Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Council

Response to EIA Scoping Opinion Request
Application Reference: 26/01359/EAS

Scoping Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
Proposed Industrial and Logistics Development and Associated Infrastructure
Land North East of Junction 11, M42

Introduction

The Parish Council recognises that this submission relates to a request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion rather than a formal planning application. However, given the likely scale of the proposed development and its location close to a number of established communities, the Council believes it is essential that the Environmental Impact Assessment fully examines the potential impacts on local residents and the surrounding countryside.

The Council is particularly concerned that the effects of this proposal should not be considered in isolation. Residents have seen significant industrial and logistics development around Junction 11 in recent years and are increasingly concerned that the cumulative effect of these developments is changing the character of the area and placing growing pressure on local infrastructure.

Traffic and Highway Safety

Traffic is one of the main concerns raised by residents.

The A444 already carries large volumes of traffic, including a substantial number of Heavy Goods Vehicles travelling to and from existing industrial and distribution sites in the area, particularly those associated with Swadlincote and surrounding employment areas. Residents regularly report concerns about both the volume and speed of traffic using this route.

Particular concern exists within Acresford, where vehicles leaving the faster sections of the A444 often enter local roads at inappropriate speeds. Residents have raised concerns for many years regarding highway safety at points where traffic transitions from higher-speed roads into village environments.

The Council believes the Environmental Statement must include a detailed assessment of:

- Additional HGV traffic generated by the development.
- The impact on the A444 corridor.
- The capacity of Junction 11 and surrounding roads.
- Construction traffic impacts.
- Highway safety implications for local communities.
- The cumulative effect of existing and approved logistics development.

The Council is also concerned that increasing congestion on strategic routes may encourage drivers to seek alternative routes through nearby communities. Particular attention should therefore be given to assessing potential increases in traffic on Measham Road and routes linking the A444 with Measham and Acresford.

Residents are concerned that roads already experiencing significant levels of traffic could face further pressure as a result of additional industrial and logistics development around Junction 11.

Landscape and Visual Impact

The countryside surrounding Junction 11 plays an important role in the setting of nearby villages and helps maintain the rural character of the area.

Residents are concerned that continued expansion of industrial and logistics development is gradually eroding that character. Whilst individual developments may be considered acceptable on their own, the combined effect of multiple large-scale warehouse and distribution schemes is becoming increasingly noticeable.

The Council believes the Environmental Impact Assessment must fully consider:

- The visibility of the development from nearby villages.
- Long-distance views across the countryside.
- The impact on the setting of local communities.
- The effectiveness of landscape screening.
- Seasonal variations in visibility.
- Cumulative visual impacts alongside existing and approved developments.

Particular attention should be given to views from Acresford, Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe, Measham and surrounding rural areas.

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Loss of Rural Character
The Council is concerned that further logistics development could result in the gradual industrialisation of land that currently forms part of the open countryside.

Residents value the separation between settlements and the rural setting that defines much of this area. The Environmental Statement should assess not only the direct effects of the development itself but also the wider impact on the character and identity of nearby communities.

The Council believes that the cumulative loss of open countryside around Junction 11 should be treated as a significant issue within the assessment.

Noise and Lighting
Modern logistics facilities frequently operate over extended hours and often require substantial external lighting.

The Environmental Statement should assess:

- Noise from HGV movements.
- Loading and unloading activities.
- Night-time operations.
- External yard activities.
- Security and operational lighting.
- Light spill and sky glow.

Residents living in nearby villages should be able to understand how their amenity may be affected, particularly during evening and night-time periods.

Ecology and Biodiversity
The Council wishes to ensure that any future Environmental Statement includes a thorough assessment of ecological impacts.

The loss of habitats, effects on wildlife corridors and long-term biodiversity implications should be fully examined. The Council would also expect any biodiversity enhancement proposals to be clearly demonstrated and secured.

Flood Risk and Drainage
Given the extensive hardstanding typically associated with industrial and logistics developments, the Council considers that flood risk and surface water management should be carefully examined.

The Environmental Statement should clearly demonstrate how surface water will be managed and confirm that neighbouring land and communities will not be placed at increased risk of flooding.

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Conclusion

The Parish Council considers that the proposed development has the potential to generate significant environmental effects extending well beyond the application site itself.

Of particular concern are the cumulative effects of continued logistics development around Junction 11, increased traffic on the A444 and surrounding local roads, potential impacts on Acresford and neighbouring villages, loss of rural character, visual intrusion, noise, lighting and pressure on local infrastructure.

The Council therefore requests that all of these matters are fully assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment and that none are scoped out at this stage. Particular emphasis should be placed on cumulative impacts, recognising that local communities experience the combined effects of development across the wider area rather than the effects of individual schemes in isolation.