

Summary Representation by Northampton Rail Users Group.

1. The proposed development would act against the interests of rail for Northampton. In the shorter term this is due to lack of capacity causing competition between freight and passenger services, and disruption in construction. The longer term relates to adverse interference with potential new services post HS-2, and the economic benefits for Northampton connecting to the HS-2 hub at Birmingham. Loading “the loop” with freight works against all of these in terms of capacity and speed. Any advantages Northampton could get from HS-2 must not be forfeited by building a new freight terminal in the wrong location.
2. Taking up capacity between Bletchley and Northampton is contrary to NRUG and NBC’s aims of getting Northampton integrated onto East West Rail, a factor in the implementation of the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford growth corridor.
3. The developer’s assertion of sufficient capacity on the WCML with no restriction to freight and no interference to passenger traffic by freight is not supported by a number of documents, including the NSPNN, Freight RUS, and Network Rail’s response to scoping for Rail Central. Limits to passenger traffic are well illustrated by the refusal to grant Virgin Trains the extra paths they requested in 2016.
4. The developer has either misunderstood or misquoted the number of night time train services, which affects the proposition for rail capacity out of peak. The developer also presents misleading journey times in an attempt to establish no interference with passenger traffic.
5. The proposed development requires mitigation at Northampton station that is impractical following the building of the new station. None of the mitigation measures appear to be included in CP5 and CP6, Network Rail’s budgeting rounds. Further, the Freight Network Study 2017 indicates the potential cost range for the modifications required for mitigation as:
 - a. Reduction of Headways on the Northampton loop : £75m-£175m;
 - b. Remodelling of Northampton station to allow higher line speed: £175m-375m.

Potential costs of up to £550 million for mitigation measures to accommodate the proposed development are not insignificant at a time when there is pressure to reduce the taxpayer funded element of the railway.

6. The site location is at odds with the decision to develop the Ely/Peterborough route as the preferred option for freight from the east coast ports.
7. EIA regulations require that assessment is made of the potential effects on both population (passengers) and material assets (the passenger rail network). Neither is provided in the ES, which renders it non-compliant with EIA regulations. Being granted freight paths is not the same as demonstrating no effects.
8. The developer uses a wrong (too high) figure for GVA for the logistics sector.

9. On balance, this proposal could reduce employment and is less efficient than a competing terminal only 20 miles away on the same track. The GVA for the proposed development is likely to be negative.
10. A number of flaws exist in the ES, including flawed methodology and not using the correct assessment criteria. The repeated use of “material impact”, rather than the assessment of significant effects, is a failure to comply with the EIA regulations.
11. The transport assessment is flawed and assigns significant beneficial effects where the correct finding would be significantly adverse. Most notably, the overall impact of the Roade bypass is one of building a new road and filling it with traffic resultant from the proposed development. Once this clarity is made, it is evident that this is of major adverse significant effect, not the significant beneficial one the developer suggests, and one to which no mitigation is being applied.
12. The developer has misunderstood the WHO noise criteria and proposes to set a higher limit than appropriate as a result. The developer admits significant adverse effects even using the wrong (too high) criteria and mitigation.
13. The developer provides no context to the extent of large warehouse development in and around Northampton. The assessment cannot be silent on the scale and spread of warehouse developments in this area. SNDC recognise the extent and spread of development through policy EV8, Important Areas of Local Gaps. The proposed development is in breach of this policy.
14. Once the developer takes into account the 6 trains per hour intended for Northampton post HS-2, its own calculations show a shortage of paths for freight.
15. The public interest (as required for CPOs) has not been demonstrated. NRUG argue that the adverse effect on rail makes the proposed development against the public interest of Northampton.

REPRESENTATION MADE BY NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS GROUP

Preamble

This representation is made on behalf of the Northampton Rail Users Group (NRUG), and concerns the proposed “Northampton Gateway” intermodal terminal being made by Roxhill, the developer, on a site south of Northampton.

NRUG has been in existence for over 2 decades now and lead a number of campaigns, including successfully stopping proposals to side-line Northampton to 1hr 20min journey time to Euston (the original proposal for the WCML upgrade), the introduction of the fast Virgin services to the morning peak, the introduction of further fast morning and evening peak services to and from Euston (50mins journey time, the restoration of routine services to Birmingham New Street, and the new Northampton Castle Station. After such a record of campaigning for, and achieving, positive changes for Northampton, NRUG is very disappointed to have to take on a negative one to defend our current position.

Please be informed that NRUG members include local MPs (both past and present), and Councillors, something we believe adds a sense of the democratic process to our campaigns. We would hope that our long history, and success in rail for Northampton, carries considerable weight in considering this objection.

NRUG’s statement on the impact on rail

The potential impact of this proposal on our rail services has been discussed numerous times in our monthly meetings, and we do not support this proposal in any way. NRUG object on the basis that it will have an adverse impact upon rail services for Northampton, both in the short and long terms.

The short term relates to lack of capacity for passenger trains (evidenced later in this representation), established through a variety of discussions NRUG have held with London Midland (the then franchise holder, since changed to London Northwestern), West Midlands Trains, and, especially, by the refusal in 2016 to allow Virgin 4 more paths on the WCML due to lack of capacity. It also relates to disruption in construction.

The longer term relates to freight at this location limiting the potential for new frequent fast services for Northampton, and connectivity to HS-2, together the very basis for NRUG’s continued support of HS-2.

