

**North East Freight Partnership – Rail Partner Group****Date Held** **18th May 2017****Venue** **Newcastle Central Station, Room 21****List of Attendees and Organisation**

Mike Page	AECOM
Paul Davison	AECOM
Chris Allan	AECOM
John Holborn	Oxford Rail Strategy
Gordon Carr	CILT
John Bourn	NECA (Chair)
Mike Hogg	Rail Freight Group
Andrew Carmichael	SENUG
Trevor Watson	NE Railfuture
David Young	Network Rail
Peter Ollivere	Durham County Council
Keith Taylor	Northumberland County Council
Nolan Grey	Port of Tyne
Ann Wilson	Tees Valley Unlimited
David Marshall	Sunderland City Council
Ivan Anson	Nexus
Stuart Corker	Gateshead Council
Calvin Ho ki Yeung	Newcastle University

Apologies

Marin Marinov	Newcastle University
Tony Walker	NECTAR
Malcolm Bingham	FTA
Derek Gittens	Tees Valley Unlimited
Martin Murphy	NECTAR
Eddie Peat	Harworth Estates
Geoff Clark	AECOM
Lee Davies	NE Railfuture
Peter Walker	NE Railfuture

Item Agenda 1: Introductions and Apologies

The chair welcomed all the delegates to the meeting asked them to introduce themselves. He read out apologies.

Item Agenda 2: Minutes of last meeting

Minutes from the November 2016 meeting were reviewed and agreed with amendments to the attendees list to include - Derek Gittens, Trevor Watson and John Holborn

Item Agenda 3: Urban Rail Freight Challenges, Chris Allan, AECOM

CA discussed the challenges to the development of urban rail freight, providing an insight into the history of rail evolution. Originally, coal provided early traffic and subsequently experienced significant growth, however the Beeching Report and associated station and line closures saw a period of decline.

He talked about how we can solve certain problems in urban areas, how issues and opportunities evolved and how we overcame them, especially the cost comparison of rail freight to road freight. The presentation highlighted the barriers to wider use of rail, which he suggested were infrastructure network and terminal limitations, rolling stock availability and wagon availability. Journey time reliability was also cited as an issue.

He stated that the barriers to the efficient rail freight transport were the transshipment costs and the facilities and equipment cost. Flexibility of the system also gave concern, with train track availability which needed a seven day railway operation. He talked about diversionary routing capabilities and ease of access.

He said rail based consolidation centres for the supermarket trade were a possible solution to the current movement of retail products, which were in containers of varying sizes (although this did present challenges). The positives being the large existing volumes of goods, regular flows and that rail is established in this sector. The barriers to growth were described as efficient road based freight movement to the existing locations and the use of double-deck trailers, increasing capacity. The rail network also has a variety of gauge clearance issues, reliability, diversions and flexibility.

CA intimated a possible solution would be the utilisation of the light railway systems in major cities such as the Metro and tram systems to transport urban freight.

He said rail has established a role in the construction industry which is a growing sector on rail and has doubled to 30m tonnes (2003 – 2015), with ambitions for 2,600t, 450m trains. There are both positive and negatives to the transporting of this commodity, the potential positives could be they only need only small terminals. The potential negatives were the availability of temporary paths and more facilities were required. This will require legislative and high level support from the Government. However efficient the rail is, there is still the issue of the final legs to be carried out by road in urban areas – is this compatible with liveability, growing cycling and air quality?

Waste is another sector where rail could be utilised further and that the country is designing for this.

In conclusion, he suggested that we need to make bold decisions with long-term political support of Government intervention and legislation and funding.

Agenda Item 4: Rail Development at the Port of Tyne, Nolan Gray, Port of Tyne

NG talked about the history of the port from the 2nd century when the Romans built the port as a supply line to Hadrian's Wall to today when the port handles a variety of commodities with strong linkages to the rail and road network.

He went on to say the port used to handle 5m tonnes of coal with 4,000 trains annually. However, in 2017 the coal was drastically reduced to nil. The port works seven days a week when other ports may not work weekends.

