

FALKIRK COUNCIL

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

The Falkirk area has the potential to stimulate significant new growth and investment. It has a growing population and over 60% of Scotland's citizens live within a 60 minute journey. Falkirk's central location, equidistant between Glasgow and Edinburgh, is at the intersection of Scotland's communication and transport networks.

Falkirk's strategic location supports key industries including oil and gas, renewables, logistics, manufacturing and the food and drinks industry. The area's projection for continued population growth makes it a key location for future transport infrastructure development projects. Falkirk has Scotland's largest container port, a gateway to the rest of the world for international trade.

Falkirk's location offers great potential for further and more sustainable growth and is attractive to businesses which need ready access to their markets. There are opportunities to exploit the environmental benefits of the multi-modal transport connections that are possible in the Falkirk area however, existing networks have a capacity and the improvement works introduced through the TIF need to be accelerated and supplemented to support these opportunities.

The Falkirk area has significant freight infrastructure and freight-dependent assets of national importance. Consequently, Falkirk Council has a particular interest in the freight industry, local and national developments and in ensuring the policy approach achieves the most beneficial outcomes for the national economy.

The strategic assets include but are not limited to:

- The Port of Grangemouth, operated by Forth Ports.
 - Critical national infrastructure, including the Petrolneos refinery and its distribution channels, upon which industry, the transport sector and households throughout Scotland and parts of England and Northern Ireland rely for the supply of fuels and other hydrocarbon products.
 - A large chemicals cluster and wider manufacturing base (motor vehicles, engineering, consumer products, building materials and timber processing) which is reliant on transport networks for the efficient movement of goods inward and outward and which makes a significant contribution to Scotland's exports.
 - Major development sites in and around the Grangemouth Investment Zone (NPF3), which are supported by the Tax Incremental Funding (TIF) arrangements, and which are highly dependent on efficient freight services and infrastructure in order to realise their economic development potential.
 - Key road and rail routes to and through the Falkirk area, including to Grangemouth.
 - A large, locally-based logistics sector which operates nationally and internationally via road, rail, sea and air.

Falkirk Council is therefore very interested in the work of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee regarding the freight sector. Its efficiency and reliability are critical to business competitiveness and to the lives, incomes and prospects of Scotland's residents.

The Council is pleased to respond to the Inquiry's key questions as follows.

1. Can you identify the main infrastructure and policy obstacles to the free flow of freight in Scotland, whether carried by rail, road, air or sea?

As part of the Falkirk Tax Incremental Financing initiative, focus has been placed upon key infrastructure projects which have been identified as required to improve access to and through the Falkirk area.

- M9 Junction 6 – Earlsgate Upgrade
- M9 Junction 5 – Cadgers Brae Upgrade
- A904 Westfield Roundabout
- A801 Avon Gorge Upgrade
- Grangemouth Foreshore Flood protection

These priorities have been acknowledged by Scottish Government and by the freight industry and require further government intervention to accelerate their implementation.

Larger vessel capacity is required through deepening of the quaysides at existing ports such as the Port of Grangemouth.

Falkirk-Grangemouth was identified in NPF2 (Grangemouth Freight Hub) and again in NPF3 (Grangemouth Investment Zone) and it is essential that the identified works are progressed to secure this site of national importance.

2. How can Scotland's rail, road, air and sea freight routes to the rest of the UK, to Europe and worldwide be improved?

Question 5 focuses on emissions and these will be driven down by efficiency improvements; a key change is likely to be the increase in vessel size and the facilities required to accommodate them. There is a clear requirement to increase the size of vessel that can be accommodated in Scotland, not only to improve the efficiency of our inward and outward trade but also to position Scottish ports as hub locations to distribute freight for onward journeys.

Upgrade of existing facilities would be the most efficient way to achieve this and would benefit from retaining the networks and skills-base of already established ports.

3. How can the Scottish Government structure its freight grant schemes to support the switch of freight to more sustainable modes of transport?

We would be cautious towards suggesting changes that favour one mode of transport strongly over another. We accept that there are some methods which have

lower emissions levels per unit however we would suggest that the only truly sustainable model is a multi-modal system which supports alternative methods to exist in order to ensure the most appropriate method can be chosen in any given case.

4. Are there any European Union initiatives which could provide further opportunities for Scottish freight transport?

N/A

5. How can the freight industry make a contribution to greenhouse gas emissions reduction?

The freight industry can make a contribution to greenhouse gas emissions reduction in several different ways:

- Improved logistics ensuring that the lowest appropriate emission option is used for each freight movement.
 - Lower carbon/ potentially slower methods such as transport by sea or inland waterways for non-perishable/non urgent freight.
- Moves towards rail distribution where appropriate
- In distribution depots, moves towards renewable energy sources such as on-site dedicated biomass with CHP or as part of a local energy network.
- Alternative traffic planning – rescheduling of movements to avoid heavy traffic flows.
- Encourage the freight industry to participate in an environmental recognition scheme such as Eco Stars which operates in the Falkirk area, amongst others.
- Many of these measures will already be in place within efficient transport networks however the use of a multimodal transport hub such as Grangemouth improves the opportunities to choose the most efficient, appropriate and lowest emission option.

6. Which policy changes, or infrastructure improvements, are required to increase the flow of goods through Scotland's major sea ports?

Covered by points 1-4

16 January 2015