NRUG simply do not believe that this proposal will not have an adverse impact. Trains entering and leaving the facility will slow down passenger trains and affect line capacity. NCC’s consultation response has set this out in detail, so we do not repeat it here. Overnight, the proposed development will have an effect on the down time available for track and signal maintenance. Over-running maintenance is already a factor that affects a number of morning services; reduced maintenance windows due to freight movements for the proposed development can only make this worse.

The ability for trains leaving Northampton to move to the “fast lines” is limited, to further limit this through either more slow train movement on the same track, or new points and track requiring slower running to pass safely, must have an adverse effect. The interaction of the proposed

development with the operation of Hanslope junction requires assessment) discussed later in this representation).

NRUG wish to state that we are not anti freight. We are supportive of DIRFT, recognising that DIRFT has capacity. However the paths south of Daventry are heavily utilised and we believe it is wrong to add to that burden with new freight for this particular proposal.

Given that policy sets out a requirement for a national network of rail freight interchanges, NRUG question the strategic value of a second terminal less than 20 miles from an existing one that has spare capacity for some years to come. The policy is specific in setting out a requirement for a national network of terminals to facilitate a switch from road to rail, not a simply an increased number, nor a cluster of terminals all serving the same geographical area.

Roxhill should not be allowed to pre-empt the strategy set by the post HS-2 WCML Rail Utilisation Strategy by this application. We believe it inappropriate to consider this application before the publication of those findings, the outcome of this Strategy is of material concern to the proposed development. In the absence of the publication of this Strategy, all reference by the developer to HS-2 releasing capacity and the future use of the WCML as a whole, including any effect it has on their proposed development is pure speculation by them and should be treated as such. To that end it is our recommendation that no decision is made on either this proposed development or the proposed Rail Central development until the Strategy is published and it can be ascertained that the proposals are in line with the WCML Utilisation Strategy. That publication of the strategy is late in unfortunate, but poor fortune is not a reason to replace strategy with ad-hoc decisions.

NRUG would be extremely concerned if works for this project were to start on the lines south of Northampton in the same period as the Euston rebuild for HS-2. The HS-2 rebuild will place pressures on services, and be the cause of disruption. It would be wrong to introduce further works on the WCML that adds further stress. This is a cumulative effect in construction that is not addressed in the ES.

Not only do NRUG ask that the application is not determined until the forthcoming WCML utilisation study is published and given due consideration in the ES, we suggest it appropriate that, if consent is granted, it is conditioned such that no development shall commence until after HS-2 is operational, Euston fully revamped, and the capacity release fully established. As the developers themselves have indicated a slow initial uptake in rail to the proposed development, this is not an arduous condition (ES Chapter 12, para 12.7.37).

HS-2 will not relieve capacity on the part of the WCML running through Northampton. This track takes all the Northampton and Long Buckby passenger traffic to and from London and Birmingham, as well as freight, and is a key part of the limitations referred to in the freight RUS and NPSNN referenced later in this response. Northampton Gateway (and Rail Central), if consented, would add trains that significantly interfere with passenger trains on this particular length of track.

Northampton getting the passenger paths and new fast and frequent services promised as a function of HS-2 releasing capacity is part of the very justification for HS-2. It is also part of the mitigation Northants gets for hosting HS-2. There will be economic benefits for Northampton by connecting to the HS-2 hub at Birmingham – but loading “the loop” with freight works against this in terms of capacity and speed. Any advantages Northampton could get from HS-2 must not be forfeited by building a new freight terminal in the wrong location.

NRUG are concerned that slowing the line speed with freight for Northampton Gateway would make it more attractive to run passenger services via Weedon, rather than serving Northampton and Long Buckby, which is contrary to the objectives of HS-2 releasing capacity for the benefit of Northampton, the polar opposite of NRUG's aims and objectives to enhance rail services for Northampton, and contrary to any intent of reducing car traffic with trains.

When NRUG responded to the West Midland Franchise Consultation, we were reminded of the requirement to ensure value for money for the taxpayer. It is for that reason we suggest that Northampton Gateway, and not Network Rail, should be financially responsible for line and signalling upgrades required to mitigate and accommodate the adverse impact of train movements generated by their proposal. This includes all modifications to line capacity and track and signalling upgrades required to accommodate their extra traffic without impacting capacity and speed of passenger traffic, and includes any mitigation required at Northampton Station.

In forming their reasoning to object, NRUG considered:

The Freight Route Utilisation Strategy, Network Rail, March 2007 ("Freight RUS"), which states:

- Rail freight from the east coast ports into DIRFT is oriented along the Peterborough - Nuneaton route to get to WCML.
- Routes and capacity for Shell Haven (now known as London Gateway), if developed, will be needed. Freight would be routed via Peterborough.
- There is no Bletchley east west agenda for freight.
- Northampton southwards (identified as Daventry to Wembley) has a capacity gap.

The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN), December 2014, which sets out the Government's vision for rail to:

- Offer a safe and reliable route to work
- Facilitate increases in both business and leisure travel
- Provide for the transport of freight

But identifies:

- adverse interaction of freight and high speed passenger rail DIRFT to Birmingham
- adverse interaction of freight with frequent suburban and interurban passenger services DIRFT to Wembley

The freight RUS and NPSNN therefore both point to this as a poor location of choice for a new facility.

The Network Rail Freight Study, April 2017, (NFRS) on pages 46 and 64, states:

3. Felixstowe to the West Midlands and the North

Strong growth in the intermodal sector has been forecast in the Freight Market Study at the Port of Felixstowe. In order to accommodate growth on the network, the industry agreed routing for growth is on the 'cross-country' route, via Ely, to certain terminals in the

Midlands and the North. Increased capacity on the Felixstowe Branch has been prioritised by the Strategic Freight Network Steering Group for delivery in this control period. Further enhancements are required on the corridor to support the forecast growth across the route.

