

From: alan [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 February 2023 13:52
To: Northampton Gateway <NorthamptonGateway@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Fwd: TRO50006 Segro August application to change the DCO Northampton Gateway

Response to Segro(applicants)submission dated Jan23

I write with regard to above submission by Segro,in which they have clarified a number of issues initially raised particularly clarification of sq footage,explanation of their business model etc etc.

Clearly the main issue has always been and still is, the ability of Network Rail to provide the final connections on the Northampton Loop of the WCML,and I would wish to refer back to extracts from the applicants original supporting statement dated Aug 2022:-

RAIL CONNECTIVITY

Para 1.9..extract The uncertainty(rail connections) arises from difficulties of NR being able to commit to achieving sufficient access of the main line to carry out the works in this post lockdown period when there is a desire to minimize disruption to passenger services and attract passengers back onto the rail.

Comment: Was this not always the case,connection issues and disruption of passenger services were well documented prior to the original grant of permission,even NR during the examination stage were always very non committal when connectivity issues were raised ,and this may well have been influential in the decision by the So S to apply this specific condition in the first instance,and furthermore their(SoS) decision to refuse the applicants request to amend the DCO through the local planning system,a point referred too 3.2 in the original supporting statement.

Para 2.14 However in order for NR to carry out its connection works it is necessary for the mainline to be closed for approx 9 days to cause as little disruption as possible to other users of the mainline and ,as pressed by the D oT are mindful of the need to encourage recovery of rail use following the pandemic.

Comment:This very limited section of the WCML may always have needed 9days closure,(even prior to Covid) to allow final Rail connectivity,perhaps the SoS should seek advise on this directly from NR,and recovery ie more passengers using rail and more importantly using the same train timetable, would not necessarily add to more disruption,, I would suggest therefore the circumstance has not actually materially changed since the original application was granted ie passenger trains services would always have been disrupted,and the principle on which the condition was imposed by the S oS still stands

BUSINESS MODELS/MARKET DEMAND/MIS LEADING MARKETING BY SEGRO

Clearly Segro had attracted their potential clients by false mis leading sales promotion ,on their website they have since 2021 been advertising units available for" occupation Q4 22 "in the full

knowledge that was not achievable they have effectively been the perpetrators of their own downfall, and whilst they have advised that their business model has always been bespoke contract build they along with the rest of us in the UK may have to change/adapt their business model in light of the aftermath of covid, I believe 80% of the civil services now as a direct result of covid work from home.

Segro have also drawn reference to the potential outlay of circa £30m to build and £30m to fit out these units thereby highlighting the risk involved to them, but Segro as owners of the units (with their return coming from leasehold rents) know full well that the initial build costs must always carry some risk, however Segro have already advised that the market for these type of units is buoyant, (refer to para 3.1 supporting statement), that the sector is undergoing a significant period of growth, consistent with trend, it would appear that any risk is lessened given this current demand.

In summary the NR connectivity issues and any potential financial outlay which Segro will have to make were all relevant prior to covid, rail strikes and have no bearing whatsoever on the original wording of the DCO, I would therefore urge the S o S to refuse any request from the applicant to change the DCO.

A. Hargreaves

