

Mrs Anne Main M.P.
St Albans



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mark Carne
Chief Executive
Network Rail
1 Eversholt Street
London
NW1 2DN

Our ref: SA24902/CM

15 February 2016

Dear Mr Carne,

We are writing pursuant to a recent meeting we had with Govia Thameslink.

For some time now we have been seeking assurances that the proposed railfreight site in Park Street, St Albans, will not adversely affect passenger services on the Thameslink link. We are especially concerned about commuters in our constituencies, St Albans and Hertsmere. It has constantly been asserted that the railfreight site at Park Street will have no detrimental effect on passengers using the line, however, this has never been underpinned by detailed analysis.

These concerns over the impact on passenger services were raised repeatedly by the previous franchise owners, First Capital Connect (FCC). You will be aware that FCC raised these concerns at the original planning hearing for railfreight before the inspector, but were never properly addressed.

Moreover, we were informed by Govia representatives that before infrastructural improvement works started at London Bridge, similar assurances were made that the works would not have an impact on passenger services.

The reality has been very different. The works currently taking place at London Bridge are routinely cited as being one of the main causes of frequent delays and cancellations on the Thameslink line. The concerns that we have regarding the possible impact of the proposed railfreight terminal on passenger services are therefore heightened as a result of what we have seen to be the case with infrastructural improvement works at London Bridge.

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Govia has now assured us that in the 2018 timetabling, the Thameslink service will have priority over freight. This is to be welcomed. However, we do believe that the assurances we have been given do not go far enough to allay the concerns of our constituents. We do think it is incumbent upon Network Rail to provide us with those assurances in the form of a detailed study that will assuage these concerns.

If the railfreight terminal is built in Park Street, we need firm evidence that there has been a proper impact assessment done by Network Rail. We would be grateful if you could provide us with that analysis or undertake to properly assess scheduling with freight and passenger services on the line.

We are copying in the minister responsible, who may wish to comment on this matter.

With best wishes,

Anne Main
Member of Parliament for St Albans

Oliver Dowden
Member of Parliament for Herstmere

CC: Claire Perry MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport