



East Midlands Gateway Phase 2 OFH 1 Tuesday 12th May 2026

Summary of Verbal Representations from Protect Diseworth (PD)

The following comprises a transcript of the verbal submissions made by two representatives from PD at the OFH. The submissions were made from the perspective of and on behalf of the village and residents of Diseworth and in this regard were presented as a Community Impact Statement. Due to timing issues, some of the points made in the transcripts below were condensed and/or summarised.

“Diseworth is a small conservation village of approximately 600 residents situated immediately adjacent to the proposed EMG2 development.

Residents are not opposed to economic growth, logistics, or investment in the East Midlands, but this Examination must decide whether this is the right development in the right location.

Our position is that it is not.

The cumulative impacts on Diseworth — from industrialisation, traffic, noise, visual intrusion and loss of countryside separation — are simply too severe for this location.

The adopted Local Plan does not allocate this land south of the A453 for development. Indeed the Local Plan specifically recognises Diseworth as a conservation village, and recognises the importance of the open countryside surrounding villages like ours.

Even North West Leicestershire District Council officers themselves acknowledge that development on this site would create “substantial” environmental impacts. They warned that this land currently provides important separation between Diseworth and surrounding infrastructure development and forms part of the countryside setting of the conservation area.

They also warned of fundamentally changed views, significant disturbance from 24-hour operations, noise, traffic and lighting impacts on residents.

That is not Protect Diseworth saying this.

That is the local authority’s own assessment.

Yet despite those concerns, the East Midlands Freeport designation appears to have transformed agricultural land surrounding Diseworth into land now assumed to be available for industrial expansion.

Residents had no meaningful involvement in that process and the amended Freeport proposal including this land was conducted in total secrecy without any public consultation.

The result is that Diseworth now faces progressive encirclement by strategic warehousing and freight infrastructure.

And EMG2 does not exist in isolation.

The village also faces the proposed Isley Woodhouse new settlement immediately to the west — a proposed development of up to 4,500 homes, creating the 3rd biggest town in North West Leicestershire

Residents are therefore not just facing this single development proposal, but the combined effects of airport expansion, Freeport expansion, strategic warehousing, major highway pressure, and now an entirely new settlement surrounding the village. The Examining Panel has a duty to take this cumulative impact into consideration. This is not a just a small extension to an existing employment site. This is a transformational change to the character of an historic village. And the impacts are not theoretical.

The Applicant's own Environmental Statement confirms that construction activity would continue for more than five years, including approximately two and a half years of major earthworks immediately adjacent to residential properties.

The applicant's own assessments show construction noise levels approaching thresholds where temporary rehousing measures can become necessary.

Residents are being asked to accept years of major earthworks, construction noise, lighting and disruption immediately beside their homes.

Operationally, the nearest warehouses would sit less than 250 metres from houses in Diseworth.

Buildings of extraordinary scale would permanently dominate views from homes, gardens and public footpaths, fundamentally altering the village's rural setting. Residents would no longer look out onto open countryside, but onto a heavily industrialised logistics landscape operating day and night.

Traffic is perhaps the clearest example of why this is fundamentally the wrong location. Junction 24 of the M1 is already one of the busiest and most constrained strategic junctions in the region.

The A453 is not just another A road to be fed into a piece of modelling software. It is the main arterial route to both the UK's largest freight airport and a major leisure venue at Donington Park Circuit. Residents already experience severe congestion associated with these sites and gridlock occurs when more than a couple of planes land in close proximity or a race event or music festival takes place. This is a route already under significant pressure.

Critically, the concerns around traffic and transport are now echoed by the East Midlands Mayor and East Midlands Freeport themselves. Their recently published report states that Junction 24 “will soon be operating beyond capacity” and that without intervention it “will become a barrier to growth.” The report also acknowledges that development at two of the Freeport’s three strategic sites is already constrained by Junction 24 capacity limitations. Most importantly, the report identifies that a future strategic highway intervention costing up to £350 million may be required to future-proof the junction. That raises a simple but fundamental question for this Examination: If strategic authorities themselves now acknowledge that Junction 24 is approaching failure without massive future intervention, how can this proposal reasonably conclude that the cumulative impacts on local communities are acceptable?

This Examination is not simply deciding whether more warehousing should exist somewhere in the East Midlands. It is deciding whether this scale of development should be imposed immediately adjacent to a small conservation village already under intense cumulative pressure. For Diseworth, the impacts are permanent, transformational and irreversible. Once the countryside buffer is lost, once the village becomes dominated by surrounding logistics infrastructure, that change cannot be undone.

Residents therefore respectfully ask the Examination Authority to conclude that this proposal represents the wrong development in the wrong location, and that alternative locations should be considered that would not impose such severe human impacts on an existing community.”

