

Government introduces landmark bill to create Great British Railways

New publicly owned body promises a simpler, more accountable railway with a statutory duty to grow freight but concerns remain over capacity and timetabling reform.

The government has introduced the Railways Bill, paving the way for the creation of Great British Railways (GBR), a new publicly owned organisation that will oversee track and train operations across Britain.

The reforms aim to simplify the rail system, improve user experience, and ensure greater accountability. GBR will bring together responsibilities currently spread across 17 bodies, acting as the "directing mind" for the network. It will be tasked with improving performance, supporting decarbonisation, and will have a statutory duty to promote freight growth.

The Bill also introduces a single national ticketing platform, a stronger passenger watchdog, and a new statutory role for devolved leaders in shaping regional rail priorities.

As the legislation moves forward, industry stakeholders will be watching closely to understand how the new governance model will operate in practice, particularly in areas where freight and passenger needs intersect. The transition to GBR represents a significant structural shift and will require detailed guidance to ensure freight services are protected and able

to grow. Clear mechanisms for accountability, performance management and investment planning will be central to delivering the Government's objectives.

Maggie Simpson OBE, RFG Director General, said: "We welcome the commitments for a statutory duty to promote freight, and the requirement for a freight growth target to be set by the Secretary of State. These are essential to ensuring rail freight will be a success under Great British Railways. However, our members remain concerned over the planned legal changes to create a new capacity allocation and timetabling process. It is essential that GBR offers capacity for freight through a fair, transparent and consistent process which offers long-term certainty for customers and operators, with an effective and strong right of appeal.

"We look forward to working with Government to ensure that the new legal framework works for our members and delivers on our shared ambitions for growth."

A link to the Railways Bill is [here](#). For more on this, please read our analysis article on page 6.



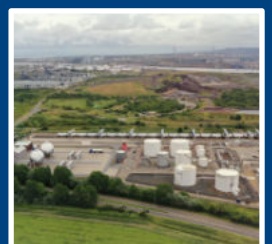
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Why planning reform must protect rail terminals

*Maggie Simpson OBE,
Director General, Rail Freight Group.*

At our recent AGM and Autumn Members' Meeting we were able to visit the new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Northampton Gateway which opened earlier this year. The rail terminal is extensive and provides significant new capacity for growth, and the adjacent warehousing is being developed at pace, with Yusen Logistics already in situ next door to the railhead. It is fantastic to see the investment which has been made and to be reminded of how rail is supporting business and retail supply chains at scale in these new locations.

Not all rail terminals are large though, and in fact many of our construction terminals are squeezed into small sites dotted around the country and in particular in cities and urban centres. There is a good reason for this – the building projects that these sites support are most often in these places, and products such as ready mix concrete and asphalt need to be made close to where they are used. Using rail to bring in raw materials keeps HGVs off urban roads, but having industrial sites in cities can bring its own problems, particularly where new houses are built close by. Many of our members have frequent challenges with inappropriate adjacent development leading to complaints about noise and dust risking operating restrictions. Worse still, sites are often desired for residential development risking the total loss of rail facilities.

Of course, building more houses is a good thing. The nation urgently needs more homes than we have, and the construction industry will benefit from an upturn in activity which in turn supports more rail freight. So, we are absolutely not opposed to measures to get Britain building but to achieve this we need to make sure that rail freight terminals are protected and not undermined. A number of recent planning changes are therefore causing some alarm, including the ability for a default 'yes' for homes near train stations, as well as thousands of new homes on railway land. Unless these new units come with appropriate designs, noise mitigation and safeguarding of adjacent industrial land they could well make severe difficulties for freight sites, and indeed potentially for overnight trains and passenger depots and stabling as well. Our members are raising these concerns with us, and we have had some helpful presentations from Platform 4, Network Rail's new property company. We have also written to the Rail Minister over proposed changes to the British Standards on noise reduction for buildings which could make it harder for members to challenge the design of new homes. It is essential that we do not throw out the baby with the bathwater in the chase to stimulate house building.

Much of my time presently has been spent on the new Railways Bill 2025 which was presented to Parliament at the start of November. We have provided a briefing on the Bill on page 6. Between now and Christmas we expect to see the second reading of the Bill in the House of Commons, with the Committee stages starting after the festive break. The Bill is complex and quite technical, and many of the details on the future regime will be in other policies and documents which have not yet been written, including GBR's licence and the so called Access and Use policy. This is a landmark bill, and we will keep members posted on the key opportunities and challenges as they arise.

As we move towards the end of 2025, I am looking forward to seeing many members and friends at our Christmas Lunch in December, in the meantime please enjoy reading this edition of RFG News.

RFG appoints Ralph Goldney to Board and confirms re-appointment of Richard Hastings

RFG has appointed Ralph Goldney to its Board and confirmed the re-appointment of Richard Hastings, further strengthening its breadth of expertise and industry insight.

Ralph Goldney of Railfreight Consulting was formally elected to the Board for the first time at RFG's Annual General Meeting yesterday, 12 November 2025, held at Northampton Gateway Terminal. Richard Hastings, Head of Logistics at Nestlé UK & Ireland, was also re-elected at the meeting.

Each brings extensive experience and a strong commitment to promoting rail freight's role in the UK's transport and logistics sector.

Ralph Goldney has spent the past 18 years working in rail freight, initially supporting GB Railfreight in mobilising for its Metronet contract before establishing his own business, Railfreight Consulting. An engineer by training, he has led numerous projects for RSSB and Network Rail, covering topics from locomotive tractive effort to simplified signalling and End of Train devices. Ralph combines technical and commercial expertise and is passionate about advancing rail freight's contribution to the UK economy.

On his appointment, Ralph said: "The RFG has always felt like my professional home, and I'm honoured to be able to give something back. I look forward to supporting Maggie and the team, championing the benefits of rail freight, and helping strengthen our industry however I can."

Richard Hastings is a logistics professional with more than 40 years' experience, including 33 with Nestlé. He leads a team of



260 across Nestlé's transport and warehouse operations and has driven major sustainability initiatives, including switching all warehouse operations to renewable energy, replacing diesel with renewable low-carbon fuels, and promoting greater use of rail. His innovative approach has helped overcome challenges such as loading-gauge constraints, enabling a significant shift from road to rail.

Richard said: "I'm delighted to have been re-elected to the RFG Board. As Nestlé continues to move more of its traffic to rail, having a close relationship with the RFG is a major enabler of us realising our modal shift ambitions."

Maggie Simpson OBE, RFG Director General, commented: "We're delighted to welcome Ralph to the Board and to confirm Richard's re-appointment. They each bring a great deal of experience, expertise and new perspectives on the rail freight sector. Their insights will be invaluable as we continue to make the case for rail freight growth."

Simon Blake of Holcim has also stood down from the Board. The Group thanked him for his significant contribution and dedicated service during his tenure.



Freightliner trials Class 93 on WCML

Freightliner, Rail Operations Group and The Malcolm Group have successfully operated a Class 93 trial from Daventry to Grangemouth and Mossend in Scotland.

This marks the first freight movement of intermodal containers using a Class 93 locomotive on the UK rail network. The Freightliner service was approximately 775 metres long and carried around 1,000 tonnes of goods, with a total train weight of about 1,700 tonnes.

Michael Leadbetter, Intermodal Operations Director at Freightliner, said: "At Freightliner, we are always looking at new, innovative ways to make rail even more sustainable for our customers and their supply chains – so this Class 93 trial is exciting for the future. From testing and trialling new technology to sourcing alternative fuels, we're driven by powering a greener future for rail and logistics."

Brian Ferguson, General Manager at Rail Operations Assets, added: "It's great to see the Class 93 entering live service within the Working Timetable, in collaboration with Freightliner and The Malcolm Group. This marks another major step in demonstrating how hybrid technology can deliver enhanced operational performance while supporting the industry's drive toward net-zero emissions."

Andrew Sumner, Rail Director of The Malcolm Group, commented: "We're really pleased to be working with Freightliner to trial a new hybrid locomotive on our services between the West Midlands and Scotland. Earlier this year we switched our Anglo-Scottish intermodal services to electric traction, significantly reducing carbon emissions for our customers. However, the operation still requires a diesel locomotive to shunt the trains at terminals. The potential of a hybrid locomotive removes this requirement, offering further environmental and performance benefits. We look forward to reviewing the results of the trial to help shape our future rail strategy."

News in Brief:

- Thank you to everyone who attended the RFG Construction Forum on 5 November. It was great to see such strong engagement and discussion around the latest developments and opportunities for rail freight in the construction sector. If you're interested in attending future forums please email maria@rfg.org.uk. RFG's next forum is its Digital Forum on 3 December.

- The rail industry has joined forces with Drax to launch a special fundraising "Super Raffle" in support of Martin House Hospice for Children and Young People. You can donate [here](#) and more details are on P31.

- The Board of Logistics UK has announced the appointment of Ben Fletcher as Chief Executive Officer. He joins on 1 December, taking up his full responsibilities in the new year.

GBRf Class 99 authorised for UK operations

GB Railfreight (GBRf) has received Authorisation for Placing Into Service (APIS) from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for its new fleet of Class 99 bimodal locomotives.

This marks a major milestone for the £150m investment developed with Stadler and Beacon Rail, which will modernise Britain's rail freight capability. The Class 99s are designed to operate on both electrified and non-electrified routes, offering greater flexibility, reduced emissions and improved performance.

Liam Day, Asset Director at GBRf, said: "Receiving ORR authorisation is another huge step forward for the Class 99, and we've been deeply encouraged by the results from recent testing. The Class 99 will set a new benchmark for sustainability, performance and safety – and we can't wait to get them out on the network for our customers early next year."

The Class 99's first revenue service is expected in early 2026.



MP supports rail freight to boost British manufacturing

Bexhill and Battle constituency MP, Dr Kieran Mullan, has shown his support for British manufacturing and for moving more manufactured material by rail to ease road congestion and damage.

On a visit and site meeting with rail freight operator, Freightliner, and British Gypsum, at the latter's production plant in Robertsbridge, Dr Mullan watched on as the day's freight train unloaded its cargo which had made its daily journey to East Sussex from the Port of Southampton. British Gypsum imports this material as part of its manufacturing process to create products which are used to line the walls and ceilings of homes, offices and buildings across the UK.

This was the second visit to British Gypsum's plant this year for Dr Mullan; his first taking the MP deep underground where British Gypsum extracts its products. The mines in East Sussex have been in operation since the discovery of the first deposit in 1876.

The MP's visit coincided with a report from the manufacturer's organisation, Make UK, calling on the Government to make rail freight a more attractive option for manufacturers by addressing the widening cost gap between rail and road freight costs, invest in rail freight corridors and logistics hubs to integrate transport and remove other barriers which are causing manufacturers to opt for lorry movements over the railway.

The rail freight industry is currently digesting the impact of legislation, which will merge Network Rail and passenger rail operators into newly formed Great British Railways. Many in the rail freight sector are concerned that the terms and price to access the railway, and the role of the regulator which currently requires Network Rail to open up new routes for freight, are being replaced with little detail as to the replacement structure or any guarantees that freight will be viewed as equals when sharing the railway with passenger services.

Speaking after his visit, Dr Mullan said: "British Gypsum is a true cornerstone of East Sussex's economy, a vital local employer



and the manufacturer of a product which is essential for building new homes and places of work. Without rail freight in this country, another 7 million lorry movements would be needed across the nation's roads. It's great to see British Gypsum bringing their materials directly into their production line by rail and minimising their road movements. With more support, their finished products could be delivered out across a national rail freight spine."

Peter Graham, attending from Freightliner, said: "It was great to show Kieran the role which rail freight plays in minimising the damage, congestion and pollution challenge which arises when HGVs are the only option for manufacturers to bring their products to market. Rail freight has huge potential to expand and we look to the Government to deliver reforms which will grow the market and help manufacturing, jobs and the economy expand in a way which is good for the country and the environment."

The Government's Railways Bill, leading to the reform of the railway, is expected to be debated by Parliament before Christmas.

