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## Status of the SRA Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy

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The Department has received a number of enquiries about the status of the *Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy* published by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) in March 2004. The purpose of this letter is to clarify the position in the light of the 2004 Railways White Paper, the Railways Act 2005 and the Secretary of State for Transport's recent statement to Parliament about rail freight.

The SRA will cease to exist from early 2006 and has already relinquished its role in the planning process. This renders parts of the document technically out of date. However, the interchange policy was based on the Government's existing policies for transport, planning, sustainable development and economic growth, and much of the material contained in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, is still relevant. For this reason we will retain the document on our website as a source of advice and guidance.

The SRA's responsibility for Route Utilisation Strategies and for identifying impacts on the rail network has now transferred to Network Rail. However, its prior role in providing scheme-specific advice and assessment has not transferred to the Department. While we will not take an active role in planning cases relating to rail freight interchanges, as part of our desire to see the freight capacity of the network optimised, we have an interest in proposals for the development of terminals. We are also keen to learn of any generic problems relating to the planning process that might need to be addressed in guidance.

Yours sincerely,

**Martin Jones**    **Timothy Wellburn**

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