

**ORR submission to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for High Speed Rail's
Rail Capacity Inquiry
March 2012**

How do you view the current capacity situation on Britain's railways?

1. Since privatisation, there has been a rise in capacity utilisation to the point where many parts of the network are now close to being 'full'. Capacity and its utilisation is difficult to measure, but from the track access applications we receive it is apparent that services have increased significantly over the last ten years, even in some rural areas.

What capacity do you believe Britain's railways will require in the future?

2. We require NR to work with the industry to plan for the future capacity needs of the railway. This is done through Route Utilisation Strategies (available on the Network Rail website). The strategies look at passenger demand 10 years ahead, with 30 year scenarios, and freight forecasting to 2019 and 2030.

What is the best way of providing capacity and future-proofing Britain's rail network?

3. There is no single answer to this question. Options include lengthening trains, running extra services and in some cases building extra infrastructure. However, we think the best way must be based on robust analysis, involving all industry stakeholders (including the DfT and Transport Scotland). The RUS manual on Network Rail's website describes the process we have agreed to. To future-proof, the strategies should be kept under review so that changes in assumptions can be made and solutions updated.

What will the effects of providing extra capacity be, beyond addressing journey supply? What would be risked by failing to provide that capacity?

4. Provision of extra capacity will enable services to run more quickly, more frequently and/or more reliably. This will increase the attractiveness of rail as a mode of choice for passengers and freight customers and help to reduce the carbon footprint of other less environmentally friendly modes of transport.
5. The ability of the industry to draw freight off the roads must not be overlooked – there are constraints for this part of the industry on some key routes, and extra capacity could encourage the movement of freight by rail. However terminal capacity is an issue in some areas.