

SEGRO DCO EXAMINATION – DEADLINE 4 SUBMISSION from Ray Sutton

I have edited, redacted and updated my input at OFH1 on ‘Principle of Development’ and hopefully sharpened it in order to highlight the unsettled political backdrop to the Examination.

Principle of Development

Here I amplify the fourth point in my response document at “Deadline 1” (REP1 - 280). The applicant response (REP2-032) referred me to the Planning Statement (APP-222). However that does not address my fourth point that the EMG2 site and other nearby sites were designated for strategic warehousing in the Draft NWLDC Local Plan after the Regulation 18 consultation and as recently as 19 November 2025.

A divided Freeport

In terms of looking for where this development should go, it is of great concern to local people on this northern periphery of Leicestershire and periphery of North West Leicestershire that we are almost in a confined and hermetically sealed strategic planning area. This dates back to the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Plan of 2018 as cited by the applicant in their planning statement. It does not appear that Leicestershire and North West Leicestershire have interpreted ‘duty to cooperate’ very generously in respect of the northern boundary. This is in spite of having a Freeport that straddles the boundary with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), which is a mayoral authority.

The integrity of the wider spatial development area

The EMCCA area reaches South to the river Trent and across it as well, and includes the power station, the Ratcliffe site, which is part of the Freeport, whereas Leicestershire contains the EMAGIC (Airport and SEGRO) site, and this is a huge anomaly in terms of the integrity of, and responsibility for, infrastructure, investment and strategic direction.

What we have here is incremental planning, albeit a DCO application, without a full consideration of cumulative and strategic impacts and prior infrastructure requirements. My question to the Panel is “What will you do to ensure that, in the later stages of the Examination, we get some

comments from EMCCA who are now the Accountable Body for the Freeport?”.

EMCCA already has a spatial plan which identifies a ‘Trent Arc’ of development centred on the M1 artery, as far as the Leicestershire boundary, and only a couple of kilometres away from J24. The Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground on strategic warehousing, now approved, fails to consider the implications of the northern boundary issue. Yet the famed “Golden Triangle” does not stop at the River Trent. The M1 runs through both local authority areas, and presents an essential material national and local planning issue. In REP1-280 I mention the then good practice example of the collaborative and integrated approach of the East Midlands Development Corporation from 2021-2024.

Spatial Development Strategy areas

The government has been consulting on Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) areas recently, focused especially on areas like Leicestershire that were not already previously designated through prior local government devolution arrangements. The SDS consultation from Feb 12th to March 26th ran almost in parallel with the consultation on options for new unitary authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire. Local councils chose not to publicise the SDS consultation, a fact I have ascertained after extensive questioning - the evidence is available should the ExP request it.

Having found the SDS consultation link by chance, my contribution to the MHCLG consultation included a suggestion that Leicestershire should form a single SDS and mayoral area with EMCCA. Because of the lack of local publicity I was one of very few residents or councillors at NWLDC to engage.

What decisions have already been made?

The core of the MHCLG view of the SDS area consultation, received in writing via Amanda Hack MP on 19 May 19 2026 is:-

“This consultation was part of an early stage of policy development to seek views on proposed spatial development strategies (SDSs) geographies. The consultation was published on GOV.UK and open to all interested parties to respond. ...

This was not a statutory consultation and there was no prescribed list of statutory consultees, nor a formal requirement to notify specific bodies. The approach taken was proportionate to its purpose as an exploratory consultation to gather initial views and inform policy making.

The Government has no plans to withdraw or re-run the consultation. Responses received are being carefully considered and will inform the Government response and next steps.”

This stands in contrast to an online statement welcoming comment from businesses and representative bodies.

It is important to note that MHCLG already listed Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as a separate SDS in the consultation document. Further, on 12 February 2026 MHCLG wrote to the Leicestershire authorities and Rutland inviting them to form a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) and they accepted the invitation on 17 March 2026 their letter shows that while the consultation was still going on.

Chronology related to this development in this location

Without attempting exact dates but relying on an approximate order, it is hard to judge the Principle of Development when the wider decision making framework of events bearing on spatial planning in this location and listed below has been so haphazard and reasons for decisions and timings so nuanced. Chicken and egg are scarcely identifiable:-

- NWLDC partners in East Midlands Development Corporation
- EM Freeport designated and announced by government after addition of EMG2 site with Leicestershire as accountable body
- EMCCA agreed as a mayoral authority and announced by government
- NWLDC Draft Local Plan Reg 18 consultation
- East Midlands Development Corporation, a cross boundary organisation, is wound up in favour of EMCCA
- Applicant begins the NISP process
- NWLDC extends Draft Local Plan timeline
- EMCCA spatial plan emerges, followed by transport plan
- DCO Pre Examination period begins

- Significant large sites in close proximity to EMA added to Draft Local Plan by NWLDC eighteen months after Reg 18 consultation finished including the EMG2 site
- MHCLG invites Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to form an FSA to commence spatial planning as a separate entity
- EMCCA becomes the Freeport Accountable Body
- NWLDC Draft Local Plan Reg 19 consultation announced
- Interdependent and interlocking Traffic and Transport questions remain within all plans at every level

Summary

The applicant's Planning Statement of October 2025 was made in a rapidly evolving legislative, strategic and spatial planning context. There is only partial accountability to local people living within a 15 mile radius of the key M1 junctions and the application site. A recommendation to the Secretary of State in this very fast moving framework seems to be at best high-risk.