Corridor 3. Felixstowe to the West Midlands and the North

The Felixstowe to the West Midlands and the North corridor (cross-country route, via Ely) is projected to be the primary route for intermodal traffic from the Port of Felixstowe travelling to the Midlands, North of England, and Scotland, and one of the key rail freight arteries in the country.

The works required to relieve constraints are ascribed in table 2, page 6 of the NFRS, and show that the highest priority is assigned to the Ely/Peterborough/Nuneaton route. Works to the Northampton loop are given medium priority, interestingly equal priority to further doubling of the constraining parts of the Ely/Peterborough/Nuneaton route.

Table 8.6 on page 60 of the report discusses the remodelling of Northampton Station and reduction in headways. Note the quoted costs involved:

Potential cost range:

Reduction of Headways on the Northampton loop: £75m-£175m

Remodelling of Northampton station to allow higher line speed: £175m-375m

These figures serve to emphasise the problems with the location of the proposed development. May-be it is not surprising the developer is having trouble agreeing mitigation for the negative effects on rail of the proposed development, potential costs of up to £550 million for mitigation measures are not small by any means.

As an alternative, more freight to DIRFT can be delivered along the Ely/Peterborough/Nuneaton route, or from Southampton via Coventry, with out the need to spend any of this at Northampton.

Table 8.13, on page 65 of the NFRS indicates that increasing capacity on the Ely/Peterborough route is underway, and forms part of the base case:

| Table 8.13: Assessment of Option 4 – Corridor 3 |
|---|
| Summary of intervention Doubling between Ely and Soham |
| Output Assessment To provide 60 fttpd in each direction to/from Felixstowe (in conjunction with other options). Timescales to be confirmed based upon market requirements. Note: Committed in CP6 and therefore part of baseline. |
| Potential cost range: £120m-£150m |

Table 8.10 is also informative:

| Table 8.10: Assessment of Option 1 – Corridor 3 |
|--|
| Summary of intervention Further doubling of the Felixstowe Branch Line (this is in addition to the CP5 scheme, which is included in the baseline). |
| Output Assessment To provide 60 fttpd in each direction to/from Felixstowe (in conjunction with other options). Timescales to be confirmed based upon market requirements. |
| Potential cost range: £75m-£175m |

Note in both these tables the commitment in CP5 and CP6 for these schemes to proceed.

Corridor 6 (NFRS page 71) addresses freight from London Gateway, but makes no mention of the modifications needed to the WCML to accommodate such freight. Corridor 1 (page 58) discusses the WCML, identifying the Northampton issues as discussed previously, but silent on Wembley to Daventry.

The case that Ely/Peterborough is the favoured freight route, as previously established from the Freight RUS and NSPNN, is confirmed by the commitments in the NFRS.

The National Passenger Operators Route Strategic Plan (February 2018)

The National Passenger Operators Route Strategic Plan (NPORS) is informative; page 35 of this report identifies modifications to the route from Felixstowe via Ely/Peterborough as priority for allocated funding under CP5, and for further works under CP6. The Northampton loop improvements appear not to be candidates for spending in these current rounds. Again, in this second document, the approved projects reinforce the Ely/Peterborough/Nuneaton route as the preferred option.

It is of significance that the developer's suggested mitigation for rail (which is mitigation by others, not by the developer itself) appears to be neither prioritised nor included in Network Rail's spending plans.

Some care needs to be given to interpreting the various reports. The later reports do not supersede the earlier ones, and whilst in various figures they show freight routes using the WCML from Wembley to Daventry, effectively they discuss the technical capability of these lines to take 775m long freight trains, and not the capacity to do so without adverse effects on other services. Had the east coast ports routing via London and Wembley to Daventry had capacity, as well as technical capability, then the need to spend on the other routes to create capacity would have been questionable. The costs for works at Northampton help put this into context.

Attention is drawn to the Northamptonshire Rail Capacity Study, April 2016, as prepared by SLCRail for the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership. This study identifies:

- *A 32% market growth for Northampton passenger traffic by 2023 – ie a one third growth before HS-2 is ready, and a 106% growth to 2043, ie doubling the current usage in the next 25 years – all on the same track that Roxhill suggest has plenty of capacity for freight.*
- *On the Birmingham to London corridor the figures are 24% growth to 2023, and 84% to 2043*

In simple terms, this means that WCML will be back to its current capacity constraints within 25 years, regardless of HS-2. This is consistent with West Midlands Trains view that HS-2 is "future proofed" to 2040.

The study used Network Rail published figures for passenger growth, not SLCRail's own forecasts.

Chapter 5 of the study, "Freight", is more specific, and states:

"WEST COAST MAIN LINE: pressure for capacity between Willesden and Northampton will be significant, and is likely to require investment at pinch points. The most significant consequences of this will be the need for investment in additional track between Bletchley and Milton Keynes, and dynamic freight loops on the Northampton Loop. This will be

particularly important if enhanced passenger traffic services between Northampton and London are to be introduced once HS-2 opens in 2026.”

We emphasise the difference between these findings and the picture painted by Roxhill. The findings however are consistent with the Network Rail Freight Study (2017).

Over the next few years Northampton passengers will be subjected to some quite significant disruption through the rebuild of Euston for HS-2. They do not need further disruption with more rail works at Blisworth. This is a matter for cumulative assessment of the effects of the proposal on transport networks in the ES.

The intent to allocate capacity on the WCML released by HS2 to Northampton is not in doubt (attachment 1).

