

FREIGHT

JOURNAL

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MEGA LORRIES



**TRANSPORT MINISTER SAYS NO
TO LONGER, HEAVIER VEHICLES ...
BUT WILL EU SAY YES?**

RAIL FREIGHT SET TO DOUBLE BY 2030



Squash Campaign: Class 66 cab improvements underway

AFTER some delay, modifications to the Class 66 cabs operated by Freightliner are underway. According to Freightliner the delay was due to the ORR prioritising brake modification, however the company have assured ASLEF that the welfare of drivers is still paramount and that a lot of attention has been made to ensure solutions to the cab environment are fit for purpose.

The fitting of cab blinds had been delayed due to concerns about the strength of the fixtures. However this situation has since been resolved and a programme of installation is now underway.

This has been combined with two separate trials of cab cooling systems. One mechanism has been fitted to



Cooling systems go on trial

a Freightliner HH locomotive and it is hoped that this will pass the cab noise assessment. This model is currently in evaluation. The second system has been trial-fitted under the watchful eye of ASLEF's ergonomics spokesman Keith Martin who has given positive feedback. When a full prototype of both systems is fitted, ASLEF members will be consulted and asked for feedback. This is due to take place in the near future.

There was a step backwards for the improvement of seats after the improved version had to be removed following injuries sustained due to a weakness in the adjusting handle. Progress has since been made with a redesigned plinth that has been delivered and is now ready for installation. Freightliner will once again be seeking ASLEF members' feedback before the seats are rolled out across the fleet.

There was also positive news from EWS who by the end of September will have fitted roof fans and blinds to half of their locos. It was decided that this would be the most apt way forward after spiralling costs of installing air conditioners.

GB Railfreight has

meanwhile fitted all of its class 66 locos with new seats as well as blinds and are currently trying out an air conditioning system.

DRS had begun to fit air conditioning units to its class 66 locos, however these were causing damage to the frame of the vehicle. Some fans have been fitted since but talks continue to find a practical air conditioning unit.

While some FOCs are progressing quicker than others, ASLEF continues to make progress on CAB environments for all its freight drivers. It has not been a fast process, but the union feels that real progress is being made and trials are taking place with each FOC to ensure a safe and comfortable days work for our members.

Freightliner bought by Bahrainian investors

FREIGHTLINER has promised that all "existing contractual relationships including contracts of employment and pensions will remain unaltered" following the purchase of the company by Arcapita, an international investment firm based in Bahrain.

Arcapita has acquired the freight company from 3i and Electra Private Equity for an undisclosed sum and has vowed to continue its investments into both Intermodal and Heavy Haul Businesses as well as develop its international activities.

Eddie Fitzsimons has claimed that Freightliner "have a clearly developed business strategy and investment plans remain in place, therefore, it is very much, business as usual."

It is believed that Electra will receive net proceeds of £71.1 million.



DfT to push the Freight Facilities Grant

THE DfT have announced a budget of £21 million over the next three years for the Freight Facilities Grant.

The FFG is designed to facilitate the purchase of the environmental and social benefits that result from using

rail or water transport instead of road. Companies who decide to transport goods on rail are able to apply for a grant in order to assist them financially in achieving this. The grant can be applied for by any company wishing to

move freight within Great Britain by rail or water.

Railway minister Jim Fitzpatrick also announced that a campaign to publicise the FFG scheme to encourage more applications. A new leaflet has been

produced, which will be mailed to potential applicants. The new Freight Best Practice contract which was awarded to Faber Maunsel on 1 July 2008, will also require them to market grants direct to businesses.



Report claims rail freight set to double by 2030

A NEW forecast published by the Rail Freight Group and Freight Transport Association has predicated that demand for rail freight will double by 2030.

The forecasts show that there will be a 30% increase in tonne km from 2006 to 2015 and rail freight will more than double by 2030. Growth in intermodal traffic is expected to increase by five-fold in the same period.