CRP wins CiTTi Last Mile Logistics Award for Waterloo Freight Hub Trial

Cross River Partnership (CRP) has won the CiTTi Awards Last Mile Logistics Award for its leadership of the innovative Waterloo Freight Hub Phase 1 Trial.

The project, delivered in collaboration with Network Rail, Lambeth Council, the Department for Transport, London and

Continental Railways, Delivery Mates, Steer, Intermodality and Waterloo Station, tested the use of an underutilised arch at Waterloo Station as a sustainable logistics hub. Funded by Defra (via CRP's Smarter Greener Logistics programme) and Impact on Urban Health, the trial ran from March to July 2025.

The 1,800 sq ft space was transformed into an effective consolidation point, enabling parcels to be transferred from polluting vans to electrically assisted cargo bikes for last-mile delivery. More than 20,000 parcels were handled through the hub, with cargo bikes travelling over 10km a day at no additional cost to receiving communities.

The results demonstrated clear benefits for air quality and public health, reducing

the number of vans on local streets and saving over 2,500kg of CO₂, the equivalent of emissions from 51 football-pitch-sized forest fires.

The trial has provided strong proof of concept for scaling up a larger, multi-operator and multi-modal hub, with the potential to serve millions of residents and businesses across inner London through rail, road and river-fed deliveries.

CRP said it was "delighted" by the recognition, highlighting the award as a testament to the collaborative effort behind the project and the role of sustainable innovation in shaping the future of urban freight.

PD Ports launches new rail service between Teesport and Scotland

PD Ports has unveiled a new high-capacity “jumbo” rail service connecting Teesport with Scotland, marking a significant enhancement to intermodal freight options for customers across a wide range of industries, including retail, manufacturing, distilling and chemicals. The launch is the latest step in PD Ports’ strategy to support modal shift and strengthen the role of Teesport as a key gateway for northern supply chains.

The new service consolidates the operator’s existing Mossend and Grangemouth rail flows into a single, more efficient operation, built around a 16-wagon train formation. This configuration adds two extra wagons compared with previous services, creating around 40 additional weekly slots for northbound and southbound traffic. By increasing capacity in this way, PD Ports aims to make rail a more compelling option for businesses moving goods between the North East of England and central Scotland.

Daily departures to both Mossend Rail Freight Terminal and Grangemouth Dockyard offer a more predictable and flexible schedule for shippers, particularly those handling time-sensitive

or regular volumes. The ability to “drip-feed” containers into the Scottish market is expected to help manufacturers and distributors streamline their operations and reduce their reliance on road haulage.

The service has also been deliberately structured around Teesport’s vessel arrival patterns. Containers can now be transferred more directly from ship to rail, improving transit times and reducing dwell, while also lowering the environmental footprint of inland transport. This alignment with port operations is designed to support both importers and exporters seeking smoother, more reliable supply chains and stronger global connectivity.

PD Ports said the enhanced rail link was developed in direct response to growing customer demand for reliable, sustainable and cost-effective transport links between Teesport and Scotland. With many sectors transitioning to lower-carbon logistics models, the new service offers a practical way to reduce HGV movements and associated emissions, while improving overall resilience.

The company expects the “jumbo” service to play an important role in strengthening the region’s position as a logistics hub and encouraging further modal shift across the UK. It also highlights the broader momentum behind rail freight growth, with Teesport continuing to invest in infrastructure and service quality to meet rising demand.

DP World adds fifth interport rail service

DP World has launched a fifth weekly interport rail service linking its Southampton and London Gateway container terminals. The 120-mile transfer working began on 1 October and provides a regular rail option for repositioning containers and serving customer flows.

By expanding its interport rail offer, DP World is helping to reduce road traffic, cut carbon emissions and maximise the efficiency of its logistics facilities.

The service underlines the operator’s commitment to building sustainable rail solutions across the supply chain.

DRS launches new DIRFT-Coatbridge service

Direct Rail Services (DRS) has launched a new cross-country service from Daventry to Coatbridge.

The service will operate along the 330-mile route, using DRS’s environmentally friendly Class 88 locomotives.

Initially launched as a trial, it will be the fourth DRS Anglo Scottish rail service, covering nearly the entire length of

England and offering an opportunity for new rail freight customers.

Gottfried Eymer, NTS’s Managing Director for Rail, said: “This new service is a fantastic opportunity for those who have considered rail but are yet to make the switch from road.

“One of the key benefits of this service is that it will run on electricity and produce no exhaust emissions, which is fantastic for the environment. Each train can take around 30 HGVs off the roads.

“The unique feature of this train is that it is made up of goods from multiple customers, making it ideal for businesses that would like to benefit from rail but lack the volumes to justify their own train.”

RFG highlights freight’s needs during GBR Inquiry

RFGs Director General Maggie Simpson OBE joined other industry experts to give evidence to the Transport Committee’s formal inquiry into the Railways Bill on 26 November.

She noted RFG members concerns about the reintegration of track and train and its potential negative impact on the freight sector. She also noted the importance of the framework of duties and structure for GBR that offsets any impartiality concerns with passenger.

She said how pleased she was with some of the clauses in the early parts of the Bill where it clearly lays out a duty to promote the network for freight and a duty to be impartial and also the wider public interest and not just passenger concerns.

[Watch the session in full here.](#)



What does the Railways Bill mean for freight?

The Railways Bill 2025 which was laid in Parliament in November is landmark legislation for UK railways and for the freight sector. As it starts its journey through the parliamentary process what does the Bill entail, and what does that mean for freight?

Fundamentally, the Railways Bill is designed to enact three things;

- It creates Great British Railways (GBR) as an organisation and establishes the necessary frameworks for it to operate the track and the nationalised passenger trains as a single entity;
- It creates a new powerful Passenger Watchdog to provide consumer protection for GBR's passengers
- It replaces the entire legal framework by which non GBR operators can secure access to the GBR infrastructure and be charged for it.

Although the new Passenger Watchdog is of little relevance to freight, the other areas of the Bill are of significance and we need to ensure that they work for customers and future customers, as well as for freight train operators, who in particular need to know that;

- they can secure access to the network for their services, including those on new routes and to new destinations as they arise.
- the costs of rail remain competitive when compared to road freight
- the network remains reliable and fit for purpose for freight trains (for example, to handle heavy or high gauge container trains)
- there is independent oversight and a right of appeal if freight is unfairly treated or disadvantaged.
- they can invest in rail freight assets (wagons, terminals, locomotives etc) with the confidence that they will have a long term use of those assets.

The current provisions in the Bill provide some positive elements in support of these requirements, but also increase the risk in others. We also know that large parts of the future framework will not be in the Bill in other documents which have not yet been written such as GBR's licence.

Positive provisions for rail freight

The Bill makes a number of positive provisions for freight which we are really pleased with.

The Secretary of State is required to publish a target for freight growth which GBR must have regard to. We have seen the power of having a growth target in driving good behaviours towards freight, with the current target of 75% growth by 2050 and in targets from Scottish Ministers. As such we believe this is a powerful clause that will have a good bearing on GBR's approach to rail freight.

There is also a duty on both the Secretary of State and GBR to act 'in the manner best calculated to promote the use of the railway for the carriage of goods'. This is a powerful duty and we are pleased to see its inclusion in the Bill

GBR can also introduce discounts to track access charges where it considers to be appropriate. This opens up options such as supporting a greater use of electric traction or to support the introduction of digital technology on wagons.

Our Concerns

Despite the positive elements, the Bill also raises some concerns for freight. In particular there are many questions over the future process for allocating capacity to freight. The Bill sets out that basis of the new approach will be via Infrastructure Capacity Plans which allow GBR to decide how capacity should be used to deliver the best value. A separate clause of the Bill however allocated capacity for GBR's own trains. It is very difficult from these clauses to have a clear understanding of how the new process will operate, and how rail freight and rail freight growth will be facilitated, including in contractual rights for operators.

Another change in the Bill relates to the ORR, who presently oversee how track access is shared. In future, GBR will lead on this, with the ORR moving to an appeals role. Our concerns however are that the framework for any appeal as described in the Bill sets an incredibly high bar for any appeal to be taken, essentially following the principles of a judicial review. More so, the Secretary of State can set further requirements on how an appeal can be brought and the fee for doing so. These clauses are clearly written to make it very difficult indeed for freight to bring an appeal, and even if they do the remedies that ORR can take are also limited. This is a key concern for us.

The Bill also sets out future framework for access charges for freight. In headline terms the charges will be calculated in a similar way to today which we welcome. However, the Bill provides for extra costs to be levied on freight services through a mandatory re reservation charge for capacity which is booked and then not used and through a redescribed 'mark-ups' provision which is broader than present. The Bill also requires GBR to operate a performance regime for non GBR operators. However, the it allows GBR (but not operators) to avoid payment where it is 'not their fault', without definition of what this means. This suggests that GBR could exclude themselves from delays caused by trespass, suicide, ill health of staff, poor weather and so on! It is likely that the promised Access and Use Policy could help to better define these requirements, but we will also be seeking amendments where possible in the Parliamentary process ahead.

Finally, the Bill has many clauses which give significant powers to the Secretary of State and GBR to amend policies, plans and requirements. We believe there needs to be an overarching review of the powers in the Bill to determine whether an appropriate balance has been struck. If the aim of GBR is to move operational responsibility of the railway from DfT to GBR, as the controlling mind, it appears perverse for so many powers and so much discretion to remain with DfT. There are some particular clauses (71 and 72) which we are asking for urgent clarification on.

In summary, although the Railways Bill 2025 provides some good provisions on how GBR will support rail freight there are some serious concerns with elements of the new access framework and the appeals process. To improve the Bill and build confidence for the rail freight sector we will be pressing for clarification and amendments as the Bill makes progress over the next few months.

RFG Members' Party 2026

3 February 2026

**Truckles, Bury Place
Central London**

RFG
Rail Freight Group



Knorr-Bremse and VTG Rail UK sign long-term FreightControl Sentinel agreement

Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems UK and VTG Rail UK have signed a landmark long-term framework agreement for the exclusive supply of Knorr-Bremse's advanced FreightControl Sentinel system - the backbone of VTG's award-winning iWagon platform.

Under the terms of the agreement, VTG Rail UK has committed to purchasing a minimum of 2,000 wagon sets of FreightControl Sentinel technology by the end of 2029. The systems will be installed on both new-build and retrofitted wagons, having secured all necessary approvals to operate in the UK.

The partnership represents a significant commercial opportunity, forecast to reach up to £40m, and positions both companies at the forefront of the UK's digital freight transformation. In addition to technology supply, the agreement encompasses the joint development of future product generations, shared digital data insights, and co-ordinated industry engagement.

The FreightControl Sentinel system has received independent safety approval for new-build iWagons - a key milestone towards full operational deployment on the UK rail network. This approval reflects the rigorous risk management process led by VTG and Knorr-Bremse, confirming compliance with the Common Safety Method for Risk Evaluation and Assessment.

The agreement further reinforces the iWagon's position as a game-changing innovation in UK rail freight. The first wagons fitted with the FreightControl Sentinel system entered service in April 2025, marking a major milestone. VTG Rail UK has since received additional orders for both new-build and retrofit iWagons from customers which will begin to enter service before the end of the year.



Nigel Day, Business Improvement Director at VTG Rail UK, said: "This agreement is a milestone in our mission to modernise the UK rail freight fleet. FreightControl Sentinel is a core part of our iWagon platform, giving our customers smarter, safer, and more efficient wagons. Our partnership with Knorr-Bremse builds on many years of collaboration and demonstrates our shared commitment to shaping the future of digital rail freight."

FreightControl Sentinel combines real-time digital monitoring with anti-slide technology, providing instant supervision of braking system status and train integrity. By reducing the risk of wheel and track damage, optimising maintenance schedules, and enhancing operational safety, the system delivers a step change in performance for the industry.

