

## **A City for All Londoners**

### **Response from Rail Freight Group**

**December 2016**

1. Rail Freight Group (RFG) is pleased to submit comments on the Mayor of London's 'A City for All Londoners'.
2. RFG is the representative body for rail freight in the UK. We represent around 120 companies who are active across the rail freight sector, including train operators, end customers, ports, terminals, developers, supply chain companies and support services. Our aim is to increase the volume of goods moved by rail, delivering economic and environmental benefits across the UK.

#### *Benefits of Rail Freight*

3. A greater use of rail freight aligns with the aims of the Mayoral strategy, particularly in respect of transport, infrastructure and the environment.
4. Rail freight is acknowledged as an environmentally superior mode to road freight, producing 76% less CO<sub>2</sub> and up to 15 times less NO<sub>x</sub> than the equivalent journey by road. Enabling a greater use of rail for serving London can therefore help with meeting air quality and carbon change targets.
5. Rail freight can also help reduce road congestion, with a full train being the equivalent of up to 75 lorry loads. Whilst final deliveries may still need to be on road, well located terminals can help to reduce the final distance, and enable operators to get the most efficient use from their fleet, which in turn should help with the uptake of more modern vehicles.

#### *Rail Freight in London*

6. Rail freight already plays an important role for the London economy. Our members' services deliver around 40% of the aggregates and other construction materials used in London for building homes and infrastructure. By supplying these materials into railheads across the capital we are helping to reduce road movements and improve the efficiency of supply to construction sites. Rail is also helping to move construction spoil, particularly from projects such as Crossrail. There are a number of construction rail heads across London, including at Battersea, Greenwich, Kings Cross and at locations further out.
7. Greater London also has a number of other rail linked sites which are serving a variety of markets. The ports at London Gateway, and Tilbury are rail served, and terminals at Barking and Purfleet also receive rail services. Further north the sites at Willesden, Wembley and Cricklewood all have rail freight capability and

use.

8. Rail freight services also use the rail network around London to access terminals elsewhere in the UK. Whilst this is not ultimately desirable, the absence of appropriate alternative routes means that such services will continue to operate. Seeking ways to better serve London with, in particular, imported goods delivered by rail will also be important, as there are presently few services which are able to do this.

### *Comments on Mayoral Plans*

9. As above, we consider there is good alignment between the Mayoral strategy, and a greater use of rail freight. To achieve this, the London Plan, and the Mayors Transport Strategy, needs to support rail freight. In particular;
10. *Land Use* The document refers to the need to protect industrial land, which is critical for rail freight. Sites with good rail and road access, in appropriately zoned areas are in short supply, and need to have strong protection in the planning system.
11. We are aware of a number of locations where railheads have been under threat, either from compulsory purchase, short term planning conditions and inappropriate adjacent development. This risks the loss of sites, which are irreplaceable, or at best, prevents long term investment in the facilities, which impacts on the ability to use the best available equipment and technology.
12. We have attached a paper setting out these points in more detail, but in summary, the London Plan must act to ensure that there is a suitable framework for safeguarding rail heads in key locations.
13. *Transport* Rail freight can, as above, contribute greatly to Mayoral ambitions, but this will require network capacity to enable freight to operate efficiently alongside passenger service. Whilst freight services generally avoid operating during the passenger peaks, capacity for freight must be protected in the off peaks. This must be factored into plans for additional passenger service.
14. *Environment* Rail freight has a superior environmental performance, but can do more with the right support. Electrification for rail freight around London has been cut from the current plans, which is disappointing. Plans for improving air quality should therefore be cognisant of the diesel fleet which are used for rail freight presently, and seek the most appropriate ways to help develop air quality plans maximising the use of rail freight.