



Department
for Transport

Framework for the Freight Council

1. Introduction

This framework document has been approved by the Department for Transport. Freight Council members are expected to be familiar with this document.

The DfT secretariat of the Freight Council is responsible for keeping this document up to date. It must be reviewed, and if necessary updated, every two years. An early review may be triggered in a range of circumstances, as illustrated by the non-exhaustive list below:

- a significant change in Government policy pertaining to freight and logistics,
- a change of Government, and/or
- a change in the Group's co-chair.

Reviews will be undertaken by the secretariat, on a consultative basis with Freight Council members.

2. The Freight Council's Terms of Reference

Aim

The Freight Council is a partnership between government, business and trade associations that provides strategic leadership to address challenges facing the multimodal freight and logistics sector and optimise its role in delivering the Government's Plan for Change and missions.

Purpose

The Freight Council will raise the status of freight in cross-economy challenges being addressed by Government and industry. A key milestone will be the co-development of a refreshed Plan for Freight. Alongside the Government, the Council will take action to ensure freight plays the right role in addressing the challenges and opportunities in areas including, but not limited to, growing the economy and the transition to net zero.

The Council has three broad functions:

- Providing expert insight and advice to Government on policies concerning the multimodal freight sector.
- Taking action on a shared set of priorities that deliver the Government's priorities and build upon industry successes.
- Engagement and advocacy by senior industry leaders and representatives with the wider freight and logistics community and other relevant sectors to support action taken.

Scope

When engaging in Freight Council activity and meetings, members of the Council are expected to consider cross-modal solutions to issues that impact the sector as a whole (road, rail, maritime, aviation, warehousing and distribution). The Council's defining feature is its cross-modal focus and scope. Mode specific issues should be communicated directly to modal teams.

The forum may, however, feed into mode specific initiatives from a cross-modal freight perspective and it will agree on how best to influence such initiatives, for example via correspondence from the Council's industry Co-Chair.

The Council is additional to established relationships between the sector and the Government, including those structured on a modal or policy issue basis.

Where appropriate, the Freight Council will also be used to help coordinate sector-wide responses to more immediate freight resilience issues as they arise.

Work Programme

The Freight Council will work together to inform the development of the refreshed Freight Plan and form sub-Working Groups and/or Task and Finish Groups to deliver a work programme for identified focus areas.

Each group formed to operate under the Council will collaborate to develop a high-level document which, so far as practical, sets out:

- Agreed workstream objectives
- Strategic goal and deliverables
- Governance and key resources (e.g. how often it will report back to the Freight Council)
- Identified success metrics

Responsibilities

The Council is Co-Chaired by the DfT Minister for Future Roads Lillian Greenwood, and an independent industry Co-Chair, Isabel Dedring (Global Transport Leader for Arup).

Minister's responsibility

The Minister has a responsibility to:

- Provide strategic and political insights to help clarify the Government's position on key issues affecting the freight and logistics sector.
- Provide leadership in the form of decision making around matters which require political judgement.

Industry Co-Chair's responsibility:

The Industry Co-Chair has a responsibility to:

- Provide focus and direction to the Council's work.

- Provide challenge and pace to industry on meeting the Council's objectives and on the delivery of the Council's actions within the deadlines set.
- Overcome barriers to progress by resolving differences between stakeholders and seeking external input and expertise, where appropriate, through senior level engagement.
- Drive a culture of collaboration, resilience, innovation and responsiveness.
- Coordinate the work of the Council with the priorities of the DfT Minister and other relevant government Ministers.
- Promote the vision and work of the Council to the public, industry and across government where appropriate.