Sanjay Albert, Director of Engineering and Innovation at Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems UK, added: "This partnership reflects our strategy to expand beyond traditional on-train systems and deliver smart, scalable solutions across the rail ecosystem. Securing this agreement is a proud moment for our teams and a clear signal of our leadership in rail freight innovation."

Budget 2025: Landfill Tax reform

The Government has confirmed its next steps on Landfill Tax reform, choosing not to pursue several of the more disruptive proposals consulted on last year.

The standard and lower rates will rise by

£4.60/t in 2026/27 (to £130.75/t and £8.65/t respectively), but key exemptions, including quarry fill, qualifying fines and water discounting, will remain in place while undergoing review and tightening.

The only substantive change is the removal of the exemption for stabilisers used in dredged material from April 2027. For rail freight, the overall impact is limited: waste flows should remain broadly

stable, with rising landfill rates potentially strengthening the case for rail-served diversion and treatment, and continued action against waste crime supporting compliant rail-based movements.

[Click here for further details on the policy objectives and summary of impacts.](#)

Government agrees support mechanism with Drax Power Station

The Government has finalised an agreement with Drax on a support mechanism for low-carbon dispatchable power generation post-2027.

The deal, signed between Drax and the Low Carbon Contracts Company, will enhance UK energy security while delivering a net saving for consumers. The agreement includes stricter sustainability standards for biomass sourcing and positions Drax for potential future investment in bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS).

[A briefing on the announcement can be downloaded here.](#)

Drax Power Station Support Mechanism Agreed
Ensuring energy security for the UK, through low carbon, affordable power

The Government's support mechanism for low-carbon dispatchable generation, and the signing of a contract between Drax and the Low Carbon Contracts Company, is an investment in the UK's energy security into the 2030s. This agreement will see Drax Power Station adapt to the needs of a changing electricity system and will result in a net saving for consumers.

Drax welcomes the enhanced biomass sustainability requirements within the agreement, including that all biomass used at Drax Power Station is sustainably sourced and verified through monitoring, reporting, and verification requirements, including enhanced auditing of the biomass supply chain.

The mechanism will reduce the UK's reliance on gas and imports, support high-skilled jobs, contribute to the UK's economic growth and maintain future options at Drax Power Station including power-BECCS and a data centre as part of the York & North Yorkshire's AI Growth Zone bid.

Analysis from Berrings has indicated that the mechanism is expected to result in a net saving for consumers of between £1.6-3.1bn over the term of the agreement, by avoiding the need to produce additional capacity and reducing the UK reliance on gas and interconnectors resulting in a lower overall wholesale price.

“ We are pleased to have agreed this new contract with the UK Government, which will support UK energy security into the 2030s and deliver a net saving for consumers compared to alternative sources of dispatchable generation. **”**

Will Gardiner
Drax CEO

Drax Power Station provided 5% of the UK's energy last year

Enough power for 5 million homes – that's every home in Scotland and Wales combined

From 2027-2031, the agreement will save consumers between £1.6 - 3.1bn

John Hall appointed as new Chair of the RWA

The Rail Wagon Association (RWA) has announced the appointment of John Hall as its new Chair, succeeding Colin Denman, who has led the association with dedication and vision over the past three years.

John Hall brings a wealth of industry experience and a strong track record of leadership in the rail freight sector. As Managing Director of Davis Wagon Services, he has been at the forefront of innovation, safety, and sustainability within the rail industry, and will now guide the RWA in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing freight wagon owners, ECMs, operators, maintainers.

“We are delighted to welcome John as Chair,” said the RWA Board. “His expertise, commitment, and passion for the sector will be invaluable in representing our members and shaping the future of rail freight in the UK.”

The RWA also extends its sincere thanks to Colin Denman for his outstanding contribution as Chair over the last three years. Under his leadership, the association strengthened its voice within the rail industry, championed best practice in wagon management, and supported members through a period of significant change.

John Hall said: “It is a privilege to take on the role of Chair of the Rail Wagon Association. I would like to thank Colin for his hard work and leadership, which has left the association in a strong position. I look forward to working with our members



and industry partners to continue promoting the essential role of rail freight wagons in delivering a sustainable and efficient supply chain.”

UK Logistics Week 2026 announced

Industry events organisers are collaborating to launch UK Logistics Week between 30 June and 2 July 2026, which will be held at both the NEC Birmingham and NAEC Stoneleigh.

At the NEC, Multimodal, Warehouse., Yard., and eDX will co-locate in adjoining halls, offering seamless access between events. Meanwhile, shuttle buses will connect visitors to the Road Transport Expo (RTX) at Stoneleigh, creating a unified experience across both venues.

Together, the shows are expected to attract more than 25,000 logistics professionals, making UK Logistics Week the definitive destination for logistics innovation, collaboration, and opportunity.

Multimodal
Multimodal is the industry's meeting place where cargo owners and shippers network, find ways to improve their supply chains and discover innovative ideas to solve their transport and logistics issues. Now in its 10th year.

Warehouse, Yard.
Warehouse is your gateway to the future of warehousing and logistics. Yard is specifically designed for individuals responsible for the movement of goods, vehicles, and equipment within yard environments.

eDX Delivery Expo
For over a decade, eDX has bridged online retailers and brands with the tools and insights to streamline last-mile logistics. This year, it brings that expertise to the heart of the UK's most comprehensive logistics event.

Road Transport Expo
2026 will see the 50th Road Transport Expo continuing to be the one-stop industry event, with all about the truck and everything related to it.

[More information](#) [More information](#) [More information](#) [More information](#)

RFG will be hosting the Rail Freight Pavilion at Multimodal 2026 as usual. More details to follow but if you're interested now in taking up a stand, please email maria@rfg.org.uk.

[Click here for details on Logistics Week 2026.](#)



Tarmac opens new Rugby rail depot

Tarmac has officially opened a new aggregates depot in Rugby, transforming a previously disused siding into a fully operational rail freight site. Materials will now be brought in by rail before local distribution by road, creating a more resilient and sustainable supply chain.

The depot strengthens regional supply for housebuilding, commercial and infrastructure projects, while reducing the need for long-distance road haulage. It also supports Tarmac's wider strategy to increase use of rail in logistics operations, cutting carbon and congestion.

Network Rail worked closely with Tarmac to deliver the project, highlighting the importance of returning disused freight sites to service.

Chris Swan, Head of Rail at Tarmac, said: "We're proud to be opening our new Rugby depot and putting a disused rail site back into action. By bringing materials directly into the town, we can reduce the need for long road journeys and provide a more efficient service for our customers. This is another important step in our commitment to making greater use of rail, reducing carbon, and supporting the delivery of local construction projects."

Gregory March, Freight Business Development Manager at Network Rail added: "Bringing disused commercial freight sites back into use is critical to our collective mission to grow rail freight in the short, medium, and long term future. I'm delighted to have worked closely with Tarmac and collaboratively with industry colleagues to make the site at Rugby a productive commercial freight reality again."

RFG joins inaugural TransCityRail Scotland conference

On 9 October, RFG's Scotland and North of England Representative, Martin Bignell, took part in a panel discussion on rail freight at the inaugural TransCityRail Scotland conference, held at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh.

The event, which builds on the success of TransCityRail's established regional forums in the North, South and Midlands, brought together more than 150 industry leaders for a day of keynotes and debates exploring Scotland's rail investment pipeline, climate adaptation and resilience, safety, customer experience, and future skills.

Rail freight featured prominently in the programme, with a keynote by Terri Kelly of NTS Global (a Strategic Partner sponsor) followed by a lively panel including Martin Bignell, Mike Gray (DB Cargo), Andrew Lewis (NTS), and Dr Paulus Aditjandra (Heriot-Watt University). Discussions highlighted the sector's strong



performance in Scotland, the importance of setting growth targets to drive accountability and collaboration, and the need for continued investment to meet customer expectations and sustainability goals.

Looking ahead to Scotland's 2026 elections, Martin called for renewed political commitment to rail freight,

including reinstating MSRS funding, maintaining ambitious growth targets, and recognising the sector's vital role in supporting Scotland's green energy transition.

The conference closed with a networking dinner and whisky tasting, rounding off a highly successful inaugural event for Scotland's rail industry.



Getting to grips with the Railways Bill

By Jonathan Roberts, JR Consulting

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander introduced the Railways Bill into the House of Commons on 5 November 2025, with a preparatory written statement. The Bill was deposited as normal procedure, so without any initial debate, though it was described by the Government as 'landmark legislation'.

[Rail Reform - Hansard - UK Parliament](#) and its Welsh compatriot: [Rail Reform: Wales and Borders - Hansard](#) - UK Parliament

There is a separate article in this newsletter which sets out Rail Freight Group's views on the Bill, so this column will focus on the Bill's processes, and a few matters to think about and probably campaign about, which arise from how the Bill is set out!

Commons Second Reading

The important Second Reading stage in the Commons is now provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 9 December. This is when the principles of the Bill are debated, and assent in the Chamber gives the Bill a general go-ahead.

Interested people, organisations and businesses who wish to support the Bill or seek small or large-scale amendments to it, need to ensure that their topics will be aired in the Debate by supportive and sympathetic MPs of all parties, and/or are taken on board by the Government and the Department for Transport's Ministers and officials who will be considering possible changes to the Bill's Clauses and their impact on the Bill's purposes.

Quite often, the Government itself proposes amendments, after it gathers more commentary from the country as a whole, and as it realises in more detailed discussions and briefing that the probable consequences and outcomes aren't quite what it wanted to achieve with its embodying Clauses and Schedules. This Bill has 93 Clauses, so there's a lot to look at!

Subsequent Commons stages are:

- Committee stage, when a selection of MPs, broadly in proportion to the seats each party has in the House, will discuss and vote on each Clause in the Bill, and proposed changes to that. Some of those who made a large contribution to the Second Reading debate, might be selected to the Committee as an initial priority.

- This is the key stage for weighing the merits of each Clause, and whether the purpose of each Clause is a reasonable one, and correctly expressed in its phraseology without unintentional knock-on consequences elsewhere.

- The Government members will set out the basis for each Clause and what it's meant to do and how. Proposals to vary, remove or indeed 'improve' the Clause will be put forward by other Committee members, and debates and then votes ensue, amendment by amendment. One should expect much discussion behind the scenes and other informal means of liaison, in the run-up to each day of the Committee stage.

- The Committee's discussions will take place around a 'marshalled list' of proposed amendments, deposited in the Public Bill Office by the Government and other parties and MPs, and then organised by that Office for practical debating sequence. There is a substantial requirement for briefing input in support of (or against!) desired changes.

- Report stage, when the Committee reports back to the Commons as a whole, the outcomes of its debates and votes. The Committee report may include significant changes to some Clauses. The House then decides whether to accept the report.

- Third Reading stage is when the House re-considers the Bill as a whole, including revisions made along the way, in a new compilation of the Bill. It is often the last time that MPs can directly raise in a debate their remaining points of concern or objection to what the Bill is now proposing.

- With some particularly contentious or complex topics within a Bill, and also when the Government is being minded to consider or accommodate some amendment but the detail hasn't yet been resolved, the Government may indicate that those matters will be considered further in the House of Lords, with mutual acceptance of that process by the different parties.

Into the Lords

When a Bill is first introduced into the Commons, it will proceed after Third Reading into the House of Lords. And v.v. for a Bill first introduced into the Lords – but then the principle of the Bill still has to await Commons Second Reading. The same general sequence as the Commons, is followed in the Lords, excepting that the Committee stage might be with the House as a whole participating – but probably not with 93 Clauses!

Debates in the Lords enable further rounds of improvements (or variations to those proposed previously) to be considered, in a similar format and sequence to discussions in the Commons. The current Minister of State for Transport, Lord Hendy – is the Rail Minister – and is an former Transport Commissioner for London, so he is well placed to lead the Government's position on the Bill.

Meanwhile the Lords is an 'improving' House for legislation, and will have on its benches other experts and current or former leaders in the transport industry and other key elements of the UK, who will be interested in what is proposed for the railways and their contribution to UK life and prosperity. So the Lords is where much nitty-gritty about Clauses can be debated usefully. But you can't keep on proposing the same change and then being voted down – so proponents have to choose their time and context for when they might seek support to promote a change to the Bill.

