

**Specific Issue Hearing – land access and transport – 14 September** (Chair: Robert Upton)

Parties who have notified the Panel of their wish to ask questions of other parties:

*The Applicant*

1 Network Rail's freight development strategy for the north-east Lincolnshire area

Network Rail's freight development strategy is determined by the overall commitments set by our network operating Licence and published Codes of Practice. In summary these involve;

- Promoting the growth of rail freight and
- Meeting the reasonable needs of stakeholders.

In order to fulfil those commitments we consult closely with the industry over its future demand for rail access and (subject to funding) the network developments required to meet this demand.

So far as North Lincolnshire is concerned, this is a key area which our "Strategic Freight Network" industry governance group maintains a focus upon. The Port of Immingham is the UK's single biggest generator of rail freight volume and it is likely to be subject to some of the most critical changes bearing upon the rail freight market over the next 5 – 10 years. We regard the rail network in this area as being an infrastructure which is of strategic importance to the economy and the nation. As such we have invested heavily in its development in recent years and need to maintain further strategic options to meet significant growth in demand in the foreseeable event that this should be confirmed in the forthcoming years.

2 The possible Killingholme Loop and its requirements

The possible Killingholme Loop could provide a step change improvement in the capacity of the rail infrastructure serving the Port of Immingham. The loop would provide additional network functionality to enhance the volume of freight trains which can flow through the port by providing a "merry go round" operation which allows trains to enter the port, load and depart to their destination without changing direction. A simple way of portraying this enhanced functionality would be to analogue with a road network; the Loop would turn a "cul-de-sac" into a through road. Avoiding train reversals in a constricted environment would eliminate conflicting movements between trains and reduce delays between trains trying to get into and out of the port.

3 The proposed ABP head-shunt and its requirements

Following on from the above analogy, the ABP head-shunt will enhance the cul-de-sac (though not eliminate it). The scheme will add an additional stretch of tracks where train reversals can be made away from the train loading area thereby separating the loading and reversal activities for some of trains using the port. As such it is an important incremental enhancement to the capacity and performance of the rail network in the port. It requires a long lease from Network Rail to ABP of part of the land required to build the head-shunt in order that ABP may construct a head-shunt of appropriate length and obtain security over the investment that they will be making.

4 ORR's safety regime requirements for any Network Rail line through private ports or port-related activity.

ORR's safety requirements for rail operations are that the network operator (be it Network Rail or a private facility owner) reduces the risks arising from the operation to a level that is "as low as reasonably practicable". This requires that all the risks arising from the operation are analysed and control measures are put in place. A key risk for train movements is that they might come into contact with people or vehicles along the route traversed. The risk is proportional to the speed and frequency of train movements. It is helpful to consider two differing scenarios in this regard;

- On a main line network (such as Network Rail's) train movements tend to be frequent and relatively speedy. Strict separation between train movement and other activity is maintained. The network is fenced and any crossing points (level crossings) are properly equipped and monitored.
- Within an "industrial railway" (such as a rail terminal) it is necessary for trains to enter a working environment where people and vehicles are present. The most common controls of risk are (a) that train movements take place at slow speed (maybe no more than 5 or 10 mph) and (b) that conflicting activity is suspended whilst a train is moving. The suspension may be managed by some form of warning system or appropriate communications protocol.