



Department
for Transport

National Policy Statement for National Networks

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 9(8) and Section 5(4) of the
Planning Act 2008

December 2014

Extract

- 1.3** Where a development does not meet the current requirements for a nationally significant infrastructure project set out in the Planning Act (as amended by the Threshold Order), but is considered to be nationally significant, there is a power in the Planning Act for the Secretary of State, on application, to direct that a development should be treated as a nationally significant infrastructure project.⁵ In these circumstances any application for development consent would need to be considered in accordance with this NPS. The relevant development plan is also likely to be an important and relevant matter especially in respect of establishing the need for the development.⁶
- 1.4** In England, this NPS may also be a material consideration in decision making on applications that fall under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or any successor legislation. Whether, and to what extent, this NPS is a material consideration, will be judged on a case by case basis.
- 1.5** The great majority of nationally significant infrastructure projects on the road network are likely to be developments on the Strategic Road Network.⁷ Development on other roads will be nationally significant infrastructure projects only if a direction under Section 35 of the Planning Act has been made designating the development as nationally significant.⁸ In this NPS the 'national road network' refers to the Strategic Road Network and other roads that are designated as nationally significant under Section 35 of the Planning Act.
- 1.6** The policy set out in this NPS on strategic rail freight interchanges confirms the policy set out in the policy guidance published in 2011. Designation of this NPS means that the 2011 guidance is cancelled.
- 1.7** This NPS does not cover High Speed Two. The High Speed Two Hybrid Bill will seek the necessary legal powers to enable the construction and operation of Phase One of High Speed Two (HS2), including the powers to acquire the necessary land and undertake the works required. It is planned to use a Hybrid Bill process for Phase Two of HS2. This NPS sets out the Government's policy for development of the road and rail networks and strategic rail freight interchanges, taking into account the capacity and connectivity that will be delivered through HS2.⁹
- 1.8** It should be noted that where the NPS refers to other documents, these other documents may be updated or amended over the time span of the NPS, so successor documents should be referred to.

⁵ Planning Act 2008 Section 35 – Directions in relation to projects of national significance

⁶ Planning Act 2008 Section 104 (2) (d)

⁷ The Strategic Road Network covers trunk roads and motorways in England where the Secretary of State is the traffic authority. Under the Planning Act thresholds (as amended by the Threshold Order), development of local roads will only be NSIPs if an order under Section 35 of the Planning Act has been made designating the development as a NSIP.

⁸ See Planning Act thresholds (as amended by the Threshold Order)

⁹ See also DfT, *The Strategic Case for HS2* (October 2013)

alignments which cross a river or estuary, may be needed to support increased capacity and connectivity.

The need for development of the national rail network

Importance of the national rail network

2.28 Railways are a vital part of the country's transport infrastructure. In 2013/14, the rail network in Great Britain consisted of 15,753 km (9,788 miles) of route open to traffic and 2,550 stations.³⁰ A total of 60 billion kilometres and 1.6 billion journeys were undertaken by rail passengers on the network in 2013/14³¹ Around 60% of these journeys were for business and commuting/education purposes.³² Approximately 9% of 'freight kilometres' in Great Britain are carried by rail³³ and the amount of freight moved by rail in 2013/14 was 23 billion net tonne kilometres.³⁴

2.29 In the context of the Government's vision for the transport system as a driver of economic growth and social development, the railway must:

- offer a safe and reliable route to work;
- facilitate increases in both business and leisure travel;
- support regional and local public transport to connect communities with public services, with workplaces and with each other, and
- provide for the transport of freight across the country, and to and from ports, in order to help meet environmental goals and improve quality of life.

Drivers of need for development of the national rail network

2.30 The full range of drivers of the need for development of the national rail network are set out in the Summary of Need in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.11. This section provides more detail on the pressures on the rail network, including forecast demand growth and the environmental benefits of rail development.

Pressures on the rail network

2.31 Demand for passenger rail travel has risen strongly in recent years. Between 1994/95 and 2013/14, total passenger kilometres travelled more

³⁰ Office of Rail Regulation, *Total Length of Route/Number of Passenger Stations*,

³¹ Office of Rail Regulation, *Passenger rail usage statistics*

³² 2013 National Travel Survey

³³ Source: DfT, *Transport Statistics Great Britain 2012*, Table TSGB0403,

³⁴ Office of Rail Regulation, *Freight rail usage statistics*,

than doubled from 29 billion to 60 billion. The fastest growth over this period has been in demand in London and the South East, although there has been a high level of growth across all regions.

2.32 Overall crowding on London and South East rail services across the morning and afternoon peaks on a typical weekday in autumn 2013 was 3.1%, with the worst performing operator's services experiencing 9.2% of passengers in excess of capacity.³⁵

2.33 Passenger demand is predicted to continue to grow significantly.³⁶ Estimates for demand growth by 2033, based on current GDP trend forecasts and fares policy, are set out in Table 2 and are split by the three main passenger rail sectors. Forecasts suggest that growth in long distance rail passenger travel will be around 14 percentage points greater than the average growth in total passenger kilometres travelled (see Table 2). These forecasts will change over time as our understanding improves and circumstances change, but it demonstrates the scale of pressure facing the rail network.