Final Bill stages

These are twofold:

- Consideration of amendments made in the second House. In the case of the Railways Bill, it will return to the Commons, and the Commons may choose to accept or reject any or all of the changes which the Lords have voted on. There may be a lot of final discussions, and some debate, on the floors of Parliament or in the corridors, also with an element of procedural ping-pong between each House, to lead up to the final Bill being approved in both Houses with the same Clauses and Schedules.

- The final Bill then proceeds to Royal Assent as an Act of Parliament. Implementation of different Clauses of the Act could take place at widely differing dates, and the sequencing of those will have been discussed during the Bill's passage through Parliament.

Some Railways Bill highlights

The introductory phrases used by the Government in support of the Bill are:

- "a major step forward to set up Great British Railways (GBR), owned by the public, for the public

- "GBR will put passengers before profits with a strengthened passenger watchdog and ultimately a one-stop-shop app for simpler ticketing and customer services

- "measures unveiled to improve rail accessibility, including expanding disabled persons railcard eligibility, rolling out more Welcome Points".

The Bill is critically important to rail freight, though this was in the second league of official headlines, following behind references to the public ownership programme, a strengthened passenger watchdog, and fares and ticketing reform.

Continued over the page.

The cornerstones for rail freight are described as:

- “GBR will be accountable to passengers, freight customers and taxpayers and will drive a relentless focus on responding to their needs.
- “GBR will deliver lasting change” – “responsible for coordinating the whole network: from track and train, to cost and revenue.”
- Better business planning – with the Railways Bill placing “a duty on GBR to grow rail freight, meaning freight operators will benefit from a longer-term strategic approach to planning, including a new capacity allocation and timetabling process”.

How can rail freight fit in without capacity, policy and priority clashes?

The kernel of the Bill, other than dismantling most of the remaining privatisation elements originally in the 1993 Railways Act, is the transformation of Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd into the unified owner of infrastructure and timetabling (as was British Railways Board previously).

The Office of Rail & Road is reduced from the primary setter of rules for track rights, and safeguarder of private sector rail operating companies including rail freight companies, to become an appeals body. It continues as the main setter and enforcer of safety standards.

The biggest practical issue will be how a single body, GBR, proposed to be largely accountable to itself on a day-to-day basis for decisions on allocation of route capacity and timetabling, can balance capacity and resilience for existing passenger services and the projected growth of passenger travel, against access requirements including operational resilience and future capacity-proofing, for non-passenger operations including freight. This will have important commercial and contractual consequences.

When British Rail was split into a multiplicity of different companies from 1993 onwards, there were few private operators, and no devolved countries, mayoralities and city regions. Now the repackaging into Greater British Railways will see a significant presence of regional and national authorities with their own rail service priorities, open access passenger services, independent ticket retailing, and the entire range of rail freight operations and

much terminal infrastructure now permanently in the private sector.

So the challenge for the Government as the Bill promoter and principal GBR advocate, and the challenge for all non-GBR participants in their future access to the wider rail network and its infrastructure and timetables, is how there can be a practical and harmonious balance which is also commercially and financially effective.

Reference is made to development of long-term planning and five-year business plans where GBR must demonstrate that it is taking account of other participants and their needs. However this sits uncomfortably against the practical reality that there are already occasions where there is no government approval for rail projects regarded as overdue for both passenger and freight operations. Examples include Ely Junction capacity which is fundamental to support expansion of the high growth East Anglian economy, and authorisation of ‘last-mile’ electrification to London Gateway Port for more efficient, high capacity rail freight haulage.

In conclusion, the DfT’s Explanatory Memorandum describes various interlocking measures – except that with the present, early state of the Railways Bill, and the parlous state of rail project approvals, it is not clear how these measures can be homogenous – or made so and delivered consistently. The true test of the Railways Bill will how its Clauses underpin and stimulate good outcomes over the next 5, 10 and 30 years. So, getting its Clauses right is a fundamental. The Railways Bill Explanatory Notes are recommended daytime and bedtime reading for the next few months!

[Click here to download the Railways Bill](#)

[Click here to download the Railways Bill Explanatory Notes](#)



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GBRf welcomes new locos into Bristol

An early Christmas present from Stadler Valencia has arrived!

99003 and 99004 arrived yesterday at The Bristol Port Company's, Royal Portbury Dock.

The Class 99s will deliver performance and environmental benefits for GB Railfreight's customers, and could ‘herald a rail freight revolution’ in 2026.

Photo credit: The Bristol Port Company



Critical Minerals Strategy published

The government has published 'Vision 2035: Critical Minerals Strategy', setting out a long-term plan to secure the supply of minerals deemed essential for future growth, clean energy and national security.

Key targets include delivering at least 10% of UK demand for critical minerals through domestic production by 2035 (including 50,000 tonnes per year of lithium), and meeting 20% of demand through recycling, as part of a move towards a circular economy and supply-chain resilience.

The strategy also aims to diversify mineral

supply globally, capping the share from any one country at 60%, to reduce geopolitical and supply-chain risk.

Government accelerates Heathrow expansion review

The government has launched a fast-track review of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), paving the way for potential expansion at Heathrow Airport, including a third runway, by 2035.

The revised ANPS will be published for consultation by summer 2026, three years sooner than the previous process, and will

assess proposals against four key tests: climate change, noise, air quality, and economic growth.

Heathrow Airport Limited and the Arora Group remain under consideration as project promoters, with a preferred scheme expected to be announced by the end of November.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander MP said expansion would "drive economic growth and create jobs across the country," while the government confirmed it must be privately financed with no cost to taxpayers.

RFG will continue to monitor the review and its potential implications for surface freight connectivity, construction logistics and fuel.



Freightliner names loco 66605 'Tribute' in memory of late colleagues

In October, Freightliner locomotive 66605 was named 'Tribute' in memory of late Freightliner colleagues.

The locomotive was named at Freightliner's Crewe Vehicle Maintenance Facility by Dave Penney, Freightliner Managing Director, Heavy Haul and Rail Services and Matthew Workman,

Freightliner Head of Operational Strategy and Transformation.

Karen Schofield, Chaplain from Railway Mission, a charity working to provide critical mental health support for everyone in the railway family, led a Roll of Honour during the service, followed by a prayer in remembrance of late Freightliner colleagues.

An online memorial book, where colleagues are able to add memories and thoughts, was also created to help to remember the 26 Freightliner colleagues who have passed in the last five years.

The naming of locomotive 66605 also

coincided with the official opening of the Freightliner Crewe Memorial Garden, which was built by Freightliner Crewe colleagues. The memorial garden provides a safe space for remembrance and quiet reflection away from the busy day-to-day of the Crewe Vehicle Maintenance Facility.

During the official opening, a cheque was presented to MIND, the mental health charity providing essential information and support services, from Freightliner. Freightliner Crewe colleagues generously raised a large proportion of the funds with Freightliner adding to this donation to present £2,500 to a very worthy charity.

RFG sponsors the Future of Rail in the East conference

RFG Assistant Policy Manager, Phil Smart, spoke at the *Future of Rail in the East* conference in Colchester on 20 November, organised by the Transport East Sub-National Transport Body. Taking part in the Unlocking the Potential of the East panel discussion he addressed a number of questions including:

The importance of rail freight in everyone's daily lives; the need for a fair access and charging regime for freight on the rail network; the need for a more joined up approach to network investment that recognised the need for capacity enhancements at major junctions such as Ely and Haughley; and to make better use of track renewals to improve rail freight performance and reliability.

He also urged for industry to adopt a 'rail first' approach to organising its supply chains and outlined the benefits to the environment that accrue from shifting freight from road to rail



Photo credit: Transport East

Caption: Phil with Andrew Summers and Will Quince Transport East, and fellow panel members Adam Thorpe Local Government East and Silviya Barrett, Campaign for Better Transport.

Victa Railfreight appoints Debbie Simmons as new Managing Director

Victa Railfreight has appointed Debbie Simmons as its new Managing Director, succeeding company founder Neil Sime, who becomes Executive Chairman.

Debbie has worked with Victa for 13 years and brings extensive management and operational experience. The announcement follows Victa's 30th anniversary celebrations, marking three decades of innovation and growth in the rail freight sector.



RFG attends domestic abuse awareness roundtable

RFG's Business Manager, Maria Papp, attended a cross-sector roundtable hosted by the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA), focused on supporting employees affected by domestic abuse.

The session provided practical resources and tools for employers, with participants encouraged to join EIDA's membership network and attend the next Insight Hour on 18 November.

[Click here for more details on EIDA](#)

DP World introduces new container handling technology at London Gateway

DP World has announced a £170m investment in cutting-edge container handling technology at its London Gateway logistics hub, a major step forward in the digitalisation and automation of port operations.

At the heart of the upgrade is BOXBAY's new Empty Superstack, an automated High Bay Storage (HBS) system that can store 20- and 40-foot empty containers up to 16 tiers high inside a fully enclosed facility. The system operates like a "vending machine for containers".

Port of Felixstowe expands autonomous truck fleet

Hutchison Ports Port of Felixstowe has taken delivery of the first units from a second major order of 34 autonomous trucks from Shanghai Westwell Technology.

The port already operates 34 Westwell vehicles at its Trinity Terminal, the first autonomous trucks in Europe to run in mixed-traffic conditions.

The new fully electric, zero-emission machines include upgraded LiDAR and sensor technology, which will also be retrofitted to the existing fleet.



RFG Autumn Members' Meeting & AGM

With the Group AGM and Autumn meeting held in Northampton this year, 12 November 2025, there was a focus on the new Northampton Gateway Terminal and rail network and services through the central England region for the first part of the meeting.

James Tierney of Maritime Logistics (pictured bottom right) outlined the challenges of making short-haul rail competitive against road, especially when track access charges continue to increase and fuel duty for road vehicles has been frozen for more than five years.

Benjamin Bird of Yusen Logistics gave delegates an insight into the future with a vision of the highly automated, sustainable distribution centre which the company is building in Northampton. The availability of rail access was integral to selection of this location for the multi-user facility, which is a massive investment for Yusen outside its usual portfolio.

Ben Rule of East-West Rail said the railway will not only improve connectivity between urban centres which is important to unlock economic growth, it also provides strategic connections between other mainline rail links, which is especially important for freight. The company is committed to maintaining current freight services on the route and planning to meet increased demand in the future.

Bryan Evans of Oxfordshire County Council said they had identified the need for a 50% increase in capacity for rail freight if the county is to meet its modal shift targets, with new infrastructure projects and electrification key to this project. Action 1 of its Freight & Logistics Strategy is to move freight from road to rail.

Simon Evans of Wabtec explained how the company has made a huge investment by setting up a new Wabtec Rail Technology Campus due to open next year. It is producing track and train friendly bogies with an emphasis on the total cost of ownership, as it also continues its eight year long project to develop the self-powered bogie.

The last two presentations focussed on the health and well-being of all team members, with Wendy McCristal of The Mental Wealth Company looking at ways to help the workforce handle uncertainty and Ben Lumley of Night Club outlining the specific challenges for night workers.



After the meeting, many of the delegates took the opportunity to visit Maritime's Northampton Gateway Terminal to see how the investment there will help increase capacity for rail.

RFG would like to thank Maritime Logistics for their support and all the speakers for making it such an interesting and enjoyable meeting.

Scotland's Transport Network: recognising the critical role of freight, but rail freight?

Transport Scotland's major new report, "Connecting Scotland – The Value of Transport," makes a compelling case for recognising transport as fundamental to economic prosperity. For the rail freight sector, the document provides valuable evidence of transport's economic significance, though it also highlights how freight, and rail freight particularly, remains undervalued in policy discussions.

The report establishes transport's substantial economic footprint, supporting over 150,000 jobs and contributing nearly £10 billion annually to Scotland's economy. More significantly, it demonstrates that transport's true value extends far beyond these direct contributions. The 2025-26 transport budget of over £4 billion represents almost 30% of Scottish Government capital expenditure, making it one of the most significant economic policy levers available to the devolved administration.