Taking up capacity between Bletchley and Northampton is contrary to NRUG’s aims of getting Northampton integrated onto East West Rail, a factor in the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford growth corridor strategy run by SEMLEP.

Issues arising in the Environmental Assessment

We draw attention to a number of issues arising in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as reported in the Environmental Statement (ES).

Passengers and passenger traffic, and the effects of the proposed development on them, has not been covered in the ES. The EIA regulations require that the likely significant effects on “people” and “material assets” are considered, para 4 (2) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states:

“The EIA must identify, describe and assess, in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following factors:

(a) Population and human health

(d) Material assets.”

Rail passengers are “population” and the railway network, including passenger networks, are “material assets”. It is NRUG’s view that the developer has not fulfilled its statutory duty in this matter.

This matter is addressed also in para 3.77 of the Scoping Opinion:

The Applicant’s attention is drawn to the comments in Appendix 3 on issues of particular concern that consultees wish to see included in the ES:

Impacts on the capacity of the West Coast main line (Leicestershire County Council, Milton Keynes Council, Milton Malsor Parish Council and Buckinghamshire County Council).

The Scoping Opinion for Rail Central is informative on this matter, noting the Secretary of State’s requirement for the effects on passengers to be included in the EIA, and his reference to the Network Rail consultation response.

Further, in the consultation responses appended to the Scoping Opinion for Rail Central, Network Rail state:

“The West Coast Main Line is a key strategic route which is very busy and reaching full capacity. Demand is increasing for both freight and passenger traffic and there is competing demand for capacity on this route.”

The picture for Northampton Gateway is no different.

The issue of competing demand, as identified by NR, is important, and illustrates why the conversations, led by the developer, limited to getting freight train access for their proposal, are not sufficient in scope and breadth, and a full analysis of the potential impacts on the network as a whole, as required by EIA regulations, is needed. Being granted freight paths is not the same as having no significant effects.

To give some idea of the magnitude for disruption of passenger services, the 16 trains per day suggested by the developer, plus the 5 aggregates trains per day, culminates in 42 train movements in and out of the terminal, one every 34 minutes on an even 24 hour clock-face. Given that these will be slow moving through the points, and crossing tracks, the scope for adverse interference with passenger traffic is large. Every 34 minutes makes it difficult to envisage a time when goods trains serving this proposed development would not interfere with passenger services, given the speed differential and time the goods trains will take to enter and leave the mainline and get up to speed. If all 42 were squeezed in to night-time (say nominally 11pm to 4am) this would be a movement every 7 minutes, which feels impractical, and has large implications in terms of neighbourhood nuisance, as well as NR’s maintenance windows.

The significantly adverse cumulative position with Rail Central is self evident.

Assessment of Likely Significance

A number of flaws exist in the ES, including flawed methodology and not using the correct assessment criteria. The repeated use of “material impact”, rather than the assessment of significant effects, is a failure to comply with the EIA regulations.

Rail Capacity Report – Document 6.7

Paras 5.1 to 5.5 of the Rail Capacity Report differ significantly to the case outlined above in this representation, including the 2014 NPSNN.

Para 5.1.3 of the Rail Capacity Study states that “there are very few night time passenger services”.

Para 6.2.10 defines night time as 22.00 to 06.00, stating “only a few late evening and early morning services operate”.

The current timetable shows half hourly services from 04.15 from Northampton, and other services from Milton Keynes and Bletchley, totalling 6 between 04.15 and 06.00. In the same period there are 3 northbound from Euston. In the evening there are 11 trains after 22.00 from Euston, 7 from Northampton and one more from Milton Keynes.

Para 5.2.5 is not correct, as established previously in this representation, a number of documents reflect capacity constraints from Wembley through to DIRFT. In addition, the capacity concerns north of Rugby are material, and adverse, in the context of this proposed development. The Coventry corridor is a major constraint to the WCML. To suggest constraints north of Rugby are not relevant is contradicted by the last bullet of para 3.1.1.

Para 4.2.5 refers to a requirement to remodel Northampton Station to accommodate additional freight paths. Northampton Station is new, having opened in 2015 at a cost of just under £20 million. During the development phase NRUG pressed for additional track to avoid it being a pinch point on the network, but Network Rail refused these. The pinch lies between the new station and river, where there is simply no room to lay additional track. We can only presume that by proposing removing the pinch point without providing the specific proposed mitigations required, Roxhill are using coded language to suggest demolishing the new station and building another with more set back from the river to enable additional track to be installed, which is not a realistic proposition.

In practice, in para 4.2.5 the developer admits unmitigated negative effects, having proposed nothing feasible as suitable mitigation.

Para 6.1.3 is both inflammatory and misleading, these lines provide peak services to and from London Euston, Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International and represent both an important commuting route to London and Birmingham as well as serving Birmingham International airport. They also provide significant commuting capacity for Long Buckby to both Birmingham and London. Further, the current working timetable accommodates freight, it is not a measure that demonstrates no interference to passenger services for increased freight.

Further, the intent for Northampton past HS-2 is to run 6 trains per hour (attachment 1), which, on the basis used by the developer, leaves only 1 path free. Even using the developers own methodology, there is a shortage of capacity for this scheme.

Para 6.2.2 differs from what NR have told NRUG in response to our continued pressure for line speed upgrades, with NR saying that freight sets the working line speed, including dwell at Northampton, and thus removes the incentive to upgrade the loop for faster running.

As regards footnote 25 to para 6.2.8, the relevance of comparing two entirely different operations on two entirely different routes is missed on us.

