

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



24th September 2022

"Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Project - Non-Material Change TR050006"

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendment requested by SEGRO to the original Development Consent Order (DCO) granted in October 2019 for the Northampton Gateway.

The SEGRO proposal is clearly in breach of the National Policy Statement for National Networks, the National Strategic Rail Freight Interchange policy and the DCO granted for the Northampton Gateway. When this application was granted, it clearly stated that: 'a rail terminal capable of handling at least four intermodal trains per day...must be constructed and available for use **before the occupation of any of the warehousing**' and it **specifically prohibited any commercial activity until the rail connection was operational**. This was clearly intended to prevent (as was widely suspected) the provision of warehousing without the supposedly intended rail link.

This proposed amendment to the DCO would allow up to 80% of the site to become operational in advance of any rail connection, and therefore road serviced only, opening the door to the site operating perpetually without any rail connection and substantially increasing the road traffic at an already overpolluted motorway junction (M1, Junction 15).

I strongly object to the proposal being treated as a non-material amendment as it is clearly a material amendment to the proposal potentially changing it from a rail serviced facility to a road serviced facility (not a non-material amendment as proposed by SEGRO). The ensuing increase in traffic/noise and pollution would have a severe impact on both the local environment and local communities such as Grange Park, Collingtree, Milton Malsor, Roade and Blisworth and which already suffer with high levels of HGV traffic (on some narrow roads and a weak rail bridge), particularly when the strategic road network is congested and traffic is diverted from the M1 through the villages (and past the village school).

Due to the significant change to use and the additional warehouse recently constructed in the area, I consider the traffic surveys and information provided in 2019 to be out-of-date and incorrect as it was assumed there would be a rail head terminal. I further urge you to request updated traffic, noise/emissions pollution data (independently collected) be provided as part of the DCO amendment request before any decision is made.

I believe that SEGRO is seeking to shift from a speculative build to a contract build operation and is seeking this change entirely for their own purely financial benefit. They have been actively marketing these units from the start of this year, with proposed occupation from Quarter 4 of 2022 which is misleading and at odds with the original DCO (but presumably always their intention as SEGRO were fully aware of the constraints to the project when they took it on).

I therefore strongly oppose and request your support to oppose this amendment to ensure that the original DCO is complied within full. If SEGRO is allowed this amendment this would open the floodgates to other developers to adopt the same approach: ignoring original commitments, bypassing local planning and planning policies and flagrantly breaching national government policy.

Yours faithfully

Karen Ross MSc, PgC, NRAC