Freight's Essential Role

The document provides striking evidence of freight transport's critical importance. In 2023, Heavy Goods Vehicles alone moved approximately 134 million tonnes of freight originating in Scotland, with 118 million tonnes travelling within Scotland and 16 million tonnes to the rest of the UK. Scotland's ports handled nearly 23 million tonnes of exports, supporting £32.3 billion in international goods trade. Trade with the rest of the UK was valued at £48.6 billion in 2021, representing over half of Scotland's total exports.

The trunk road network, valued at over £27.4 billion, carries approximately 90% of freight originating in Scotland. However, the report focuses almost entirely on freight leaving Scotland rather than arriving, an analytical gap that appears to understate freight's full economic contribution given the volume of imports. For example, the data presented in the report excludes the 19.7m tonnes per year of road freight into Scotland and the 19m tonnes imported through Scotland's ports.

Rail Freight's Visibility Challenge

More concerning, rail freight receives minimal attention throughout this comprehensive 104-page document - it entirely excludes any reference to the 4m tonnes of freight lifted by rail.

Whilst passenger rail features prominently in discussions of connectivity, agglomeration benefits and decarbonisation, rail freight appears largely invisible in policy thinking. This represents a significant missed opportunity, particularly given transport's responsibility for 33% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and the urgent need for decarbonisation.

The report extensively discusses road freight's role but overlooks rail freight's potential contribution to both economic efficiency and emissions reduction. With Scotland's challenging geography—70 residents per square kilometre compared to 270 across the UK—and the critical importance of the trunk road network connecting dispersed communities, rail freight could play an increasingly strategic role in managing capacity constraints whilst supporting climate objectives.

Looking Forward

The document identifies significant fiscal pressures ahead, with capital budgets facing real-terms decline and the Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasting only 2% growth between 2025-26 and 2029-30. An ageing population and changed travel patterns following COVID-19 add further complexity. In this constrained environment, maximising the efficiency of freight movement becomes increasingly critical.

For the rail freight sector, this report provides powerful evidence of freight's economic importance that can strengthen advocacy for modal shift. However, it also reveals how rail freight remains worryingly peripheral in transport policy thinking. The challenge is to ensure that future iterations of Scotland's transport strategy fully recognise rail freight's role in delivering economic growth, addressing capacity constraints and achieving decarbonisation targets. Transport Scotland's own data shows rail freight's contribution, but translating this into strategic visibility requires continued industry engagement with policymakers.



RFG joins experts at Net-Zero Summit

The Rail Freight Group was delighted to attend the Rail Net Zero Summit at Canary Wharf on 14 October.

Phil Smart, RFG's Assistant Policy Manager, joined a panel discussion on decarbonising diesel trains, calling for greater network electrification focused on key freight routes.

He noted that while HVO is emerging as a transition fuel, it remains more expensive than diesel. Meanwhile, battery technology currently lacks the power and range for long-distance freight, adding up to 32 tonnes to locomotive weight.

He also highlighted that full electrification remains the most effective long-term solution, delivering not only greener operations but also improved performance for all rail users.



Rail freight showcased in Party Conferences

The Rail Freight Group played its part promoting the needs and benefits of rail freight during Party conference season at both the Labour and Conservative conferences.

RFG co-hosted the Global Trade and Logistics Reception during the Labour Party Conference, bringing together senior parliamentarians and industry leaders. Director General Maggie Simpson OBE joined MPs and key figures from DP World, Heathrow and Logistics UK.

The event provided an excellent opportunity to highlight rail freight's contribution to trade, sustainability and regional growth at the heart of the political agenda.



Many thanks to all members who attended and supported the event, which ensured freight was firmly on the conference radar.



RFG joins YRP Wales for Politics in Rail debate

Photo: Young Rail Professionals

Robin Smith, RFG's Wales and West Midlands Representative, joined a panel of experts at the second annual Politics in Rail event held at the historic Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay.

Hosted by Young Rail Professionals Wales, the event gathered early-career leaders for a day of timely policy discussion against the backdrop of the Railways Bill.

The session opened with a keynote from YRP Wales Chair Katie Williams, who reflected on the heritage of the Pierhead Building and its motto, "Wrth ddŵr a tân" ("By water and fire"), celebrating the industrial history that continues to inspire the sector.

A panel chaired by Lewis Brencher MCIPR (Transport for Wales) included:

Robin Smith, Rail Freight Group, (pictured middle); Samuel Rowlands MS, Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Transport; Peredur Owen Griffiths MS, Plaid Cymru; Stuart Evans, Head of Rail, Welsh Government; Katie Allister, Director of Transport Policy, COGITAMUS.

Discussions covered the impact of GBR, rail investment priorities, skills pathways and recruitment, the importance of showcasing industry careers, and the relationship between funding models, value for money and rail's public service role. Panelists also reflected on how the next Senedd elections could influence long-term strategy.

Scottish Government backs new rail freight terminal

The Scottish Government has confirmed £3m Freight Facilities Grant

funding towards a new £11.2m rail freight terminal at Inverness, led by West Fraser Ltd.

Construction has now begun at the Dalcross site and operations are expected to start in mid-2026.

The terminal will enable more goods to be transported by rail direct to UK markets, removing an estimated 8.5

million lorry miles from Scottish roads and 17 million miles UK-wide over the next decade. The site is expected to take the equivalent of 100 HGVs per week off the A9 and A96.

This investment is part of the government's wider policy to reduce emissions, cut congestion and grow rail freight's contribution to Scotland's economy.

Potter Space marks 60 years as founder member shares new book

Potter Space, one of the original founder members of the Rail Freight Group (RFG), has reaffirmed its long-standing connection with the rail freight community as it celebrates its 60th anniversary and a new chapter in its company journey.

Formerly known as Potter Logistics, the business has evolved into Potter Space – a leading industrial property company with three operational rail terminals – while maintaining its commitment to supporting and engaging with rail freight partners across the UK.

Long-serving RFG Board member Derrick Potter has released a new personal account of his life and career, *The Road Behind Me*, reflecting on six decades of entrepreneurship, community values, and rail freight innovation. The book charts his story from the early days of the business in 1965 through to major milestones including the company's expansion into property, its continued investment in rail, and the celebrations marking Potter Space's 60th year. Sample pages from the book highlight key themes such as leadership, long-term thinking, and the company's commitment to people and place.

Members who would like a copy of Derrick's book are invited to get in touch by emailing Kay.Kendall@potterspace.co.uk

Derrick sends his warmest wishes to all RFG members and extends his thanks for their continued support throughout the company's long-standing involvement with the Group.

Right: Images from Potter Space's recent 60th anniversary celebrations.



RFG & Network Rail Scotland – joint presence at All-Energy 2026

13 - 14 May 2026, Glasgow

With the Scottish Parliamentary elections scheduled for 7 May 2026, and the likelihood that purdah will limit engagement with key decision-makers, RFG has taken the opportunity to do something different. For 2026, we are working with the Scotland Freight Joint Board (SFJB), via Network Rail's Scottish Freight Team, to take the rail freight message directly to a sector where there is real potential for growth.

RFG and Network Rail will jointly host a stand at All-Energy 2026, the UK's largest low-carbon energy and renewables event, at the SEC in Glasgow on 13–14 May 2026.

Scotland's ambition to expand its low-carbon energy economy is driving major investment in onshore and offshore wind, sustainable and renewable fuels, hydrogen, carbon capture and related technologies. Many of these developments involve large-scale movements of materials well suited to rail, and in several cases the products planned for manufacture will also be ideal for rail transport. The locations of these projects closely align with the rail network, and as developers seek consents and assess logistics options, rail freight has an important role to play.

RFG is making the case that supporting rail freight will help



enable Scotland's transition to a low-carbon energy future.

Being present at All-Energy for two days will give our sector valuable visibility at the centre of this fast-developing industry, with attendance expected from investors, developers, suppliers, planners and influencers across the field.

RFG and Network Rail will be on the stand throughout the event, and we hope that RFG and SFJB members will join us in helping to highlight the positive contribution rail freight can make in Scotland.

[Click here for more details on the event.](#)



Putting freight first: a new chapter for Network Rail's System Operator

By Paul Harwood, Interim Freight and Customer Director, Network Rail

As I start my role as Interim Director for Freight and Passenger within Network Rail's System Operator, I'm really excited by the opportunity to deliver on government's strong commitment to rail freight growth.

After starting as a British Rail finance trainee, I spent the early years in my career working across finance, investment and strategic planning in Railtrack and then Network Rail, ultimately becoming Investment Director for the Southern Region.

I've learnt plenty from these experiences, not least the importance of placing freight customers and passengers at the centre of investment and engineering decisions on a mixed-use railway, balancing the aspirations of multiple contracting authorities and facing the invariable capacity constraints on an intensively used network. It also deepened my appreciation of the critical role rail freight plays for the economy, be it transporting container traffic from the Port of Southampton, fuel destined for Heathrow from the Isle of Grain, or building materials from Angerstein Wharf to locations across London.

More recently, working in the Great British Railways Transition Team across a wide range of commercial issues, I've been focussed on how future rail industry structures can deliver better outcomes for customers and taxpayers. During that time I was particularly proud to have supported the development of the rail freight growth target, which represents a real step forward in the rail industry's approach to freight. We've made a positive start with freight volumes growing by 5.1% in the first year of CP7, supported by initiatives such as the Network Rail Track Access Discount Scheme, which currently supports 49 weekly freight movements.

Since returning to Network Rail, my focus has turned to developing GBR's future Access and Use Policy (AUP). As set out recently in the Railways Bill, this document will represent GBR's approach on key areas including assessing and allocating capacity, charging and performance schemes. I

recognise the importance of getting this policy right for freight operators and their customers and, frankly, because of the critical interaction between private and public sector organisations, I've always said if future industry processes work for freight they will work for all, so that really is my litmus test. GBR must be an intelligent and informed directing mind, able to make the right trade-offs between flexibility and certainty, to give the sector confidence and unlock investment. My approach is always to work in partnership with all organisations across the rail sector, and I have really welcomed the time and input from expert colleagues across the freight community to help shape the future. I am really looking forward to continuing this partnership in my new role so that we can turn freight growth into reality.

As I start in the role, it would be remiss not to recognise the great job my predecessor, Henry Bates, has done over the past five years. I look forward to carrying on this work and exploring further opportunities to deliver for rail freight. No doubt Henry will continue to be a strong advocate for the sector in his new role as Integration Director on the Anglia Route, which RFG Director General Maggie Simpson rightly notes is the UK's container capital (although other ports are available)!

One of the joys of being back in freight is the need and opportunity to dust off the PPE and visit freight partners doing what they do, moving goods and materials. In fact, on day one in what I travelled to Mountsorrel to visit Tarmac, it was fascinating to see the scale of their operation and understand more about the commercial challenges and opportunities they, and other customers in the aggregates industry, are facing. Also, on day six I was lucky enough to cab ride to and from London Gateway and was excited to see the growth in port traffic and rail operations since the last time I was there in about 2017. Seeing nearly 80,000 tonnes of granite recently extracted from the quarry, much of which will be moved by rail, and a 1,500 tonne container load leaving the port really brings home the scale, and importance, of the rail freight business.

For GBR to deliver for freight, there must be a focus on driving a better understanding of what we can do to support modal shift and make moving goods by rail more attractive to end users. Conversations with rail freight colleagues help us understand how GBR can do better, and I look forward to working in partnership with the rail freight sector to enable government's growth agenda.

Visit the RBF Christmas Shop

Scan the QR code or go to our website:
<https://www.charitycardshop.com/RBF>





Strategic role in industrial decarbonisation: a call to collaborate to unlock future opportunities on the journey to Net Zero

By Matt Wilson, Head of New Energy Markets, Navigator Terminals.

