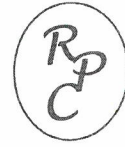


# Roade Parish Council

PO Box 847, Northampton, NN7 9AB  
Telephone: 01604 861976

E-Mail: [clerk@roadeparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@roadeparishcouncil.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.roadeparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.roadeparishcouncil.gov.uk)



Parish Clerk:  
Alison Reynolds

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National Infrastructure Planning  
The Planning Inspectorate  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Temple Quay  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Project – Non-Material Change TR050006**

The developers of Northampton Gateway – Segro – recently told the Community Liaison Group that they would be submitting an amendment to the DCO listed above. This has now been done.

The amendment requests the occupation and usage of warehouses before the completion of the Railhead Terminal on-site. As a SRFI this development was permitted by you, as Secretary of State for Transport. As part of this initial agreement the developers agreed that no warehouse would be occupied and operated before completion of the Railhead Terminal. Whilst we welcome the fact that Segro discussed the changes with members of the community liaison group, during which they explained the reasons (from their point of view) for the changes, we must object in the strongest possible terms to the amendment.

Our local council – West Northamptonshire Council – have stated that they are not responsible for the decision on this amendment and so we are writing – on behalf of the parishioners of Roade Parish – to ask you to reject the amendment.

## **Background**

The original SRFI was approved by you as Secretary of State for Transport on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Amongst the clauses was a requirement that the Railhead Terminal was operational before any warehouses were occupied and operated. This was required to make the application suitable and appropriate as an ‘Strategic Rail Freight Interchange’. This allowed the decision on the planning application to be made by central government and not local government despite the objections of local communities.

Segro have recently obtained permission from West Northamptonshire Council to amend the dimensions of the first warehouse, despite local objections, and this request for amendment shows the poor state of the original application.

## **Impact of Change**

As a direct result of this change, the initial warehouses will need to be supplied and supply via the road network and primarily HGVs. This was not included in the original plans and the road and transport network around the site is unable to accommodate these additional movements which – in the original plan – would have occurred on the rail network.

Additionally, this will cause significant noise, light and fuel pollution in the local area which was not included in the original DCO planning application. The repeated changes to the original DCO are causing a lot of additional work for local people and local organisations – particularly Parish Councils – in reading, understanding and commenting on amendments. This is creating a 'drown with paperwork' approach with an obvious aim that Segro wish to change aspects of the DCO without these concerns being heard.

Segro have told us the reason for the planning application change is that Network Rail are unable to complete the Railhead Terminal due to disruption on the 'Northampton Spur' of the West-Coast Mainline. However, as Network Rail also falls under the remit of the Secretary of State for Transport and the SRFI was agreed by you and your office in this role, this circumstance must have been known at the time. As nothing material has changed in the intervening years, we can see no good justification for this amendment to the DCO planning application to be approved.

Given that the original application was created by experts and approved in that state, we strongly object to further changes. If this change is approved it will send a clear message to this developer - and developers of SRFIs more generally – that the quality and content of the original DCO is irrelevant and can be changed at will without objection when foreseeable issues arise. It will further ensure that companies will be empowered to mislead Secretary of States in any department and be rewarded for it. This is a very bad message for democracy and transparency in the United Kingdom and for the rule of law.

#### **Traffic and Air Quality**

We note that there was no report on the additional traffic and impact on air quality that this change of use from an SRFI to a 'normal' warehouse will cause. Due to the significant change to use and the additional warehouse recently constructed in the area we consider the traffic surveys and information provided in 2019 to be both out-of-date and with incorrect assumption – as it assumed a railhead terminal. We further urge you to request this information be provided as part of the DCO amendment request.

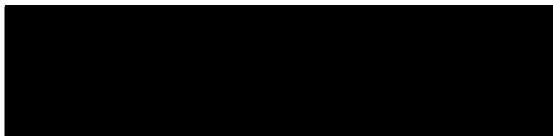
#### **Alternatives**

Should the change in plan be confirmed and approved, we would ask that you add conditions to the additional traffic that will be caused by the occupation and operation of the warehouse. The development site is located on the A508 and the M1 and we would strongly encourage a condition be added to limit the movement of lorries and vans to and from the warehouse including a limit on operation hours – 9am to 4pm for example, and a limit on traffic moving south along the A508 through Roade and other neighbouring villages. It is our opinion that no lorries or vans should be permitted to turn south as an additional conditional to operation if there is no railhead freight terminal and before the Roade Bypass is completed.

#### **Conclusion**

We urge you to object to this amendment and insist that the original DCO is followed as signed by the Secretary of State for Transport in October 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Reynolds  
Clerk & RFO to Roade Parish Council