

26th September 2022

To: The Planning Inspectorate – Secretary of State for Transport – Dame Andrea Leadsom MP

Re: Segro Northampton Gateway. Application for amendments to the development control order restricting warehouse occupancy prior to rail connection to the west coast mainline.

We are writing to express our very strong opposition to the proposed amendment requested by EGRO to the original Development Consent Order (DCO) granted in October 2019 for the Northampton Gateway. We live on the A508 and are directly affected by this application, which we have only just found out about.

We have lived with roadworks, works obstructing our access, noise, traffic and pollution issues caused by the construction of the “Rail Freight Interchange” site. We have seen trees and hedgerows destroyed overnight to make way for the bypass road and now we hear of Sergro’s application for amendments to the DCO.

Our concern is that these objections will be ignored, as were our objections to the Gateway at the start. It seems that these “developments” go ahead despite the objections of the community, ignoring the very real environmental and community issues in favour of money. We all felt this Gateway was merely a coverup for SERGO to build what they really wanted in the “Golden Triangle” and now it appears to be true.

We have listed the main reasons for our opposition below, which I know many others have also done. We hope that this time we will be listened to and action will be taken.

Reasons for our opposition:

- 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. The DCO prohibited any commercial activity until the rail connection was operational: ‘a rail terminal capable of handling at least four intermodal trains per day ... must be constructed and available for use prior to the occupation of any of the warehousing’.
- This amendment 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 in perpetuity without any rail connection.
- It is clearly a material amendment: the ensuing increase in traffic/noise and pollution would have a severe impact on both the local environment and local communities such as those living along the A508 which already suffers with high levels of HGV traffic, particularly when the strategic road network is congested.
- We 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 financial benefit**. They have been actively marketing these units from the start of this year, with proposed occupation from Q4 2022 which is misleading and at odds with the original DCO. SEGRO were fully aware of the constraints to the build when they took on the project.
- We are strongly opposing and seeking your support to oppose this amendment and ensure that the original DCO is complied with in 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 flagrantly breaching national government policy

Yours Faithfully

Rebecca and Fritz Kok

Email: [REDACTED]