

News Release from Network Rail

02/06/2009 15:00

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: NETWORK RAIL LAUNCHES LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR THE RAILWAY

Network Rail today launched a network-wide route utilisation strategy (RUS) on scenarios and long-distance forecasts. The strategy will enable effective planning, facilitate efficient short-to-medium-term investment decisions as well as help to develop an efficient and environmentally-friendly railway for future generations.

The plan looks at how long-term demand for passenger and freight services across the network could be affected by a range of different scenarios facing the country.

Its network-wide perspective – supported by a stakeholder group with network-wide expertise – enables the development of a consistent approach to issues which underpin future development of the railway. It enables strategies to be developed by the rail industry, governments in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff, other funding bodies, users and suppliers.

The RUS sets out four possible future scenarios which should be considered for long-term planning so that decision makers can help shape their policies in the face of uncertainty. These scenarios are made up of reasonably predictable measures such as population growth as well as more unpredictable factors including economic development, international trade, social trends and energy prices.

In assessing passenger and freight demand, 30 year growth forecasts for passenger services range from a conservative 28% on the London to Hampshire and Dorset corridor to 95% on the cross-country corridor, while demand estimates for container freight range from between 60% and 310% depending on which economic and population projections and scenarios are applied. These growth rates could be increased further by factors such as additional investment in the railways and service improvements.

Paul Plummer, director of planning and regulation at Network Rail, said: “Over the last decade, more and more people have been choosing to travel or move goods by rail. Performance and reliability have risen dramatically, and so it is important that we

continue investing in rail to expand the network with more seats, more services and better journeys.

“To plan effectively for the future, it is vital that we look in detail at what the future may hold for the railway so that the decisions we make now help develop a rail network that is fit for the future. I thank those who made a valuable contribution in the formation of this strategy as part of the consultation process. This will provide an important input to our planning for 2014 and beyond.”

The RUS follows consultation period with key stakeholders after the draft strategy was first launched on 31 March this year. It was developed in close collaboration with industry partners including the Department for Transport, Transport Scotland, Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), DB Schenker, Transport for London, the Passenger transport Executive Group (PTE), Passenger Focus and the Rail Freight Group, and was overseen by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR).

Note to editors:

Route Utilisation Strategies seek to balance capacity, passenger and freight demand, operational performance and cost, to address the requirements of funding bodies and stakeholders. Network Rail will take account of the recommendations outlined in a RUS when carrying out its activities to improve, maintain and manage the railway. In particular, the strategies will be used to inform the allocation of capacity on the network through application of the normal Network Code processes.

Other than the Freight RUS, the Network RUS is the only RUS to cover the entire network. Owing to its scope, the Network RUS has been split up into a number of different strategies which are published separately. These include strategies for stations, rolling stock and depots and electrification.

The Network RUS process is being overseen by a stakeholder management group consisting of Network Rail, the Department for Transport, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Assembly Government, Transport for London, PTE, ATOC, freight operating companies, Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch, Rolling Stock Companies and the Rail Freight Group. The ORR attended stakeholder management group meetings as observers.

The RUS documents are available at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4449.aspx>

For more information contact:

Media Relations (National)

t: 020 3356 8700

e: mediarelations@networkrail.co.uk

Our website: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk>