

North East Freight Partnership - Rail Partner Group

Date Held 18th November 2015

Venue Aecom Offices, Newcastle upon Tyne

List of Attendees and Organisation

John Bourn (Chair)	North East Combined Authority
Paul Davison	AECOM
Mike Page	AECOM
Walter Cartwright	DB Schenker
Peter Ollivere	Durham County Council
Keith Taylor	Northumberland County Council
Ann Wilson	Tees Valley Unlimited
Stuart Corker	Gateshead Council
Martin Murphy (MMu)	NECTAR
Marin Marinov (MMA)	Newrail
Anna Fraszczyk	Newrail
Andrew Carmichael	SENUG
Trevor Watson	Railfuture North East
Peter Granlund	Nexus
Alan Mayor	Carlisle Rail
Eddie Peat	Harworth Estates
Jim Hubbard	Newcastle College
Gordon Carr	CILT
Andy Foster	Port of Tyne
Paul Blackburn	Independent

Apologies

Anthony Walker	Railfuture North East
Dave Bargh	Co-Op
Edward Dunn	Network Rail
Jonathan Bell	Network Rail
John Holwell	Oxford Rail Strategy
Malcolm Bingham	FTA
John Cram	North Tyneside Council

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of last meeting

The Group accepted the minutes as a true reflection of the last meeting

Agenda Item 3 North East Rail Network Study (NERNS)/ East Coast Route Study

PD provided an update and circulated the annual leaflet. He advised that there had been a NER network study in June which will form part of the long term Network Rail planning process. The East Coast route study was also discussed.

This process includes consulting stakeholders who use rail - both passenger and freight. This information will feed into the CP6 and wider aspirations.

The demand studies will then progress onto route studies and include some conditional

outputs including connectivity and clear passenger focus.

PD advised that clearly the North East does not sit in isolation and the NERNS will feed into both the East Coast route study and the Industry Plan in 2016.

The outputs for both studies will feed into CP6 and Network Rail's Long Term Strategy. Resource issues at Network Rail have held up the timescales for the publication of the plan; it is now thought that the Plan will be published Spring 2016 although this has not been confirmed.

Regarding the ECRS, there has been a brief response from Network Rail advising that Working Groups are continuing. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

PD gave a general update which included advising that there has been increased demand and increased movements per day at Tyne Dock. Although coal traffic has decreased, an increase has been seen in biomass and a sharp increase in automotive traffic.

The closing of SSI has had an impact on freight and it is hoped that Government will be able to assist with the situation.

In rail freight news, there are still ongoing issues at the Channel Tunnel which have had a lot of media attention. Movements have dropped 33% this year, however this has not had an effect on the North East.

DB Schenker advised that they have encountered a challenging few months. The area around Calais is beginning to provide better security to stop the intrusions, which has meant, they are able to run a better service although there are difficulties after 21:00. There has been some lobbying to the Government for extra help and, although there have been improvements, there is a need to gain the customer's confidence again.

It was stated that the TEN-T network has brought 3 new corridors on board. The EU want to break down barriers affecting freight.

The National Infrastructure Commission which was created this Autumn, is an independent body that makes long term recommendations about key infrastructure for the UK. Their recommendations will feed into the Northern Powerhouse including the work which they will be doing on HS3.

PD stated that he will act a conduit for responses and do a collective response on behalf of the Group.

Transport Scotland are currently producing a high level rail freight strategy which will impact on our area. All representations which would like to be made are needed by the 22nd January 2016.

Agenda Item 4: Intermodal/ Multi-Modal: DB Schenker aspirations for the future

WC from DB Schenker gave a presentation on the aspirations and direction for his company. He stated that coal movement is significantly decreasing and it is predicted that metal movement is also going to decrease which makes the industry rather uncertain. Intermodal growth is increasing at a rapid rate but centred in and around London at the moment.

DBS is attempting to change their direction by trying to collaborate more with partners and seeing what can be done differently and thinking out of the box. Historically, movement has predominately been E-W, however is this something we need to revisit?

This area has three healthy ports, all with rail connections; these all have massive potential in the future.

It was advised that currently there are 4-5 feeder services leaving the Port of Tyne. At the moment, the majority of freight is moved by road.

DBS are currently looking at key growth markets and how we can assist in their movement of goods. WC queried whether there was potential for a Rail Freight terminal at the Team Valley which would relieve the roads of a number of trucks and lorries.

NE Ports should be feeder ports into Scotland so it is imperative to understand the markets within Scotland to be able to know what their needs are.

KT stated that there seems to be a feeling that the north east will only benefit from increased trade with the south with little mention of dealings with Scotland; there could be more collaboration between England and Scotland rail transport groups ie East Coast Main Line Study.

It was advised that there are several key locations in the NE including Tyne Yard which has good access onto the ECML, Jarrow Oil Terminal which is a purpose built terminal but needs investment, and Widdrington, Wardley and Butterwell.

There are a lot of opportunities in Northumberland, but we need to ascertain what is going in and out regarding freight.

PO stated that there is a lot of inland freight in the North West, is this something which the NE could benefit from?

