

Matter 5 – Economy and Employment

Issue 4 – Strategic Rail Freight Interchange ('SRFI')

Q1 What is the latest position regarding development proposals at the SRFI?

- 1.1 SEGRO have made substantial progress with the delivery of the SRFI. There is continuous and ongoing work with SADC's Development Management team to progress planning matters and significant on-site works to take the permission forward. This has included significant co-ordination by SEGRO with Network Rail, including agreed line closures to facilitate works on site.
- 1.2 This significant progress can be summarised as below:

Update on discharge of conditions

Most of the conditions relating to the Outline Planning Permission and Reserved Matters applications have been discharged. There are a few conditions which have been part approved as the trigger point is prior to any works within that area or occupation of a certain amount of floorspace.

Update on works undertaken to date

A - Progress on Rail Enabling Works

- Midland Mainline Underpass Jackbox installed – (line closed in December 2024 to accommodate this)
- Installation of new signal gantry WH262/62N on Mainline – (December 2024)
- Commissioning of new signal gantry WH262/62N on Mainline - (weekend 15th March 2025 – 16th March 2025)
- Mainline down slow track formation works in preparation for rail chord points to be installed in 2026 (12th April 2025-13th April 2025)
- Mainline overhead line equipment wire transfer and registrations (weekend 10th May 2025 – 11th May 2025)
- Up slow track formation works in preparation for rail chord points to be installed in 2026 (weekend 31st June 2025 -1st July 2025)
- Excavation of landfill waste, processing of landfill waste completed (March 2025 -June 2025)
- Construction of the rail chord embankment and embankment drainage has commenced (August 2025)

B - Progress on Main Site Enabling Works

- Hedges Farm barn demolition and erection of new barns
- Enabling works such as site clearance, UXO investigation, earthworks trials and testing
- Works related to Natural England licenses such as the creation of ponds, ditches and terrestrial habitats for the great crested newts

- The new Contractor is mobilising ready to commence earthworks during September 2025

Q2 What is the justification for Policy EMP2, which shows the SFRI on the policies map but states that it will only be removed from the Green Belt once development has been completed? Is this consistent with other policies in the Plan, which seek to remove land from the Green Belt in order to facilitate new development?

What is the justification for Policy EMP2, which shows the SFRI on the policies map but states that it will only be removed from the Green Belt once development has been completed?

2.1 The justification is, essentially, that the SFRI has permission for the specific use as a Strategic Rail Freight Terminal only and there is a comprehensive package of both: a) associated road, rail and other infrastructure facilities and b) community benefits including publicly accessible open space and a community forest on land in and around the site; which formed a significant part of the “very special circumstances” case when the SFRI was given permission by the Secretary of State in 2014. The land is not needed to be taken out of the Green Belt to facilitate the permitted development (see answer to M5I4Q1 above). Given the sheer size and complexity of the scheme, it is considered necessary to signal clearly that on review of the Plan and once the SFRI has been completed, Green Belt boundaries in relation to the SFRI facility will be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

2.2 The Plan gives some of this context at:

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

5.20 The Government gave planning permission for the construction of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange in July 2014, comprising an intermodal terminal and rail and road served distribution units comprising 331,665 metres² employment floorspace.

5.21 Aside from employment floorspace the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange will provide associated road, rail and other infrastructure facilities and works including earth mounds and a Park Street / Frogmore relief road in a landscaped setting. Further landscaping and other works will provide publicly accessible open space and a community forest on land in and around the site.

5.22 The scheme is located south of the North Orbital Road, north of the M25 and east of the village of Frogmore, between the Abbey Line and the West Coast Mainline. The Strategic Rail Freight Interchange is shown on the Policies Map.

2.3 Further details are set out by SEGRO as:

The Development

The site covers eight separate parcels of land (Areas 1 to 8) with a total area of 419ha.

The SRFI development will comprise

- *an intermodal terminal*
- *331,655sqm of logistics floorspace (Class B8 use with ancillary Class B1/B2 uses) and associated car/HGV parking*
- *landscape setting with perimeter landscaped mounds*
- *provision of a Country Park for public access to open land and community forest*
- *Park Street/Frogmore Relief Road.*

The Development Site for the SRFI (Areas 1 and 2) is located south of the A414 North Orbital Road.

Area 1 is a 146ha land parcel previously used for the runways of the Former (Radlett) Aerodrome and then later quarried for gravel until 1997.

Area 2 is a 26ha land parcel comprising a section of the Midland Mainline Railway and land to the east which will accommodate a new rail link into the SRFI. This land has been used for mineral extraction and has been restored to low grade agricultural land. Save for the rail line and earth mounds, there will be no development.

More than 86ha, 50% of the Development Site will be for landscaping.

A new road will be provided through the SRFI from the A414 in the north to the A5183 to the south, the Park Street/Frogmore Relief Road. This will provide benefit to residential properties fronting the A5183 by diverting through traffic.

Areas 3 to 8 will be used to create 247ha of publicly accessible open Country Park and Community Forest with recreational uses and improved access to the countryside.

Is this consistent with other policies in the Plan, which seek to remove land from the Green Belt in order to facilitate new development?

- 2.4 As above, it is considered to be a different case due to the extant planning permission and the 'community benefits' Very Special Circumstances basis on which that permission was given. Therefore the approach taken in the Plan is considered to be an appropriate and justified one.