



Making life loads better in Yorkshire and the Humber

The strategy for freight in the region

From the field to the fork,
from the factory to the
pharmacy, freight is
essential to the life we lead

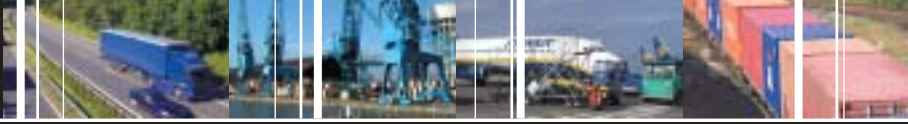


**YORKSHIRE
AND
HUMBER
ASSEMBLY**
Voice of the region



Freight: the Top Ten Facts

1. Imports into the UK are growing at a rate of between 6 and 8% a year, fuelled by an increase in the amount of goods manufactured in the Far East as well as from Central and Eastern Europe.
2. The region has moved from the bottom to fourth from the top of the UK league table of European inward investment, as major retailers and developers are choosing to locate major distribution centres here.
3. Ports and shipping in the region employ nearly 50,000 people. The largest single UK port in 2003 was Grimsby-Immingham, handling 56 million tonnes of product.
4. The main inland waterways of Yorkshire and Humber carry around fourteen million tonnes (internal and seagoing traffic) per year, a quarter of all waterway traffic in the UK. The River Humber is one of the busiest trade routes in Europe and has over 40,000 international shipping movements every year.
5. The region's rail network moves around 40% of the UK's rail freight. Almost a third of national rail freight tonnage moves to, from or through the region. The South Humber Main Line alone carries almost 25% of the national tonnage, with at least 50 freight trains a day leaving Immingham loaded with 12 millions tonnes a year.
6. Just over a quarter of a billion tonnes of goods were moved by road to, from or entirely within Yorkshire and Humber in 2002 - over 10% of the total freight moved across the UK by road.
7. Road transport deliveries to Meadowhall Shopping Centre total 80,000 a year.
8. The increase in road traffic between 1990 and 2000 was 24%. Two of the top three sites with the highest rates of congestion on the national motorway network are currently in Yorkshire - the M62 west of the M1, and the M1 in South Yorkshire below the M18. The Freight Transport Association estimates the cost of road congestion to the UK economy to be £20 billion a year.
9. More than 60% of the UK's manufacturing capacity is within one hour's drive of the Yorkshire and Humber ports, which together handle over 80 million tonnes of freight a year.
10. Pipeline traffic has increased by 76% since 1980, now standing at 146 million tonnes a year. One fifth of petroleum products are carried this way, including the network of pipelines that transport aircraft fuel from the oil refineries at Immingham to London's airports. Other products transported by pipeline from, or via the region include natural gas, liquid gas, ethylene, water, sewerage and oil based commodities including fuel and lubricants.



Freight is a vital part of all our lives: because of it we have breakfast to eat, clothes to wear and a place to live. We can't do without it but often we're the first to question why lorries travel through our towns and villages.

Freight moves by ship, train, plane and even pipeline. But far and away the most important medium is road, using mainly lorries, trucks and vans.

We've all at some time moaned about the spray from a lorry on a wet motorway journey, the trundling tanker on a country track, or the hastily-parked delivery van taking up two spaces outside the local shopping precinct.

But before we rush to condemn the road freight industry and demand that all loads be switched to other types of transport, we should consider this: how could a train get our favourite breakfast cereal to the local supermarket? How long would it take a barge to deliver those vital drugs to the Accident & Emergency department? And though pipelines are very good for the environment, it's not a practicable way of getting TVs and DVD players to the house.

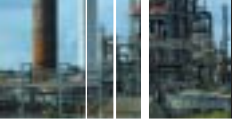
The most efficient and effective means of transporting most of these goods is unquestionably by road. But to balance the needs of consumers and our wish to protect the environment in which we live presents huge challenges.

To meet those challenges and to make the most of the opportunities, the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly and its partners are taking the lead in designing the future for freight in the region.

Policies and actions need to ensure that freight respects both people and the places where they live. Loads Better is our region's plan to both help freight move more efficiently and cause the least harm and disruption.

This Regional Freight Strategy spells out what's needed to support the economic and efficient movement of goods - but in ways that minimise the impact on roads, the environment and the people who live in the region.

Freight is good business and good for business, especially in a region like Yorkshire and the Humber which has many natural advantages: its physical geography means that freight is a bigger part of everyday life than in most other regions, especially for rail (the East Coast Mainline and the Transpennine link) and waterways, from a long and accessible coastline to navigable rivers and canals and an enviable position on the national road networks (M1, M62, A1, M18).



It's no surprise then that a huge quantity of freight is carried into and through Yorkshire and the Humber. But wouldn't it be better if more of these imports could be processed in the region? That could mean more jobs in the processing and production of goods for re-export at a profit to the regional economy.

However, that kind of success would have an impact on other aspects of life, particularly air quality, noise pollution and the visual environment. And that is where a regional freight strategy can play its part in maintaining our quality of life, by managing the targets for success and balancing the needs of the freight industry with those of the people who live here.

