

Freight Customer Panel

27 April 2021

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 Wool (HPUK), Simon Blake (Aggregate Industries), Colin Denman (VTG Rail), Zoe McLernon for Alex Veitch (FTA), Paul Garnham (MSC). The panel on was attended by ORR officials and chaired by Martin Jones. This was the third session to meet by video conference under Covid conditions.

Previous meeting

Martin Jones referred to the notes of the September 2020 panel meeting [here](#). Patrick Talbot (Rail Freight Safety Lead) confirmed ORR was involved in RSSB's work on trespass identification of risk.

Health and safety

Patrick Talbot updated the panel on H&S developments and cases. ORR is issuing level crossing guidance. Slides available here:



2021 04 27 Freight
Customer Panel Pres

Reform and PR23

Siobhán Carty and the team presented on ORR's preparations for PR23. There was an emphasis on the access charges and performance regimes. The Panel commented that freight customers should be included early on in PR23 development, and highlighted the need for early clarity and dialogue over any proposals that would affect them. In respect of charges, the Panel said that ORR should review whether the variable usage charge provides the right incentives for investment in better wagon technology (e.g. track-friendly bogies). They also said that the freight-specific charge should not be set in a way which penalises recent rail-specific investments made by freight customers.

Value of Rail Freight

Jonathan Chatfield and Laurence Atchison (RDG) presented on the new Value of Rail Freight report. This is available on the RDG website here <https://media.raildeliverygroup.com/news/new-research-shows-rail-freight-is-levelling-up-britain-and-cutting-emissions-across-the-country>

Access issues

The Panel covered:

- The importance of railfreight to the economy. Need for managed solutions to any access issues.
- 3rd parties' interests in some Network Code provisions (eg Part J and Network Change).

Next Panel meeting

The next panel meeting will be September or October 2021.

ORR will plan for the next freight customer event with a focus on charges, PR23 etc.