

Dover's port secures funding for rail link

Planning Resource - 21 April 2006

The Port of Dover could be reconnected to the rail network under plans being considered by the regional development agency for the South-East.

The South East England Development Agency (Seeda) believes that a new rail connection at the Port of Dover would attract international trade to the area and boost the local economy.

The agency has secured funding under the Intermodal Port Access and Commodities Transport in Europe (Impacte) programme to investigate the feasibility of reconnecting Dover to the national rail network.

Impacte is an £7.6 million programme to maximise the economic development potential of ports and promote their connectivity with other transport links across North West Europe.

The scheme would connect Dover's Western Docks with the main rail network 200-300 metres away.

Seeda chairman James Braithwaite said: "Dover's importance as a key access point to Europe cannot be underestimated and we must do what we can to assist with its development as a driver of the South-East economy."

The proposal is flagged up in Seeda's coastal strategy for the region, published last week alongside its draft regional economy strategy.

Nell Stevens, development and communications manager at industry representative body the Rail Freight Group, said: "A new (Dover) rail link would provide a wholly sustainable and reliable alternative for freight customers."

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REGIONAL NEWS DIGEST

Key rail route gains backing

A move to upgrade the key Southampton to west Midlands rail-freight route to international standards is being backed by the South East England Development Agency and local businesses.

Efficient freight transport is seen as vital to the south-east economy, with the port of Southampton handling about half by volume of the UK's sea-borne trade with China

and south-east Asia. Deep-sea container traffic is forecast to continue growing at about 6 per cent a year resulting in more freight travelling by road if the capacity of the rail network is not enhanced.

To improve connections with the Midlands and the Continent, the Intermodal Port Access and Commodities Transport in

Europe programme, funded by the European Regional

Development Fund, is making preparatory investments in raising rail-freight capacity to move more distribution from the roads to the rail network.

Gauge enhancement is being undertaken jointly with Network Rail and the port of Southampton to take globally standardised 9'6" containers and transport them by rail to the Midlands rather than by road.

Under the same programming, SEEDA has announced a study into how the port of Dover can be reconnected to the rail network to encourage greater use of rail freight for traffic such as trailers and containers on the Dover-Calais route.



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Agency backs Port of Dover rail link

By Samantha Thorp

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a key access point to Europe cannot be underestimated and we must do what we can to assist with its development as a driver of the South-East economy."

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Dover: awarded Euro funding for port rail link feasibility study

The Impacte funding will be used to establish the commercial viability of the Dover rail link proposal. A new study will build on initial work carried out as part of the Freight Intermodality and Exchange on Seas and Straits in Europe programme – a transnational project led by Seeda to develop plans to improve freight transport services between the UK and mainland Europe.

Neil Stevens, development and communications manager at industry representative body the Rail Freight Group, said: "A new [Dover] rail link would provide a wholly sustainable and reliable alternative for freight customers."

Meera Rambissoon, public transport manager at campaign group Transport 2000, said: "Ports would like to increase the proportion of rail traffic through their terminals, but for too long now a restricted rail network has thwarted this. Seeda is making the right noises but if it is serious about reconnecting the Port of Dover to the railways, then expansion and upgrade of the railways is vital."

Peerage hit acad

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Sarah French for the Vardy E sponsors acad east said: "Obvie en what we are sponsor in impro in deprived area [bad press] is bas tion or a genera funding being pu

The Departm and Skills said the attracting spon halfway to our la academics open by 2010," said a s

IN BRIEF

Funding to develop a national centre for micro-fluidics, the science involved in producing devices such as ink jet printers, was announced last week. The Department of Trade and Industry and regional development agency One North-East will each provide £2 million to fund the Fluence Microfluidics Application Centre in the Tees Valley for its first five years.

Two new local enterprise companies formed by a reorganisation at Scotland's economic development agency Highlands and Islands Enterprise were launched last week. The new companies are HIE Skye and Wester Ross and HIE Inverness and East Highlands.

Devon and Norfolk county councils and Nottingham City Council have been shortlisted in the transport borough of the year category of this year's national transport awards. The list can be viewed via www.regen.net/doc

South-East authorities set conditions for backing Ken

Councils in the South-East are demanding that they must be represented in the transport decision-making process if London mayor Ken Livingstone is granted wider powers over rail services.

Last month, the Department of Transport published a consultation outlining proposals to extend the mayor's powers over commuter rail services that run beyond the Greater London Authority boundaries (*R&R*, p12, 17 March).

The South-East England Regional Assembly (Seera) has announced that it will not back these proposals unless it is granted representation on the Transport for London (TfL) board in order to safeguard the interests of rail users in the wider South-East region.

Seera chairman Keith Mitchell said: "We can only support the Government's proposals to extend the mayor's rail powers beyond London if the Assembly sits at the



Growth zone: London's rail network

top table. The Assembly needs to be involved in the decision-making process where it can influence and look after the region's interests."

However, a spokesperson for TfL said the Government's proposals already allow for the appointment of two board members to represent areas outside London.

He said the consultation document made adequate provision for ensuring "that the interests of passengers outside the GLA boundary would be well represented at decision-making level".

DATA CHECK

Self-employed gener

47

Average each we employ

27

Average each we employ

Self-employed women work an average of 42.5 hours a week, while self-employed men typically work 43.8 hours a week, according to research from the Economic and Social Research Council.

The Economic and Social Research Council says that self-employed men who are also employed full-time – and are therefore known as job creators – work an average of 42.5 hours a week on average.

But the average self-employed woman works an average of 42.5 hours a week, while the average self-employed man who works 43.8 hours a week, it says.

● *Explaining the Nature of Work and the Supply of the Self-Employed* is available at www.regen.net/doc