Industry's responsibility:

All members of the Council have a responsibility to:

- Maintain an ethos of whole-industry collaboration, working in a non-competitive way for the benefit of the sector overall.
- Provide the best available evidence in support of challenges identified and work to collectively improve the evidence base for freight sector challenges and opportunities (including economic analysis).
- Actively participate in discussions, providing alternative points of view and identifying solutions to issues raised.
- Assess and consider the effectiveness of progress on objectives, providing challenge to ensure outcomes and output are of a high standard.
- Take forward agreed workstreams, develop key metrics for these, monitor and report progress against these to the Council on the basis agreed.
- Where appropriate, provide working level support to progress the work programme and/or to deliver agreed actions.
- Maintain impartiality (and commercial confidentiality if commercial information is provided or shared in the forum).
- Promote the work of the forum to stakeholders to build confidence and raise the status of freight and its critical importance to UK supply chains and national wellbeing.

Membership

Industry

Senior representatives from trade associations and operators representing all parts of the freight sector form the standard membership, as follows:

Sector

Organisation

Cross-modal

Logistics UK

Sector	Organisation
Road freight	Road Haulage Association
Rail freight and rail infrastructure	Rail Freight Group
Ports and shipping	UK Major Ports Group
Logistics providers, freight forwarders and warehousing	UK Warehousing Association
Cross modal, logistics providers, freight forwarders and logistics hubs	Association of International Courier and Express Services
Retail	Tesco
Logistics	UPS
Postal services	Royal Mail
Construction	Cemex
Logistics	Malcom Transport
Logistics	Welch Group
Maritime	Peel Ports

Government departments

Senior officials from DfT's Multimodal Freight Division and modal teams will attend as standard. The Department for Business and Trade will also be invited to attend most meetings.

Ministers and SCS from other departments will be invited and copied into correspondence as appropriate.

Membership cycle

The Council's effectiveness and membership will be reviewed every 24 months.

The Chairs have discretion to remove members who have failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the Council and approve new member requests.

Governance

Meeting frequency

The Freight Council will meet three to four times a year for 90 minutes. Frequency and duration may be varied at the discretion of the Minister or attendees.

The industry Co-Chair will meet annually with the Minister Co-Chair to discuss the Council's work programme and progress.

External participation

At the request of the membership, Minister or Co-Chair, the Council may invite others to attend its meetings to share insights and provide critical challenge to its work on a case-by-case basis. Invitations may be issued to academia, trade unions, other government departments (including local government representation) or other relevant businesses and organisations.

Working groups

Working Groups and/or Task and Finish Groups will be formed to undertake more detailed work on specific themes/areas as the need arises. The Council can utilise the expertise of individuals and organisations beyond its core membership, either via inviting them to participate in meetings or through invitation to join Working Groups/ Task and Finish Groups. The non-exhaustive list below provides example of additional stakeholders the Council may seek advice from:

- Academics
- Professional bodies
- Trade unions
- Other Government Departments
- Sub-National Transport Bodies
- Local Authorities
- Delivery bodies such as National Highways and Network Rail

Key interfaces

The wide range of policies pertaining to freight will mean that the Council is likely to have an interest in the work being undertaken by Working Groups and Forums outside of its direct control. The non-exhaustive list below illustrates some examples of Groups the Council will consult and obtain updates from:

- Freight Energy Forum
- Freight Workforce Group

- Freight Innovation Cluster

Members of the Freight Council who sit on these wider forums of interest will be expected to provide updates to the Council and reflect any strategic input from the Council back to the groups of interest.

Secretariat

A secretariat function for the core Council will be provided by the DfT Multimodal Freight Division team. They will be responsible for:

- scheduling meetings,
- agreeing the agenda and circulating papers at least 3 working days in advance,
- minuting meetings (which will be considered draft until agreed at the next meeting), and
- maintaining a log of agreed actions.

The secretariat function for identified sub-working groups and Task and Finish Groups will be agreed by the members of the given group. There is an expectation that industry will provide secretariat support to these groups where appropriate.

Papers and meeting minutes

Information and papers are requested from members as and when required.

Meeting minutes will be published on the Freight Council's gov.uk page.