



## **ASLEF Response to the Consultation on a Draft National Policy Statement for the National Road and Rail Networks**

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train driver's union representing approximately 18,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. ASLEF agrees that transport is an engine for growth. The rail network is approaching capacity for both passenger and freight services and must be expanded to support economic growth and for many social benefits.
3. Transport not only supports the economy but drives it itself. Figures quoted by Credo Group for Invensys Rail which showed that every £1 invested in rail by the government generates an additional £1.30 from the private sector – in other words investment in transport has a stronger multiplier effect than other sectors of the economy.
4. ASLEF welcomes the statement notes that there is a compelling need for development of the national rail network and has recognised the importance of rail freight in economic, safety and environmental terms. However more consideration needs to be given to all the economic, social safety and environmental benefits of rail compared to road in any analysis of practicality and affordability. This is especially true given that road only internalises between one to two thirds of the costs it imposes on society.

5. ASLEF welcomes the prospect of re-opening or creating new alignments to improve capacity and believes that many of the lines closed since the Beeching cuts could hold the key to the capacity restraints we currently have.
6. The environmental benefits of rail are becoming increasingly relevant. The Government has set a legal commitment for the UK in the Climate Change Bill to a 34% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 and an 80% reduction by the year 2050.
7. The surface transport industry is responsible for 21% of the UK's carbon emissions with transport as a whole responsible for about 33%. Transport is also the fastest growing polluter in the UK. However rail emits just 2% of these transport emissions whilst road is responsible for 19% of all emissions and 55% of transport emissions.
8. Additionally, rail freight produces 70% less carbon dioxide per tonne carried than the equivalent road journey. HGVs are responsible for 20% of carbon dioxide emissions from all domestic transport and road freight now account for 8% of UK carbon dioxide emissions.
9. ASLEF believes that the NPS needs to make a stronger case for the Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges at a regional and sub-regional level and give some definition of the potential scale of need. ASLEF feels the NPS should give more guidance as to which regions are poorly served by Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges on order to remedy this situation.
10. The Union is extremely concerned by the proposals for large scale road building. Whilst it is true that road congestion is a major issue in the UK, we must be looking to alternatives to cars and lorries, rather than facilitating more of them. The government cannot call for a reduction in

transport carbon emissions whilst looking to increase the amount of roads we have in Britain.

11. ASLEF welcomes the government's understanding that much needs to be done to support both rail freight and passenger rail services. Rail must be on the front line in dealing with carbon emissions and congestion. For this reason there must be no watering down of emission limits, and the problem of over reliance on road vehicles must not be exacerbated by the creation of more roads.

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