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Planning Services
Council House
Priory Road
Dudley
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sent via email

Dear Sir/Madam,

BLACK COUNTRY CORE STRATEGY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT CONSULTATION

On behalf of Four Ashes Limited (FAL), this letter responds to the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation (July to September 2017).

FAL welcomes the opportunity to comment on emerging policies given its commitment to work in partnership with South Staffordshire DC, the Black Country Authorities and the local community in delivering a new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange in South Staffordshire.

As the Councils are aware, FAL has an interest in the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) at Four Ashes, referred to as West Midlands Interchange (WMI). The WMI project was formally launched in April 2016 and it is intended to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) before the end of the year.

FAL carried out Stage 1 Consultation on the proposals from 13 June to 24 July 2016. Stage 2 Consultation was carried out from 5 July 2017 to 30 August 2017. Stage 2 Consultation includes detailed information about the preferred scheme, draft Parameter Plans, an Illustrative Masterplan and a draft Environmental Statement assessing the impact of the scheme

The WMI proposals cover approximately 297 hectares, within the administrative boundary of South Staffordshire District Council, approximately 5 km from the Black Country.

The proposed development comprises:

- An intermodal rail freight terminal with connections to the West Coast Main Line, capable of accommodating up to 10 trains per day and trains of up to 775m long and including container storage, HGV parking, rail control building and staff facilities;
- Up to 743,200 square metres of rail served warehousing and ancillary service buildings;
- New road infrastructure and works to the existing road infrastructure;
- Demolition of existing structures and structural earthworks to create development plots and landscape zones;
- Repositioning and burying of electricity pylons and cables; and



- Strategic landscaping and open space, including alterations to public rights of way and the creation of new ecological enhancement areas and publicly accessible open areas.

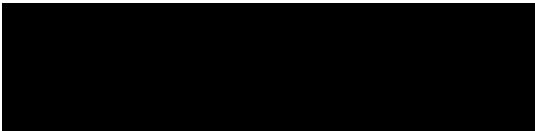
WMI would offer intermodal freight facilities located near to junctions of the M6, the M6 Toll and the M54 motorway, in accordance with the requirements of the National Networks National Planning Statement.

The site is located near the Black Country conurbation and would provide the opportunity to build on the competitive advantages of the manufacturing and distribution sector in the region. It would make a significant contribution to establishing a critical mass of such activities and by providing a rail freight terminal and encouraging further investment, it would ensure that the area remains competitive against other regions, both nationally and internationally, which have similar facilities already in place.

WMI is projected to generate £417m of economic activities and its scale, proposed uses and location mean it is of significant importance not just to the Black Country and southern Staffordshire, but within the West Midlands region as a whole. It is against this background that FAL representations to the draft policy document are made.

In due course, we would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the WMI project and the Black Country Core Strategy in more detail.

Yours faithfully,



Sue Willcox
Director

cc - Peter Frost, Four Ashes Limited