

West Midlands Interchange granted development consent

May 4, 2020



Development consent has been given for the development of a new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and other supporting infrastructure works near Junction 12 of the M6 motorway in South Staffordshire District.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Four Ashes Limited on the 03 August 2018 and accepted for examination on 24 August 2018. Following an examination during which the public, statutory consultees and interested parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 27 November 2019.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said: "This is the 84th nationally significant infrastructure project to have been examined and decided within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008. The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in a 6-month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making their recommendation."

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

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

The project comprises:

- An intermodal freight terminal with direct connections to the West Coast Main Line, capable of accommodating up to 10 trains per day and trains of up to 775m long, including container storage, Heavy Goods Vehicle ('HGV') parking, rail control building and staff facilities;
- Up to 743,200 square metres (gross internal area) of rail served warehousing and ancillary service buildings;
- New road infrastructure and works to the existing road infrastructure;
- Demolition of existing structures and earthworks to create development plots and landscape zones;
- Reconfiguring and burying of existing overhead power lines and pylons; 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.

Malcolm Holmes, director of rail for Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and executive director for the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) said: "Freight and logistics are vital to our region's economic activity and development; the West Midlands Interchange delivers further rail freight capacity providing a sustainable route to market for the West Midlands."

Those behind the project say it will 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."