

Edward Mountain MSP
Convenor, Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament
Holyrood
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr. Mountain,

Thank you for offering us the opportunity to provide evidence to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on 29 April 2025. I am writing to supply some further information to supplement our evidence.

Infrastructure interventions – freight.

When it comes to rail freight, we focus on what we can control: providing a reliable service to our customers and making it as easy as possible for businesses to choose rail.

In the first year of Control Period 7 (2024/25), we carried 4.3 million tonnes of goods, saving 67 million lorry miles – a 5 % increase from the previous year. We were ahead of our targets for reducing freight cancellations and lateness, which is crucial for the sector. We ended the 2024/25 year with a cancellation rate of 1.1 %, better than our 1.4 % target. Similarly, our Freight Cancellations and Lateness measure was at 4.5 %, significantly below our 5.5 % target.

This demonstrates a strong level of reliability, and our freight customers will continue to benefit from Control Period 7 investments to further improve the network's reliability and resilience. Our £1.9 billion renewals programme from 2024 to 2029 has increased investment in key areas such as earthworks and drainage systems to improve our network's resilience to extreme weather and protect safety outcomes.

Our renewals programme also includes a £400 million investment specifically aimed at improving the rail network's resilience to climate change. This will help improve performance and guard against unexpected delays and cancellations for our freight partners.

We will also continue upgrading our track throughout the Control Period, aligned with our gauging strategy, to help our customers transport larger containers. We have already linked the existing W12 network (for intermodal traffic of box/wagon combinations up to 3.965m high x 2.6m wide) from the East Coast Main Line to Carstairs, Mossend, Coatbridge, and Grangemouth freight terminals. Additionally, we have installed W12 on the diversionary route to Grangemouth via the main line between Edinburgh and Glasgow, building further resilience into freight operations. This work provides a wider clearance between rails which facilitates the movement of the largest containers permitted on the UK network.

Over the Christmas and New Year period this year, we plan to carry out track and resignalling works at Mossend as part of a wider £7.3m project which will increase speed limits and minimise delays for our freight customers. This will significantly benefit freight with 80 % of Scotland's freight traffic running through this area. Minimising delays in Mossend is crucial to support high-performing Scottish freight services.

We are constantly working with businesses to promote rail freight and develop opportunities for growth. While ongoing initiatives with the private sector are commercially sensitive, we have, for example, worked closely with West Fraser on their planning application for a new rail freight facility at Dalcross, submitted in December 2024. To enable new traffic, we have planned

upgrades to the freight looping facility at Dalwhinnie Junction. This follows our successful collaboration with Highland Spring, which saw its freight terminal open in Blackford in 2022.

Access for All budget.

The Department for Transport's Access for All aims to address the challenges encountered by disabled passengers and those with mobility restrictions when using railway stations in England, Scotland, and Wales. This has now delivered accessibility improvements and step-free access at 33 stations in Scotland since the Fund's inception in 2006.

Control Period 6 (2019-24) total spend for the Department for Transport's Access for All was £292m across the GB rail network. In Scotland, accessibility improvements over this time were made to Port Glasgow, Dumfries, Uddingston, Croy, Johnstone and Anniesland stations. This represented a total combined investment of £23.2million.

The UK Department for Transport is considering Access for All schemes for Control Period 7 as part of the wider capital review it has been undertaking.

We are informed that they intend to make a further announcement on feasibility schemes for CP7 in the coming months, once that decision is taken, Network Rail will be given a remit to plan and undertake feasibility studies on the chosen locations.

We will continue to work closely with the Department for Transport and the UK Government as it considers the next phase of the programme.

Kind regards,

Liam Sumpter
Managing Director
Network Rail Scotland