Much of the demand is expected to be related to the

expansion of trade from continental Europe as well as increases from beyond the continent. It is also expected to be boosted by the use of rail from new warehouses that are rail connected.

Unfortunately it appears that the rail network will simply not be able to keep up with this demand, even when assuming no increases in passenger train numbers. The chairman of the Rail Freight Group, Tony Berkeley commented; "these new forecasts demonstrate the

urgent challenges facing the rail industry and Government in meeting the future demand for rail freight."

ASLEF General Secretary Keith Norman explained, "To build new lines and increase capacity can take decades. The government is promoting the use of rail to transport freight. It's important they put their money where their mouth is and begin investing before it's too late and before our roads become even more congested."

Lords recognises importance of rail freight

DESPITE concerns about the negative effect of Crossrail on rail freight, the House of Lords Committee examining the bill "recognised the importance of rail freight to the UK economy," and were "grateful to the freight Petitioners for organising themselves and presenting their cases efficiently and clearly."

The committee accepted the need to build freight capacity to match the additional Crossrail trains in order to allow freight to grow between now and 2015.

The report by the committee ensured that Department of Transport gave assurances that "any subsequent decisions by the Promoter (DfT) not to carry out all of the proposed infrastructure works authorised by the Crossrail Bill will be taken on the basis that... it should not have an overall negative impact on the capability of the existing rail network to handle the current and forecast growth in rail freight traffic to 2015."

General Secretary Keith Norman said, "Crossrail is an exciting project and will benefit millions in the South East and across the country. It is essential however that it does not jeopardise rail freight. The fact that the Lords have recognised this is vital, and ASLEF will work to ensure that what should be a fantastic project for passenger rail is also of benefit to freight rail."

Rail freight means savings for Tesco

MORE Tesco goods will be taken by train in a move that will save 2.4 million litres of petrol a year.

The Stobart group has announced plans that will reduce its petrol usage and remove huge numbers of lorries from the M6.

The group has announced that it is to expand its Tesco rail freight service between Scotland and the Midlands. From early September the

round trip between Daventry and Grangemouth will run on Saturdays in addition to its current Monday to Friday service. From Grangemouth, goods will be taken to Tesco's distribution centre at Livingston by road.

It is hoped that the move from road to rail will cut costs as well as reduce congestion and carbon emissions.



STIRLING - KINCARDINE LINE REOPENS In April the first freight train operated on Scotland's newest railway between Stirling and Kincardine. The 21 Km line was operated as part of a driving training programme.

The line which was officially opened on 15th May and will operate passenger services between Stirling and Alloa, was primarily built to help transport coal on rail to the power station at Longannet while avoiding the congested Forth railway bridge.

It is hoped that the new line will increase capacity for both freight and passengers in central Scotland and demonstrates the importance of re-opening existing lines or developing new ones.

THE THREAT OF LHV FROM EUROPE



Thanks to the hardwork put in by ASLEF and the rest of our colleagues in the Freight on Rail group, the government has confirmed that there will not be a trial of longer heavier vehicles in the UK. Much of this hardwork has been done by **Philippa Edmunds** from Freight on Rail who warns us that there is still work to be done...

The threat of 25.5 metre 60 tonne HGVs still exists as there is a danger that these vehicles could come to the UK over time if the European Commission recommends that cross border LHV traffic should be allowed. Thanks to all our joint lobbying, the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Ruth Kelly, announced on 3rd June 2008 that it will not allow trials of longer heavier lorries (LHVs) in the UK in what is a crucial decision if we are to stop LHVs at a European level. We warmly welcome the Government's decision and urge it to use all its powers to lobby against LHVs in Europe.

In Brussels, the European Commission officials in the Transport and Energy Directorate (DGTREN) seem very enthusiastic about longer heavier lorries and are likely to recommend that LHVs should be allowed in member states with bi-lateral agreements between countries which want LHVs. It would appear that the European Commission has dropped the idea of forcing all member states to allow LHVs but once the precedent is set of cross border traffic, LHVs would come to the UK by default over time because if other European countries allowed them, the road haulage industry could claim that excluding longer heavier lorries (LHVs) would be anti-competitive.