The UK's legally binding target to reach net zero by 2050 presents a formidable challenge. Heavy industry, in particular, must find viable ways to decarbonise while maintaining competitiveness and security of supply. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) has emerged as a critical pathway, enabling carbon dioxide to be captured at source and stored permanently underground.

Much of the national discussion on CCS has focused on pipelines. Yet pipelines, while essential, will never be a universal solution. To the many emitters located outside major industrial clusters, rail freight offers an opportunity to unlock the potential of UK permanent storage by enabling dispersed emitters access to CO₂ sequestration, playing a defining role.

Rail's untapped potential in CCS

Rail is uniquely positioned to support the CCS sector through Non-Pipeline Transport (NPT) solutions. By moving captured CO₂ in either compressed or liquefied forms, rail can provide a flexible, scalable, and cost-effective bridge between emitters and storage hubs.

The 'Train to Zero' project is just one example of how we can unlock the multi modal aggregation model, using corridors which also encompass Navigator Terminals other facilities at Barry Island in Southwest Wales, and at West Thurrock in the Thames region, illustrating what is possible. The project will see the movement of CO₂ captured from industrial sites nationwide to an aggregation hub in Seal Sands, Teesside. From there,

established pipelines and shipping routes can take it to secure geological storage in the North Sea.

Rail freight brings advantages that are not just operational but strategic:

- Flexibility and reach - serving dispersed emitters far from pipeline networks.
- Cost efficiency - particularly for small and medium-scale CCS projects.
- Scalability - projects can expand as demand grows, without waiting for critical mass.
- Speed to market - leveraging existing infrastructure, avoiding pipeline lead times.
- Resilience - multiple routing options provide continuity against disruption.
- Economic value - supporting skilled employment in logistics, engineering, and rolling stock.

These advantages matter because the UK cannot afford to pursue only one route to net zero. Pipelines will capture and store vast volumes of CO₂, but without rail, entire regions and industries risk being excluded from the CCS opportunity.

A realistic view of the challenges

Rail-based CCS is not without hurdles. Questions remain about locomotive emissions, specialist wagon availability, liquefaction facilities, and the competition for network capacity.

But these are not insurmountable barriers. The inherent adaptability of rail, combined with buffer storage and new rail technologies, can mitigate many risks. In fact, the challenges of rail transport are often more manageable than those associated with building entirely new pipeline corridors across sensitive landscapes.

Continued over the page



The reality is that no single solution will deliver net zero. What is required is a complementary network of pipeline and non-pipeline systems working together. Rail has the potential to be the flexible backbone of that system.

The terminal at North Tees

Positioning rail at the heart of net zero

The rail freight sector must be proactive in making the case for its role in CCS. This is not about marginal gains but about securing a long-term strategic position in the UK's energy and climate policy. Without rail, the country risks leaving large volumes of industrial CO₂ stranded, undermining progress towards 2050 targets.

Navigator Terminals, through its Train to Zero initiative, has begun to articulate this opportunity. As the company's Head of New Energy Markets, I co-chair the DESNZ/CCSA Non-Pipeline Transport (NPT) CO₂ working group, which brings both technical expertise and industry perspective to the debate. Rail freight is not just a transport option, but a critical enabler of the UK's entire decarbonisation strategy.



A call to collaborate

The challenge ahead is as much political and commercial as it is technical. For rail freight to take its place in the CCS ecosystem, industry must build coalitions across energy, infrastructure, and government. Collaboration will be key: between terminal operators, rolling stock suppliers, freight operators, and policymakers.

The Train to Zero corridor should therefore be seen not only as a single project but as a test case for the UK's willingness to embrace innovation in pursuit of net zero. It demonstrates how rail can open new pathways, protect industrial competitiveness, and create high-value jobs — while tackling one of the toughest aspects of the decarbonisation puzzle.

As the UK accelerates its climate ambitions rail must be at the table, "Train to Zero" is not just about moving CO₂. It is about redefining the role of rail freight in the country's energy transition, with collaborative engagement required by emitters, freight operating companies, and the aggregation hubs as proposed by Navigator Terminals to shape a scalable NPT solution.



Contact: *Matt Wilson, Head of New Energy Markets, Navigator Terminals can be reached at www.navigatorterminals.com*

Resilience in rail freight: from cost to collective value

By Dr Dongjun Li, Northumbria University

Last winter, prolonged flooding across parts of northern England disrupted rail freight services for several days. Containers waited at ports, manufacturers faced shortfalls in critical materials, and lorries were brought in to move what rail could not. The immediate costs were visible, but the longer-term effects on reliability and customer confidence were harder to measure.

These disruptions are becoming more visible across the UK's rail freight network in recent years, making resilience increasingly critical. Flooding, heat-related track restrictions, and storm damage now frequently challenge operations. In both academia and industry, the term resilience is mostly referred to as costs—the expenses required for upgrading infrastructure, adding capacity, or funding climate adaptation. However, this viewpoint overshadows the fact that resilience is not merely a financial burden. It creates long-lasting value for the rail freight system, its customers, and society.

Moving Beyond 'Can We Afford It?'

Resilience actions are mostly judged by their direct cost-to-benefit ratio. For instance, when evaluating whether to spend money on strengthening embankments, improving drainage, or installing heat-resistant components, we ask one question: "Can we afford it?" Nevertheless, research on transport resilience consistently shows that these expenditures return multiple times over through avoided disruption, reduced recovery costs, and increased reliability.

When services operate during severe weather or recover rapidly after disruption, the resulting financial and reputational benefits spread throughout the logistics chain. As freight becomes more reliable, insurance companies may lower their premiums, consumer confidence is strengthened, and rail maintains its competitive advantage over road transport. In this way, resilience becomes a direct source of business continuity and long-term growth.

The Environmental Case

The benefits extend beyond the balance sheet. Rail freight already has a significant carbon advantage over road transport, but resilience investments help protect it. When climate-related incidents interrupt services, displaced freight typically shifts to road, increasing emissions. Maintaining service continuity through resilient infrastructure allows the sector to contribute to national decarbonisation goals.

Why Collective Action Matters

In rail freight, collective action is necessary. The network depends on the smooth and coordinated operations of operators, infrastructure managers, ports, terminals, policymakers, and customers—each equally important for the efficient and reliable flow of goods.

When only one party invests in resilience, the results are limited and localised. The network's overall resilience improves slowly, if at all. However, when all stakeholders co-invest, the advantages multiply and extend throughout the system. Combined resources for climate-adaptive steps lead not only to rapid recovery when disturbances occur, but also strengthen the network's capacity to absorb disruption in the first place. If the sector treats resilience as a shared responsibility and invests collectively rather than individually, it can build a stronger and more adaptable network. Beyond addressing climate-related risks, this collaboration delivers long-term value through greater efficiency, dependability, and sustainability.

Reframing the Conversation

Considering resilience as a shared value shifts the discussion from short-term costs toward long-lasting benefits. This perspective positions resilience not as the price of facing uncertainty, but as the foundation of a sustainable, adaptable rail freight sector capable of enduring environmental stresses while facilitating economic growth.

The question isn't whether we can afford to invest in rail freight resilience. It's whether we can afford not to. These investments ensure reliability, environmental integrity, and future competitiveness.

That's not a cost. That's value creation.

ORR approves Temple Mills access for Virgin Trains' international plans



The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has approved an application from Virgin Trains EUROPE Holdings Limited for access to the Temple Mills International Depot in east London — a key step towards potential new international train services via the Channel Tunnel.

While primarily focused on passenger operations, the decision signals regulatory openness to new cross-border services and could have longer-term implications for network access, infrastructure use, and future freight connectivity.

Martin Jones, ORR Deputy Director for Access and International, said the decision "backs customer choice and competition in international rail" and underlines the regulator's commitment to supporting new market entrants.



Alstom celebrates 150 years of Glasgow's Polmadie Depot

Photo: Richard Gennis

Alstom opened its Glasgow Traincare Centre (Polmadie Depot) to the public for the first time in 25 years to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

Over 1,000 visitors attended to view historic and modern rolling stock, including locomotives from GB Railfreight, Freightliner, and Rail Operations Group.

Speakers from Alstom, Avanti West Coast, Caledonian Sleeper, and Network Rail Scotland praised the depot's long-standing contribution to Scottish rail operations and its role in inspiring the next generation of engineers.

Freightliner and Malcolm Group name loco in honour of Donald Malcolm and celebrate new service



On 8 October, Freightliner and The Malcolm Group held a special ceremony at Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) to name locomotive 90021 Donald Malcolm, in memory of the late Donald Malcolm.

Donald Malcolm inherited the family's coal-round business and built The Malcolm Group into one of the UK's leading providers of logistics, construction and maintenance services. The naming recognised both his huge contribution to the transport and logistics industry and the strong partnership between Freightliner and The Malcolm Group.

The event also marked the launch of a new daily Freightliner service between Felixstowe and DIRFT, operating from the Malcolm Group's new terminal. This adds to the companies' existing dedicated services between Daventry, Grangemouth

and Mossend, which help cut carbon emissions and remove HGVs from busy roads.

Andrew Malcolm, CEO of The Malcolm Group, said: "We are both delighted and honoured to be launching this new service, along with Freightliner, from DIRFT to Felixstowe and to be naming locomotive 90021 in memory of my late father Donald Malcolm."

RFG's Director General Maggie Simpson, said: "It is fantastic to see this locomotive named 'Donald Malcolm' today, recognising the long heritage of Malcolm Logistics in freight transport. As pioneers of rail freight from Daventry, Malcolm Logistics have transformed retail and logistics supply chains, and this new facility at DIRFT 3 will help them to continue that journey, helping more businesses to use rail freight."

East West Rail: Next phase confirmed with positive signals for freight

The government has confirmed the next stage of East West Rail (EWR), outlining a series of enhancements to the Oxford–Cambridge corridor that promise more frequent services, new stations and significant economic benefits.

Announced on 19 November, the proposals include increasing service frequency from three to four trains per

hour to up to five, delivering around 70% more seating capacity, improved resilience and shorter waiting times. New station entrances at Bletchley, Cambridge and Bedford have been confirmed, along with four brand-new stations on the Marston Vale Line - the first major investment in the corridor since the 1960s.

A new Stewartby station will support both the local community and the planned Universal theme park, forecast to generate nearly £50 Bn for the UK economy by 2055 and welcome over 8.5 million visitors in its opening year. The scheme also includes seven new stations across the wider route, hybrid battery-electric rolling stock and a new Cambridge East station offering improved connectivity to the upgraded Newmarket

Line and direct links to Norwich, Felixstowe and Ipswich.

RFG's Assistant Policy Manager, Phil Smart, said: "On initial review, this is a positive outcome for freight. EWR has taken decisive action on station closures - an approach RFG supported during consultation. Retaining a stopping service at every location alongside a fast service would have left limited space in the timetable for freight; the new plan provides a clearer path to balancing passenger needs with freight capacity." Download the East West Rail You Said, We Did Autumn Report here and at the link above.

[Click here to download the report.](#)



NR and Loram launch ETCS working group

Network Rail and Loram UK have established a new ETCS working group in Derby to advance the fitment of digital signalling systems to On Track Machines (OTMs).

The initiative aims to boost performance, improve rail maintenance efficiency, and prepare for a fully 'signal-free' railway. Loram's new ETCS-fitted RGC Rail Grinder, the first of its kind in the UK, marks a major milestone for digital railway technology.

Fargo Group acquires Bankside Systems, creators of Intermodal Manager

The Fargo Group has announced the acquisition of Bankside, the company behind Intermodal Manager, a cloud-

based, web-native Terminal Operating System (TOS) used by inland terminals, depots, and intermodal hubs to manage container, equipment, and yard operations more efficiently.

As part of the Fargo product family, Intermodal Manager will be rebranded as Fargo IMTM (Intermodal Terminal Management). It will sit alongside Fargo's established solutions - Fargo TOPS

(Transport Operations and Planning System) and Fargo Yard (yard and gate coordination).

The Fargo IMTM platform provides integrated functions for yard operations, stock visibility, gate & rail control, maintenance & repair (M&R), equipment and stack management, and customer self-service workflows.

