

Whole Industry Strategic Plan

Call for Evidence Response Form

09/12/2021

Responding to this Call for Evidence

This call for evidence launches on 9 December 2021 and will be open for eight weeks until 4 February 2022.

You may respond as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or organisations (please let us know all the organisations you are responding on behalf of) and can submit a response in the following ways:

- Online via the call for evidence [webpage](#).
- Via email to cfe@gbrtt.co.uk using this response template.

We recommend you read the call for evidence launch document in full before submitting your response.

Please send the completed response form, along with any supporting information or attachments, to cfe@gbrtt.co.uk.

In the email subject please include your name and/or organisation and 'WISP call for evidence submission'.

Confidentiality

The information you send to us may be shared with colleagues within Great British Railways Transition Team, the Department for Transport and published or referred to in the Response Summary Report response document. All information contained in your response may be subject to publication or disclosure if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you want any information in your response to the call for evidence to be kept confidential, or if it contains sensitive information, you should explain why and identify the information clearly within your response. Extracts from responses used within the Response Summary Report will be agreed with the responder before publication, where information is not already in the public domain.

I am responding on behalf of: *

One or multiple organisations

If you are responding as an individual, please move to Section 2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please fill in Section 1 and Section 2.

Section 1 – Organisation Details

Organisation name(s)*

Railfuture

Please identify the category, or categories that best describes your organisation(s)*

If multiple categories apply, please list within the “other” field below.

Passenger body or interest group

If other, please state

Please provide a brief description of the organisation(s) you are responding on behalf of.

This may include information about who the organisation represents, the size of its membership and how the views of members were obtained.

Railfuture is a not for profit campaign organisation with a remit to campaign for a bigger, better railway in Britain, fulfilling objectives of maximising rail’s contribution to the nation’s economic, environmental and social objectives. A competent and successful GBR is essential to achieving these objectives.

Railfuture is not affiliated with any rail supplier, contractor or trade union. Railfuture’s campaigning stance is to equip itself to be commercially, operationally and technically competent so as to be able to contribute from an informed position on rail industry issues with government, with the industry and with stakeholders.

Section 2 – Your details

Name

Chris Page

Email address

chris.page@railfuture.org.uk

Please choose the region you or your organisation(s) are based within*

If multiple regions apply, please list within the “other” field below.

Choose an item.

If other, please state

Great Britain

Please provide information about the reason for your interest in the Whole Industry Strategic Plan

The Secretary of State for Transport set out core goals that will define GBR. Railfuture’s response is set against the need to achieve these goals.

Railfuture aligns with the five Strategic Objectives set out by the Secretary of State:

1. Meeting Customer needs
2. Financial sustainability
3. Long term economic growth
4. Levelling up and connectivity
5. Environmental sustainability

Railfuture’s response is set against the need to support the stated GBR goals and achieve these five objectives. Railfuture’s region of interest is the whole of Britain, and covers freight and passenger rail transportation.

The response is from the Chair of the Railfuture Board, representing the Railfuture Board’s position following input from Railfuture’s branches and interested members situated throughout Britain, including branches based in Scotland and Wales. Railfuture has about 20,000 members and affiliates.

Railfuture’s evaluation of the government’s strategic objectives for the rail sector against current performance reveals that there is considerable scope for increasing the part our railways can play in addressing these objectives so improving value for money for users, stakeholders and the taxpayer. We will be pleased to discuss this response with the team.

Strategic Objectives for the Whole Rail Industry

The UK Government has developed five strategic objectives for the Strategic Plan over the next 30 years: **meeting customers' needs, delivering financial sustainability, contributing to long-term economic growth, levelling up & connectivity, and delivering environmental sustainability.** We intend to put these objectives at the heart of the Strategic Plan, and we are using them to guide all of the questions in this call for evidence.

[Click here to see more information](#)

We recognise that many of you are working to similar long-term objectives. We are very interested in how you define and quantify your objectives, and how they match or differ from our own. When considering your response to question 1, please use your experiences to inform your answers and share any examples, taking into account that in all future scenarios we expect affordability to be a significant constraint.

