

The deadline for a decision on West Midlands strategic rail freight interchange delayed until May

April 29, 2020



The deadline for the decision on the West Midlands strategic rail freight interchange has been extended until May 5th.

The government says it's to allow for further work to be carried out before it is determined by the Secretary of State.

The West Midlands interchange is being promoted by Four Ashes Limited – a consortium led by Kilbride Holdings.

Those behind the project say, should it be given permission, it would generate £427m of local economic activity each year, and, through the supply chain, create £912m of economic activity each year nationally.

The Four Ashes site has been identified for its potential to boost economic growth through its location in

the M54 Wolverhampton – Staffordshire High Growth Zone.

A statement on the West Midlands Interchange website said: “A new strategic rail freight interchange (SFRI) is something that has been long identified as essential for the future prosperity of the West Midlands region. The West Midlands’ strong manufacturing and logistics industrial base is growing and there is a shortage of suitable quality development land for large scale rail-served logistics warehousing.

“Businesses are particularly reliant on good logistics support and a SFRI in this part of the West Midlands will continue to ensure the region is competitive in national and international markets.

“The Four Ashes site supports both the Government’s Modern Industrial Strategy and the Midlands Engine, which together aim to help deliver a high-skilled, competitive economy that benefits people in the West Midlands and throughout the UK.”

A statement on the government website about the deadline extension reads: “West Midlands strategic rail freight interchange: for the proposed development by Four Ashes Limited of a new strategic rail freight interchange and other supporting infrastructure works near Junction 12 of the M6 motorway in South Staffordshire District. The Secretary of State received the Examining Authority’s report on 27 November 2019 and the current deadline for a decision was 27 February 2020. The deadline is now extended to 5 May 2020.”

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the examining authority’s report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The department will also endeavour to issue decisions ahead of the deadlines above wherever possible.

The decision to set new deadlines is without prejudice to the decisions on whether to give development consent for the above application.