Steve McBride to replace Gareth Roberts at UKRL

Steve McBride has been appointed Managing Director at UKRL, replacing Gareth Roberts, who is leaving to pursue a new opportunity outside the rail sector.

UKRL Director Mark Winter said: "We are saddened by Gareth's departure but fortunate to have an excellent replacement in Steve, who brings a wealth of experience from a long career in the railways."

Steve McBride added: "I'm thrilled to be taking over from Gareth, who has done an incredible job. I look forward to continuing to serve our customers with care and professionalism during a period of significant transformation."



RFG Sponsor Partners 2025

The RFG's Sponsor Partners provide additional support for our activities and events throughout the year. The companies involved in the scheme represent a wide range of key stakeholders and we would like to thank each of them for their commitment and ongoing support.



FORTH PORTS LIMITED



DP WORLD





How to decarbonise rail freight

A HGmotive tender undergoes testing.

In 2015, an expert in compressed gases and an expert in locomotives in North America came together to tackle a big question: How can the rail freight industry decarbonise? At first, compressed natural gas (CNG) seemed like a logical step in the energy transition away from diesel. However, post-COVID, the market—and our clients—began demanding green hydrogen instead. The focus shifted rapidly from lower-carbon to zero-emission solutions.

The Challenge: Fuelling Heavy Freight with Green Hydrogen

The question was clear: How can we provide enough green hydrogen to power North America's heavy, high-horsepower freight locomotives pulling more than 150 fully loaded railcars—without frequent refuelling stops?

A multidisciplinary team was formed, bringing together experts in rail engineering, hydrogen systems, and locomotive design. The conclusion was straightforward: a hydrogen tender—a specialised railcar positioned directly behind the locomotive—was required to store enough fuel for long, uninterrupted journeys.

Our goal was to design a tender capable of supplying a freight train for 625 km (388 miles) nonstop—roughly the distance from Tilbury to Edinburgh. In freight logistics, time is money, and every avoided refuelling stop counts.

Designing the Hydrogen Tender

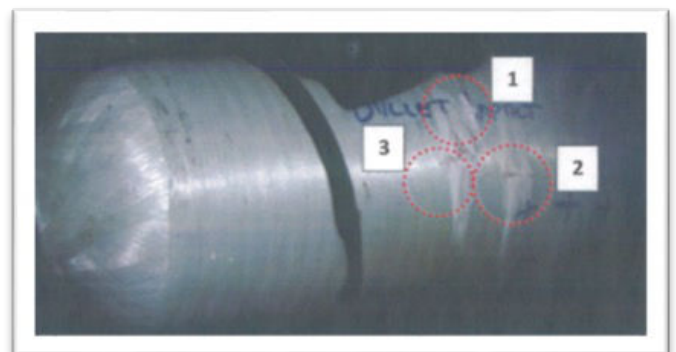
Working with our customer in Canada, who developed a hydrogen fuel cell retrofit kit to replace a diesel engine, we designed a tender equipped with:

- Proprietary compressed hydrogen cylinders, each capable of safely storing hydrogen at 350 bar.
- A precision pressure reduction system, which delivers hydrogen to the locomotive at 12 bar—the optimal operating pressure for its fuel cells.
- An automatic shut-off and leak detection system, ensuring complete operational safety.

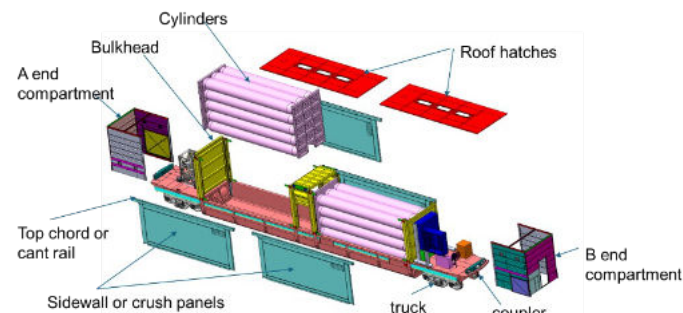
- Crash protection structures, capable of withstanding up to 7G impact forces, simulating potential collisions at 25 mph in compliance with North American safety standards.

Our cylinders were also subjected to drop and impact testing, while the entire tender was tested as if it were a locomotive—meeting and exceeding stringent North American rail safety regulations.

Below is just one of the many tests carried out on our cylinders/tender, firing bullets at them!



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HGmotive tender internal

Real-World Success: 2024 Trial in Canada

In 2024, our hydrogen tender began a 9-month operational trial, which was successfully completed in September 2024. Since then, it has remained in commercial operation for over a year—accumulating 700+ operating hours and delivering 1,200 kg of compressed green hydrogen per trip.

The results were remarkable:

- The fuel cells performed 10–20% more efficiently than diesel engines.
- The locomotive operated with zero emissions and reduced noise.
- Hydrogen demonstrated higher energy efficiency on an equivalent basis compared to diesel.

Our customer has been converting additional diesel locomotives and switchers and plans to purchase four more tenders over the coming years.

When it comes to decarbonising freight, the question is no longer if—but now!

Bringing Zero-Carbon Freight to the UK, EU, and Beyond

Our hydrogen tender can fuel any hydrogen fuel cell locomotive globally. We design each tender according to the specific standards, infrastructure, and track gauge of the destination country—ensuring full compatibility and flexibility.

The Canadian trial also proved the system's resilience. Operating through sub-zero temperatures, mountainous terrain near Calgary, and with heavier locomotives than typically used elsewhere, our hydrogen tender even rescued a frozen diesel locomotive—a testament to hydrogen's reliability in extreme conditions.

Who knows how many more nonstop kilometres could be achieved in milder climates?

Next Generation: Increasing Hydrogen Capacity

We're not stopping here. The HGmotive engineering team is currently developing the next generation of hydrogen tenders:

- A 1,700 Kg and 3,200 Kg capacity models followed by
- A 6,000 Kg tender using cryogenic-compressed hydrogen stabilised with nitrogen.



After extensive studies, we have ruled out liquid hydrogen due to its lower energy density vs. cryogenic compressed hydrogen and the requirement to vent gas under pressure—making compressed or cryo-compressed hydrogen the most efficient and safe choice for rail.

Hydrogen Transportation and Storage Solutions

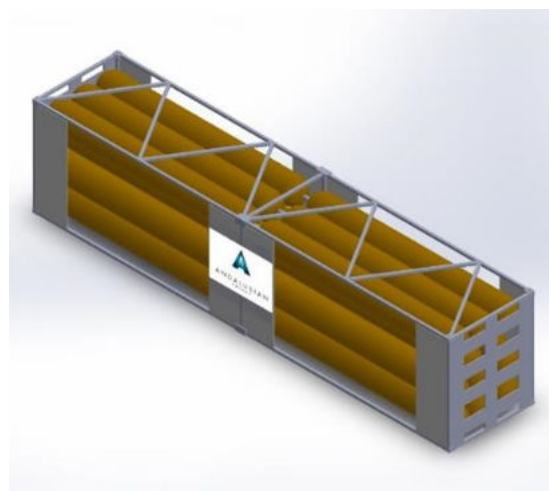
The hydrogen industry is still young, much like the early days of automobiles replacing horses. To support its growth, we've also developed flexible hydrogen logistics solutions for transportation and storage.

For regions where hydrogen production is not yet established, we've created an ISO container system filled with our proprietary hydrogen cylinders. These containers can be transported by truck, ship, or rail, and serve as mobile or stationary storage hubs, from which hydrogen can be decanted into smaller batches as needed.

Photos of our ISO containers () in situ by ship and by road:*



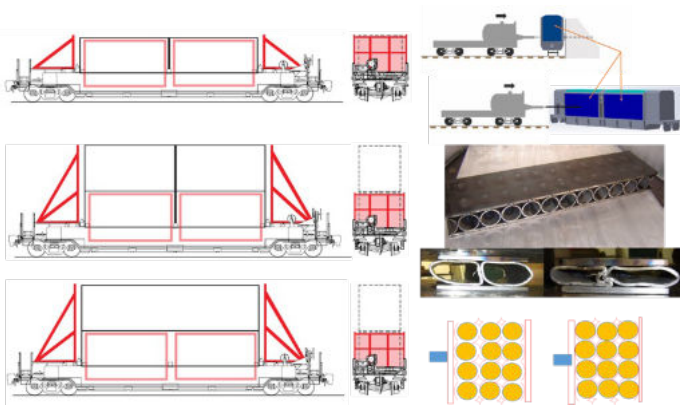
External view schematic of the ISO container with cylinders:



() Andalusian Energy is the parent company of HGmotive*

As hydrogen production scales up, bulk transport becomes essential. For that HGmotive has designed the ArmorWell Solution™—a self-contained container capable of carrying large volumes of green compressed hydrogen using the same high-performance and technology designed for tenders.

Continued over the page.



HGmotive's ArmorWell Solution:

Conclusion: Driving a Zero-Carbon Future

We are proud to be part of the movement that's reshaping the future of freight. Our mission is to bring innovative, reliable, and zero-emission rail transport solutions to the UK, EU, and global markets.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how HGmotive's hydrogen tenders and logistics systems can help accelerate the transition to a cleaner, carbon-free rail network.

For further information please email:
emcfarlane@methane.io
gtrillanes@hgmotive.com



David Roberts & Partners elevates marine & transit claims proposition with new Myton Law advice service

RFG member and specialist international trade and shipping law firm Myton Law has entered into a service agreement with David Roberts & Partners Insurance Brokers to provide DR&P's clients with specialist marine and transit claims dispute advice.

The expert legal insight provided through the partnership with Myton Law will elevate its marine and transit claims proposition, says DR&P.

Marine and transit insurance is one of DR&P's key market specialisms. A family of brokers, DR&P has 34 UK offices and is one of the UK's top 100 independent insurance brokers.

DR&P's Mark Taylor, Group Claims Executive Manager, explains, "For more complex claims, our clients now have access to specialist legal advice delivered by a law firm with a deep understanding of how the insurance industry operates.

This partnership will provide clients with robust legal insight quickly."

Myton Law is a firm of specialist lawyers covering insurance relating to international trade, sale & purchase of goods, shipping, rail, logistics, renewables, ports, real estate and commercial and transactional work. Acting for underwriters, insureds and brokers, Myton Law advises on marine claims, including cargo, hull and machinery, P&I; non-marine, including goods in transit, warehousing and commercial property; and other matters such as insurance fraud, policy wording and broker's rights and obligations.

The service agreement adds value to DR&P's claims process. Where required, clients will have access to initial legal guidance on policy interpretation, liability, quantum and strategy and receive written assessments within 3-5 days of instruction to help progress claims and facilitate better and faster outcomes.

Commenting John Habergham of Myton Law said, "We have worked with David Roberts & Partners to resolve a number of commercial insurance disputes and are pleased to extend that relationship via a more formal agreement through which we look forward to giving their clients swift, practical, commercially minded advice."

2000

Rail Staff Christmas Carol Service 2025

with

London's Transport Choir

St Mary's Somers Town

Eversholt Street, London NW1

Thursday, 18 December, 2025

12:30 HOURS [PLEASE DRESS FOR THE SEASON]

Followed by light
refreshments

**COLLECTION
PROCEEDS
DONATED
TO CHARITY
EVERYONE
WELCOME**



SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED BY



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SIEMENS





Scotland welcomes 'Inspiration' train celebrating 200 years of the railway

As part of the Railway 200 programme, the Inspiration exhibition train arrived at Glasgow Central Station on 11 October, celebrating two centuries of railway history.

The train featured interactive exhibits, local stories, and engineering showcases, marking the railway's enduring role in connecting communities and driving innovation.

DB Cargo UK appoints new Engineering Director

DB Cargo UK has announced the appointment of Wayne Miller as its new Engineering Director, responsible for leading the future development and growth of the company's maintenance and engineering activities.

