

North East Freight Partnership - Rail Partner Group

Date Held **15th November 2016**

Venue **Hitachi Rail Plant**

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
Eddie Peat	Harworth Estates
Martin Murphy (MMu)	NECTAR
Andrew Carmichael	SENUG
Geoff Clarke	Aecom
James Turnbull	Durham County Council
Peter Walker	Rail future North East
Anthony Walker	Rail future North East
Kim Farrage	North East Combined Authority
Dave Marshall	Sunderland City Council
Tony Walker	NECTAR
Alan Chapman	Nissan
Jack Bond	Nissan
Mark Bridel	Network Rail
Stuart Clarke	Gateshead Council
Martin Foster	Sunderland City Council
Edward Dunn	Network Rail

Apologies

John Cram	North Tyneside Council
Keith Taylor	Northumberland County Council
Mike Hogg	Rail Freight Group
Gordon Carr	CILT

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of last meeting

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

Agenda Item 3 Background to Hitachi rail- this was followed by a tour of the plant

Nina Harding from Hitachi gave a brief introduction to the Hitachi site. She advised that there are currently 690 employees at this site with the intention to employ over 900 by Easter. 95% of the employees and the supply chain are within 50km.

Various contracts are currently underway for Scotrail, Intercity Express. The majority of suppliers which are used are from the North East e.g Romag and Nomad.

Hitachi are currently in the process of opening a 12 train maintenance depot which by 2017 will have taken their employees up to 2000.

Community relations is also extremely important and they invited local schools to visit during Rail Week.

Agenda Item 4: Issues and Opportunities affecting rail freight in the North

Mike Hogg was unable to attend the meeting and therefore this agenda item was not discussed.

Agenda Item 5: Network Rail Update

Mark Bridel from Network Rail gave an update on Network Rail and stated that his remit has been expanded. It was advised that Lynemouth Power station is converting to biomass and there has been some testing on services as it is expected that 5 trains per day will run from Port of Tyne to the Station by September 2017. A lot of work including possessions will have to be undertaken in advance of the opening

Network Rail has been requested to identify land for 18k homes as part of Government targets which is proving difficult. Sites continue to be assessed to establish whether they are appropriate for housing.

It was stated that there is pressure for a site at Heaton which is opposite the depot and used to be used for freight to be used for alternative purposes. Tarmac are looking for somewhere in Newcastle but do not consider it suitable. There is a need for a strategy for unused land near rail lines which can be put into a portfolio. This needs to be developed with the freight team at NR on a national level.

It was stated that NR are currently working with Port of Sunderland and there is the prospect of more traffic from the POS.

It was queried whether the majority of freight traffic to Ireland was from the Mersey or Stranraer. It was stated that at this current time it was the Mersey.

Mark was thanked for his presentation.

Agenda Item 6: Freight Interchange, Forrest Park, Newton Aycliffe

Peter Ollivere from Durham gave a presentation on the progress of a Strategic Freight Interchange in the NECA area which would be located at Forrest Park in Durham. He stated that, nationally, government are keen to see SRF interchanges being constructed around the country.

The County Durham Plan, although not published, is likely to support the RFI at Forrest Park. The reasoning for the location includes the fact that the A1 is stronger than the A19 linked to the recent investment in Hitachi and Net Park. It also aligns with the main objectives set out in the Strategic Economic Plan.

The site is on the east side of the branch line near Junction 59 with good rail connections. There is momentum around the proposed site with huge investment from Hitachi and Gestamp.

Additional benefits include a good public transport offer, spare capacity at Junction 59 for increased freight deliveries, there is also capacity on the Tees Valley line for more trains- there are direct rail line connections to the ECML and all east coast ports.

In regard to funding, Peter advised that £13m has already been committed and is currently being spent on improving access to the site, A feasibility study has also been commissioned into inter-modality looking at the current situation and any new evidence as the current evidence base is from 2011.

It was noted that the key next steps are to produce a Consultants' briefing to identify occupier interest for rail freight, deliver the enabling Infrastructure in line with the final masterplan for SRFI and continue to build on recent Aycliffe Business Park momentum and attract investors.

It was queried whether the land would be protected for rail freight in the Local Plan, it was stated that the land has been safeguarded for employment use but cannot confirm it will be designated for rail freight.

It was asked whether Network Rail has been approached. It was advised that NR have been approached and are discussing potential rail connections.

It was further advised that funding for the project is still unknown and this needs to be worked up as the specifics are worked through.

Agenda Item 7: DfT Rail Modal Shift Study 2016

Geoff Clarke gave a presentation on a study which the DfT had done on Future Potential for Modal Shift in the UK Rail Market. The work and outcomes from this strategy has fed into the DfT Freight Strategy.