As expected, the consultants for the EC have recommended that introducing LHVs is overall beneficial for European society and that freight transport with LHVs will be cheaper, but the question is what is meant by cheaper and for whom? Findings that LHVs will be safer than existing HGVs and produce lower emissions are based on the inaccurate premise that there will be low modal shift to road from rail and a high utilization factor of LHVs which is unlikely to materialize in reality. Given that existing HGVs are up to

160,000 times more damaging to road surfaces than the average car; it would have been difficult for the consultants to imply that LHVs would not have a detrimental impact on road infrastructure. Justification on safety grounds for LHVs appears to be based on the premise that two LHVs will replace three HGVS and by comparing LHVs with all the latest available safety features to HGVs which do not, but could have, the same safety features as the LHVs. The safety analysis seems very narrow and Freight on Rail is investigating whether the impacts of emergency situations where LHVs might have to reverse such as in tunnels or the implications of the larger fuel tanks are being fully analysed. It appears also that the consultants were not asked to investigate the road congestion implications of LHVs which further undermines the credit of the research, all of which we will be highlighting with decision makers.

Procedurally, this recommendation, expected in September/October 2008, would have to go to other EC departments before going before the Parliament, where MEPs on the Transport committee would vote before the motion went before all the Parliament and Council of Ministers. This means that legislation could be changed in the new European Parliament in the second half of 2009, when Sweden, which already has LHVs, holds the presidency.

However in addition to the UK Government announcement opposing LHVs, the Austrian Government has also stated its opposition to LHVs this summer. In October 2007, German Transport Ministers voted to reject LHVs highlighting the increased safety risk, after extensive trials in Germany and we understand that its position has not changed which is crucial given both its geographical



position and status in the EU. Freight on Rail is working closely with organisations across Europe opposing LHVs where there is a web based campaign, launched in June 2008, which is already supported by over 40 NGOs, union and trade association representing over 10 million people across Europe. Once we know what the European Commission is formally recommending we will be asking for your support in the campaign again.

In terms of the UK Government's decision to investigate modest increases in the size of HGVs we believe that overall larger carbon gains could be achieved by enabling more rail freight rather than increasing HGVs which could affect rail freight competitiveness in the future in the intermodal (domestic and european) rail freight markets, which are forecast to grow significantly.

Freight on Rail maintains that while road and rail modes can complement each other trunk movements of large quantities of freight



RUTH KELLY SAYS NO TO LHVS

AFTER months of campaigning and concern, Ruth Kelly finally put the Rail Freight industry's mind at ease in early June by rejecting proposals for a trial of Longer Heavier Vehicles. The decision followed an independent report by the Transport Research Laboratory and Heriot-Watt University.

ASLEF through its work with the Freight on Rail group have relentlessly argued against the introduction of LHVs. We have written to government, briefed MPs, commissioned polls and produced leaflets and articles and the hard work appears to have paid off. Our case was simple. LHVs would make our roads more dangerous, would increase pollution and congestion and would undermine cleaner and more sustainable rail freight.

The study looked into the introduction of 60-tonne 25.5 metre lorries, a concept that 75% of the public were opposed to. The road haulage lobby continued to argue that longer vehicles would lead to fewer lorries actually being needed, thus reducing emissions, congestion and accidents. However Freight on Rail research showed that previous increases have resulted in more lorries driving around less full creating more pollution and CO2 emissions. In addition, the reduced costs of road haulage that larger vehicles would lead to would increase demand, resulting in more lorries.

There were also many questions over the suitability of the British road network for the use of LHVs. A trial in Germany led to the rejection of LHVs. The main argument for the rejection of the vehicles was safety fears and concerns over the strength of bridges on the Autobahn. The axle weight is insignificant if the vehicle is shorter than the bridge. At this point it is the combined weight of the whole vehicle and the bridge that can cause long term damage. German roads are in fact more suited to LHVs due to the fact that 5 per cent of their roads are motorway in comparison to Britain's 1 per cent. LHV would have been confined to our motorways and this would have made the construction of huge access centres a necessity.

