

Mr and Mrs C Read



National Infrastructure Planning,
The Planning Inspectorate,
Temple Quay House,
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Via Email: - Northamptongateway@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

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

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.

When this application was granted under the National Planning Framework, 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**. 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 Development.

I am concerned that 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. There is a strong feeling in the community that SEGRO have intentionally used national planning policy to circumvent the local planning legislation. This would significantly undermine public confidence in the national infrastructure planning process.

We draw the inspectorate to the following issues:-

1. 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. There are no obligations for tenants to move freight traffic to rail and there are already following proposals in the community to expand the area for warehousing. A further 1.8m sq ft of warehousing is proposed opposite the area of the SEGRO development. The amendment also allows for full use of the site without rail infrastructure in the future if deemed necessary.
2. The proposal is being treated as a non-material amendment. When the proposal was granted the impact to road infrastructure was assessed based on the rail link being in place. It is clearly a material amendment and should be treated as such, not as 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 Blisworth, which already suffers with high levels of HGV traffic, particularly when the strategic road network is congested or closed, and traffic is diverted from the M1 or A43 through the local villages.

3. The original proposal allowed £75,000 to be allocated to our village to mitigate the development impacts. We believe that this sum in no way allows the community to address the impacts of the increased traffic on the already significantly damaged rural highways and pavements. If the amendment was allowed there would need to be an increase to the compensation to local communities.
4. Due to the significant change to use and the additional warehouse recently constructed in the area, along with the proposals that are current in the proposal pipeline tabled by the Local Plan. We consider the traffic surveys and information provided in 2019 to be out-of-date and incorrect. The local plan allows for significant development south of Northampton, North of Milton Keynes and in the Towcester Area which clearly will significantly impact the road network. The development was granted on the basis as it was assumed there would be a rail head terminal. We further urge you to request updated traffic, noise/emissions pollution data be provided as part of the DCO amendment request, before any decision is made.
5. 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 at the significant detriment to the local community. SEGRO 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 and clearly not aligned with Network Ralis commitments. SEGRO were fully aware of the constraints to the build when they took on the project.

We would strongly encourage you to reject this amendment in full until such time as the full impacts of the proposal can be considered. To achieve this any further amendment should be treated as a material amendment to the original Development Consent Order.

Yours Sincerely



Chris Read MBE

For Information:

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Grant Shapps MP Department for Transport - transportsecretary@dft.gov.uk