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Subject: Decision delayed on rail freight hub

Categories: Carly

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NEWS RELEASE

Decision delayed on rail freight hub

The Secretary of State for Transport has said she is “minded to refuse consent” for the 662-acre Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) - but needs further information before making a final decision.

Secretary of State, MP Louise Haigh, was due to give her verdict on the controversial scheme by Tuesday 10 September. This followed a review and subsequent recommendation from the Planning Inspectorate’s Examination Authority (ExA).

However, Blaby District Council has received notice that Ms Haigh is delaying the decision until 10 March 2025.

The letter makes it clear the ExA felt the plans should be rejected. Ms Haigh says having weighed both benefits and adverse effects, she is of a similar opinion.

The Minister said while she “is minded to agree” with the advice, she wants further information before making her final decision.

As the scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project any ruling on approval or rejection lies with the Secretary of State for Transport.

Proposed by developers Tritax Symmetry, the hub is earmarked for a huge expanse of countryside between the M69 and the Birmingham to Leicester rail line. The site is southwest of Elmhurst, mainly in Blaby District but it also abuts the edge of Burbage Common.

Blaby District Council has been vehemently opposed to the plans from the outset. Criticisms have centred on the loss of vast swathes of countryside and far-reaching adverse environmental, traffic and social impacts.

Leader of Blaby District Council, Councillor Terry Richardson, said: “I am extremely disappointed that while the Secretary of State is minded to refuse this application, following the recommendation of the ExA, she has not done so. The applicant has clearly failed to present the appropriate evidence during the process. They should not be given what residents might consider a 'second bite of the cherry'.

“My residents find it extraordinary as Leader of the Council, in whose District the application lies, that I have not had the courtesy of any direct communication from the Secretary of State relating

to this decision. I therefore urge the Secretary of State to stop being evasive. She should listen to the ExA and turn down this application now.

“Once again, I should like to thank everyone, especially our officers, who provided the necessary information at the public examination to ensure the recommendation could only go one way, namely, to recommend refusal.”

Best regards

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