



campaigning
by the
Railway Development
Society Limited

Freight Group

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26th November 2012

Dear Sirs,

Network Rail Property Consultation

Introduction

Railfuture is pleased to submit this response to the NR Property Consultation, which has been prepared by our Freight Group with contributions from individuals and branches.

Railfuture is a national voluntary not for profit organisation, limited by guarantee, and structured in England as twelve regional branches and two national branches in Scotland and Wales.

In providing this response, we have limited our comments to areas that mirror our voluntary status thus leaving others best placed to submit an industry prospective.

NO PART OF OUR RESPONSE IS CONFIDENTIAL

Comment

In general terms, we support the open-access/multi-user theme of the paper. It has the scope to increase the carriage of freight by railway transportation. This could support UK Government targets of reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, and by 34% by 2020 (relative to 1990 levels). De-carbonisation of freight transport through a modal shift from road to rail seems certain to be a key route to achieving this.

Our only reservations are listed below:

We note the statutory and regulatory mechanisms in place but we are concerned that some sites may be sold by Network Rail as 'for no future railway use'. In particular, sites marked as 'non-freight sites' are vulnerable for release for alternative use.

The wording regarding 'non-freight sites' presumes that all future freight development will be standardised in trainload/block train services. There is no consideration of alternative or innovative ideas, as for example services that would require smaller regional or urban/inner-city sites to handle bi-modal trailers, freight multiple units or single wagonloads. Potentially these may capture niche or premium logistics traffic such as air cargo, fast moving consumer goods, high-value consignments, mail and parcels.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

Railfuture considers that the Freight Site Review should include workshops to examine 'non-freight sites' in more detail. The Workshops would include trade bodies, professional institutes, local authorities and the voluntary sector. The latter group would enable environmental, user and specialist lobbies to put alternative points of view.

In relation to locations or potential locations that become 'freight reserved', preservation of operational connections to the national network is vitally important as reconnection results in considerable cost to the operator/developer at a later date.

The opportunity for Network Rail to provide an independent ground staff should be included as a commercial service to open access, smaller and new entrant companies.

The process documented may seem overly complex in expanding the use of rail to third parties that are typically road orientated.

We trust you will find these comments of use.

Yours faithfully,

PWakefield

Peter Wakefield
Railfuture
Head of Freight Group