ASLEF's progressive arguments for rail freight proved the obvious way to develop freight transport. The average freight train



takes 50 HGVs from our roads with aggregate trains removing 120 HGVs. When you consider that road freight now accounts for 8 per cent of UK carbon dioxide emissions the benefits are clear. Per tonne carried, rail produces between five and ten times fewer emissions than road transport.

THE CAMPAIGN

It has been a bumpy road to the minister's decision on LHVs. It started well, with former transport minister Steve Ladyman having responded to a written parliamentary question on the issue by explaining that he would refuse to allow 60 tonne or 80 tonne lorries on to our roads. Just over a year later the government commissioned a fresh report into the issue.

Although Ruth Kelly continued to make negative sounds about LHVs, she refused to dismiss a trial. The minister explained, "I am also sceptical of these vehicles, but there is an absence of evidence, and this is what we hope to correct when our research is complete... It would take a great deal of persuasion for me to allow such vehicles in the UK."

It was not until 3rd June that the minister finally announced what train drivers, environmentalists and motorists had been longing to hear; "This study shows that super-lorries are not compatible with British roads. Not only are there clear environmental drawbacks, but such vehicles would be unsuitable for many roads and junctions, while providing the infrastructure to accommodate them would require substantial investment."

can be more sustainably and more safely carried by rail, rather than ever larger lorries, in line with public opinion[i]. Rail freight has the potential to double volumes over the next 25 years as long as LHVs are not introduced. Increases in fuel price increases make the case for rail, which is energy efficient, much stronger and Freight on Rail is lobbying the Government to take energy prices into account as well as the environmental and safety case for rail freight in its forthcoming Transport Strategy.

● Philippa Edmunds Campaigner 020 8241 9982 email philippa@freightonrail.org.uk: www.freightonrail.org.uk

● Members are Direct Rail Services, EWS, Freightliner, ASLEF, RMT, TSSA, Unite-Amicus Section, Rail Freight Group and Campaign for Better Transport

● A NOP poll in August 2007 found that 75% of people opposed LHVs and 80% wanted more rail freight instead.



FREIGHTLINER INTERMODAL REPORT

Company Council Rep **Steve Wilson** updates us on the situation at Freightliner Intermodal...

ONCE again summer is here and once again Freightliner's drivers have to endure the high temperatures and uncomfortable cab conditions on their class 66 locomotive fleet. There has been minimal progress in the agreed cab modifications needed to improve the class 66 cab environment.

Freightliners Business Council's lead officer, District Organiser Andy Morrison reported on the lack of progress on the class 66 locomotives to the EC which in turn led ASLEF to advise Freightliners Management that they were not satisfied with progress on cab improvements and that the failure to resolve these matters to the satisfaction of the EC will bring them

into dispute with ASLEF.

The Intermodal Business Council was informed at a meeting held on July 25 that side blinds were now being fitted across the fleet. In addition locomotives had new seats installed, but the design will have to be modified as a fault led to a driver being injured.

Two locomotives have been installed with different types of cooling systems one of which will be chosen once comparative trials have been completed.

The Genesis project is proceeding as planned with the first of the new locomotives scheduled to enter service in the second half of 2009. The staff-side members who have been involved in the project from the start have again visited the G E factory in the United States to observe the progress being made and report enthusiastically on the work they have witnessed so far.

The ownership of the Freightliner Group has been sold from one investment

company, 3i to another, Arcapita. Employees have been informed that no changes will result from the sale.

There are a number of new Graduate Drivers being trained at the present time, this is the third year of Freightliners in-house driver training scheme and has been very successful so far.

We can expect there to be some extensive alterations to the train plan as we enter 2009 because of Network Rail alterations to the East London area around Stratford and connecting routes to facilitate railway improvements for the 2012 Olympics. The company is waiting on Transport for London for the information needed to produce the new train plan but does not expect this will be finalised until the end of 2008.

