

£17 million boost to Southampton's rail freight capacity



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government investing £17 million into track and signalling infrastructure to support the lengthening of freight trains

investment will allow more freight to be transported between Southampton and the Midlands, boosting national supply chains and the wider economy

longer freight trains offer a greener solution, reducing traffic congestion and cutting air pollution

An additional £17 million is to be invested into a major rail upgrade to freight services in Southampton, the Rail Minister announced today (13 October 2020), as the government looks to support the seamless flow of goods across the country and strengthen links into Southampton's docks.

Freight services are currently restricted to a length of 520 metres in the Southampton area. This crucial investment will see this rise to 775 metres, significantly increasing capacity and allowing an additional 7 trailers to be transported on a single service.

The upgrade to freight capacity will give a boost to the nation's economy and the country's second-busiest container port, increasing the volume of goods transported to and from the Midlands.

These improvements to existing infrastructure also offer a green alternative for local industry, reducing the reliance on road traffic, cutting congestion and increasing the efficiency of industry.

Greater information on the upgrade is available on the

Network Rail website.

Chris Heaton-Harris, Rail Minister, said:

The injection of funding into the expansion of freight capacity will have a profound effect. Not only will this lead to a greener and more cost-efficient way to transport freight from Southampton, but the economic benefits will also be substantial.

Our freight industry has played an integral role through this pandemic, helping keep this country moving, and this investment will ensure it continues to support our economic recovery.

Mark Killick, Network Rail's Wessex route director, said:

The railway in Southampton plays a vital role in bringing goods into the country and sending exports overseas. Our upgrades will support up to 14 extra containers for each train, providing a great boost for Britain's freight network and those businesses relying on it to transport goods to stock shops, and materials for industry.

It will also help cut down on greenhouse gas emissions, as each container has around the same carrying capacity as a single heavy goods vehicle.

To introduce these longer trains there will be some line closures in January and February 2021. We would like to advise our passengers to plan their journeys well in advance and check before travelling.

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