Question 1

- a) How would you apply these objectives to rail in your region or to your area of expertise within the transport sector? Do you have evidence you can share with us of how you have applied similar objectives in relation to rail, and do you consider the objectives to have missed any key areas?
- b) How is it possible to make progress against a number of the objectives simultaneously? Do any of the objectives have larger barriers associated with them than others, or do any objectives pose possible barriers to others? Where would you make the trade-offs?
- c) What long-term trends in wider society, the economy, and the environment will affect these five objectives over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? Please give evidence to support your response.

[Click here to see more information](#)

- d) What are the key uncertainties you consider that the Strategic Plan must be resilient to in order to be effective over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?
- e) Over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, which steps should the sector take to improve integration of rail with the wider transport system (including walking and cycling) in pursuit of these objectives?

- a) Passenger usage doubled on the railway in the 20 years to 2019. The industry did not plan for this and as a consequence suffers from issues of capacity and operational resilience issues, affecting future passenger and freight growth. It is contended that specific output targets should be set for GBR so the industry can plan efficiently for sustained growth through modal transfer in order to achieve the 5 objectives. A further doubling of passenger and freight traffic over the next 30 years would seem to be an appropriate objective.
- b) These objectives are not individual competing initiatives, they add up to a single strategic direction if GBR is tasked with a strategic objective to address them. The principal potential barrier is lack of funding.
- c) Any strategic plan must be sensitive to a range of economic growth scenarios. These include the rise in working from home (WFH) which has been accelerated by COVID. Commuter traffic will recover to some extent but it is likely that 3 days per week in the office will become the typical norm and more people will commute less frequently but further. This and sustained growth in leisure travel provides an opportunity to increase the financial sustainability of rail by smoothing demand to match a consistent service frequency throughout the day. The potential introduction of road pricing would make the true cost of travel more apparent and comparable. The other key uncertainty is how public attitudes to profligate consumption (of which car based personal transport may be considered an example) will change. A small modal shift from personal transport to public transport would represent a major increase in demand for rail transport; for example a 1% shift from car to rail represents a 10% increase in rail demand. The strategy must plan for various scenarios and be reviewed regularly to compare the scenarios to actual outcome. Environmental objectives for the UK are well set out and defined. The key however is for rail to contribute to the government's overall transport objectives by modal shift, rather than simply depending on economic growth projections to plan for future demand.
- d) Achieving the objectives is dependent on wider government policy. It is essential that government policy supports, not conflicts, with these objectives eg competition law should not prevent bus and rail operators working together to provide integrated services. GBR must be in a position to deliver these objectives with efficient service and project capability, and continuity of direction and a funded rolling programme of capacity, reliability and resilience projects.
- e) In terms of achievement of these objectives, rail is not sustainable if considered as a free standing transport option. Rail must be considered as the backbone of a proper integrated transport system for Britain. Within 5 years, sponsorship of transport corridor upgrade plans must be organised in such a way as to consider transport corridors, as recently tested on the Southampton to Birmingham freight corridor. This requires a different organisation at DfT. Similarly Regional Transport bodies should be rationalised and tasked with specific stakeholder input into GBR development plans, not repeating the disorganised mess seen recently in the north of England, when confronted with the need to upgrade railways and properly integrate HS2-E into the strategic requirements of the region.

Meeting customers' needs

Rail industry customers broadly fall into two types: passengers and freight. The rail network provides important benefits to the customers who rely on it. The Plan for Rail says that passengers must receive high-quality, consistent services day in, day out. This means accessible, reliable journeys that are well connected with other transport services and include new customer offers at stations and on trains.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the rail freight industry has shown its resilience and agility, working to transport food and medical supplies around the country. This example, and others given in the Plan for Rail, highlight how important rail freight is to our economy now and in the future, and how we will develop growth targets for freight that will be included in the Strategic Plan. The Plan for Rail says of freight: 'national co-ordination, greater opportunities for growth and strong safeguards will put rail freight on the front foot.'

When considering your responses, please take account of the likelihood of changes in levels or patterns of passenger and freight demand over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, what that would mean for the rail system, and what will the interventions be over that period that will provide the maximum value for money.

Question 2

- a) Passenger: how will rail passenger expectations, including accessibility requirements, evolve over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years, what will be the driving causes of these changing expectations, and how can they be most effectively met by the rail sector?
- b) Passenger: in your experience, how can we most effectively monitor and assess customer satisfaction? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What evidence can you share to support your view?
- c) Freight: what evidence can you provide regarding the advantage(s) of transporting goods by rail and what evidence can you share for how that could develop in the next 5, 10 and 30 years? What do you consider to be the most effective role for rail freight in the existing supply chains served and those that it doesn't? How could this change over that period? In answering, please explain and take account of likely developments in technology and in the wider economy.
- d) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your claim?

