

Second revenue-generating freight route opens up in North Wales

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Welsh slate aggregate is being transported to Luton via rail freight for the first time ever, thanks to a joint initiative between Network Rail, construction materials company Breedon, and the Welsh Government.

The Llandudno Junction freight yard, which hadn't been used for several years, was brought back to life following extensive work at the site.

Vegetation removal, track repairs and refurbishment of the points have enabled trains to enter and leave the yard.

The first freight train to leave Llandudno Junction freight yard departed in July, carrying 22 wagons filled with slate aggregate from local quarries for the journey to Luton in south-east England. Each freight train removes approximately 76 lorries from the roads, reducing carbon emissions and congestion.

The Welsh Government has provided match funding to Breedon Group for the enhancements at Llandudno Junction freight sidings via the Freight Facilities Grant scheme. The scheme is available to encourage modal shift where there are environmental benefits from removing HGVs from roads across Wales – up to

250,000 tonnes of slate waste aggregates is expected to be moved by rail each year from the site Jess Lippett, Network Rail senior regional freight manager said: "Rail freight is a vital part of our infrastructure, providing a fast, green, safe and efficient way of transporting goods."

"We've worked closely with our partners at Breedon and in Welsh Government to get Llandudno Junction open for business, ensuring that we can carry slate aggregates by rail and therefore reducing the number of lorries on the road and cutting carbon emissions."

"The recent slate loading represents the second revenue-earning freight flow to commence on the North Wales coast-line in recent months - showing how we can work together to have a positive impact on the environment and the economy."

Andy Roberts, General Manager at Breedon's Welsh Slate Business said: "Breedon are delighted to have worked with Welsh Government to develop a high quality freight facility in North Wales. This will allow slate aggregate to be delivered across the UK in a sustainable manner and remove truck movements from the A55."

John Smith, GB Railfreight chief executive officer said: "We're delighted to be transporting Welsh slate from Llandudno."

"It is encouraging to see the Government and the private sector come together to enable a service that will transport key construction materials, create employment opportunities and drive local growth. "This new service will demonstrate the commercial, environmental and safety benefits of transporting goods by rail freight."