

Study into potential for expansion of rail freight welcomed

Oct 08, 2015



The West on Track community campaign has warmly welcomed the announcement in the newly-published Capital Programme of a feasibility study to examine options for expanding freight transport on the railways.

According to the recently published “Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021” – ‘In advance of the Mid Term Review, the Government will commission a feasibility study to examine options for expanding freight transport on the railways.’

The announcement was mentioned at the Irish Exporters Association Supply Chain Ireland Seminar in Claremorris, County Mayo last week. Simon McKeever, its CEO urged that the study would be undertaken without delay. Attendees were informed that Ireland’s rail freight is now expected to quadruple in the next number of years.

In welcoming the news a spokesman for West on Track said: “The planned rail freight study opens up the prospect of re-introducing freight capacity on currently disused routes such as Limerick-Foynes and the Claremorris-Athenry lines. In that context the protection of these routes as rail

lines is vitally important and West on Track understands that the Claremorris-Athenry line will now be preserved and protected for rail use.”

“The provision of infrastructure is fundamental to the creation of jobs. As Irish rail freight continues to grow, expanding Ireland’s rail freight network will create further opportunities to attract new business here while consolidating existing employment,” he added.

“The study will also need to consider the serious issue of Ireland’s carbon emissions. It is recognized that railways have an important role to play in reducing carbon emissions from the transport sector. Currently transport is responsible for approximately 30% of carbon emissions across Europe. A significant modal shift away from road to rail freight is achievable by using the existing spare capacity of operational railway lines and by re-activating routes such as the Limerick-Foynes and the Claremorris-Athenry lines.”