- a) Passengers will expect rail to be able to deliver reliable, comfortable (proper seats with sufficient legroom, aligned with windows, as well as working toilets and space for pushchairs, luggage and bikes), sensibly priced transport in association with other transport modes including access to the station on foot, by cycling or by other road modes such as cars, buses, trams and taxis. Passengers expect payment to be simple, value for money with understandable pricing. Expectations will rise in line with performance of other modes, so rail must be proactive in achieving integrated transport and remove barriers such as poor connections and the present half-hearted approach to accessibility at stations. A key development must be Mobility as a Service (MaaS), an emerging type of service that, through joint digital channels enables users to plan, book, and pay for multiple types of mobility services, including rail, and locally provided services. Decisions which affect passengers must be taken as close to the passenger as possible, by people with authority and detailed knowledge. In the short term the key is information, but real progress will only be made if specific objectives are set such as 5 year (system 25% accessible), 10 year (50% accessible), 30 year (fully accessible) targets to make the system accessible and to provide integrated transport with clear wayfinding. Passengers need to feel secure at stations and on trains.
- b) The best measure of customer satisfaction is a growing user base together with a consistent rail product so that passengers have a clear idea as to their expectations. The current myriad of key performance indicators and compensation schemes is testament to planning for failure to meet expectations.
- c) The environmental advantages of conveying freight by rail are well defined and documented with a train typically producing 6 times less CO₂ and fewer particulates than 76 trucks. This advantage only applies of course if freight customers choose to use rail, which depends on whether rail can provide the quality, flexibility and reliability of service required. Pricing clearly must be competitive and any capital costs of the equipment necessary must be covered to effect modal transfer. More generally the railway needs the capacity to grow freight in order to take on new business. Interestingly, rail freight operators have made the transition to a modern freight railway for both heavy haul and for largely intermodal, supply chain distribution. The objective now is to build on this with innovative ways of moving freight at higher speeds and directly into city centres, linking with zero-carbon last-mile delivery, to achieve modal transfer.
- d) GBR should plan to achieve increases in freight on the network of +25% in 5 years, +50% in ten years and + 100% in 30 years. Value for money interventions are needed to ensure that rail capacity and electrification schemes provide for freight strategically, and the need to re-introduce freight facility grant schemes to facilitate transfer freight to rail operation. An international freight initiative is also required alongside the EU freight initiatives because so much freight is international, so capitalising on the under-utilised Channel Tunnel in terms of through freight trains.

Delivering financial sustainability

Rail is both a public service, supported by the taxpayer, and a business, run by private operators, with paying passenger and freight customers. The railways have received unprecedented levels of public support throughout the pandemic, protecting the essential services that people, including commuting key workers, rely on. As the recovery and rail reform gains pace, as with all areas of public expenditure, there is an onus on the rail sector to ensure value for money for users and taxpayers in how funds are used, and it must harness the incentives of the private sector to deliver the service in the most cost-effective way.

The railway, accordingly, must seek to deliver infrastructure and services more efficiently, in order to maximise beneficial outcomes while balancing costs against revenue and taxpayer funding. This is more than just a short-term issue: we are clear that reducing the cost of the railway, increasing efficiency including through innovating with private partners, and achieving a better deal for users and taxpayers is a critical priority over the next 30 years.

When considering your answer to the question below, please consider how we can support greater efficiency (such as joined up operations), innovation, alternative sources of funding and/or cost base reduction. Similarly, what steps you would propose to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of infrastructure projects, operation and maintenance, and what evidence you have to support your response.

Question 3

Where are the most significant opportunities and barriers to delivering financial sustainability in the rail sector over 5, 10, and 30 years and how do we achieve/overcome them? How can we most effectively monitor and assess this? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money?

It is now over 15 years since the McNulty Rail Review was commissioned on rail costs. It concluded that rail costs were generally about 30% higher than they should be when benchmarked against a theoretical, efficient railway. Nothing happened as a result, in part owing to the complexity of the rail industry structure and lack of aligned incentives, but also importantly, owing to the lack of a continuous programme of investment in enhancement projects such as electrification.

