



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Graham Pardoe
Managing Director
Roxhill Developments Ltd
Lumonics House
Valley Drive
Swift Valley
Rugby
CV21 1TQ

22nd November 2017

Ref: AL/TG/1711

Dear Mr Pardoe,

Thank you for sending me through the updated briefing note with answers to the questions that arose in our meeting in September, and in Tommy's subsequent email in October. Regretfully, I have already finalised my submission to your pre-application statutory consultation and have sent you a hard copy in the post, but I was interested by the some of the content in your update.

A few specific points:

- 1) In paragraph 1.5, you state that *the work Roxhill have undertaken liaising with Network Rail, concludes that there is sufficient freight capacity on the rail network to serve the site.*


The wording suggests that Network Rail has confirmed the outcomes in the Draft Rail Operation Report and the Draft Rail Capacity Report that were conducted by your consultants. Although those reports have been shared with Network Rail, it is the view of Network Rail that, as they have not yet signed a contract / legal agreement with Roxhill, they cannot carry out their own, or verify a feasibility study to confirm the assumptions made in the reports. My understanding is that the finalised versions of the Rail Operation Report and Rail Capacity Report will not be made public until the application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, but it is misleading to suggest that Network Rail has agreed that there is sufficient freight capacity.

Network Rail has also explained that each extra train on the network involves a trade-off between capacity, reputation and performance. A busy timetable will not be as robust during small levels of disruption, and all these considerations need to be weighed up when constructing a timetable and considering new applications for rights, balancing the developing needs of all Network Rail's customers (passengers, passenger service companies and freight operating companies).

They are clear that capacity on the Northampton Loop needs to be considered in the broader context of the wider rail network. This means the destination of the traffic is equally as important as where it is originating from.

Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

Page 1 of 3

- 
- 2) In paragraph 2.2 and Appendix One, you kindly provide the road heat map which demonstrates the forecasted change in daily traffic flow resulting from the proposed development and highway mitigation works.

As far as I can see, no date is included for the timescale of the forecast. My understanding from our September meeting is that this road heat map showed forecasted traffic flows in 2031; could you confirm if this is still the case?

However the point I made at the meeting, and Tommy subsequently re-highlighted in his email to you, was that I wanted to see a traffic forecast comparison for the local road network through to 2031 without the proposed development and highway mitigation works. This is absent.

Additionally, the map does not include any information for Towcester or the A5. As you know, the A5 is a trunk road that is already operating at capacity through the centre of Towcester, with Watling Street through the town designated as an Air Quality Management Area. It is extremely important that the traffic flows for Towcester are modelled in your forecast, and this relates to a point in my submission to your pre-application statutory consultation that you have not given enough consideration to the cumulative effects of other local proposed and committed development schemes, including the Towcester Vale Southern Extension.

- 3) In paragraph 3.2, you state that *it is anticipated that around 60 per cent of employees will be from the immediate Northampton area.*

This means that you anticipate around 4,500 employees being found in the immediate Northampton area (which, absent a technical definition, I presume refers to the Borough). Taking together the total number of people claiming unemployment benefits in Northampton South and Northampton North, there are 2,435 people at present (October 2017) levels. Even adding in those in South Northamptonshire who are on unemployment benefits, the total only climbs to 2,825 people.

On the assumption that 100 per cent of these 2,825 people were to take a job associated with the Northampton Gateway development, this is only 63 per cent of the 4,500 employees you have stated will come from the immediate Northampton area.

A number of other points that Tommy and I have raised have not been answered.

Specifically:

- 4) Further to point 3 above, the origin points of some 750 employees are not identified. You state in paragraph 3.0 that the total employment on the site will be around 7,500 people: 60 per cent will come from the Borough and 90 per cent from the wider core catchment which also includes Milton Keynes and Wellingborough.

- 5) I asked how many HGVs will use the rail-connection. In paragraph 1.1, you confirm that Phase 1 of the development will be an investment of £15m, that the site will cover an initial 7 acres, and that it will accommodate at least 4 trains per day.

Whilst you state in paragraph 1.2 that *around 60 per cent of the on-site warehousing is capable of being directly rail connected*, this is disingenuous. There is a significant difference between the capability of being directly rail connected, and the actuality of being so-connected. What guarantees are you making that this 60 per cent of on-site warehousing will be directly rail connected?


I also wanted to know how many daily HGV movements will utilise the rail connection.

As I outlined in my submission to your consultation, Table 9 in Appendix 12.7 of your Transportation Strategy summarises the predicted traffic profiles for the Northampton Gateway SRFI if the travel plan is enacted. This assumes a total daily movement of 14,116 vehicles comprised of 4,245 HGV trips and 9,871 other vehicles.

Given that each freight train, according to Network Rail, can typically remove around 60 lorry journeys off the road, 4 trains per day would amount to around 240 lorry journeys each day. This is less than 6 per cent of the total daily HGV trips that Northampton Gateway will generate, suggesting that this proposal remains a road-connected warehousing project with a bit of rail added on, rather than a truly Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.

I look forward to your response.

With best wishes,



The Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP
Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

Cc: Planning Inspectorate