far end of Bostock Close with a new route from Station Road along the pavement on Bostock Close to the far end where it will pick up its onward route.
- The proposal includes the provision of a crossing on the B581 close to the bottom of the B581 railway bridge. Unfortunately visibility at the proposed point of the new crossing is severely restricted, endangering the lives of people attempting to use it. The railway bridge has a blind summit - please see the fourth photograph in Appendix 2 - so vehicles coming over the bridge from The Wentworth Arms direction and gathering speed on the downward slope will encounter pedestrians trying to cross the road. The Parish Council would ask that the proposed location for the crossing is reviewed as a matter of concern.
- 13.12. Turning to the closure of the U17 pedestrian level crossing, the Parish Council understands that it is proposed to divert the footpath along the railway line to the west, over an existing farm bridge and back eastwards along the railway line to the same point on the opposite side, whereas the investment in a new pedestrian footbridge over the railway line would avoid this.
- 13.13. Given the forecast 10 year period the development is expected to be in the construction phase, the Parish Council would like details of any proposed rights of way diversions which will be in place from the point in time at which the site is physically secured for construction purposes. It is not acceptable for the Burbage Common area to be inaccessible from Elmesthorpe at any time.

13.14. In summary, the residents consider the proposed erasure, alteration or diversion of rights of way to be to the detriment of the whole community. The alternatives put forward to replace what is being lost are considered to be neither practical nor of the same quality.

#### 14. Construction

14.1. The Parish Council understands from previous discussions with yourselves that it is proposed to:

- commence the construction work at the M69 J2 end of the site
- the heavy machinery required for earth moving and other construction work will enter the development site at the M69 J2 end of the site
- heavy machinery and construction traffic will not be travelling through the village
- heavy machinery and construction traffic will not gain access to the site via Burbage Common Road
- retain all soil on site
- retain all earth moving and heavy machinery on site once the construction work commences

14.2. The Parish Council would like confirmation that the above proposals still reflect how the construction work is to be undertaken.

14.1. The Parish Council would specifically like reassurance that there are no proposals for fleets of HGVs to be removing soil from the site.

14.2. The Parish Council would like an indication of how large the workforce for the construction phase is likely to be and whether it is expected that they will arrive and leave the site in private vehicles. If they are using private vehicles, please can we have confirmation that they will not be accessing the site via Burbage Common Road.

14.3. The Parish Council would also like details of how it is proposed to protect the wellbeing of the large number of horses in liveries on Burbage Common Road during the construction work, particularly the construction of the rail port.

#### 15. Green Credentials

15.1. It is generally felt that this proposal will not have the green benefits that are being put forward as a positive factor, with the benefits appearing to rely heavily on moving freight by rail rather than by road.

15.2. It is considered that the green benefits derived from using rail rather than road freight are negated by a number of other factors:

- The warehouse units are stated to “built to net zero carbon in construction” but there doesn’t appear to be any wider commitment to making the site itself carbon neutral or placing any expectation on the occupiers of the site to meet environmentally friendly targets
- Building to net zero carbon does not offset the ecological impact of the development
- In the existing infrastructure and housing provision, there is little opportunity to employ a workforce who can walk or cycle to work, or even use public transport

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- The freight trains will be diesel and not electric
- The notion of moving freight by rail rather than road can only deliver benefits where the end market is sufficiently close to the rail hub (and the only information provided about the end market at the consultations was based on the misconception that MIRA has a need for automotive parts)
- Energy for the site is primarily to be provided by an on-site gas power plant rather than from greener sources.

## 16. Conclusion

The residents who have contacted the Parish Council overwhelmingly consider that the proposed Rail Freight Interchange will have a massively detrimental impact on their lives.

Many have expressed their appreciation of the countryside surrounding the village and can see no reason why it should be destroyed to further financial gains for a large business such as Tritax Symmetry. Others simply feel that Tritax Symmetry has failed to try to offset the impact of the proposed development in any meaningful fashion.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Greenwood  
Chair of Elmesthorpe Parish Council

## Appendix 1

Some of the comments received from residents of Elvesthorpe regarding the adequacy of the consultation:

1	<p>Tritax consultants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Did not know the area</li><li>2. Could not answer questions regarding the height of the rail track that would have to be built up for the sidings</li><li>3. Could not say how many trains or how long it would take to unload each train</li><li>4. Could not say where the lorries would park</li><li>5. Did not know whether the trains terminated and how do they go back to their destination</li><li>6. Thought MIRA was a car manufacturer</li><li>7. Did not know how they would fit in 2 trains an hour without disrupting existing passenger or freight trains</li><li>8. Said that the footpaths to be closed were not used which is untrue</li><li>9. Said that no farms would be demolished which is untrue</li><li>10. The photographs of before and after were very misleading</li><li>11. The scale of the plans and the writing were too small to read.</li></ol>
2	<p>The plans presented to us by Tritax Symmetry are not clear or provide appropriate information making forming an opinion on this proposed project difficult. There have been no clear answers to the questions asked at consultation events and some consultants representing Tritax Symmetry repeatedly tried to find staff that could answer the questions being asked. In our experience we are left with no useful information.</p>
3	<p>The vague photographs, maps and information on show at the Tritax meetings are alarming, and questions were answered in an equally vague way.</p>
4	<p>We attended the meeting at Elvesthorpe Village Hall on 19 January 2022 and were disappointed with the lack of information and misinterpretation that your pictures portrayed ie on the now and 15 years in the future pictures, how could you miss off the new M69 Slip Road, as this will have a major visual impact on the local area. Also, when I asked where it was I was told that it was only a guide.</p> <p>As for your questionnaire handed out at the end of the meeting to fill in and send back, this is an utter waste of time and paper due to the questions being highly loaded in one direction, so we decided to send our views.</p>
5	<p>It would seem that inadequate resources have been provided by Tritax in handling of any queries. I have experienced a poorly timed response from Tritax to the single question that I put to them by email on 13 January 2022 shortly after the HNRFI consultation document were made public. It was only after calling on their premium rate telephone line that I obtained a response on 9 February.</p> <p>The materials on their database are not searchable across all documents so it is difficult to locate items. The answer to my query was in fact located in "Plan: HRF-BWB-LSI-D2-DR-CH-00100 Document 2.4B Highway Plans Sheet 2" which I eventually managed to</p>

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	find under the website section "Plans". Somewhat of a challenge for the general public to find!
6	I have not found the consultation meeting with Tritax to be a good experience. The Staff at the presentation seemed to know very little and out of their depths. The consultation form is biased in the way that they are asking the questions and is not a real consultation of the community.
7	I mentioned the visuals that were on display at the consultation, and the fact that they did not show the views that are actually important to me as a resident living close to the development.

Appendix 2

Photograph 1 – T89



Photograph 2 – T89



Photograph 3 – V23/1



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Photograph 4 – B581 Station/Stanton Road Railway Bridge at Bostock Close junction



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