To repeat this would probably fail again, leading to an erosion of the quality of the product, just at a time when improvements are needed to attract traffic, build revenue and deliver the economic, environmental and levelling-up benefits being sought. However specific initiatives such as further extension of Driver Only Operation and Driver Controlled Operation and more flexible rostering are important to facilitate extra capacity within existing resources.

Financial stability with a view to a reasonable price offering is essential. Railfuture contends that a three point plan is required;

- Bank the costs, increase output and hence efficiency, grow the business ie government fiscal policy has to encourage modal shift.
- Simplify the structure so that most costs are focussed on output rather than internal processes, engaging with staff to identify productivity improvements
- Implement a careful, predictable and continuous investment programme of enhancement projects and renewals to encourage suppliers to build up team delivery skills, using systemised processes to minimise unit costs.

In the short term, the industry must face up to difficult choices to meet the government demand for lower costs, for example between introducing DOO and reducing services. Such choices must be made on the basis of bottom line impact; whilst the former may impact customer satisfaction, the latter would certainly reduce revenue.

Contributing to long-term economic growth

Rail helps to boost productivity and growth through improved connectivity and job creation, enables supply chains, delivers goods to businesses and consumers and directly employs over 240,000 people (source: the rail sector in numbers). Among other factors, such as population growth, long term economic growth is influenced by emerging technology, and innovative, more effective ways of thinking and doing things. Over the next 30 years, wider economic, social, environmental and technological trends will change the role rail plays in our economy. It will be for the whole sector to demonstrate that it cannot only continue to deliver wide economic benefits in the face of a changed economy but that it can find new ways to catalyse growth and prosperity.

When considering your answer to the questions below, please share examples of any relevant local, regional and national growth and productivity, and examples of innovations and technology from the UK and abroad, research into trends that may influence rail's contribution to economic growth, and/or new ways of thinking that should be used in or for the rail sector over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years.

Question 4

- a) As Britain recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, what evidence do you have for how rail can contribute to wider economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What type of interventions over that period will provide maximum value for money from rail's economic contribution, and what evidence can you share to support your views?
- b) In the context of enabling development and regeneration opportunities both in the immediate vicinity of stations and within the surrounding area, how can rail best facilitate improvements to places and local growth, through improved connectivity and unlocking commercial activity, housing, and employment over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?
- c) What innovative and modernising ideas do you have which would benefit the railway while supporting the strategic objectives? Please give evidence and make reference to how they would maintain or enhance the railway's safety record.

A key reason for continued investment in railways is rail's contribution to economic growth, including the economic benefit of the agglomeration effect of sustaining Britain's cities and towns. This can only be achieved if regional and city development planning includes rail, in partnership with GBR. This is important – rail connectivity will not bring about regeneration by itself, it must be in conjunction with other initiatives to make the area more competitive. The development of Canary Wharf with the Docklands Light Railway in London is an example of such a successful partnership. The stakeholder interface needs to be clearly defined so that GBR can respond and provide for the economic needs of the country.

The economic growth benefit of on-going investment in rail has been documented. Investment schemes such as the business plan for Crossrail in London are based on economic benefits. These arguments also apply to smaller more regional rail schemes such as the Borders railway project in Scotland, which has resulted in economic, regeneration and “levelling up” benefits. Railfuture's response is set against the need to achieve these wider economic and social inclusion goals.

- a) COVID has put all this on hold although most of these underlying benefits of rail remain, provided time is allowed for the railway to recover. Cutting back and pre-empting these long term benefits is unlikely to be in the interests of the economic, and certainly not the environmental interests of the country. The intervention necessary is to better integrate support for rail services and investment into the economic needs of the country at national, regional and local level. Rail should be provided on the basis of directly responding to these quantified needs.
- b) The planning context for enabling regeneration and redevelopment opportunities, including both new housing around stations and rail links into warehouse areas and factory complexes, needs an overhaul so as to incorporate rail access into future plans around existing rail stations and freight connections, and enabling new ones. This includes provision for access to employment. Oversight commercial development can generate additional value. Section 106 needs widening in scope or Land Value Capture schemes utilised to facilitate more housing opportunities in a sustainable way that does not leave the Local Authority with a problem to provide access schemes.
- c) GBR must accommodate innovation and provide a framework for welcoming ideas particularly to enhance the customer interface, including personal safety when using the railway or interfacing with the railway using level crossings and bridges. GBR should have call on research capabilities to evaluate more technical areas such as tram-train designed to reduce system pressure at pinch points, and more effectively use the rail network to facilitate regional transport integration and improvements. Railway operational safety is at a high level, but requires innovation to reduce the cost of advanced control systems designed to release more capacity from the railway's infrastructure. A funded research programme is essential, best coordinated with partner organisation on standards such as the EU.