However, in contrast to the example path quoted at 63 minutes, NRUG point to the 13.13 departure from London Euston that takes 57 minutes to Northampton, vastly faster than Wembley Central to Northampton time quoted at 63 minutes, part of a journey from Euston to Northampton timed at 82 minutes. It is the threat to these faster services, not the ability to fit in with the slow ones that concerns NRUG. We have little doubt that the developer can demonstrate that a service that already shares paths and timings with freight is compatible with freight. That is not the topic in question.

As regards terminology, and its misuse, the 13.13 is semi-fast leaving Euston on the “fast lines”, crossing lines at Ledwood Junction to serve Leighton Buzzard and all further stops to Northampton. The 13.54 is not semi fast, it is all stations stopping and uses the slower lines for its whole journey. Semi-fast paths are Leighton Buzzard first stop.

This terminology is important, as Northampton’s fast trains (ie the ones that take 49 or 50 mins to/from London Euston), cross at Hanslope junction, which is very close to the proposed development. NRUG have grave concerns over the effects of the proposed development on these

services, some of the reasons for which are well described in the NCC consultation response, and some by the proximity of the site to Hanslope junction causing lower running speeds.

Further the developer's assertion that freight and semi-fast trains run at compatible speed on the "slow lines" makes no sense, having crossed paths to the "slow lines" at Ledwood Junction trains continue at 100mph running up to Northampton. Semi fast is not freight speed. The position north of Northampton is discussed elsewhere as a specific topic. The speed difference between 100mph and 60 or 75 means that freight inevitably slows down passenger services over the 25 miles from Leighton Buzzard to Northampton, something that NRUG's members can readily attest to from experience.

As the developer has raised specific services as an example, NRUG suggest a different one to illustrate our point. The 18.49 from London arrives in Northampton at 19.38. This journey time of 49 minutes is highly at risk of being slowed down solely to pass points for the proposed development. There is a concern that there will be no time to regain speed after Hanslope Junction before slowing again to safely pass points at the proposed development, resulting in elongated journey times simply because of the presence of the proposed development, without even getting caught behind slow moving freight.

Let us be very clear on this, the extent of the developer's considerations towards the effect of the proposed development on passenger traffic is to pick a single service that stops at all stations, runs intermingled with freight, and uses it to try to demonstrate the lack of negative interaction, whilst ignoring the faster trains in the timetable and the factors that can affect those adversely with significant effect.

Para 7.14 is contradictory to the routings established by the Freight RUS and elsewhere. The station pinch point (which, as explained previously, is impractical to mitigate) is evidence of the lack of suitability of the proposed site for an interchange location.

Paras 10.1 to 10.11: NRUG's reasons to dispute these have been run above and will not be repeated here, with the exception that the issue at point over 10.2 is not the ability to grant these paths but the effect they have on other services.

It is interesting that para 10.4 of the draft version of this Rail Capacity report referred to unresolved capacity issues at Northampton Station, it would be interesting to know if these were resolved in between the draft and final version, and what the resolution was, or the wording was simply omitted in the final. The capacity issues are, after all, referred to in the Freight Network Study. Ostrich methodology is inappropriate for EIA, the key issues should not be hidden from eyes.

Elsewhere Roxhill suggest that capacity will be released on the WCML when all the intercity trains are moved to HS-2. This will not be the case: the WCML will continue to host a significant number of intercity services post HS-2, as the Environmental Information presented for the HS-2 revamp works at Euston makes clear.

Para 5.2 of the GB Railfreight report is informative, it identifies a strong aggregates market as the Northants region meets its planned housing expansion. One of the effects of the large new house build, as recognised in the NSEP, is the need for more fast passenger train, something this proposal mitigates against. The effect of moving the aggregate terminal on changed road traffic has not been established, but in view of the housing developments proposed for the north and west of Northampton, it could be significant.

As a side note, NRUG members are very aware of the freight interference already existing at Northampton. Frequent delays of 10 to 20 minutes arise on evening returns into Northampton, caused by freight movements. This matter has been raised with the operator, but the response to preventing this delay lies in the track layout through the station, in particular the need for freight and passenger trains to cross paths. No suggestions as to how to alter signalling or points work to overcome the fundamental issue of passenger and freight traffic having to cross each other has been identified. If the developer has a reason why the problem goes away with increased freight, NRUG would be very pleased to hear it.

Transport Assessment (Chapter 12)

We disagree with para 12.2.4 of the Transport Assessment. The definition of minor is not an effect that may be a local issue. An impact is not minor because it is local. Major local effects are commonly identified and assessed in EIAs. Dismissing significant effects because they are localised does not comply with the EIA regulations.

As regards the comments on cycling, cycling in this area is far from limited to recognised cycle paths, notwithstanding the routing of NCN 6 along the roads in the vicinity of the proposed development. The roads in this area are widely used by recreational cyclists, the effects on this usage have not been identified, particularly the risk to road safety.

Para 12.7.13: it is more usual in construction to limit Saturday hours to 07.00 to 12.00 or 08.00 to 13.00 to provide a reasonable respite for local people.

Whilst on the subject of working hours, it is not clear at what times the rail interface works will be done, if at night then the statement on working hours is not correct and the need for night time working has to be stated and the effects of night time working evaluated. If by day, then the interruption to rail services has to be assessed.

Para 12.7.37 is informative: "It is anticipated that it would take several years before the rail freight terminal at Northampton Gateway would operate at full capacity" Coupled with the assertion that there are free freight paths we question why they do not expect a rapid modal change off the highly congested M1 and M6. NRUG is minded to conclude it is because of lack of demand for more rail freight at this particular location.

