

Freight Customer Panel

12 May 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 eighth 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), Robert Brook (VTG Rail), Alex Veitch (FTA), Paul Garnham (MSC).

The panel on 12 May was attended by ORR officials and chaired by Catherine Williams.

This was the first session to meet by video conference. The panel focused on the following themes:

Health and Safety update (Patrick Talbot)

Patrick Talbot provided an update on ORR's COVID advice documents. He said that further advice would be available soon. Paul Appleton also contributed, explaining that RDG also provided advice and describing the relationship with ORR and government advice.

Greg Strong presented on permanent way management [for 3rd party infrastructure]. There was a discussion of who would have time/resources and willingness to take the issue forward. ORR noted this and will make enquiries.

Industry challenges

Panel members advised on the impact of Covid19 on rail freight business. Domestic intermodal is holding, deepsea international container is volatile and construction traffic dropped considerably. There could be a bumpy period ahead. Panel noted that rail freight companies have not had any government subsidy, beyond the measures available to other industries. Schedule 8 discussions are ongoing. There has been good co-operation with Network Rail. The Panel discussed the challenges facing the industry.

Next Panel meeting

The next panel meeting will be held by video conference in the autumn or earlier if warranted.



Permanent Way Management

A View from the ORR

Gregory Strong

Permanent Way Management – Hams Hall

2



■ Hams Hall:

- Train derailed on ABP infrastructure and continued onto mainline.
- Significant damage to NR infrastructure caused.
- Faults identified in the maintenance processes, which potentially led to the incident.
- Other possible risks identified in boundary measures.

ORR Inspection Aims

- Current track maintenance and inspection regimes, including the frequency and type of inspections.
- The process to review, assess and address the risk from faults identified through the inspection regime (e.g. defect classification codes, minimum action codes, etc.).
- The decision making processes in place for track renewals, specifically when track renewals are deferred.
- The competence of the staff responsible for overseeing track inspection and maintenance.



Companies Inspected



4

General Findings



- Significant variability in processes company to company:
 - In house vs. contractors
 - Track standards vs. contractor reliance
 - Inspection types – basic visual inspections, ultrasonics, etc.
 - Boundary conditions and relationship with NR
 - Competency requirements

5

Recommendations and Observations

1. Standardised track inspection and maintenance standards.
2. Assess the risks associated with derailments at boundaries with Network Rail and implement outcomes.
3. Harmonisation of track staff competency requirements.

ORR

6

ORR