Levelling up and connectivity

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up has outlined four key outcomes on which the government will focus:

- Empowering local leaders and communities;
- Boosting living standards by growing the private sector and improving productivity and connectivity;
- Spreading opportunity and improving public services; and
- Restoring local pride.

Rail has an important part to play in working toward these outcomes, and particularly so in connecting the nations, regions and communities of the UK. Improved rail links can connect people to jobs, education and skills, high-quality housing, social opportunities, services, and green spaces, as well as encouraging the growth of businesses, and attracting leisure visitors into an area. Improving stations and surrounding areas can also act as a catalyst for regeneration and development and a cause for local pride.

At present, usage of rail differs widely across the UK; before the pandemic, almost two thirds of all rail journeys made were in London and the south east ([Rail Sector in Numbers report from 2019](#)).

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail can be used to improve connectivity and local economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years.

Question 5

- a) What evidence can you provide for how the rail sector contributes to the four levelling up outcomes and to improving connectivity across Great Britain, including through cross-border services? How does this change depending on the type of place where the sector operates (including in cities, towns and rural areas), and what are the most cost-effective ways at the sector's disposal to improve that further during the next 5, 10, and 30 years?
- b) How could the rail industry, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years, become more responsive to, and more accountable to, local communities and passengers? Please give evidence and examples in your response.
- c) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?

- a) Properly integrated transport is the key to levelling up, providing access to jobs, education, services and leisure. It is also essential to consider Britain as an entity with no region deprived of efficient transportation, so they can all participate in the economic success of the country. London and the South East benefits from a comprehensive transport system with projects such as Thameslink and Crossrail justified upon the economic benefits to the region. Other regions under-perform, as do opportunities to link regions amongst themselves and to Scotland and Wales, on account of poor transport links and road and rail congestion. Both electrified railways to Scotland are saturated. HS2 is an important step in linking London to the West Midlands, North West and North East but was, until recent HS2 –East considerations, considered as a free standing project. A strategic plan to integrate HS2 into the rail network in the East Midlands and Yorkshire is a far more powerful approach to address the levelling up agenda. Conversely none of the three links to South, Central and North Wales are fulfilling their potential (South Wales electrification stops at Cardiff, the Central Wales rail link is poor and slow and the North Wales link, formerly a main line to Holyhead, is run down. The Union Connectivity exercise identified key corridors for transport links from England to Scotland, Wales and Ireland. We would expect the Union Connectivity exercise to be incorporated into the strategic Plan. Similarly the opportunity must be taken to review the changing demographics within England, Scotland and Wales and upgrade rail capacity to serve regional centres as well as the big cities effectively, with the specific aim of effecting modal shift to rail within and between regions. Targets suggested are 5 years +10%, 10 years +50%, 30 years +100% ie a phased increase in rail traffic reflecting the slower start for investment projects. This is a realistic but not comprehensive target as applying this still leaves most regions behind London and the South East. The economic effect of increasing productivity of the whole country to that of London and the South East must far outweigh sensible, careful investment in rail upgrades.
- b) Extending effective transport to smaller communities is also important if they are to benefit from the levelling up agenda. Adding extensions to the rail network, such as re-openings subject to the government's rail reopening agenda, is a cost effective way of facilitating this, as does the provision of more meaningful integrated transport outside major conurbations. Community Railways as a way of engendering community involvement as railway stakeholders are an important initiative, although it is essential that such railways are operated as part of a UK wide rail network so addressing the wider levelling up agenda. GBR must be equipped with empowered local managers to respond to a hierarchy of stakeholders, community, local authority, regional and national, taking into account the effective use of system capacity, to ensure that services satisfy local needs and aspirations. Contributory revenue from a local branch line to the network can far outweigh local allocated revenue, so treatment of these railways operationally and commercially as part of the national system is essential for their survival.
- c) The same 10%, 50%, 100% targets are suggested for all these questions as modal shift is the key to railway contribution and GBR must provide an integrated solution to the strategic targets proposed. Continuous attention to value for money is essential and these means increased value through more users and reduced unit costs from developments based upon a continuous programme of development of delivery skills.

