

Freight Customer Panel

21 September 2020

The Freight Customer Panel is part of ORR's wider commitment to engage directly with freight customers. The panel provides a structured forum for engagement and helps to ensure our policies and regulatory decisions take into account the commercial environment that freight customers work within. The panel members assist us by contributing views, expressing opinions and advising us on freight issues. This note summarises the main themes and issues discussed at the ninth meeting of the Freight Customer Panel.

Freight Customer Panel members: Chris Swan (Tarmac), David Turner (WH Malcolm), Maggie Simpson (RFG), Martin Woor (HPUK), Simon Blake (Aggregate Industries), Colin Denman attended in place of Robert Brook (VTG Rail), apologies from Alex Veitch (FTA), Paul Garnham (MSC).

The September panel on was attended by ORR officials and chaired by Martin Jones. This was the second session to meet by video conference. The panel focused on the following themes:

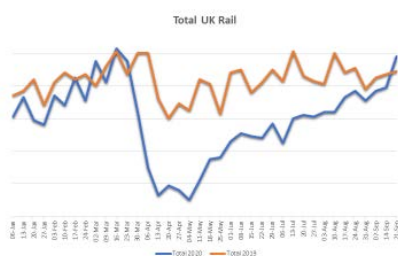
Previous meeting

The May meeting had discussed (3rd party) permanent way infrastructure. It was noted that this was an ongoing discussion.

Freight Customer perspective

Chris Swan presented on how Covid-19 had impacted rail freight and the prospects for recovery.

Tarmac 2020 – Covid impact



Tarmac. Building our future

1

Future State priorities

- Business recovery post Covid
 - Demand forecasting
- Railway post Covid
 - 30% of the people on 90% of the trains
 - What is the best use of the network going forward?
 - Doing railfreight better – more capacity, longer and faster trains
 - Embrace more technology to improve safety and delivery
- Decarbonisation
 - Industry Roadmap required (not just long term plan)
- HS2
 - Opportunity
 - Is the network prepared to do what is necessary to deliver it?
 - Increase in tonnage is significant

Tarmac. Building our future

2

The panel discussed issues of prolonged uncertainty; securing capital. Longer term decarbonisation is an opportunity for rail freight but it needs a road map.

Health and Safety update (Patrick Talbot)

Patrick Talbot provided an update on ORR's Freight Safety Performance 2019-20. ORR Annual Report of Health and Safety Performance on Britain's Railways 2019/20¹.

Action: Patrick Talbot will follow up question on whether ORR was involved in RSSB's work on 'trespass identification of risk'.

¹ <https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/om/annual-health-and-safety-report-2019-20.pdf>

Current regulatory issues

The panel discussed:

- Covid
- Brexit
- HS2
- PR23
- NR regulation, route devolution, congested infrastructure
- Impact of end of franchising and the regulatory framework.

Next Panel meeting

The next panel meeting will be held by video conference in six months. Gordon will invite DfT representative. The Panel favoured holding a 'virtual' freight customer event in the New Year or before. Suggested topics included PR23, NR strategy, 'penalties' and performance regimes.