

Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange
Planning Inspectorate Reference: TR050006
Interested Party reference 20010782
Representation deadline: 6th November 2018

I wish you to note my strong objection to the proposed Northampton Gateway development.

In my registration as an Interested Party I commented that

- The increase in traffic in the local area is estimated by the developer themselves to be at the magnitude of at least 16,500 vehicle movements (per day).
- This additional pressure on already overcrowded roads will spill into and cause lasting and unmitigated damage to the village of Blisworth.

This further Written Representation is to highlight the specific degradation to Air Quality which would be caused by such volume of traffic.

As part of a Clean Air Campaign in 2017, ten locations in Blisworth were monitored using approved methodology and equipment provided by Friends of the Earth who also conducted the independent analysis. I have personal knowledge of how carefully the exercise was undertaken as I was one of four Blisworth residents who mounted, observed and removed the individual monitoring devices in accordance with the clear instructions set out by Friends of the Earth. The results are published on their UK Map at <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/clean-air/results>.

Blisworth is a rural village and levels of Nitrogen Dioxide are currently lower than the EU and WHO maximum permitted annual level of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. However, the detailed results from the monitoring exercise show a disturbing and fragile picture regarding Air Quality at five locations.

- a. One location (A43/Towcester Road junction) is already at 80% of the maximum annual permitted level, recording 31.8 micrograms/m³.
- b. Three other locations are at or above 60% of the maximum annual permitted level. Two of these are in the High Street, the other is on the A43 opposite Arm Farm.
- c. One location (Northampton Road/Courteenhall Road junction) is at 58% of the maximum annual permitted level, recording 23.2 micrograms/m³.

The developer has shown they expect the volume of traffic to increase at each of these five locations [*source 1*]. It is therefore very likely that Blisworth's Air Quality would be made worse than the current (barely) acceptable levels if the Secretary of State were to approve the Northampton Gateway development.

The significance of maintaining healthy Air Quality is recognised in the National Policy Statement for National Networks Chapter 5. More specifically, Friends of the Earth makes the following statements about Air Quality [*source 2*]:

- Nitrogen Dioxide is a toxic gas that inflames the lining of the lungs.
- The Government's 2015 Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide air pollution was ruled as too weak in a High Court Judgement in November 2016. Friends of the Earth's analysis found the (subsequent) May 2017 draft Air Quality Plan fell well short of what was required.
- There are 40,000 early deaths a year in the UK attributable to outdoor air pollution.

- Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society – the young, whose lungs may never develop properly, and older people.

Blisworth is home to around 700 children and older people (ages 0-15 and 65+) representing 40% of the village population [source 3]. Air Quality therefore matters to the village. Poor air quality cannot be mitigated away nor should localised harm be offset by an assumed improvement elsewhere.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Planning Inspectorate to ensure that the Secretary of State is guided to reject the application having been made fully aware of the risk of damage to our health in Blisworth.

Sources used above

Source 1: Developer's assessment of increased traffic volume from document "Strategic Transport modelling and proposed highway mitigation overview" dated March 2018 <http://www.northampton-gateway.co.uk/downloads/StrategicTransportModelling.pdf> (Refer to slides 47, 52 and 53)

Source 2: Friends of the Earth statements quoted above are in publication "Too little, too late – a critique of the Air Quality Improvement plan" <https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Too%20little%20too%20late%20-%20a%20critique%20of%20the%20Air%20Quality%20Plan%20Updated%20FINAL%2020180531%20%28002%29.pdf>

Source 3: 2011 Census Blisworth population data:
http://www.blisworth.org.uk/images/Census/parish_data.htm

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