

OBJECTION TO NORTHAMPTON GATEWAY RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE PROJECT – NON-MATERIAL CHANGE TR050006

FAO: Planning Inspectorate

I am writing to **OBJECT** to the proposed amendment to the DCO by SEGRO for the Gateway development at Junction 15 of the M1.

The impact of the warehouses themselves has already had a devastating impact on the environment with developers ripping out hedgerows along the Courteenhall Road and Knock Lane.

The developers should never have been allowed to build the warehousing until the railway link had been completed and was operational.

If the changes are permitted in the absence of a rail terminal, the consequent increase in road traffic volumes would be severe.

Blisworth village roads were never built to cope with this volume of traffic or type of traffic. Stoke Road has a weight limit and is subsiding, and High Street is bordered by many houses with preservation orders and is the middle of a conservation area. Courteenhall Road runs past the primary school and at pick-up and drop-off times the road becomes a single tract road. The main routes through the village are simply too narrow, there are no pavements on many sections of the road but still the HGVs continue to mount the kerbs, knock over road signs, destroy trees and often simply get stuck, causing major traffic issues. Additionally, there is nowhere for pedestrians to get out of their way, due to the lack of pavements. Already it is exceedingly difficult for the elderly, anyone with a pushchair or mobility issues to cross the roads because of the onslaught of traffic. If the amendment is approved this situation will only worsen.

The developers have already removed road signs that clearly stated that Courteenhall Road is not suitable for HGVs and are in the process of widening the access to Courteenhall Road from the A508 which will further encourage HGVs to use the village as a shortcut to the A43 whenever there are issues with either the M1, A43 or A508.

The changes the amendment proposes would have a significant impact on the local road network, on the conservation area in Blisworth village, on the local community and it would **constitute a material change to the DCO**, not a non-material one, and should accordingly be rejected.

The planning inspectorate needs to ask for the following up-to-date independent surveys:

1. Traffic surveys
2. Noise pollution
3. Air pollution and
4. Light pollution surveys
5. Impact on the environment

as the surveys submitted initially in 2019 are not only out-of-date but also possibly biased.

Linda Hack [REDACTED]

There should also be detailed surveys regarding the condition of the local roads and the impact of this increase in traffic on the buildings in the conservation area.

If this amendment is approved it will send a clear message to the developers and to the developers of SRFI's, that they can misrepresent their case to the Secretary of Transport with ease, thwart local planning restrictions and the views of the public to serve their own ends and most importantly thwart the democratic process. Furthermore it will signal to other developers of SRFI's that they can submit a proposal to the Secretary of Transport with the confident knowledge that they can, at a later stage, bypass the details of any DCO, whatever restrictions were put in place at the time of its approval.

As part of any decision regarding this amendment, the planning inspectorate must insist that the developers ensure that they restrict B8 classified warehouses from commencing operations ahead of the full opening of the railhead terminal.

To protect the health and safety of the residents and the buildings in the conservation area in Blisworth, the planning inspectorate also needs to ensure that the developers pay (in full) for the necessary traffic calming measures to ensure that HGVs cannot use the village as a rat-run, particularly when there are issues with the M1, A508 or A43. We have been told repeatedly that Highways do not have the money to pay for any road improvements.

For these reasons I strongly object to the amendment to the DCO and would look with interest to see what reasons the Secretary of Transport would provide to pass this amendment without first asking for more up-to-date surveys and looking to safeguard the well-being of residents and the democratic process.

Yours faithfully

Linda Hack
[REDACTED]

Copy to Andrea Leadsom MP

Copy to Secretary of Transport

Copy to Blisworth Parish Council