

# ORR delivers positive outcome for passengers and freight

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The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) announced its decision to use railway track capacity between Wrexham and Bidston for Transport for Wales Rail Limited (TfWRL) and GB Railfreight Limited (GBRf).

This decision will see both more passenger services and greater certainty for freight trains on the line.

The rail regulator's independent review was needed because TfWRL and GBRf, had both applied for capacity that could not be accommodated together.

Stephanie Tobyn, director of strategy, policy and reform at ORR said: "We are pleased to have reached a decision that promotes passenger and freight growth in line with our duties through an increase in passenger services and placing the freight trains serving the cement works on a firm contractual basis.

"Our review of the applications identified areas where Network Rail needs to improve its management of granting access to the rail network. We will continue to monitor the Wales and Borders route on these issues."

Currently, TfWRL operates an hourly passenger service between Wrexham and Bidston while GBRf freight services use sections of the track to serve Deeside and Avonmouth from the Padeswood Cement Works.

Network Rail's initial capacity analysis showed that only one of the TfWRL or GBRf applications could be fully accommodated, so it rejected both. GBRf and TfWRL then asked ORR to take a decision on the competing applications for access to the line.

ORR's review looked at the line's capability, operational issues, and a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed services.

The regulator's decision delivers a positive outcome for passengers with TfWRL able to run 2 trains per hour for most of the day. This will provide a step change improvement to the passenger service provision in North Wales.

Equally, the decision reflects a positive outcome for freight and the local area. The freight trains which currently serve Padeswood cement works can continue with greater certainty because of the firm contractual basis. Each freight train on this line equates to the removal of 36 HGVs from the roads, bringing associated environmental benefits to the local area.