CD-D33/C


**Appeal: Land NE J10 M42, Tamworth**

**PINS Reference: APP/R3705/W/24/3336295**
**LPA ref: PAP/2021/0663**

# Summary Proof of Evidence of Michael A Hatfield BSc MSc

**May 2024**

MDS Transmodal

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## SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

1. My name is Michael Austin Hatfield. I have a BSc (Hons) in *Geography* from the *University of Durham* and a MSc post-graduate qualification in *International Transport* from the *University of Wales (Cardiff)*. I am a Director of *MDS Transmodal Ltd*, a transport and economics consultancy that specialises in the logistics and freight transport sector.

2. I have worked for MDS Transmodal for 25 years and have been a Director of the company since 2020. Prior to that, I worked in the logistics sector for 4 years (for a major third party logistics provider) in both operational and project based roles. I have a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) in road transport operations. Since joining MDS Transmodal, I have advised clients in both the public and private sectors, mainly covering logistics (road haulage and rail freight sectors), transport economics, freight policy and planning matters.

3. I have considered three issues related to the appellant's proposals for Land NE J10 M42, namely:

- The urgent need for additional high quality HGV parking capacity in Tamworth area, particularly along the A5 corridor, which the appellant's plans for a new overnight HGV parking facility are intended to address;
- The warehousing element of the proposals and the connectivity with the intermodal rail terminal facilities at Birch Coppice Business Park; and
- The transition to zero-emission road goods vehicles and the site's ability to accommodate which ever emerging technology or technologies eventually becomes the long-term solution.

***HGV Parking Facility***

4. The overall case for the proposed HGV parking facility is summarised as follows:

- There is a requirement for drivers to park HGVs while operating away from their home operating depots;
- Parking at locations not specifically designed for HGVs can generate serious environmental impacts, has implications for the welfare of drivers and can attract criminal behaviour;
- While there is significant demand for lorry parking in the immediate hinterland of the appeal site, there is currently a clear short-fall in appropriate HGV parking capacity in the Tamworth area, particularly along the A5 corridor; and
- The site meets the criteria defining a suitable location for HGV parking to a high level and the planned parking facilities are those required by road haulage operators and drivers.

5. HGVs need to park at suitable and appropriate parking facilities due to the following operational reasons:

- The need for drivers to undertake statutory (legally required) driving break or rest periods;
- While awaiting allocated delivery/collection time-windows at factories and distribution centres; and
- The need for drivers to access amenities.

6. While drivers are out on the road, this clearly implies a requirement for some form of purposely designed 'parking facility' connected to but located off the public highway, where HGVs can be parked in an appropriate manner while providing drivers with access to suitable amenity facilities.

7. Current planning policy and Government support for the development of new HGV parking facilities is provided in a number of documents. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework, the North Warwickshire Local Plan and a number of Ministerial Statements.

8. There is a wealth of quantitative and qualitative evidence which demonstrates significant demand for lorry parking, while also showing a clear short-fall in appropriate HGV parking capacity in the Tamworth area, particularly along the A5 corridor. The DfT's National Survey of Lorry Parking (2022) identifies a shortage of 'on-site' parking capacity across the West Midlands region, with the average total number of HGVs parking each night being well in excess of the installed on-site capacity (458 in 2022). A parking beat survey undertaken in December 2023 indicates that around 117 HGVs were parking at inappropriate non-truck stop locations each night. Assessments demonstrate that there is a significant level of HGV activity passing into and through the area immediately surrounding the proposed HGV parking facility, meaning we should expect a reasonable proportion of these trips to be attracted to and seek to use the capacity at the planned parking facility.

9. Derived from the requirements set out in DfT Circular 02/2022, an assessment of the location of MSAs and official overnight truck parks in the Midlands to the east of Birmingham concludes that a HGV park at/close to J10 M42 would create a 'chain' of facilities which broadly conforms with the requirements set out in the Circular. Without a facility at that location, driving times and distances between HGV parking facilities would be significantly in excess of the recommended distances.

10. Based on the qualitative and quantitative evidence provided in my Proof of Evidence, it is impossible not to conclude that there is a significant demand for HGV parking in the area surrounding the appeal site, albeit there is currently a short fall in capacity at appropriate sites.

11. The key criteria, along with the rationale, that sites should meet if they are to be considered suitable locations for hosting HGV parking facilities, have been defined. An assessment

undertaken of the appeal site demonstrates that it meets all the criteria to a high level. I have therefore concluded the that the appeal site should be considered a suitable location for hosting HGV parking facilities providing both short-term and long-term requirements. It will be an efficient use of land as the planned facility would be able to intercept 'passing trade' on the strategic highway network (breaks and rest needs) and provide parking areas to wait ahead of time-windows at nearby freight generators from the same location.

