

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Northampton Gateway](#)  
**Subject:** Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange - Application for Non-Material Change  
**Date:** 12 September 2022 09:40:19

---

To whom at HMPI it may concern,

I am writing in a personal capacity to register with you my objection to SEGRO being granted a change to their DCO to allow commercial operation of Northampton Gateway before the rail terminal is operational. I am a resident of Blisworth, a village in close proximity of the SEGRO development at J15 of the M1. I have studied the documents lodged on your website on behalf of SEGRO which support the application.

My objection is as follows:

<!--[endif]-->

At the time of the public examination of the proposed SRFI many local people suspected that the rail connection that made the project "strategic", was simply to gain permission to build warehouses on the west side of the M1 that otherwise would not have been allowed under the (then) Northampton County Council planning policy. I believe that the condition attached to the DCO that prohibited any commercial activity till the rail connection was operational was to address this concern. It seems local suspicions were well founded.

To allow commercial operation without the rail connection would undermine HMG's policy of shifting goods from the roads to rail. If SEGRO (and its predecessors) had no firm undertaking from Network Rail on when the facility could be connected to the Northampton Loop railway line, then they clearly proceeded speculatively in full knowledge of the DCO conditions. Their relationship with Network Rail and the claim that a 9-day shutdown of the line to make the connection is too difficult, needs to be rigorously challenged in public with both SEGRO and Network Rail present. Such an examination would not seem to be possible by treating the issue as "non-material".

SEGRO assert that commercial operation of half of the warehouse area without a railway connection will not result in increased HGV traffic. I believe this to be a dubious claim and fear that the result will be more heavy traffic through our village, particularly when there are delays on the M1, as there often are. Blisworth provides a "convenient" rat run for traffic bypassing J15 to J15A as well as from the A43. Once again, treating the issue as "non-material" seems to avoid any rigorous examination of SEGRO's claims. Increased HGV traffic through the narrow streets of

Blisworth is extremely undesirable from an environmental, safety and heritage point of view.

As you may recall, at the time of the application to build Northampton Gateway, there was another proposed SFRI application, Rail Central. This was contiguous with NG, and effectively used all the land between the villages of Milton Malsor and Blisworth. This was vigorously opposed locally, and the application was eventually withdrawn. I fear that if SEGRO's application is granted, this will send a clear message to developers that more warehouse facilities can be built locally merely by claiming SFRI status and then dismissing the rail connection later as "too difficult".

Regards, Bill Root