We can only hope the economic downturn proves to be temporary, as a longer period of recession could eventually impact on the rail freight business.

DRS REPORT

Tam McKendrick, Company Council Secretary for DRS reports on a busy few months for the company and its drivers...

THE past few months have been very busy for us in DRS, the main issues being the continuation of training for our trainee drivers and further recruitment of train crew. On top of this was the recruitment of some EWS drivers who were under threat of redundancy. That we were able to find fellow drivers new jobs demonstrates the benefits of ASLEF membership. To be in a position to help a fellow driver gain employment while under the threat of redundancy far outweighs any other so-called burning issues. This lets everyone know within our union and outside that we are unified and we look after the members' main interest which is to remain gainfully employed.

Aside from this we were invited to attend the local transport forum in Grangemouth

which is our main Scottish base. Hugh Bradley and I attended on behalf of ASLEF and DRS and found the forum to be very informative. It was also interesting to note that as railway people we had quite a lot in common with the road haulage people who attended.

Grangemouth is a hugely important industrial area in Scotland; some of the main employers in the town supply Scotland and the north of England, included in these employers are INEOS who were recently in the news with the pensions dispute with our colleagues in unite; also forth ports who operate one of the busiest docks in Britain.

The main reason the forum was set up was to try to improve the infrastructure of the town to cope with industrial expansion.

At present the town struggles to cope with traffic trying to reach the main industries. From the railway perspective a Victorian infrastructure is struggling to meet the demands of twenty-first century society.

As stated above we have every sympathy for the road haulage lobby. It can see the financial benefits of transporting goods by rail due to government grants and the high cost of fuel. ASLEF's view is that the main freight journey should be via rail before goods are transported to their final destination by road. This can only be realised if the intermodal infrastructure is in place.

The local MSP is very sympathetic to the argument for rail and has now been introduced to the rail freight group, also freight on rail are being updated on developments. Hopefully, by lobbying the Scottish government we can achieve our aims to dramatically improve the transport infrastructure and at the same time bring more freight onto rail.

Levelling the playing field, a real new approach?



EC member for District 1 **Simon Weller** explains why the true cost of road and the long-term benefits of rail must be recognised in transport planning.

IN AN article last year, Jonathon Leake of the *Sunday Times* highlighted the ridiculous planning and appraisal rules applied to road building applications; rules that you would expect to be more at home in a piece from Edward Lear than a Government policy document.

The 1998 New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) requires road planners to show the effect of their proposals on the environment and economy. So far, so sensible, but the rules twist and distort any cost benefit analysis in favour of the road solution rather than any green alternative. Why the Tories would miss such an easy target to bolster their new found green credentials is a mystery, except it would mean upsetting their road lobby friends.

The inconsistencies the NATA rules encourage would be funny if they did not have such a detrimental impact on our industry and environment.

For example, rule 3.5.1 of NATA awards additional points to road schemes that actually generate extra traffic because extra traffic means greater fuel sales and increased tax revenue. 'This is not the mouth breathing indignation of The Daily Mail it's the rules by which road schemes are judged. Public transport schemes score in precisely the opposite manner as they reduce road traffic. The same applies to rail borne freight.

There are other ways of tipping the balance in favour of the road solution, typically by massaging accident figures. If a road scheme can be shown to reduce fatalities and each fatality is given an

arbitrary value and this is shown against the cost of the scheme making it cheaper - as rail has no fatalities (relative to road), these savings cannot be applied to a rail scheme. Although, it is obvious the removal of HGVs from busy roads can only make them safer and those savings should be applied to rail.

These madhouse economics aside, the further failing of NATA is it does not fully calculate the carbon costs. The policy dates from ten years ago, before the mainstream realisation that to slow climate change we must change the way we operate. Although, two years ago the Government introduced an unrepresentative £70 per tonne of carbon produced for road costing. Arguably, the real figure is nearer £1000 per tonne.

