



National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a [Respondent Information Form](#) and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

Name of proposed national development	National low-carbon freight network
Brief description of proposed national development	The modernisation of strategic Anglo-Scottish corridors is fundamental to unlocking the potential for rail freight to better serve domestic and export markets. Amongst the core upgrades needed are lengthened overtaking loops on the East Coast and West Coast Main Lines to accommodate 775-metre freight trains – the equivalent of more than 40 lorry loads in a single movement. But rail freight cannot prosper simply by concentrating on the Anglo-Scottish lines. Development of a national low-carbon freight network will depend on three factors: 1. ELECTRIFICATION Early electrification of the routes from Central Scotland to Aberdeen and Inverness – speeding up transits, improving route capacity and further cutting carbon emissions compared to road haulage. To support electrification there must also be investment in ensuring that the electricity supply will be able to meet the demand placed on it. The energy density provided should ensure that freight trains are able to run; this is especially important on Anglo-Scottish routes (East and West Coast Main Lines) in conjunction with the start of HS2 services. 2. ROUTE CAPACITY

	Enhancement of route and train capacity and capability (including loading gauge) to secure cost-effective rail freight operations connecting Central Scotland with key ports and terminals across the country The Scottish rail network as a whole remains a patchwork of different clearances involving complex permutations of wagon and container types. This imposes particular constraints on rail conveyance of wider refrigerated containers for chilled / frozen food on the routes from Aberdeen / Inverness to the Central Belt. An early focus for investment should be the long-overdue enhancement of the largely single-track Highland Main Line from Perth to Inverness, with longer crossing loops and more double track allowing rail freight to increase the capacity of each container train from 20 to 28 containers. This will make rail freight more economical to run and will make rail freight more attractive to customers and help to reduce the carbon emissions of the transport sector. 3. TERMINALS Realising the above potential depends in part on the creation of new rail freight terminals to serve currently neglected regions and undersupplied areas. Amongst the priorities should be: • Speyside – re-opened terminals at Keith and/or Elgin are needed to allow rail freight to help cut down on the 50,000 long-distance whisky lorry trips on the A9 annually. • Direct rail access to key whisky industry sites, such as Cameron Bridge in Fife (the largest grain distillery in Europe) and Cambus / Blackgrange near Alloa (the largest bonded warehouse site in Europe).
Location of proposed national development (information in a	Nationwide

GIS format is welcome if available)	
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	The electrification and improvements along existing lines do not require planning permissions or other consent and are within the scope of Network Rail. We propose that where those terminal sites cited above lie outwith the current operational railway that these should be considered part of the National Development and hence exempt from normal planning procedures.
When would the development be complete or operational?	To be completed within the next 15 years (2035), in line with Transport Scotland ambitions for complete decarbonisation of the Scottish rail network.
Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.	Much of the above falls within the existing policy ambitions of Transport Scotland & the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish network would also form part of Network Rail's Strategic Freight Network.
Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria (maximum 500 words): Climate Change A low-carbon economy is central to the Scottish Government's aims having, in April 2019, declared a Climate Emergency. But there is a relatively low level of awareness of the important contribution rail freight can make – in both the short and long term – to delivering policy objectives, for example through cutting CO2 emissions by up to 76 per cent compared to road haulage, even where road collection and delivery legs are required at either end of the rail trunk haul. Switching freight from road to rail can offer a 'quick win', as it involves doing the same for less carbon, rather than having to doing things completely differently (as is often the climate change prescription in other sectors). The carbon emissions of rail freight can be reduced still further by a programme of electrification. Reducing the emissions of the transport sector is key to tackling the climate emergency as it is currently the sector with the most emissions. Encouraging modal shift from road to rail will be following the wider European policy direction as set out in the European Green Deal. People The transfer of freight from road to rail will benefit public health and quality of life across the country by cutting air and noise pollution, by reducing road congestion which cause delays to other business etc, road traffic crashes and community severance where high numbers of HGVs make it difficult to cross roads. Inclusive Growth	

Rail freight has long played a central role in Scotland's exporting economy, particularly in the movement south of spirits – for domestic, mainland European and Deep Sea markets – from hub container railheads at Coatbridge, Grangemouth and Mossend. Following the end of the Rosyth-Zeebrugge freight ferry service, two container trains daily link Mossend with the fast-expanding Teesport, providing vital links to mainland Europe. Rail has the potential to create jobs and growth in all regions of Scotland.

The retail transport sector has successfully moved into using rail to convey supermarket supplies in containers from the West Midlands of England to the Central Belt, and from the latter to Aberdeen and Inverness. And traditional bulk commodities by rail continue to efficiently service the Scottish economy – and keep heavy lorries off the roads, with big safety benefits – through trainloads of alumina, cement, china clay, coal, oil and steel.

Rail provides timetabled reliability, avoiding 100% dependence on road haulage and its vulnerability to road congestion, lorry driver shortages and future energy constraints. But the much bigger role which freight trains could play in a sustainable low-carbon economy is fundamentally dependent on the quantity and quality of available infrastructure.

Place

By encouraging the use of rail freight, more HGVs can be removed from the roads meaning that more historic and special places can be enjoyed as they were intended. Strong planning policies encouraging new development to have access to rail could unlock the potential of vacant and derelict land near rail as it would encourage it to be reused.

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