***Birch Coppice and Rail Terminal Connectivity***

12. The overall case for rail freight is based on the following two key benefits:

- Under certain circumstances, rail freight offers a more cost competitive transport option when compared with other modes, principally road haulage. These are often termed 'user benefits'; and
- Rail freight is recognised as being a substantially more sustainable mode of transport, which generates wider societal benefits when compared with road haulage. These are often termed 'non-user benefits'.

13. One of the main factors which renders rail freight cost competitive against road haulage, thereby generating user benefits, is the ability to locate distribution centres at rail-served locations (when compared with warehouses located distant from a rail terminal). If rail freight is to both thrive and ultimately grow (as shall be shown below, there is significant support from Government for this to occur), then an expansion in the quantum of rail-served warehouse capacity nationally is a pre-requisite.

14. Planning and Government policy support the development of new rail freight facilities. The NPPF includes a suite of policies to promote sustainable transport, including encouraging development at locations which offer a choice of transport modes. The National Planning Statement for National Networks (NPSNN), originally published by the DfT in 2014 and updated in 2024, sets out the Government's plans to further the development of rail-served warehousing and logistics facilities. In particular, it states that they are a key element in reducing the cost of moving freight by rail and are therefore an important element in facilitating modal shift, thereby reducing HGV movements.

15. The long-term rail freight growth target was published in December 2024, setting a target for rail freight to grow by at least *75% in terms of freight moved by 2050*. This equates to an annual growth of around 2.3% on a compound basis. The purpose of the growth target is to strengthen the place of rail freight on the network, to help create new opportunities for investment (both public and private sector), and to give confidence to the sector's customers and investors. The

Government considers the rail freight growth target as a signal of support for and confidence in rail freight.

16. Internal road movements on private roads within SRFIs using yard tractors and skeletal semi-trailer equipment provide substantially lower rail terminal-warehousing transfer costs when compared with serving an 'off-site' warehouse using road-legal HGV equipment. These savings are generated due to their lower operating costs when compared with road-legal HGVs. While yard tractors have been designed to haul semi-trailers on private land (as described, including between intermodal terminals and warehousing within SRFIs), under limited circumstances they can also be operated on the public highway (defined as roads maintained at public expense). In these situations, they are classed as *'works trucks'* and are defined under the Construction and Use Regulations.

17. Given the location of the appeal site on the opposite side of the A5 to Birch Coppice (gate-to-gate around 500m), the proposed warehouse development clearly falls within the description of the term 'immediate neighbourhood'. It is therefore concluded that yard tractors operating internally within the Birch Coppice Business Park (to/from BIFT) will also be able to access the appeal site on the same terms (under the works truck conditions). Lower transfer costs will therefore accrue when compared with the use of road-legal HGVs. The proposed warehouse development can therefore in practice be classified as rail-served, and occupiers will be able to access the BIFT facilities on the same basis as those currently located within the business park, including being able to accrue the consequent user benefits.

***Net-Zero Road Goods Vehicles***

18. The technological solutions which are emerging as potential zero-emission replacements for diesel/petrol engine freight vehicles were described. These are:

- Battery-electric – vehicles using electric motors for traction, with the electricity sourced from on-board batteries;
- Hydrogen – again vehicles using electric motors for traction, albeit with the electricity sourced from on-board hydrogen fuel-cells; and
- E-highways (aka the electric road system) – likewise vehicles using electric motors for traction, albeit with the electricity supplied via overhead live contact wires.

19. The emerging consensus is that zero-emission LGVs will utilise battery-electric technology, supported by an expanded fast-charging network. In contrast, there is currently a significant degree of uncertainty with respect to the long-term solution for HGVs. No single reliable technological solution (or multiple solutions) has yet to emerge which has the necessary 'buy-in' from both Government and industry. However, the planned scheme will include fast-

charging points (and the ability to retro-fit additional points at a later date), could support the receipt and storage of hydrogen and, should the electric road system emerge as a suitable alternative, it is more than likely that the M42 and A5 would be included given that they form part of the long-distance strategic highway network.

20. The appeal scheme as planned would be able to accommodate zero-emission goods vehicles (both LGVs and HGVs), which ever emerging technology or technologies eventually becomes the long-term solution. It is therefore 'net-zero ready' and will contribute to the process of decarbonising the road transport sector.

***Overall Conclusion***

21. I have therefore concluded that the appellant's proposals are an exceptional development. It will help deliver three key Government policies, namely providing much needed secure overnight HGV parking capacity in an area where there is a recognised short-fall in appropriate facilities, provide access to a modern intermodal rail terminal (thereby encouraging modal shift) and support the transition to net-zero road haulage. It will also be funded entirely by the private sector. In my 25 years consultancy career (and 29 years overall experience in the logistics sector), I consider the proposals at Land NE J10 M42 to be one of the best schemes I have provided with advice and support.