Road to Rail Seminar Report

Held on 24th May 2012 at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Transport Directorate
Aviation, Ports, Freight and Canals

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1   Introduction

A Scottish Freight and Logistics Advisory Group seminar was facilitated by Transport Scotland on 24 May 2012. It was attended by members of the logistics sector, representatives from trade associations, business, members of Regional Transport Partnerships, Local Authorities and Transport Scotland.

The aim of the seminar was twofold:

- the identification of barriers faced by logistic companies to move goods by rail rather than road (this included small infrequent loads); and
- what were the enablers to allow modal shift.

To stimulate debate, a series of presentations were given, coupled with syndicate work aimed at drawing together ideas and thoughts from delegates. Details of the presentations are contained within the body of the report, which also highlights the broad themes raised during the seminar.

2   Network Rail Presentation

David Simpson (Managing Director Scotland) gave a presentation on the role of Network Rail in the movement of goods.

A short Q&A session then followed which included discussion on:

- the rail operating companies can do more to dispel the myths / negative perceptions which some hauliers have e.g. moving goods by rail is too expensive and difficult an undertaking to consider;
- timetables are published for passengers, it would be useful if a similar service was available for the movement of freight by train;
- Network Rail is flexible and adaptable about any potential service. The imaginative use of equipment e.g. line side loading, can be a cost effective tool to enable new services to be introduced;
- freight terminals require committed volumes to enable them to be a success. Also it had to be remembered that the building of a new terminal doesn't automatically mean that new business will be generated, hence prior to work commencing any potential terminal required committed traffic.
- the cost of moving goods by rail was dependant upon a number of variables which included:
  - potential collection of goods from customer;
  - terminal handling (at both ends);
  - terminal storage of goods;
  - rail haulage charge;
  - potential onward delivery;
  - equipment hire e.g. HGV etc.

3   Malcolm's / Russell Group Joint Presentation

John Holwell (Rail Development Manager) and Ken Russell (Director) gave a joint presentation on how goods can be moved on behalf of hauliers.

After the presentation a short discussion took place and points raised included:

- approximately 30% of the goods moved on train by Malcolm's and the Russell group is for third parties;
- although Malcolm's and the Russell Group were competitors, when required, they collaborated to ensure the delivery of customers goods;
- customers were kept fully informed of any issues that arose that could delay the delivery of goods by train;
- theft from trains was not considered to be an issue to concern customers. (Network rail work closely with the British Transport Police to maintain the safety of the service.)

4 Broad Themes

The broad themes that were identified during syndicate work included:

- lack of equipment was seen as a barrier to the use of rail, example given was bulk tanks for whisky from Elgin to central belt;
- getting product onto rail was tricky to get started, plus there was the issue of more traffic coming north that going south;
- there was acknowledgement that rail had improved over the last 10 years;
- the vast majority of freight movements were over a short distance, these usually are not suitable for rail haulage;
- with rail there was also the issue of having a suitable terminal at the origin and destination, this wouldn't always fit in with actual movements;
- it was felt that there needed to be someone to pull together the road and rail sides to make the transition easier for people;
- rail operating companies were perceived as being difficult to deal with;
- in the digital age it was felt that road and rail hauliers need to get more information on the web, it was difficult to find details on the internet;
- Network Rail were putting in longer passing loops down south and there was also the possibility of the use of electric trains which could take more traffic, this should result in lower costs in the future;
- most goods moved on rail happen at night;
- the Freight Transport Association and Road Haulage Association can advise members on the movement of goods by rail;
- the whisky industry is keen on the movement of goods by rail but has many hurdles to overcome;
- rail was seen as being too slow in getting out quotes for work;
- Freight Facilities Grants were still available from the Scottish Government;
- we haven't as yet reached saturation point for the amount of freight that can be handled by Scotland's rail terminals;
- the movement of goods has to be driven by business needs;
- everything moved by rail can be moved by road, not everything moved by road can be moved by rail;
- Rail Operating Companies have taken traffic from customers in the past. This cannot happen in the future.

Delegates

1. David Simpson, Network Rail
2. Anne Mackenzie, Network Rail
3. Frank Roach, Hitrans
4. Phil Flanders, Road Haulage Association
5. David Eaglesham, Road Haulage Association
6. Chris MacRae, Freight Transport Association
7. David Spaven, Rail Freight Group
8. Douglas Norris, Chartered Institute of Logistical Transport
9. Ken Russell, John G Russell
10. John Holwell, W H Malcolm
11. Nicol Wilson, Fife Silica Sands
12. Martin Gordon, The Edrington Group
13. Ian Adam, Streamline Shipping Group
14. Colin MacKinnon, Ferguson Transport (Spean Bridge) Ltd
15. Kenny Walker, ARR Craib Transport Ltd
16. Carol Campbell, Hayton Coulthard Transport Ltd
17. Roland Stiven, Confor
18. David Hardy, Diageo
19. Carol Gilbert, SPT
20. Suzanne Fraser, Diageo
21. Alan Perrie, Patersons of Greenoakhill Ltd
22. Colin Lawson, Colin Lawson Transport Ltd
23. Don Barclay, Barclay Bros Ltd
24. Trond Haugen, SEStran
25. Alex Macaulay, SEStran
26. Andrew Stirling, P D Stirling Ltd
27. Allan Galt, Galt Transport Ltd
28. David Murray, All in 1 Distribution Ltd
29. Michael Lawson, Harry Lawson Ltd
30. Nik Scott-Gray, Forth Ports
31. John Maxwell, Transport Scotland
32. Pam Stott, Transport Scotland
33. Jim May, Transport Scotland
34. David Prescott, Transport Scotland
35. Gillian Hastie, Transport Scotland
36. Peter Hunter, Transport Scotland
37. Justin Huthersall, Transport Scotland
38. Robert Boyter, Transport Scotland