

Department for
Transport

Department for Communities and
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Attn: Chris Howsham
Case Officer

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11 November 2011

Dear Sirs,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 78
APPEAL BY HELIOSLOUGH LTD – APPLICATION REF 5/09/07/08
LAND IN AND AROUND FORMER AERODROME, NORTH ORBITAL ROAD, UPPER
COLNE VALLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE.**

I refer to your letter of 19 October, enclosing representations in relation to the above Application.

Included among these was a letter from St Albans City & District Council attaching a report it had commissioned from the consultants, Steer Davies Gleave (SDG). Drawing on this report, the Council made certain postulations in relation to the capability of the rail network to serve the proposed strategic rail freight interchange facility at Radlett and, in the light of these, disputed the likely efficacy of such a facility.

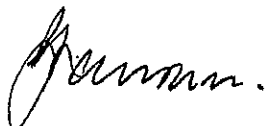
It is not for the Department to comment on Helioslough's specific application. However, the Department does not recognise the picture of rail network capability which the SDG report implies, and has sought the advice of Network Rail on the issues raised in it. Network Rail, as both the owner and operator of the rail infrastructure and the author of the Rail Utilisation Strategy documents referred to in the SDG report, may be regarded as authoritative on these matters. I enclose a copy of our exchange of correspondence, including their advice, for your information.

In summary, Network Rail confirm, inter alia, that:

- this region is significantly short of rail freight interchange capacity;
- there is sufficient rail capacity on the Midland Main Line to serve a SRFI at Radlett;
- current rail loading gauge is not an insurmountable issue.

I confirm that it is the Department's policy to support the development of efficient rail freight distribution logistics, a key element of which is private sector development of a network of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges. I enclose a copy of our updated Strategic Rail Freight Interchange policy guidance document for your reference.

Yours faithfully



Timothy Wellburn