Scotland have a freight strategy and now the DfT have launched theirs. The document is looking to 2030 and what will freight look like and what are the likely air quality issues.

It was advised that there are a lot of changes within the industry that are currently being grappled with e.g. coal power stations have closed at a quicker rate than anticipated which has had a detrimental effect on rail freight. There have however been some areas which has seen a growth in the utilisation of rail freight including domestic and the construction sector traffic as well as automotive.

As part of the conversation around the study, a workshop was held at the DfT to gauge people's views especially those from Port Groups. In terms of trends by commodity, construction is definitely going up and as an area continues to do so.

Trends suggest that by 2030, biomass will have become static, however there is potential for growth in the automotive sector.

There have been Identified constraints on the industry include train lengths, lack of diversionary routes and lack of electrification to name but a few. In terms of solutions, a whole raft of suggestions have been considered including new technology, digitisation of railways and new build terminals. It's not just about improvements around the infrastructure, regulations have also to be made easier for businesses.

It was stated that the best thing that government can do to address issues around air quality is by moving freight onto rail.

It was queried whether other cities like London who have banned diesel HGVs in London in some areas from 2017/18 will follow suit and have they been factored into the longer term vision. It was stated that this had occurred and consolidation centres are crucial going forward. It was also noted that the government are trialling lorry platoons next year.

Geoff was thanked for his informative presentation

Agenda Item 8: Cross-Boundary Issues and Challenges

Transport for the North

John Bourn advised that there were various workstreams being progressed by TfN but he was going to concentrate on freight and rail.

The Freight strategy was published in September 2016 and sits on the TfN website.

Within the strategy, various measures are recommended to increase freight in the North including:

- Promotion of Shipping routes to Northern Ports

- Build out of Chained Multimodal Distribution Parks
- Rail Network Upgrades
- Policy and Planning:

These measures could see outcomes including:

- 4% increase in the proportion of large distribution buildings located in the North
- 42% increase in rail freight kilometres nationally
- Larger increase in the tonnage of goods carried by rail freight to, from or within the North than for the wider UK

Next steps include:

- Reviewing the strategy due to implications from the Brexit result
- More detailed analysis of infrastructure constraints and growth opportunities across key sectors and LEP areas
- Feed in requirements to road and rail workstreams, to inform investment priorities

Northern Powerhouse Rail

Derek Gittins gave a presentation on TfN rail and advised that an early feasibility study is currently underway which will be completed via Network Rail and HS2 teams across the North's 7 routes and 7 destination stations. In addition, prioritisation of options for routes and stations is underway. This work is not to determine the prioritisation between corridors but to narrow down the options within each corridor to develop the business case for a 'preferred option'.

For the North East region, they are looking at the Leeds to Newcastle Corridor and Newcastle Central Station capacity.

It was noted that in relation to HS2, it is the trains which will be coming to Newcastle as opposed to the line.

Agenda Item 8:Northumberland Rail Update

Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line

It was stated that a paper on ABT and the GRIP2 study went to Cabinet on 11th November which was welcome. The current capital cost is £191m which is a preliminary figure.

Harworth Estates update

Eddie Peat gave an update on Harworth Estates and stated that they have 4 sites in the North East. The site at Lynemouth has a lot of activity on it at the moment including demolishing the pot buildings as well as a planning application being taken forward to develop the site and provisionally identify expansion.

Butterwell Site- this used to be a rail coal dispatch site. It is still supported in the Core Strategy as a coal connection site. They are In discussion with the Banks Group about this site.

Widdrington- this has been disconnected by Network Rail as it too expensive to maintain. It is a safeguarded site in the Core Strategy and could be attractive to a mineral operator.

Wardley- this site is within the IAMP boundary and discussions have taken place with South Tyneside and Sunderland. Eddie advised that he was very supportive of IAMP and hoped that the Wardley rail site could be recognised as a piece of infrastructure which could support the objectives of the IAMP.

Agenda Item 9: East Coast Route Strategy

It was advised that this study began in 2015 looking at the rail connection from Kings Cross to Berwick. It is a 30 year forward view and is based on market studies and other known aspirations.

It is part of the long term planning process which identifies what needs to be urgently prioritised for CP6 and options for funders like the DfT.

Main issues include the speed mix on the lines and that new physical infrastructure is an expensive solution.

It is proposed that a strategic approach will take place in order to develop enhancements packages that move towards target outputs.

A draft report will be published in the Spring with a 3 month consultation.

Agenda Item 10: AOB

No additional business was identified

Agenda Item 11- Date and Venue of Next meeting

18th May 2017- Newcastle Central Station