Another effect of the NATA rules is they undermine any economic case for public transport. According to NATA, the light rail schemes proposed for Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds, Portsmouth as well as other cities did not give "value for money" and a bus alternative recommended. A further bias in the system is light rail must fund itself to the tune of 25% yet road only needs to contribute 10%.

The Countryside Agency and Campaign for the protection of Rural England

published a report into the "before" predictions of NATA and the actual "after" statistics of a number of road building projects, notably the A34 Newbury bypass, A27 Polegate bypass and M65 Blackburn bypass. It will come as no surprise the preliminary NATA assessments underestimated traffic growth, congestion and environmental impact.

The Government has come to realise that NATA is an unsustainable position and recently sought to "refresh NATA". We await the results of the consultation with interest. However, will it be a missed opportunity?

The need to overhaul our transport policies and approach to oil use places rail, both freight and passenger, in a very strong economic, political and environmental position.

Efficiency of bulk transportation, further electrification coupled with regulated renewable generation freeing us from ever-increasing oil prices and unpredictable supply coupled with a reduction in the national carbon footprint is a compelling argument.

Unfortunately, the current structure and financing of the railway does not support long term planning and investment; compounded by the unfair and skewed planning appraisals that do not factor the true cost of road or the long-term benefits of rail.

ASLEF will continue to argue and lobby in Westminster and amongst any group that has influence on the decision makers for a level playing field to defend our industry, both passenger and freight, against short termist policies and destructive profit motives.



RAIL FREIGHT IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE



Jim Dobbin MP for Heywood and Middleton is a passionate supporter of Rail Freight and has tabled EDMs to support the building of improved rail infrastructure. We asked him to explain to us why he believed that getting freight off of the roads and on to trains is so important to the whole of the country.

THE UK economy depends on efficient, fast, direct freight transport systems. My interest in freight transport stems from the geography and nature of my constituency, Heywood and Middleton. The M62 goes straight through the middle of it, with Heywood on one side and Middleton on the other. M62 Junction 19 gives access to both towns and access to a number of distribution parks. Situated midway between the Ports of Liverpool and Hull and midway between the M6 and M1 motorways, the HGV density is extremely high.

If this large number of HGV journeys is allowed to travel freely through my local communities then it means nose to tail traffic every 2 minutes 24 hours a day. Local communities should not have to suffer this continuous noise, pollution and disruption. We of course direct the HGV movements away from local communities. We have weight restrictions and chicanes on certain routes to force heavy traffic to use other routes to reach their destinations.

It is for these reasons that I support the creation of a network of rail freight across the country to enable much greater access from road to rail freight. There needs to be much greater focus on rail freight. It was for these reasons that I agreed to lead a House of Commons Early Day Motion in support of the Howbury

Park Rail Freight Interchange which is as follows.

That this House applauds the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government granting permission for a new strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Howbury Park and her conclusion that the benefits of the scheme, primarily related to meeting London's need for SRFI's were well justified; further calls on her to ensure that additional sites similarly require her support in order to create a network of international rail freight facilities that link into major freight routes, seaports and other rail-served logistics parks throughout the country, as well as the European network of similar facilities via the channel tunnel; acknowledges that sites such as the Kent International Gateway are essential to build on the decision made at Howbury Park in order to alleviate the growing pressure on the M20, the M25 and London's main arterial roads in addition to the achievement of the Government's own targets to shift more freight from road on to rail.

I am aware that local people may not be in support of such interchanges. However the government needs to be more strategic in its planning the future of the country's freight transport. London in particular must be free of heavy traffic as must the other city regions of the UK. There would be considerable benefits from a better planned freight transport system. Noise pollution, environmental pollution, traffic pollution all create health hazards for local communities. A policy to create increased rail freight facilities would certainly improve the quality of life for the people of this country and would have my solid support. A network of interchanges linking the entire country through the Channel Tunnel to Europe must be the way ahead.

JIM DOBBIN MP

Member of the HoC Rail Freight Group

