

Mrs Anne Main M.P.
St Albans



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Our ref: SA24902/CM

16 September 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing regarding the proposed railfreight terminal in St Albans, and the continued absence of any freight timetabling on the busy Midland Main Line (MML).

In the attached correspondence from Network Rail (NR) dated 12th August, you will note that the rail body have confirmed that there is still no clear timetable for the MML that accommodates both passenger services and freight. You will also see the latest Q&A from Segro's business director, Gareth Osborn, in the local paper, *Herts Advertiser*, which confirms when they will bid for the land in Park Street.

This whole unhappy and unpopular development dates back 10 years. For much of this time, I have been asking technical questions as to how freight trains on the MML can run a coterminous service with passenger carriages. Despite many meetings, public hearings and letters to NR, I am shocked to learn that we still have no evidence of how this may work in practice.

Indeed, during the time of the initial planning inquiry in 2007, NR submitted a short letter and were absent from the meeting; the previous train operators First Capital Connect (FCC) were thoroughly cross-examined. FCC at the time expressed deep concern over how freight and passenger services would work together. Now, with the freight developer, Segro, preparing a bid for the land 'shortly', we have yet to see any evidence of a fully-functioning timetable.

Commuters in St Albans pay good money to commute daily. In the absence of any evidence, they rightly believe that their service into London could be disrupted should railfreight go ahead. This

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would compound the difficulties that they have experienced since the London Bridge upgrades, and the many other disruptions following the Govia Thameslink takeover.

The casualness with which NR is proceeding is astounding. Any proposals backed by evidence would have at least served to calm some of the worst fears that my constituents have about the railfreight development. However, vague assurances and 'optimism' do nothing to reassure commuters, and those residents surrounding the freight terminal.

I would be extremely grateful if you were to meet with me, or indeed call a meeting with NR and myself to discuss how the rail body can expedite this process. I do strongly believe that if the government does want to expand freight capacity across the network, at the same time train companies *need* to expand their capacity to meet growing demand, then the department must insist that NR are working to meet and deliver national policy.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Main".

Anne Main MP

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