There is a need to look at Nissan and the raw materials which they need and where they get them from. It was stated that a lot comes from the Port of Tyne.

It is important that we don't forget our geography and that we are both East and West facing.

It was queried where the raw materials for Hitachi were originating from and whether a lot of it was moving via road. It was stated that there is in fact very little raw materials for Hitachi. The carriages are being shipped over and the fitting out carried out over here, from parts manufactured in the UK.

WC advised that historical perceptions of rail freight tended to be detrimental to the industry and this needs to be overcome.

AW queried whether reliability had improved? It was stated that there are now more dedicated services as opposed to "piggy backing" onto other services.

JB mentioned investment and advised that there used to be DfT grants to encourage more rail freight traffic. He queried whether these were still available? It was stated that these are no longer available.

Agenda Item 5: Rail Newcastle

MM gave an overview of the activities currently ongoing at Newrail. He advised that a conference had been organised and taken place last July which engaged with rail education bodies. 50 people attended this conference which resulted in over 60 publications being produced.

The conference will be held again in 2 years' time, but the momentum will be kept by holding a post Rail-Newcastle activities workshop in June 2016.

Talent Platform held an event at the University which was coordinated by UIC which aims to attract young people to the railway industry. MM invited the Group to look at the website and contribute.

MMa also discussed Foster Rail which is a vital partnership and advises the EC on future

needs for research which will result in an implementation plan over time.

A workshop was held in Brussels in which the current situation was discussed and the direction for the future. The EC is aware of the skills shortage and need for knowledge transfer.

MMA identified in the presentation a road map which was organised through 7 elements.

MMA stated that a course is being set up in conjunction with the rail academy which will start in September 2016. The duration of the course will span 3 months and will primarily be for international students. 9 modules will be included and 3 will be delivered by Newrail including a course on English for Rail Transport.

With regards to student projects, proposals have been submitted to the University; topics include urban freight, rail automation and whether High Speed Rail can be used for freight.

MMA stated that there could be potential for a joint project with the Partnership looking into how efficient freight services/deliveries are in NE England. Is this something which the Partnership would be interested in?

JB advised that funding would be a challenge although it does sound like an interesting project and further discussions off line will be needed.

Item Agenda 6: Local Rail Opportunities affecting the North East

Update from the Port of Blyth on its Business Plan

This item was not discussed as Chris Owen was unable to attend.

Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line (ABT)- An update from Northumberland

KT stated that the GRIP2 has begun which will be completed by Summer 2016 and Network Rail are currently working on the feasibility study looking at two options- ½ hourly all day or ½ hourly through the peak and hourly at all other times.

Rail line speeds would need to be upgraded to accommodate the service. Other elements which are being looked into include; change in risk assessment at level crossings, path availability, particularly on East Coast Mainline between Benton and Newcastle Central and platform availability at Newcastle Central Station.

The ABT line is included in both Northumberland's Core Strategy as well as being mentioned in the Devolution Deal for the North East.

It is anticipated that trains could be operational from late 2019/early 2020.

The Tall Ships Event is being held in Blyth in 2016 - it was queried whether a charter rail service could be a solution to get people to and from the event? It was advised the station is not in close proximity to the port.

County Durham - Update

PO discussed the County Durham Plan and how the Group may recollect that it received a critical response from the Planning Inspectorate. Durham appealed against this and DCLG agreed that there had been flaws within the Inspectorate's report.

The Plan is to be re-submitted in Summer 2016 setting out the economic case which underpins the spatial approach.

Durham has long identified Bowburn as being a possible location for a SRFI, however a site has now been identified at Newton Aycliffe adjacent to where Hitachi are now operating. This site would be used for Rail Freight and Durham County Council are keen to promote the site as the Council would be a key delivery partner. The site will be known as Forrest Park and has already been awarded £13m Local Growth Fund to improve access and utilities on the site. This would be primarily a storage and distribution location. Durham are keen to promote this location and there have been some positive noises from key businesses who would be keen to support this site. The next step will be to commission a feasibility study. PO stated that he will keep the Group informed of any developments.

Harworth Estates Update on Butterwell Disposal Point

EP gave an update on the Butterwell Disposal Point and stated that it had been announced that all coal-fired power stations will be closed within 10 years.

There are two open cast sites at Butterwell - the Northern part of the site has rail connections and HE are currently promoting the site.

EP stated that, although both Butterwell and Widdrington are mentioned in Northumberland's Core Strategy, more could be said about the sites and further promotion is essential.

Regarding Butterwell, far too small an area is being promoted and, as there will soon be no coal, new opportunities are needed.

The Widdrington site offers new opportunities and consultants are to be commissioned to investigate these opportunities further.

It was advised that, in respect of the Wardley site which is on the Western boundary of the IAMP, Harworth Estates have achieved a success in getting the restoration obligation changed.

Item Agenda 7: Any Other Business

AC commented that, as the Partnership had been advised that timber traffic will increase over the coming years, it would be good to re-examine the case for movement of timber from Kielder Forest by rail. This was now more relevant due to the opening of the Borders Railway on 6th September 2015 as part of the Waverley Route reinstatement.

Next meeting

May 17th 2016 – venue to be confirmed.