Investment in the port is currently £100m but in the future it has planned a further £35m. This investment includes: W10 Gauge and loading Clearance delivered at the start of CP5 (June 2014), with connections to International Advanced Manufacturing Park via Pelaw Junction, Wardley Open Cast and Leamside line. Reinstatement of Tyne Dock Loop which allows simultaneous freight traffic movements to and from Tyne Dock and re-alignment of Boldon Curve in the reduction in the severity of curve of the Boldon junction.

The import of Biomass is set to increase by a further 1.8m tonnes of wood pellet per year (6 trains per day). There is a second rapid rail loader under construction and there are plans to the extension of rail sidings to accommodate full sets.

The Port would like to see a world class railway network that supports economic growth with a local Rail Infrastructure Storage hub with access to ECML and DCL. Additionally it would be beneficial to port if the doubling of both Boldon East and Boldon West Junctions and the re-instatement of a rail line into the Port's north estate to facilitate seaborne trade opportunities on the north bank of the Tyne were undertaken. It would also like to see the Leamside Line re-instatement to support further flows of automotive, bulk and modal into the Nissan plant in Sunderland (NMUK).

Nationally, there are issues with East Coast Main Line (ECML) capacity; however, the Port supports all proposals for creating more capacity for freight traffic along the ECML to facilitate the movement of additional freight into and out of the region.

Item Agenda 5: Rail Freight Group Update, Mike Hogg, Rail Partner Group

MH said the RFG has 3 regional offices and the membership of the group was made up from Local Authorities, ports, shipping forwarders and rail groups.

He stated that rail freight has had a difficult couple of years, however it is now doing well in the agriculture and construction sectors.

The RFG support the work of TfN in lobbying the Government for rail investment in the North. This is especially important for linking ports to the rail network. Ports such as Liverpool, Immingham and Port of Tyne have all invested in rail connections.

RFG has spent some time in discussions with Teesport to allow containers to connect with the ECML at Northallerton. This would require investment to upgrade a number of structures to W12 standard.

There have been issues with journey time reliability so the customer needs to be confident the rail industry can deliver product within a six and a half day period and maintenance of the track to be planned to allow night movements.

MH said Network Rail has overspent more than budget over the past 5 years and the Treasury may have lost confidence.

In summary, do not stop the aspiration for rail freight but look for best costs.

Item Agenda 6: Transport for the North Update, John Bourn, NECA

JB provided an update on Northern Powerhouse Rail. He outlined the aspiration for faster train journey times between Newcastle and Leeds and to increase capacity to benefit passengers and rail freight.

He outlined a strong focus on through rail traffic on the West Coast Main Line due to origin and destination points as well as path availability and growth in through traffic driven by intermodal growth on key Scotland to Southern Ports / Daventry routes.

He highlighted projected growth at Liverpool was resulting in requirements for more freight paths (particularly east – west across the Pennines) and export traffic dominated by intermodal movements to the Southern Ports from rail freight terminals in the North. He stated that the Port of Liverpool is also experiencing growth in intermodal export traffic.

Also discussed were the concerns regarding the over rail capacity (for passengers and freight) on ECML north of Northallerton. Trans Pennine capacity is also an issue for freight traffic and will become more so in future decades. The agenda does not take account of multi-modal distribution parks beyond those already under development.

Item Agenda 7: Report on Multi Modal Show, Paul Davison, AECOM

PD talked about the Multimodal show event he attended on the 4th April 2017.

The Government is under increasing pressure to find additional ways of addressing the issue of emissions from road transport. It's not just an urban problem, with poor air quality affecting health but greenhouse gas emissions are a major concern. Inter-urban congestion is getting worse as there is more traffic on the strategic road network (vehicle numbers have grown to over 37 million in UK) and hence carbon dioxide and other pollutants are a problem. Engine technology is improving and alternatively fuelled vehicles are becoming more widespread. In addition, modal switch from road to rail offers an immediate and powerful solution.

It was said we in Europe emit much more than the world average CO₂ suggesting there is a need for a much more rapid reduction in emissions and that most studies suggest pledges indicate likely temperature increase of about 3c in 2100.