Delivering environmental sustainability

The Plan for Rail commits to the creation of a comprehensive environment plan that will establish rail as the backbone of a cleaner future transport system, one that aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. That plan, the Sustainable Rail Strategy (SRS), will be one of the inputs to the Strategic Plan, and will build on and develop a strategy for achieving the policy commitments set out in both the UK's [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) and the [Rail Environment Policy Statement](#) that were published in July 2021, as well as the Net Zero Strategy from October 2021.

In addition to tackling the causes of climate change, the rail network must also be able to adapt to the changes already being seen. This means preparing for the impact of extreme weather events and increasing the resilience of the rail network to the impacts of these events – for example, flooding.

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail and the rail estate can contribute to wider national and regional environmental policy agendas, support decarbonisation, conserve and enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and increase renewable power generation.

Question 6

- a) What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?
- b) What use can the rail sector make of emerging or existing technologies to reduce its impact on the environment and enhance biodiversity over the next 5, 10, and 30 years, and, in a proportionate and cost-effective way, help national and regional authorities to meet their environmental objectives?
- c) How can rail best invest in climate resilience, supported by smarter forecasting, planning and technology, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years and what evidence do you have to support your view?

- a) The brief lists some of the many extant sustainability strategies. The key missing ingredient is to implement them, giving due consideration to the part the railways can play in achieving overall government transport objectives. Making the railways carbon neutral is important but as a lone target, this potentially seriously underplays the benefits investment in railways can bring to making transport environmentally friendly (including minimising the extraction of minerals such as cobalt and lithium). Railfuture therefore contends that the 2050 net zero carbon neutrality target for the railways should be supplemented by modal shift targets, supported by fiscal policy, to bring earlier and more substantial carbon reduction benefits to the transport sector overall, hence the suggested modal shift targets listed under several headings in Railfuture's response.
- b) For passenger services the key is a rolling programme of electrification based on skilled teams, not starting from contractual scratch each time. The schemes should be incremental so maximising the use of electric trains across the network. This includes short branches where long distance diesel operation under the wires can be avoided (eg Windermere branch, replacing diesel operation from Windermere to Manchester Airport). There are also many other, particularly urban, examples potentially capitalising on electrified city terminals such as in Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester). To achieve this no more diesel-only multiple unit trains should be introduced on the network. Future orders should be bimodes, as recently deployed on all non-electric routes in East Anglia. Longer term, future passenger trains should be electric or electric/other fuel (including biofuel and hydrogen) hybrids. We recognise that current bimodes are electric/diesel and more development is necessary to move to electric/other fuel bimodes. A route such as London Waterloo to Exeter should be a target for the next stage of bimode development, as should Cross Country and Scotrail Inter City. The electrification plan described allows, in vehicle numbers terms, for a rolling stock cascade of some current bimode trains onto other routes so extending electrically operated mileage. The electrification base proposal includes completion of the Midland Main Line (to Leeds) and the GW Main line to Bristol and beyond Cardiff to Swansea. For freight, the immediate environmental issue is modal shift from road haulage to rail where an existing diesel locomotive replaces 70-80 trucks, even if not carbon free itself. Targets for freight diesels would not apply for 5 years until effective bimodes have been delivered and certain infill electrification schemes delivered, particularly connecting UK ports (especially Liverpool, Southampton and Felixstowe) to the West Coast Main Line, with its additional capacity as a result of HS2 transfers.
- c) Network Rail has ample evidence that climate change is affecting the condition of rail infrastructure resulting in a series of bridge and embankment wash outs as well as flooding as a result of inadequate sea defences. A number of accidents have occurred such as the fatal Stonehaven wash-out in 2020. Asset monitoring is important but the real answer is competent risk assessment and a funded programme of asset enhancement, including drainage works. Value for money is obtained by a continuous programme, not reactive repairs following an accident.