Delivering an Agenda for Rail Freight

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Why I’m Here Today

• IMechE’s Railway Division (RD) has been central to the conception of this event;
• Parallel development of the IMechE’s Freight Transport Report;
• The RD is one of the most energetic of the IMechE’s Divisions and Groups;
• Strong centrally-led RD programme, plus six regional Centres;
• The RD is a committed supporter of the REF;
• Timely focus for my year as new RD Chairman.
Taken as Read:

• The successes of rail freight since privatisation;
• Engineering innovation has been a key ingredient of this success;
• Significant environmental benefits from rail freight.
My Pre-Conceptions about Rail Freight Priorities (1)

- Capacity for growth – the need for continuing investment in the rail network;
- Traffic management efficiency, and improved route access;
- Actions to reduce infrastructure costs, and increase average speeds/payloads;
- Equity of approach to road and rail freight from Government.
My Pre-Conceptions about Rail Freight Priorities (2)

- Electrification and associated locomotive development;
- Freight vehicle development;
- ERTMS and other IT developments - Digital Railway in its broadest sense;
- Greater priority of funding of innovation.
The Role of the REF and its Constituent Partners

- A Catalyst: Coaxing, facilitating and encouraging debate;
- Strongest when Collaborating, giving Confidence and Consistency of approach;
- A source of independent, non-political expertise and ideas (engineering, operations, logistics);
- Coordinated publicity for Institution events (‘REF Combined Events List’);
- Engagement with NSARE and others in developing and delivering the national Rail Skills Strategy;
- Encouraging research e.g. vehicle design for better reliability, reduced track damage, lower noise, higher payload etc.
The IMechE’s Freight Transport Report – Remit

- The IMechE’s transport theme encourages the development of safe and efficient transport systems, and the reduction of congestion and emissions;
- In 2009 the IMechE produced a Rail Freight report – ‘Getting on the Right Track’;
- In 2014 it was decided with the REF that there was a need to update this report, expanding it to cover all modes;
- Consultation aiming to reach as many as possible of customers and service providers in the logistics and freight sector;
- Helping to improve the efficiency of the transport network by raising the profile of the UK logistics sector and making sure it is a priority area of interest for Government.
The IMechE’s Freight Transport Report – Process

• Over 70 key stakeholders from all modes have been involved either through individual meetings or group workshops;
• Draft report to be circulated shortly to these contributing stakeholders;
• Internal IMechE review (rail, auto, aero and energy experts);
• Wider consultation during the Parliamentary recess;
• Publication in September;
• Subsequent discussions / briefings / dinners etc.

The report’s author is Philippa Oldham, IMechE Head of Transport & Manufacturing  (p_oldham@imeche.org / 0786 050 5290)
The IMechE’s Freight Transport Report – Headlines

• Premature to summarise here – primarily in listening mode today;
• Central focus on the need for a multi-modal National Freight Transport Strategy supported by appropriate metrics;
• The creation of an environment that will encourage the development of innovation.
Next Steps

- The IMechE’s Freight Transport Report will be influenced by today’s seminar and subsequent dialogue;
- Wider follow-up action by the REF and its constituent partners;
- Renewed IMechE RD focus on Rail Freight issues