WH MALCOLM

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

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.

Rail:

- The main rail routes into and out of Scotland are the WCML and ECML. Capacity on these routes is constrained and increasing capacity would benefit the flow of goods.
- Electrification of Grangemouth Branch is committed in 2018. This is welcome and will benefit the flow of goods
- The creation of a rail freight strategy for Scotland covering routes and terminals would be of great value. This would allow investment to be focused on the key areas.

Road: There have been a number of significant road investment schemes in the last decade or so (e.g. M74 extension), Clackmannanshire Bridge etc.). Others are committed (e.g. Aberdeen by-pass, replacement Forth Bridge, A9 improvements etc.). These welcome investments have improved the flow of freight in Scotland.

Opportunities for further road improvements which would benefit the free flow of freight are:

- Widening A80 to 3 lanes at Cumbernauld
- New road and bridge at Avon Gorge (Falkirk Council / West Lothian Council)

Air: No comments.

Sea: The above mentioned Avon Gorge road scheme and rail improvements at Grangemouth would benefit accessibility to Grangemouth Docks.

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

Rail:

- Increased capacity on WCML and ECML.
- Improved reliability of core infrastructure during periods of adverse weather
- Faster recovery times from incidents
- Reduced Network Rail ‘white periods’ restricting access to routes e.g. Grangemouth

Road:

- Improved reliability of M74 / A75 / A1 during periods of adverse weather
- Faster recovery times on key roads following incidents
3. How can the Scottish Government structure its freight grant schemes to support the switch of freight to more sustainable modes of transport?

The re-introduction by the Scottish Government of the Freight Facilities Grant scheme in respect of rail freight has been a welcome development. The lack of take up of this grant indicates there are issues with the scheme in its current format and the rail freight industry as a whole. The following should be taken into account:

- FFG was re-introduced as the recession was ending. Businesses were not at that time ideally placed to grow rail freight.
- Scheme development timescales are considerable – normally at least 2 years
- Network Rail processes relating to investment in rail facilities not widely understood – suggest Network Rail provides briefings / guidance notes to improve knowledge
- Processes related to acquiring land from Network Rail for schemes are not straightforward and can add several years to scheme development timescales
- Development of a freight route / terminal strategy for Scotland would provide a foundation stone for the focused award of FFG
- Long term commitment to FFG is needed in order for its benefits to be realised
- The development and management of rail freight terminals is not without its challenges. A means of collecting and distributing lessons learnt (both good and bad) from FFG assisted schemes would benefit new schemes and transportation as a whole.

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

There is a growing market for direct delivery of goods between Scotland and mainland Europe. Lessons will have been learned from the Elgin – Grangemouth EU assisted trial. Sharing this knowledge would assist others seeking to benefit from EU initiatives.

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

Transportation provides opportunities for greenhouse gas reduction, for example:
- Innovation – For example, development of 50’ containers for use on road and rail leading to a reduction in overall distances travelled and emissions.
- Rail freight emissions roughly 1/3rd less than road equivalent

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

The Avon Gorge road scheme will improve road access to the Port of Grangemouth.