Wayne will take up the role in January, overseeing DB's three major engineering centres at Toton, Stoke and Crewe, along with its nationwide

network of maintenance outstations.

Currently DB's Head of Service Design, Wayne joins the leadership team at a pivotal time as the company looks to expand its third-party client base. He holds a BSc in Engineering Management, is a former British Army engineer, and has held a number of senior leadership positions within the business.

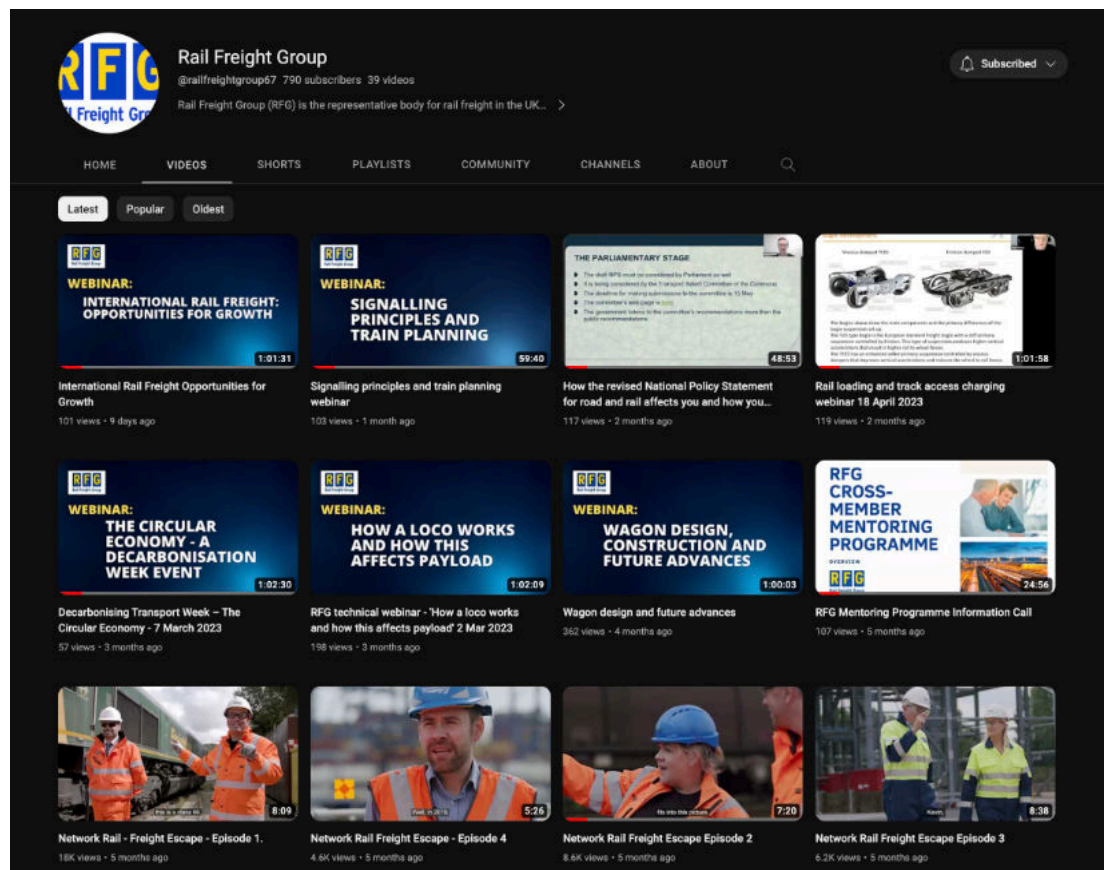
Chief Operating Officer Neil Ethell FCILT said: "I'm delighted to appoint Wayne to the role. His engineering background, sales experience and deep understanding of our business mean he is ideally placed to support the continued growth of our maintenance and engineering portfolio."



Send us your rail freight videos

Rail Freight Group (RFG) is happy to post and share rail freight industry videos on our YouTube channel.

If you have a video showcasing products, services or rail freight operations that you would like us to promote with our membership, please send to contact@rfg.org.uk via [wetransfer](https://www.wetransfer.com) or a similar free file sharing site.



RFG Events Calendar 2025

To find out more about any of our events please go to rfg.org.uk/events

Our forthcoming events:

RFG Christmas Lunch 2025

10 December 2025

[RFG Members' Party 2026](#)

3 February 2026

We are delighted to be hosting our popular Members' Party at Truckles in Central London. Bookings are now open for this free-to-attend event. Please register your interest at the link above.

[RFG Forums](#)

- 3 December 2025

All forums are open to any member who wishes to join. Contact Maria Papp at maria@rfg.org.uk



Watch this space for our 2026 dates

We'll be announcing our 2026 event dates next issue (December 2025). Please watch this space for full details of what's coming up next year.



Supporting “the forgotten shift” can boost engagement and productivity!

Shift and night workers are the backbone of many rail freight companies – yet their unique challenges are often overlooked. Sleep disruption alone is estimated to cost the UK economy £50 Bn a year through lost productivity, absence and health costs. Accident rates are higher at night. And for the 8.7 million people working at night, the impact on health, relationships, and engagement at work is significant.

Night Club recently spoke at the RFG's Autumn Members' Meeting on this issue. Night Club was developed with Oxford University's Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute and night workers themselves. Night Club has supported more than 14,000 shift and nighttime workers to stay healthy, safe and engaged. They provide live in-person training experiences (delivered

any time 24/7), diagnostics and leadership support to transform culture. We want to highlight two particular opportunities in this newsletter:

- Night Club are offering free 30 minute consultations for leaders to help you explore particular issues or opportunities you may be facing in relation to shift and nighttime workers in your business. [Click here to book](#)

- This summer they launched the free 28 page Bright Nights employer guide, which is available to [download here](#). This lays out current legal obligations on employers, a business case for focusing on shift workers and a host of practical tips from data gathering to rota design, worker wellbeing, workplace amenities and company culture. Check it out!

For further information check out www.night-club.org and you can contact info@night-club.org



GB Railfreight



Cargo

Martin House
Children's Hospice

Freightliner 60
1965-2024

drax

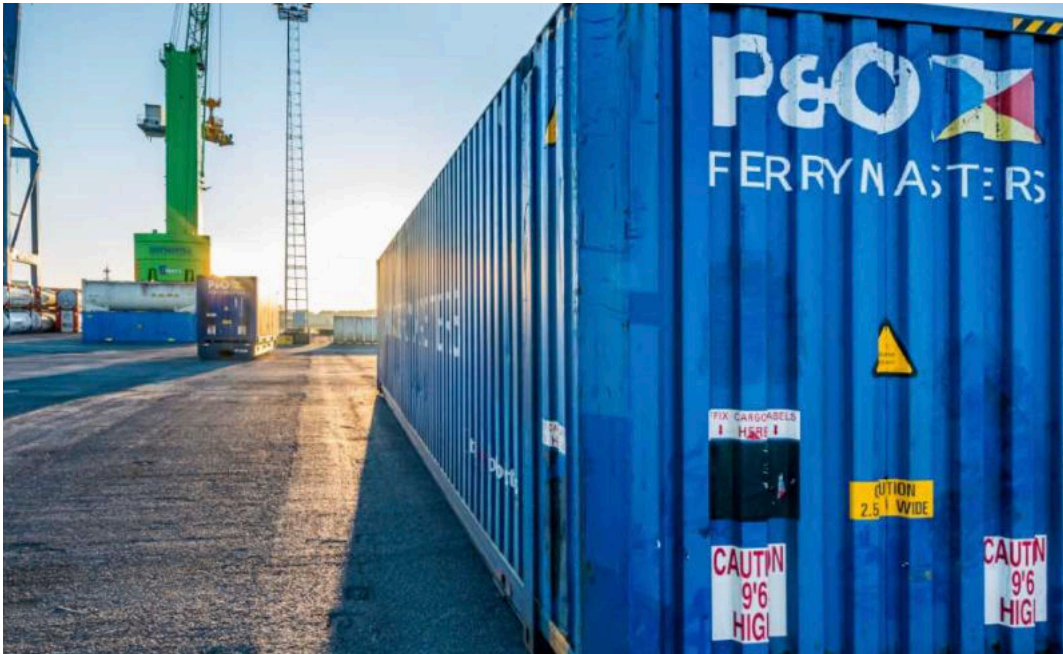
Enter the Rail 200 Martin House Super Raffle

Martin House supports children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families, across West, North and East Yorkshire. Its vision is that every child and young person has access to palliative care when and where they need it.

The Rail industry and Drax have come together to offer some amazing money can't buy prizes to be won in return for your donation including a DB Cargo cab ride from Immingham, GBRf cab ride on the East Coast, FLHH cab ride on a convenient route, DB Cargo Toton depot tour, GBRf simulator experience, Drax tour, and a Revolution sold out 66301 model.

Please donate a minimum of £10 and tick the "I'm happy to share my contact details with Mark Gibbens for the purpose of thanking me." so that the winners can be contacted.

[Click here for the link to donate.](#)



P&O Ferrymasters launches direct rail service between Zeebrugge & Barcelona

P&O Ferrymasters has launched a new direct container rail service between Zeebrugge and Barcelona.

The first direct train departed Zeebrugge on 23 September 2025, establishing the first-ever direct rail connection between a North Sea port and

Barcelona. Operating three times per week, the service runs parallel to the existing Zeebrugge–Dourges–Perpignan connection, providing daily access to Spain.

The new direct service delivers substantial improvements for customers including improved sustainability with around 250 km less road transport per shipment on average, significantly reducing carbon emissions. It will also improve reliability as there are no intermediate stops reducing delay risks, while parallel routes provide fallback options. The service accepts both containers and swap-bodies, with each train carrying up to 45 units consisting of a mix of 45-foot containers and 30-foot tank containers.

CargoBeamer adds new route between Venlo and Oradea

CargoBeamer is expanding its European network with a new route between Venlo in the Netherlands and Oradea in Romania. The route has been integrated into CargoBeamer's intermodal offering since the end of September 2025. Six roundtrips per week are provided, with a transit time of 60 hours

Trains run daily from Sunday to Friday from the Cabooter Terminal in Venlo, Netherlands, as well as from Friday to Wednesday from the Intermodal Terminal Oradea. Both craneable and

non-craneable semi-trailers, Frigo, ADR, and tank trailers, as well as containers and swap-bodies can be transported. The new service marks one of the first direct connections for semi-trailers between the Netherlands and Romania.

"With Venlo – Oradea, we are establishing one of the first direct intermodal links between the Netherlands and Romania, which is an important step towards further connecting Western and Eastern Europe," says Boris Timm, COO of CargoBeamer. "This new service enables sustainable transport over a long distance of approximately 1,500km. The connection between Venlo and Oradea marks another milestone in the expansion of our European network, supporting both our entry into Eastern Europe and the continued growth of the CargoBeamer network."

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News in Brief:

- The Polish terminal operator CLIP Terminals has signed a deal to build an intermodal terminal in the town of Zabrze, southern Poland.

- The European Rail Freight Association (ERFA) has announced interim arrangements following the departure of Secretary General Conor Feighan. Josselin Petit, currently ERFA's Policy Advisor is serving as Acting Secretary General.

- ORLEN Kolej, one of Poland's biggest rail freight operators, is acquiring 40 new locomotives. They fall into two categories: twenty 304E Gama locomotives from Polish manufacturer PESA and twenty E6ACTadnb Dragon 2 locomotives from Newag, also a Polish manufacturer.

- CER Cargo Group has acquired Wiener Lokalbahnen Cargo GmbH (WLC).

- HHLA recorded a 13.7% growth in rail freight during the first nine months of 2025, reaching 1,300,000 TEUs. A similar trend was noticed in the intermodal segment, with a +13.6% for 1,501,000 TEUs.

- METRANS and INTERPORT Servis s.r.o. are teaming up in a joint project to modernise an intermodal terminal near the eastern Slovak city of Košice.

- Rail Logistics Europe (RLE) has opened a register of interest for the auction of 26 locomotives put up for sale by new entity, Hexafret.