Knowing how important freight is to the region is the first step in making sure that we are making the most of this industry. The next and most important step is taking action!

The Assembly believes that the best way to guide this is through partnership with other organisations, such as Yorkshire Forward, the Highways Agency, Local Authorities and the freight companies.

A Freight Partnership and Delivery Group is being put together to deliver and monitor the freight strategy. Its key objectives will include reviewing targets and checking progress of regional and local freight strategies, sharing information and best practice, and co-ordinating with industry and other partners.

This region boasts Britain's busiest port in Grimsby-Immingham, and an enormous amount of freight comes into the region by sea. One of the cornerstones of the freight strategy is to support all the region's ports and dock facilities and promote increased shipping to maintain and build upon this favourable position.

The Assembly and its partners want to see growth at ports and on inland waterways to allow vessels to penetrate further into the region before goods are switched to other surface transport: but any investment in new infrastructure must be based firmly on a multimodal approach that makes a safer, more efficient and integrated transport network.

Safety

Rail

The Regional Freight Strategy will press for more safe rail movements of freight. So the Assembly and its partners are committed to improvements in the network of diversionary routes for freight trains in the event of unexpected disruption, or planned maintenance work. In fact, the region will campaign vigorously for a national network of such routes.

In addition, bridge strikes by road vehicles and accidents at level crossings cause immense disruption in the region, so a plan will be drawn up to identify the worst locations and suggest a programme of safety improvements.

Road

Road accidents that involve goods vehicles can be particularly serious, and locations where these are common will be investigated with a view to remedial action such as improved junctions at identified black spots.

The crucial role of the Local Authorities

Local Authorities will be encouraged to view freight as a key part of their transport and economic responsibilities, and to make sure their different departments work together to manage freight transport more effectively.

The LAs will also be asked to find examples of innovative ideas in the freight industry and in local authorities in environmental and efficiency performance, then lead by example with their own vehicle fleets.

The routing of goods vehicles is an area where LAs can make a big contribution to this regional strategy. Those authorities considering restricting lorry movements need to strike a fair balance between the interests of residents, communities, the environment and efficient freight movements.

LAs will also be coordinating the management of goods vehicles that make deliveries in urban areas; here too a balance is needed between the need for efficient deliveries and their impact on the environment, residents and shoppers. A review of timed access restrictions for goods vehicles may be a useful working guide for freight operators when scheduling vehicles.

Hand in hand with this, LAs should work with each other and the Highways Agency to make sure that information about traffic conditions is made available to all road users.

Finally, LAs have a responsibility to provide adequate driver rest and lorry-parking facilities, both directly and through planning support and partnership working with the Highways Agency and the freight industry. This will underpin other YHA-led aims to promote road safety, freight efficiency, security and the reduction of unauthorised lorry parking.



This means safeguarding suitable land and wharves for possible future developments, including protection and provision of road and rail links; supporting road projects (A63, A160 and A180 are prime examples); and lobbying the Strategic Rail Authority and the Government for improvements along the South Humber Main Line.

In fact, no opportunity should be lost to press for enhancements to the rail network, including developing new rail freight terminals where needed; and action to clear identified bottlenecks and capacity constraints that are likely to affect future growth of rail freight.

There are benefits to the region in local sourcing of goods, and the freight strategy recommends that everyone should take the opportunity to increase local competitiveness. Not only will this help efficiency by cutting transport needs, it also fits with the Assembly objectives of making freight a 'greener' industry.

Areas of poor air quality need to be managed properly - especially where the negative contribution of goods vehicles is suspected - through a better understanding of the nature of freight, random testing of emissions, and public participation in emission helplines.

Similarly, freight-related noise will be targeted in action plans across the region and properly dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Of course, using pipelines to their full potential could have a positive impact on the environment, and the aim is to make the planning process for new pipelines or alterations to existing ones as smooth as possible to encourage their development.

The region's airports are gradually building up their freight services, and the policy is to promote and support the claims of all the airports.

The regional freight strategy took over 12 months of careful research and planning to create and agree. Throughout the process, all matters were discussed with:

- the freight industry;
- environmental groups;
- local authorities;
- government organisations; and
- other interested people.

We also asked for the public's views through stories in the press and on the radio asking people to comment through a dedicated email address.

We still welcome your comments on the strategy. Please send them to the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, 18 King Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2SQ or email freight@yhassembly.gov.uk

A shortage of skills

A huge number of lorry drivers - more than 50% - are over 50 years old, and therefore nearing retirement. Making sure the region has enough suitably qualified and experienced staff is absolutely essential to the health of the region's freight industry. Financial assistance will be sought from European, national, regional and local sources to support initiatives to attract new blood to the industry and raise skills levels.



Yorkshire and Humber Assembly
18 King Street
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF1 2SQ

T: 01924 331555
F: 01924 331559
E: mail@yhassembly.gov.uk

www.yhassembly.gov.uk