Paras 12.7.42 and 12.7.44 are troubling. The reduction in HGV mileage is clear, the reasons for the lack of reduction in HGV trips locally is also clear, after all, these are the very trips that result in the need for the Roade bypass, but the assessment of significance in traveling to and from the site in operation, which surely must be significant adverse, appears to be missing. Maybe it was simply discounted by erroneously ranking local effects as minor. There is clearly a methodology problem here. It is not a given that the effects on local air quality, noise and traffic are automatically offset by a reduction elsewhere in HGV mileage.

Para 12.7.45 concludes "permanent beneficial impact of major significance", which does not compute with the introduction of such high figures for both HGV and light vehicle traffic, again a methodology problem.

Para 12.7.88 is misleading, it conflates the benefits of an improved road network with benefits for the rail freight interchange, noting the improved road network is in fact mitigation for increased traffic volumes as a result of the proposed development. In EIA methodology, mitigation of adverse effects does not produce major significant benefits.

Para 12.7.103 it is our view that such an increase in HGV and light vehicle movements over a single motorway junction will increase driver stress. To suggest that such increased traffic levels, and in particular HGVs, on a difficult junction will reduce driver frustration is beyond comprehension. The change in wording from stress to frustration between the draft and final is noted.

Motorway junction issues can be resolved independently of the proposed development. Indeed, even if the developer proposes them, it is far from clear that they are offered as mitigation, they seem to be suggestions for other parties to fund for the benefit of the developer. The taxpayer should not be asked to contribute to road works as mitigation for a scheme local people do not want.

Table 12.4 is very informative. It sets out, under “movements for construction”, that year 1 will have 455 movements per day, and year 2, 515. The ES concludes that these are temporary adverse of moderate significance. It then sets out that in operation, table 12.9, there will be 4245 HGV movements per day, and 9871 movements for light vehicles, but that these are permanently beneficial of major significance. This demonstrates the degree of problem with the assessment.

In EIA terms there is a simpler way of looking at this: part of the proposed development is to build a new road that takes 4245 HGV movements per day, and 9871 light vehicle movements per day created by the development. The developer then suggests the effects of the new road and this high traffic level to be “permanent beneficial” of “major significance”. This is not correct, on the contrary, building a road and then filling it with traffic created by the proposed development is not a beneficial environmental effect, it is a significantly adverse one.

It is stated that the Roade bypass will follow the SFRI development by up to 2 years. There appears to be no discussion of the combined traffic effects of the terminal in operation and the construction of the bypass, nor is there an assessment of significant effects for operating the terminal in the interim period without the bypass, though there can be little doubt they are significant adverse, otherwise there would be no proposed bypass. There is a question to be answered as to whether the operation of the terminal without the proposed mitigation, along with the construction effects of implementing the mitigation (ie the effects of building the bypass), are of such significance to justify refusal. Just because they are temporary (though present over a number of years) does not make them acceptable.

Socio-economics (Chapter 3)

The developer selectively quotes the Northamptonshire Strategic Economic Plan (NSEP) on a number of occasions, but chooses not to use the data embedded in it.

Para 3.3.24 uses a GVA of £46,204 per employee, using West Northants as a basis. The NSEP, on page 18, sets out the GVA for warehousing and logistics, as £36,000, Given Roxhill’s professed understanding of the NSEP, their decision to use a misleadingly high figure for GVA is strange. It is also likely that the Strategic Economic Plan has already taken multipliers of salary to produce the GVA figure, and the developer has used the multipliers a second time, inflating the figures.

Further, the £36,000 is £2,000 below the England average for this role. Closing the gap is a strategic objective, one that Roxhill might have addressed, but chose not to.

Para 3.6.1 sets out 7457 employees. NRUG note that on a prorated floor area to DIRFT III, the number of employees would be 5760. Given Roxhill’s experience, we can only presume they know what this terminal design will need in terms of labour, and therefore we do not doubt it. What we

doubt however is the ability of this terminal to attract business if it is so much less efficient than the standards being set out by a terminal only a short distance away. Our suspicion is that there are some particular constraints to this site that causes a lower efficiency design.

The premise put forward by Roxhill is that this is a strategic development that moves existing freight from road to rail. They are not making the case for increased warehousing demand due to growth (indeed the pressure to decrease working capital held by goods instore, and just in time delivery, would make it difficult to do so). Therefore the jobs in operation are moving goods that are today moved by other means. These will be new jobs only in the sense that they are in a new facility, the road based jobs and facilities that move the same goods today will disappear as business transfers. Since rail freight is said to be more efficient it would be reasonable to assume that fewer jobs will be created than will be lost. In terms of lorry drivers vs train drivers this is clearly the case. Accordingly the GVA would balance out as negative.

So, on balance, this is a proposal for a facility which could reduce employment, have a negative GVA, and is less efficient than a competing terminal only 20 miles away on the same track.

The location in its entirety needs some consideration as to just how strategic and economically viable it is. The NSPNN and Freight RUS have set out the constraints and limitations, and the routings for freight. Freight from the East coast ports and London Gateway will travel via Peterborough and Nuneaton, and past DIRFT to get to Northampton Gateway. Freight from Southampton will travel via Coventry and past DIRFT. Freight landed at London Gateway is not going to be routed to Northampton to be transferred to road to complete a longer journey into London than had it gone directly from port, nor is it going to travel from Southampton via Coventry to Northampton for road transport into London as opposed to going by directly road from Southampton itself, which is roughly the same distance. As far as freight going north is concerned, given the rail freight routes, moving it both up and down the Northampton loop, and past a more cost effective terminal, makes it an unattractive proposition. Freight will not go past a more economical terminal to seek out a higher cost one.