The presentation discussed various options open for consideration including efficient vehicles, use of alternative fuels, lean supply chains, effective management and better planning, load sharing and collaboration and Modal shift. It looked at the benefits and improvements needed to grow rail volumes further which were to invest in to rail connected warehouses and increase rail paths into Port of Felixstowe as 33 Trains currently operate from there and it is at capacity. It highlighted the limited network rail train paths from the south to the Midlands, HS2 increasing capacity on WCML and route improvements on the Southampton route.

Item Agenda 8: Forrest Park Update, Peter Ollivere, Durham County Council

PO opened his presentation by informing the group that this was a recap of the November presentation regarding the feasibility for an interchange. He talked about the benefits of the location, the objectives of Forrest Park and a joint venture with new access and improved utilities.

The development of the Strategic Economic Plan was to attract private sector investment and grow the North East as a manufacturing hub, providing regional opportunities to improve business routes to market.

He stated there is no intermodal rail connected traffic except for a small amount of port related services to and from TeesPort. The nearest being in Mossend EuroCentral near Glasgow (128 miles to the North) and Wakefield (61 miles to the South). This is a huge area to be in-filled between Glasgow and Wakefield. Beyond Teesport, RFI at Selby and Goole no longer handle freight intermodal traffic. Forrest Park offers a very cost-competitive location for an rail freight interchange.

Industry forecasts assumes that further RFI will be constructed across UK, including the North East; However, the North East is an immature market and as a result currently attracts lower levels of interest compared to the Midlands.

The findings of the study were to ensure that land is left for a siding at Forrest Park to handle intermodal movements but that due to the current potential market, further investment in the rail link is not made.

Item Agenda 9: Harworth Estates Update

Unfortunately, due to the meeting running behind time on the agenda items, and that Eddie Peat had sent his apologies to the chair it was decided not to discuss this item. This will be re-introduced at the November 2017 meeting.

Item Agenda 10: Ashington Blyth and Tyne Progress Report, Keith Taylor, Northumberland County Council

KT told the group of the re-introduction of the passenger service, Ashington to Newcastle saying that the Grip 2 was now finalised. The projected costs were in the region of £191m, the risk factor being 40% planned over several years. The good news was that a survey train was to be run in the next month, and the setting up of a workshop to discuss the results of Grip 2. Northumberland set aside a budget of £5m for 2017-18 for a Grip 3 study.

He stated that Nexus was to support the scheme on signalling and Network rail to support Grip 3. However, the council leadership has changed so they are waiting for outcomes and the setting up of committees.

The operational date has been set for 2021.

Item Agenda 11: Designing a Baggage Collection Point at Newcastle Central Station, Calvin Yeung, Newcastle University

CY discussed his thesis for his MSc course at Newcastle University, to investigate the possibility of building a baggage collection point at Newcastle Central station based on simulation exercise.

He is using the Newcastle Central Station as a major station along East Coast Main Line which is a similar concept of HK Airport Express Line for city centre luggage drop off.

The methodology used is the Investigation of compliance of service, check-in points, storage and movement within station. To simulate the bags movement he has used Simul8 software.

His initial proposal is take up the empty shop near the ticket office for baggage check-in point and build a storage point next to the main block. He plans to target customers with families, business travellers and tourists. There may be some modifications required of gate barriers to allow car movement to the suitable platforms.

Using the software he will investigate the flow of baggage within station, determine the capacity of the new system and use the results to work out the costs.

He has identified a number of practical difficulties and issues in the transfer across the bridge to Platform 3-8 which will entail the modification of existing bridge structures to allow both car/passengers. Other options available are to build a new bridge/ subway solely for this purpose or using passenger lift and lastly manpower transfer.

He has also identified potential difficulties in problems in security, the modification of train compartment which is out of scope of his research and potential delays in trains and or last minute platform alternations affecting overall movement of baggage. He has also taken into account the popularity of this service, customer confidence and the costs of this service which may be prohibitive.

It was suggested other alternatives could be utilised, e.g. use of the left luggage facility which could be enhanced and expanded. Also consider that the design of the trains was to take out non-conforming spaces to maximise the capacity for passengers, so these should be taken into account in his simulations.

Any other Business

MM announced he is hosting a rail seminar in Brazil. If anyone requires further information please contact PD.

Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 15th November 2017, at Newcastle College Rail Academy in Gateshead, reception 10:30 for 11:00 start