Table 2: Growth in Passenger km (in %) since 2011 including HS2 Phase 1			
Year	2020	2026	2033
London & South East	20.4%	31.2%	46.1%
Long distance	12.9%	36.8 %	63.8%
Regional	8.7%	16.5%	32.8%
Total (average)	15.3%	30.5%	50.1%

Source: Network Modelling Framework (NMF) – estimates based on model runs conducted in October 2014. HS2 forecasts have been supplied by HS2 Ltd modelling team and incorporated as overlays to the NMF numbers.

³⁵ Rail passenger numbers and crowding on weekdays in major cities in England and Wales 2013

³⁶ Forecasts are best estimates of likely future demand, based on strategic modelling work. They involve considerable uncertainty, but the central forecasts presented are indicative of the broad direction of travel for the three main rail sectors. The modelling work has been based on the latest intelligence on parameters and assumptions for modelling changes on the rail network as at October 2014. The forecasts incorporate HS2 Phase 1 demand growth, added to DfT-modelled demand forecasts as overlays. This explains the large step change in demand from 2026.

2.34 Rail freight transports over 100 million tonnes of goods per year. The amount of freight moved has expanded by 75% since 1994/95. Total tonne kilometres are forecast to grow by 3% annually to 2043, the same rate as the growth seen in the mid-1990s.³⁷ Rail freight delivers nearly all the coal for the nation's electricity generation and over a quarter of containerised food, clothes and white goods. Rail freight is therefore of strategic importance, is already playing an increasingly significant role in logistics and, is an increasingly important driver of economic growth, particularly as it increases its market share of container traffic. The industry estimates that it contributes £1.5 billion per year to the UK's economy.³⁸

Environment

2.35 Rail transport has a crucial role to play in delivering significant reductions in pollution and congestion. Tonne for tonne, rail freight produces 70% less CO₂ than road freight, up to fifteen times lower NO_x emissions and nearly 90% lower PM₁₀ emissions.³⁹ It also has de-congestion benefits – depending on its load, each freight train can remove between 43 and 77 HGVs from the road.⁴⁰

Conclusion

2.36 The Government has therefore concluded that at a strategic level there is a compelling need for development of the national rail network to meet the need set out in paragraphs 2.28 and 2.29.

Government's policy for addressing need

Economic growth and user satisfaction

2.37 In the short to medium term, the Government's policy is to improve the capacity, capability, reliability and resilience of the rail network at key locations for both passenger and freight movements to reflect growth in demand, reduce crowding, improve journey times, maintain or improve operational performance and facilitate modal shift from road to rail. The rail network is predominantly a mixed traffic network and the provision of capacity for both freight and passenger services is core to the network. Some of this growth can be accommodated by making more efficient use of the existing railway infrastructure and rolling stock, such as by running more or longer trains or encouraging passengers to travel at less congested times of the day. Signalling and power supply improvements, and more modern electric rolling stock, as well as providing a more comfortable and reliable passenger experience, can also reduce journey times and offer opportunities to increase service frequencies and reduce crowding. Relatively modest infrastructure interventions can often deliver significant capacity benefits by removing pinch points and blockages.

³⁷ *Network Rail Freight Market Study* (October 2013)

³⁸ *Keeping the Lights on and the Traffic Moving*, Rail Delivery Group, May 2014

³⁹ *Delivering a Sustainable Transport System: The Logistics Perspective*. DfT, December 2008

⁴⁰ *Network Rail: The Value and Importance of Rail Freight*

- 2.38** As demand pressures rise, this incremental approach will no longer be sufficient to maintain the desired levels of service in the longer term.⁴¹ Substantial investment in infrastructure capacity – particularly on inter-urban routes between our key cities, London & South East routes and major city commuter routes – will be needed. The maintenance of a competitive and sustainable economy against a background of continued economic globalisation will mean that there is a need to support measures that deliver step change improvements in capacity and connectivity between key centres, by speeding up journey times and encouraging further modal shift to rail. The Government will therefore consider new or re-opened alignments to improve capacity, speed, connectivity and reliability. Rail is a safer, greener and faster mode of transport for large passenger volumes and for long distances, including inter-city journeys.
- 2.39** Where major new inter-urban alignments are required, high speed rail alignments are expected to offer the most effective way to provide a step change in inter-city capacity and connectivity, as well as helping to deliver long term sustainable economic growth. High speed rail would offer the opportunity for a shift to rail from air and road, by delivering improved connectivity between major conurbations and economic centres through improved journey times and reliability that upgrades to the conventional rail network could not match. Transferring many inter-city services to a high speed railway would also release capacity on the conventional network, increasing opportunities for additional commuter, regional and freight services. Given these potential benefits, where major new rail alignments are required, high speed rail will be considered.

Environment

- 2.40** Modal shift from road and aviation to rail can help reduce transport's carbon emissions, as well as providing wider transport and economic benefits. For these reasons, the Government seeks to accommodate an increase in rail travel and rail freight where it is practical and affordable by providing for extra capacity.
- 2.41** The Government's strategy is to provide for increasing use of efficient and sustainable electric trains for both passenger and freight services. The environmental performance of the railway will be improved by continuing to roll out a programme of rail electrification.

⁴¹ 2025 and beyond