This site does not meet the criteria for a strategic network of rail freight interchanges. It is the wrong location and its costs are too high.

Noise (Chapter 8)

Para 8.3.71: the interpretation of WHO is incorrect, the WHO figure of 45 is measured at the exterior façade. The WHO guidelines provide for a 15dB attenuation to the internal space, resulting in a 30dB figure consistent with British Standards. It is not clear why the developer is trying to establish a higher night time noise level than appropriate, or how they then rely upon it in the assessment.

Para 8.5.103 uses Leq16, ie the noise averaged out over 16 hours. Concern is expressed that averaging out noise over such a long period misleads, as individual periods, or single, high noise emissions, which in themselves may be significant effects, become indiscernible through averaging.

In table 8.19 the developer has established significant adverse effects but has made no proposals to mitigate them.

Para 8.5.169 states that the significant effects in table 19 exist, even after the “inbuilt” mitigation has been considered. Accordingly, there are unmitigated significant effects.

The modelling of rail operations as a continuous main line operation does not reflect the nature of terminal operations.

Note in para 8.5.11 the proposed Saturday working hours.

Para 8.5.127 proposes that +3dB is a conservative allowance. +5 dB is the usual consideration for tonal or other such characteristics of noise emissions. It is normal for conservatism to be on the side of the receptor, not the emitter. The developer was not being conservative in attempting to justify higher noise limits than British Standards specify, so claims of conservatism do not sound true.

The combined aspects of setting a higher noise limit due to misinterpretation of WHO guidelines, and using +3 rather than +5 dB are worthy of further investigation as they will understate the significance.

Landscape and Visual Assessment (Chapter 4)

The assessment for both landscape character and visual effects needs to take into account the existing developments of warehousing at Pineham, Swan Valley, Grange Park, Brackmills, and the consented J16 (Panattoni Park) development. Artificially limiting the assessment to Northampton Gateway and Rail Central will lead to understating the cumulative effects of big shed developments in this local area. Given that Panattoni Park at junction 16 is under construction, its omission is surprising. It was not scoped out.

To help understand the extent and spread of warehousing and the cumulative position, the view from the Nobottle Road, west of Little Brington, approximate grid ref SP650637 is informative.

The key issue with the L&V assessment is that it simply ignores the other warehousing developments, with the exception of a minor mention, but no assessment, of Grange Park.

The assessment is, but should not be, silent on the scale, extent and spread of warehouse developments in this area. The documentation presents the Examiners and Secretary of State an incomplete and misleading scenario to consider.

If the developer takes the position that the existing developments are in the baseline, then the baseline needs to include, discuss and assess them, and not ignore them. The proposed development needs to be assessed in that context. If the developments are not considered part of the baseline, then they need to be discussed and assessed in cumulative terms.

SNDC recognise the extent and spread of development, and have addressed this through policy EV8, which identifies Important Areas of Local Gaps. Not only does the site of the proposed development breach this policy, the ES appears to be silent on this breach, and offers no explanation why such a breach is in anyway acceptable.

Residential amenity in the round

The developer appears not to have addressed residential amenity in the round, taking into account the experience residents will have in and around their homes and arriving and leaving their homes, considering the combined visual, noise, light, traffic, dust and air pollution effects, noting a number of adverse effects are reported throughout the assessment. The developer should demonstrate that the effect of the summation of all the effects on residential amenity still renders the proposed development acceptable, rather than assessing each individually as if they were unconnected to the other negative impacts. Whilst a single individual adverse impact might be deemed insufficient

grounds for refusal, it is the summation of all such negative effects creating multiple adverse impacts on residential amenity that should be assessed.

Ecology (Chapter 5)

Para 5.4.80 the issue of connectivity to the designated protected sites, and the use of the protected sites, has not been properly explored to establish that this is indeed only a local effect.

Para 5.6.2, we do not see the development evolution presented in a way that leads to this conclusion.

Bat habitat will have been lost in the development of Swan Valley and Grange Park. At the time these two developments were approved, nearby open areas, such as this proposed development site, are likely to have been considered as mitigation, or reasons for low significance, in the same way as the developer does in para 5.5.48 for Northampton Gateway. These other developments need to be accounted for in either the baseline or cumulative assessments, otherwise the full effects are not being assessed and bat habitat is being lost one development at a time.

Further the wetland habitats associated with the River Nene south of the A4500, formed as part of the flood mitigation scheme, are likely to be insect (food) rich for bats, and commuting and continuity of path to them is likely to be a factor. Fragmentation could therefore easily lead to significant effects of Natura 2000 protected species in the cumulative round and must be assessed.

Cumulative Assessment

A properly constructed cumulative assessment is needed taking into account the other local developments mentioned previously under L&V. The whole point of cumulative assessment is to prevent development creep through assessing individual developments as acceptable whilst cumulatively they are not. Just because something is already there it should not be viewed as in baseline with no effect.

As previously discussed, whether the other extensive warehousing developments are included through specific reference and assessment in the base case, or in the cumulative assessment, may be a matter of choice, but not to do it at all is not.

SNDC policy EV8 Important Areas of Local Gaps is material in this matter.

Waste Management

We note that capacity to handle the waste has not been established. Given the routine nature of both this construction and the operation of this facility, this is a surprising omission.

Aggregates Terminal

A number of commuters would be pleased to see the terminal relocated, and to return from work and find their cars are not covered in dust. Their experience does not confirm the concept of no dust emission from the relocated facility.

The train journeys to the aggregates facility should not be allowed in the count when it comes to a discussion of the number of trains needed to be strategic. These are not new strategic movements resulting from modal shift, but simply existing goods trains running a few more miles.

