

Reference: EP1537

**Communities
County Hall
New Road
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National Infrastructure Planning
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
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Bristol BS1 6PN

**Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for
Environment and Place**

26 September 2022

Via email:

NorthamptonGateway@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

**RE: Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange project – Non-Material
Change TR050006**

Oxfordshire County Council has been consulted on the above proposal, which is to permit occupation of a proportion of the site ahead of the connection of the rail terminal to the rail network.

We do not wish to raise an objection to this proposal, since we do not believe it will have any significant direct impact on Oxfordshire.

However, whilst we understand the difficulty presented by uncertainty over the timing of the connection to the rail network, we wish to express our concern about allowing occupation of the site prior to this connection being made. Strategic Rail Freight Terminals have NSIP status on the basis of the environmental benefits of transferring road freight to rail, yet there can be no restriction requiring occupiers of the site to use the rail terminal. Given the attractiveness of the site in terms of proximity to the strategic road network, allowing occupations when there is no rail connection, and no certain date of that connection being made, increases the risk of the site being occupied by logistics firms who do not need the rail connection and therefore may not become users of it in the future. That in turn reduces the potential for the site to achieve its stated environmental benefits.

Yours sincerely

Amrik Manku

Amrik Manku
Growth Manager Cherwell and West

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