

For Hampshire business – by Hampshire business

HAMPSHIRE CHAMBERS RESPONSE TO  
HAMPSHIRE FREIGHT STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT - July 2008  
BY TRANSPORT FOR SOUTH HAMPSHIRE

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

**1. What are the key issues for freight providers? Are these properly reflected in the draft strategy?**

YES. The draft covers the relationship between increased population, increased demand for freighting goods, which will bring even more congestion on the roads if current trends in rail/road freight continue. But the Chambers of Commerce in South Hampshire consider that the draft does not stress sufficiently the serious consequences of doing too little for freight providers.

- The transfer of freight from road to rail and short sea shipping should be the main theme of the draft, if the present 27% of goods by rail is to become 40% and 9% by sea is to become 25%.
- The congestion points at peak times are obvious today, both on major routes and in towns/cities. The draft mentions the use of climbing lanes for heavy vehicles. These should be built on all major routes to smooth traffic flow.
- Stretches of major routes are already operating to design capacity, eg. M3 to J9, as mentioned in the draft. It is insufficient to just note that “identifying funding remains a major hurdle” - as in the case of the J9 roundabout.
- The shortage of lorry parks has been recognised as a problem for many years, but no new sites are identified in the draft.

**2. What are the three most important issues for freight distribution that the following categories of people should be focusing on?**

**a) Public Sector (national and local government, Highways Agency, Network Rail etc)**

1. Encouraging the take up of sustainable transport modes by all freight operators.
2. Providing the political and financial will to establish out-of-city warehouses and distribution systems and a managed rail/road network to facilitate deliveries and pick-ups.
3. Improving the road networks at well known bottlenecks to improve journey time reliability and to reduce carbon emissions from slow moving or stationary traffic.

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**b) Providers of freight distribution services**

1. Work with national and local government to ensure that future needs are brought to their attention, especially regarding the transfer of freight from road to rail.
2. Diversify to multimodal options operating 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, instead of the current 16 hours a day, 5 days a week.
3. Invest in latest environmental technology.

**c) Users of freight distribution services**

1. Demand that their suppliers meet rigid environmental standards and be prepared to accept the higher costs involved.
2. Improve booking process so that freight can move immediately it is available after landing at the port and not be delayed between 2 – 4 days in the custom clearance process.
3. Work with the industry supply chain to seek synergies and efficiencies in systems and in the use of the existing infrastructure.

**3. Do national and local policy and investment decisions pay adequate regard to freight issues? Where are the major failings and what could be done to address this?**

NO. Historically, freight transport has not received high enough consideration in national or local government policy and investment decisions. Privatisation of the railway industry did not improve this. However, there has been a greater emphasis on freight since the Eddington report. Funding for major infrastructure works takes a long time to achieve (viz the Solent to Midlands Rail Freight Upgrade). So the key projects should be identified now and those that clearly make economic and environmental good sense should have their own case and benefits fully spelt out, so some sort of national programme of freight infrastructure improvements can be established.

Hampshire Chambers consider the problem of traffic jams caused by delivery vans at premises without rear service access needs a funded solution and urgent attention from the local planning policy perspective, so that a programme of changes are made to existing roads and delivery facilities, as well as ensuring such access exists in future developments.

**4. Do you have any suggestions for ways of making freight distribution more sustainable (other than those already mentioned in Section 6 of the main strategy document)?**

The example in Section 6 could be applied to the retail sector where there is increasing emphasis on reducing carbon foot print. The retail sector's future needs for regional distribution centres should be identified and their ability to provide a sustainable transport plan should form part of the discussions.

Air quality black spots normally coincide with freight corridors and areas where HGVs have to stop to unload. If we can minimise the time HGVs need to park on roads with engines running and give them somewhere bespoke to unload goods safely, then this could provide a partial solution to the air quality issues.

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**5. The draft strategy proposes an increased role for freight by rail and by water. Is this realistic? What are the barriers and how should these be addressed?**

The DP World targets referred to in the strategy should be minimum targets (to achieve 40% of onward container transportation by rail and 25% container traffic from the terminal to be transhipped by sea via feeder services to other UK ports). It will take a strong will and leadership from the industry and government to achieve and exceed the minimum targets. The completion of the Solent to Midlands rail freight route upgrade (SMART) in 2011 will be an initial catalyst to increasing the modal shift from road to rail, but the freight industry must be prepared to work smarter and longer to achieve the targets. Some of the issues to be tackled are:-

- Increasing the length of freight trains,
- hundred per cent utilised trains North and South,
- Increased Saturday and Sunday paths for rail freight,
- Pricing to compete with road freight.

The most environmental friendly form of transport is by sea, but today it is the most expensive. There must be a positive drive to tackle this cost issue and government should provide the means or initiatives to facilitate this change.

**6. How can new and emerging technologies help improve freight distribution? What is "just round the corner" that we should be planning for now?**

A booking system in conjunction with dedicated freight lanes and charging for peak time use would regularise traffic flow on major routes.

The first "collapsible" container could be just around the corner, to economise on storage space of transporting or stacking empty ones.

**7. Do you agree with opening up certain bus lanes for use by freight operators? Are there any other priority measures you would like to see for freight?**

YES Hampshire Chambers supports the principle of allowing freight to use bus lanes or "no car lanes", but not in peak travel times and only certain bus lanes, such as those that coincide with a freight priority route on a national network for freight priority which should be set up first. Existing bus lanes should not be used for setting up a network of national freight priority routes, because this would risk reducing the advantage bus lanes now have during congested peak hours, which in turn would reduce the shift from car to bus travel.

A national freight priority network should be set up to include rail, road and trans-shipment by sea. Rail in and out of urban areas and ports would be favourable to using road, whether during the day or at night, due to road traffic noise and pollution along urban routes. Maybe a start should be made now on identifying and building more dedicated rail freight routes, instead of identifying bus lanes for freight use, if a major shift from road to rail freight is ever to be achieved.

**8. Should there be a presumption that water and rail connected sites and lorry parks be protected for future freight uses? Are there any specific sites that need to be protected?**

YES To answer this question fully we need to further study what is available now and what is at risk in the future and the document should address this issue.

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**9. Is there a need for additional lorry parking across the sub-region? If so where?**

YES Since the new EU regulations on HGV drivers came into force there is an increased requirement for secure lorry parks with adequate rest facilities for drivers. Sites should be identified in the draft along the key corridors approaching the Ports of Southampton and Portsmouth, with minimum deviation from the motorways and major routes. The cost of using such sites could be compensated by reduced insurance premiums for the HGVs using only secure sites, which in turn would encourage freight drivers to use only the routes designated for them.

**10. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the TfSH Freight Strategy: Consultation Draft?**

It is a clear and very comprehensive document, which reflects the range of contributors involved in the freight sector who worked together to produce it and the solutions it contains for the urbanised South Hampshire sub-region and nationally significant freight gateway.

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