Consultations with various bodies

The list of CPOs demonstrates impacts upon a number of assets, including water, gas and electricity. It is normal practice to consult with all such bodies as part of the EIA to establish the potential effects on other infrastructure. Aside from the utilities assets, other such consultations would include the emergency services, to ensure that their networks suffer no interference. This is all simple, the reasons for not doing it are unclear, especially as it causes the ES to be uncompliant with the Scoping Opinion.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

CPOs apply where a development is in the public interest. The public interest has not been established. A definition of 4 trains per day making this warehouse development “strategic” for the purposes of a planning application is not the same as it being in the public interest.

The prevention of better rail services for Northampton and consequent inhibition in Northampton’s economic growth could be said to make it against the public interest.

Summary of key conclusions:

1. The proposed development would act against the interests of rail for Northampton. In the shorter term this is due to lack of capacity causing competition between freight and passenger services, and disruption in construction. The longer term relates to adverse interference with potential new services post HS-2, and the economic benefits for Northampton connecting to the HS-2 hub at Birmingham. Loading “the loop” with freight works against all of these in terms of capacity and speed. Any advantages Northampton could get from HS-2 must not be forfeited by building a new freight terminal in the wrong location.
2. Taking up capacity between Bletchley and Northampton is contrary to NRUG and NBC’s aims of getting Northampton integrated onto East West Rail, a factor in the implementation of the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford growth corridor.
3. The developer’s assertion of sufficient capacity on the WCML with no restriction to freight and no interference to passenger traffic by freight is not supported by a number of documents, including the NSPNN, Freight RUS, and Network Rail’s response to scoping for Rail Central. Limits to passenger traffic are well illustrated by the refusal to grant Virgin Trains the extra paths they requested in 2016.
4. The developer has either misunderstood or misquoted the number of night time train services, which affects the proposition for rail capacity out of peak. The developer also presents misleading journey times in an attempt to establish no interference with passenger traffic.
5. The proposed development requires mitigation at Northampton station that is impractical following the building of the new station. None of the mitigation measures appear to

be included in CP5 and CP6, Network Rail's budgeting rounds. Further, the Freight Network Study 2017 indicates the potential cost range for the modifications required for mitigation as:

- a. Reduction of Headways on the Northampton loop : £75m-£175m;
- b. Remodelling of Northampton station to allow higher line speed: £175m-375m.

Potential costs of up to £550 million for mitigation measures to accommodate the proposed development are not insignificant at a time when there is pressure to reduce the taxpayer funded element of the railway.

6. The site location is at odds with the decision to develop the Ely/Peterborough route as the preferred option for freight from the east coast ports.
7. EIA regulations require that assessment is made of the potential effects on both population (passengers) and material assets (the passenger rail network). Neither is provided in the ES, which renders it non-compliant with EIA regulations. Being granted freight paths is not the same as demonstrating no effects.
8. The developer uses a wrong (too high) figure for GVA for the logistics sector.
9. On balance, this proposal could reduce employment and is less efficient than a competing terminal only 20 miles away on the same track. The GVA for the proposed development is likely to be negative.
10. A number of flaws exist in the ES, including flawed methodology and not using the correct assessment criteria. The repeated use of "material impact", rather than the assessment of significant effects, is a failure to comply with the EIA regulations.
11. The transport assessment is flawed and assigns significant beneficial effects where the correct finding would be significantly adverse. Most notably, the overall impact of the Roade bypass is one of building a new road and filling it with traffic resultant from the proposed development. Once this clarity is made, it is evident that this is of major adverse significant effect, not the significant beneficial one the developer suggests, and one to which no mitigation is being applied.
12. The developer has misunderstood the WHO noise criteria and proposes to set a higher limit than appropriate as a result. The developer admits significant adverse effects even using the wrong (too high) criteria and mitigation.
13. The developer provides no context to the extent of large warehouse development in and around Northampton. The assessment cannot be silent on the scale and spread of warehouse developments in this area. SNDC recognise the extent and spread of development through policy EV8, Important Areas of Local Gaps. The proposed development is in breach of this policy.
14. Once the developer takes into account the 6 trains per hour intended for Northampton post HS-2, its own calculations show a shortage of paths for freight.

15. The public interest (as required for CPOs) has not been demonstrated. NRUG argue that the adverse effect on rail makes the proposed development against the public interest of Northampton.

NRUG believes its objection on the basis of adverse effects on rail provision for Northampton is well founded and supported by the various arguments and documents referenced in the representation. We ask that our objection is considered seriously and carries weight.



Department
for Transport

David Mackintosh MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Andrew Jones MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: andrew.jones@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/179488
Your Ref: DM/2016/0140

21 NOV 2016

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October about High Speed 2 (HS2) and the impact on Northampton rail services as a consequence of the re-development of Euston.

The option we are now progressing at Euston is for 6 high speed platforms to be built in Phase 1 and open by 2026, with another 5 to be built for Phase 2 opening in 2033. 16 platforms will be retained in the existing station whilst Phase 1 is being built and 13 platforms will remain in the existing station once Phase 1 has opened in 2026 to serve the classic network.

Development of the design for the station and the approaches, and how it can be built, is at the early feasibility stage. I am, therefore, not able to confirm the impact of these works on services out of Euston, including to Northampton, during the construction period. However, with HS2 Ltd, I can assure you that I am committed to minimising their impact on services. Once HS2 Phase 1 is opened, there will be additional capacity made available on the West Coast Main Line (WCML). This will enable an increase in services to six trains per hour to Northampton.

Yours,

ANDREW JONES