

Dear Andrea

Thank you for your email.

We anticipate that we will be in a position to submit the application to the Planning Inspectorate in mid-July. The process is that at the same time as we submit the application we will notify the statutory consultees and general public that we have done so and they will have a period of not less than 28 days to send in comments to the Planning Inspectorate.

Details of the application will be on the Planning Inspectorate's website and our own website. I will notify you as soon as I know the precise dates of the consultation period and the details of to whom/where representations should be sent.

As regards other changes, hopefully I will have the opportunity to explain to you in more detail, when we meet on 22nd July, how the need for this change has come about. We have been working very closely with Network Rail over the last few years and they, like us, have been frustrated over the delay in being able to achieve the final rail infrastructure, being the connections onto the main line. They are trying to secure adequate possessions to carry out the works as soon as possible but are constrained by the impact of COVID and the desire of the DfT to minimise the disruption to passenger services in order to attract passengers back to rail.

The on site rail infrastructure (within SEGRO's control) is now under construction and is on target to complete this autumn, so that, as soon as Network Rail are able to arrange the necessary possessions of the line and construct the connections, the terminal can become operational. I attach a press release issued recently by Maritime confirming that SEGRO has appointed them to operate the terminal, following the success of the East Midlands Gateway Terminal operated by Maritime.

I look forward to seeing you again soon to discuss the position further. In the meantime, it might be of some assistance to know that National Highways have confirmed they have no problem with the suggested change reflecting the fact that the change to the timing of the rail in respect of occupations will have no adverse effect at all in terms of the traffic impact from the site.

As always, we are very happy to answer constituent enquiries as and when they arise.

Kind regards

Kate

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Dear Kate,

Thank you for your reply to my earlier email with an update on the process with your DCO.

I note your comments about Network Rail's position, but I attach a letter I wrote to Network Rail back in March 2017, during the original planning discussions, where they indicated that there might not be enough track paths for additional freight movements on the West Coast Main Line prior to the timetabled opening of HS2 Phase 1 (in 2026). I raised at the time with the planning inspector that while developers were claiming there was freight capacity to support the development of either Northampton Gateway or Rail Central, in fact Network Rail confirmed in writing to me in April 2017 that their view was that "not every proposal can safely connect to this stretch of the railway due to high levels of existing traffic." A copy of this letter is also attached.

It is clear that Network Rail's prediction of a lack of capacity is coming true, and residents are rightly furious that you are seeking to amend the DCO. I have made clear my views on this project over many years and I do not agree with any change to the planning specification.

Additionally, I note your comment about National Highways and their contentment with your proposed change to the DCO. Residents are highly concerned that any amendments to the planning permission could potentially facilitate an increase in lorry movements rather than a shift to rail. It is clear that this would have a highly detrimental effect on the rural landscape in the area. Please would you therefore provide evidence of any research or modelling National Highways have undertaken to back up their view that there will be no adverse effect in terms of the traffic impact.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,
Andrea