- End.

“At your first meeting in March, Diseworth Parish Council’s chair complained that most site references in SEGRO’s DCO and its competing applicant, East Midlands airport/Prologis, were to land south of the A453 or land to the west of Finger Farm Roundabout.

That encapsulates Diseworth’s sense of this matter; that it is being treated largely as an irrelevance by combined political and corporate interests, to be ignored if possible and given minimal regard at best. There is no other logical explanation for this application being made on this site. In short, Diseworth feels steam rolled – bullied. My submission will not focus on the detailed objections of which you will hear more tomorrow but on wider issues.

First, SEGRO has no apparent experience of constructing such a development so close to a settlement of our type. As evidence, the nearest structure in Lockington on the north side of the existing site is nearly twice as far as that in Diseworth and moreover, the shapes of the respective villages mean that far more of Diseworth will be directly affected. Similarly, when asked to provide a “comparable,” Segro gave its RFI project close Milton Mansor in Northamptonshire but here again, the closest building is over

twice the distance for that proposed for Diseworth and that, not on the steeply sloping site we have here.

Whilst personal relations between the individuals are professional, the village feels that it is corporately being paid scant regard in the application documents with little or no response to our representations. One example only, why is Segro resisting using what we are advised as a higher industry-standard for control of highly intrusive noise during the construction phase?

And what of the Freeport? We think we would not be here were it not for the Freeport designation which is being used as a crutch for this application. Even on its own terms of encouraging economic growth and job creation, it should fail. The claimed relocation of its anchor tenant, Maersk, is self-evidently a displacement project rather than creation of new jobs.

Moreover, from the time the village became aware of the Freeport designation, it has been treated with barely concealed disdain by the public sector bodies involved in the project. One of our previous submissions refers to the EMF chair saying that the expectation was that "something would happen on the site," and that the Freeport was "looking for more than merely sheds," and this in 2023, long before the initial joint application. Equally, repeated FOI attempts to try to find out what consideration was given to Diseworth after the rejection the first Freeport proposal have all ducked the issue.

NWLDC, first refused and only when compelled by the IC to whom I'd complained produced 4 emails one of which said, "looks like EMAGIC's a done deal." Even now, MHCLG is trying another defence, claiming commercial confidentiality even though the decision was taken four years ago.

Again, to take one example, BEIS wrote to the Chief Exec of LCC in December 21 saying

"I seem to remember that this was a huge bone of contention for members when the initial Freeport bid was being put together. It would be helpful to know what has changed that makes this site more likely to be brought forward for Freeport development in the near future?"

The answer wasn't disclosed and Diseworth continues to ask why? Why the continuing lack of transparency? What inconvenient facts about the panicked exercise between December 21 and January 22 are being withheld?

Additionally, there is hard evidence (now given to the Information Commissioner) that the former Chief Executive of Leicestershire was directly and personally involved in the resubmission of the amended Freeport proposal including the Diseworth land in late 2021 and early 2022.

All of this is in the context of a planning officer of NWLDC telling the local plan committee in November 2024.

“The environmental impacts of development are likely to be substantial. The land in its current, undeveloped state creates important separation between Diseworth and the infrastructure related development to its north and east. Linked to this is the role it has providing a countryside setting to Diseworth Conservation Area and thereby undermining its legibility as a stand-alone village set within its agricultural context. Views from PROW through and close to the site will be fundamentally changed. Further, the scenic long-distance views to the south of the parcel and beyond will be affected..... There is also the prospect of significant disturbance to Diseworth residents from 24-hour operations on site, principally from noise (including from traffic) and lighting.”

Because of all of this, Diseworth challenges the objectivity of the local authority statutory consultees, NWLDC and Leicestershire County Council. In our view, both are hopelessly conflicted. Our impression is that they simply seem to have taken “as read” the bulk of what Segro has claimed in many cases.

Why has this application and that of its competing partner happened? In our view because the Freeport is desperate to claim success on this agricultural site, a Freeport where both consultees are strategic partners in the Freeport project and where one of them (LCC) has been the accountable body since the start of the project announced without notice in February 2022. All of this suits the two protagonists who are using the Freeport to try get a totally unsuitable application “over the wire” which in other circumstances wouldn’t see light of day.

In recent directions, you decided that you would visit the village unaccompanied. I would urge you to do so after these hearings to see for yourself the care the villagers take of their homes, homes in a vibrant community with roots, and in some cases specific families, going back centuries and remaining a lively and caring place; one now facing the existential threat brought by this development.

You will also see many signs with the words “Wheat fields not Warehouses” and more specifically, “Stop SEGRO.” That is precisely what Diseworth asks you to do. Reject this application. “

- Ends.