

A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION FOR WALES CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Please note responses are required by 9 January 2017. Responses can be sent to:

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Introduction

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) was established in May 2011. It brings together Network Rail and passenger and freight train operating companies to lead and enable improvements in the railway. The purpose of the RDG is to enable Network Rail and passenger and freight train operating companies to succeed by delivering better services for their customers. Ultimately this benefits taxpayers and the economy. The RDG aims to meet the needs of:

- Its members, by enabling them to deliver better outcomes for customers and the country;
- Government and regulators, by developing strategy, informing policy and confronting difficult decisions on choices; and
- Rail and non-rail users, by improving customer experience and building public trust.

Question 1: Do you agree that NIFCW's remit and output should consist of analysis, advice and recommendation to the Welsh Ministers?

Yes, the RDG agrees.

However, it is important that the Commission's role in the established processes for planning, funding, developing and delivering projects is more clearly defined. There are some areas of ambiguity in the consultation document, in particular the type and scale of infrastructure under consideration. The NIFCW does not set out a clear threshold project size threshold below which it would not seek to intervene.

Question 2: Do you agree that NIFCW's remit should extend to non-devolved as well as devolved infrastructure?

Economic and social markets can have a greater influence on passenger journeys rather than geopolitical boundaries. This is particularly evident in Wales, which has strong and long established east-west rail flows across its borders, particularly along the north and south Wales coasts.

Therefore, NIFCW's remit should reflect how people and businesses use infrastructure. This is irrespective of whether the infrastructure is devolved, non-devolved, provided on an agency basis or entirely commercial in nature. Infrastructure is provided by a patchwork of different organisations and these will need to be in scope so that NIFCW can take a holistic and cross-cutting view.

However, as the consultation document suggests responsibility for making investment decisions for infrastructure that is devolved should remain with the Welsh Ministers and with the UK Government for infrastructure that is non-devolved.

The cross-sector approach proposed in the consultation document should add value to decision making and would be welcomed by the rail industry. Dependencies exist between rail and other transport modes; and between rail and all of the other infrastructure types set out in the consultation document.

Question 3: Do you agree that NIFCW should not advise on programmes and work that have already been decided, or will be decided in the immediate future, by statutory and regulatory bodies?

Further clarity regarding the time horizons for programmes of work which would be considered outside the scope of the NIFCW due to them being decided 'in the immediate future' would be welcomed.

This is currently of particular relevance as the process under which the industry identifies its priorities for investment over the coming years is already underway as part of the Office of Rail and Road's Periodic Review 2018.

Whereas previously enhancement projects were funded primarily through multi-year funding settlements, in the future the industry expects enhancement projects to be funded progressively on an ongoing basis. This should be taken into account if rail enhancement schemes are to be funded within the NIFCW's fiscal remit.

Question 4: Do you agree that NIFCW should be able to look at cross-cutting delivery issues if it considers them a barrier to delivering infrastructure needs, including governance, costs, financing and programme/project management methodology? Please specify any other delivery issues that you consider NIFCW should be able to look at and the reason.

In order to make the best use of expert resources and valuable time, the RDG believes that NIFCfW should focus on looking at cross-cutting infrastructure planning for the future instead of looking at the inputs into the delivery process that will vary significantly between infrastructure providers.

It is important that the work of the NIFCfW builds upon the detailed planning carried out by the individual actors within each sector and adds value rather than complexity to these processes. Rail has established planning processes and approaches to funding investment; primarily through a combination of public sector investment through five-yearly Control Periods and private sector investment through the passenger franchising process and by freight operators. Other sectors will have their own arrangements, reflecting their history and characteristics.

Question 5: Do you agree that NIFCfW should engage closely with and consult other bodies that may have an economic and environmental infrastructure remit? Who do you think are the key bodies that NIFCfW should engage with and consult?

Yes, the cross cutting nature of infrastructure means that this is important.

The RDG would welcome the Commission operating in a collaborative manner with other relevant bodies, recognising the specific expertise within each sector and using the detailed long term planning which is already done within the rail industry as a building block for its own work. By taking a comprehensive, whole system approach to infrastructure provision the Commission can complement and inform the work of individual actors.

Bodies which the NIFCfW should engage with include the UK Infrastructure Commission, as well as organisations such as UK Government, High Speed 2 Ltd, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Transport for Wales, Rail Delivery Group and Network Rail (this is a non-exhaustive list).

Question 6: Do you agree that NIFCfW's remit should extend to participating in other relevant strategic advisory fora, such as the Council for Economic Renewal? Please specify any other forum you consider NIFCfW should participate in and the reason.

The RDG does not have a view on this based on the information within the Consultation document.

Question 7: Do you agree that the Welsh Government should undertake and publish a review of NIFCfW's status and remit before the next Assembly election in 2021?

The RDG does not have a view on this based on the information within the Consultation document.

Question 8 Do you agree that NIFCfW should work collaboratively with the UK National Infrastructure Commission where relevant?

Yes, the RDG agrees that this is an important next step as a consistent

approach is needed as passengers and freight customers travel across geopolitical boundaries.

Question 9: Do you agree that NIFCfW members should be appointed by virtue of their expert knowledge and experience?

Yes, the RDG agrees, and believes that the members should be active practitioners and representative of the infrastructure sector in both Wales and in the UK context.

Question 10: Do you agree that all appointments to NIFCfW should be made through an open public appointments exercise?

Yes, the RDG agrees.

Question 11: How do you think we should promote this public appointments process to under-represented groups?

The RDG does not have a view on this based on the information within the Consultation document.

Question 12: Do you agree that NIFCfW should be able to commission targeted research? Please identify any specific research you think NIFCfW should commission as a priority in order to best inform its work, and explain why.

Yes, the RDG agrees that NIFCfW should have the ability and resources to undertake its activities.

At the same time, the RDG believes that these resources could be optimised by looking at existing research already carried out by infrastructure providers or, in the absence of this, by commissioning work that will be of value to both NIFCfW and the infrastructure sector. This will promote a joined up approach.

Question 13: Do you agree that NIFCfW should publish an annual report on its work? What factors do you think might require reports to be published more than once a year?

Yes, the RDG believes that information and transparency is important.

Question 14: Do you agree that NIFCfW should hold public meetings in North, Mid, South and West Wales to explain and promote its role?

Yes, the RDG agrees that public engagement is important as is engagement with the infrastructure sector.

Your name/organisation and postal/email address

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We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: