1. Purpose

1.1 This paper reports on standards-related activities carried out by RSSB during the past year under the auspices of the Industry Standards Coordination Committee (ISCC), of which Tim Gilbert is the chairman and Andrew Sharpe the RSSB member. The paper also introduces Issue 3 of the ISCC Strategic Plan, which is offered for the board’s endorsement.

2. Report on standards activities

2.1 ISCC monitors the effectiveness of Railway Group Standards (RGSs) and the procedures for managing them as defined in the RGS Code and Standards Manual. RSSB provides ISCC with a report on standards activities every year, supplemented by a half-yearly update and by reports every six months from the chairman of each Standards Committee (SC) covering work on standards in their subject areas. At its meeting on 6 January ISCC endorsed the report for 2011 and also endorsed RSSB’s approach to the management of standards. Achievements and developments during the year are summarised below.

2.2 The SCs’ work in reviewing RGSs against the required scope, as defined in the RGS Code, is on target. It is complete for four of the six SCs (Infrastructure, Rolling Stock, Plant, and Traffic Operation & Management) and is close to completion for Control, Command and Signalling. The Energy SC is working on four key standards which will be finalised following consultation; the remaining work on energy RGSs will be completed once these documents are in place. This work has led to a reduction in the number of RGSs from 227 five years ago to 127 now. The number of Guidance Notes and Rail Industry Standards (RISs) has risen, as the industry has identified the need for non-mandatory documents to be produced on a cross-industry basis in the interests of efficiency.

2.3 The number of deviations applied for was 198 last year, down from the peak of 288 two years ago. Over the last five years, of the applications not withdrawn by the applicant, 98.5% were approved. Over the past year improvements have been made to the mechanisms for managing deviations: changes to the deviation application form and RSSB website mean that completing the form is easier, and there is an initiative to obtain feedback from deviation applicants.

2.4 Efforts have been devoted to improving industry-wide understanding of standards and how to use them. RSSB is developing briefing materials on standards, of which the first set are expected to be launched in the next 2-3 months. The briefing material is being produced with the support of ISCC and a number of standards users from the industry’s front line. In a similar vein, Network Rail and RSSB held a workshop with a group of Network Rail personnel currently working on station enhancement projects, to tackle issues relating to the use of both RGSs
and Network Rail company standards. The workshop was a success and further events will be held, with participation from front line staff in other companies (depending on the subject matter). RSSB continues to engage with the supplier sector on standards, notably through forums arranged by RIA.

2.5 Delivery of the New Approach to the Rule Book is on schedule, with Tranches 1 to 5 now live and Tranche 6 to go live in June. Other key developments include:

(a) A survey of front line users has been conducted, focusing on Tranche 1; it showed that the new documents are a considerable improvement over the old versions. A survey for Tranches 2 and 3 is being conducted.

(b) Following on from the first survey, a self-assurance mechanism has been designed to help each company to consider whether its approach to managing Rule Book changes is robust.

(c) The decision support document, which incorporates the cost benefit analysis, has been refined and agreed by all industry sectors. It shows that the benefits of the New Approach greatly outweigh the costs.

(d) Good progress has been made in communicating about the New Approach, in line with the Communications Plan agreed by the Industry Leaders Group. A key element is the sequence of regular briefings that RSSB offers to each company to support their implementation work.

(e) The Operational Concept has been published, its aim being to facilitate operational change and thereby support the industry in its efforts to optimise the way the railway operates.

2.6 During the year ISCC and RSSB made substantial contributions to the revision of the UK Interoperability Regulations. RSSB submitted comments to the DfT’s consultation, as did other companies, informed by an ISCC workshop. One important issue relates to the ability of the DfT to grant dispensations from national technical rules (NTRs). Since most NTRs are RGSs, and RGSs already have a mature deviation process, ISCC members considered it important to ensure that there is no scope for confusion or conflict. This point has been recognised by the DfT and it is understood that requests for dispensations against NTRs that are RGSs will be referred to the existing process as set out in the RGS Code.

2.7 ISCC approved a series of papers which proposed changes to the RGS Code and the Standards Manual. These changes are now being integrated into revised draft versions of the documents, under the guidance of an ISCC subgroup. Once the work is complete ISCC will approve the Standards Manual, and endorse the Code for consideration by the board and ultimately the ORR.

3. ISCC Strategic Plan

3.1 The board has previously endorsed Issues 1 and 2 of the ISCC Strategic Plan; Issue 3 is presented as Appendix 1 to this paper for the board’s consideration and endorsement. The Plan has been updated in the light of developments during the past year; the progress made has allowed some streamlining of the Plan, which is now focused on four themes.

Theme I: Aligning GB standards with the European framework

3.2 Because of work done over the past few years, the GB mainline railway is in a reasonably strong position in terms of the need for standards that support the
European legislative framework. RGSs perform the functions of national rules, and their structure and content are already fairly well matched to what is required. However, understanding of what the European framework means in practice is evolving within the European Railway Agency and European Commission, some notable steps forward having been taken in 2010 and 2011. This has given rise to a need for further work on GB standards, including:

- Amending the scope of RGSs in a revised RGS Code and Standards Manual, so that it aligns fully and explicitly with the European framework.
- Building on recent analysis, which established that requirements in RGSs are necessarily either NTRs or national safety rules (NSRs), to develop and deliver a programme of work to ensure RGSs correctly reflect this status. For example, any requirements in RGSs that should not be NTRs or NSRs will need to be withdrawn. Also, given that NTRs and NSRs fall into several categories, standards users will need to be advised as to which RGS requirements fit into which categories.
- Ongoing input to Euronorms, often in parallel with work on RGSs, to make sure that a common European approach can be used in GB wherever this makes economic sense.

**Theme II: Producing a coherent and efficient suite of standards for the railway**

3.3 Again, the GB mainline railway is in a strong position. This has been recognised for example by Infrastructure UK (part of HM Treasury) in work they are leading across government to improve infrastructure planning, prioritisation and delivery. However, as part of ISCC's initiative to improve engagement between standards makers and standards users, the Network Rail members of ISCC have recently obtained useful feedback from people who use standards in projects. Issues were raised about the hierarchy of requirements contained in different levels of standard: TSIs, RGSs, company standards, and sponsors' requirements. It was not a question of problems with individual standards, or different types of standards contradicting each other; but of differences in wording, emphasis or range (between the different levels of standard) which could make the 'read through' challenging – particularly for busy project personnel.

3.4 ISCC and RSSB’s work in this area is aimed at rationalising the interaction between standards. This involves, for example, reducing the need for separate requirements in RGSs by using or referencing the requirements in TSIs and Euronorms; and also offering the capability of RISs to provide cross-industry but non-mandatory standards where this is more efficient than having multiple company standards. Network Rail is articulating a similar philosophy in respect of its current initiative to rewrite Network Rail company standards. Other parts of the industry, such as TOCs, are involved through their participation in ISCC and through their ownership of company standards, ATOC Codes of Practice, etc. Some recent developments, such as the deepening of alliances between TOCs and Network Rail Routes, may strengthen the movement in this direction if they reveal the existence of multiple company standards covering similar issues.

**Theme III: Improving decision taking on standards**

3.5 The aim of standards is to provide for the most cost effective, efficient and compatible means of rail system delivery, whilst providing for a safe railway. It is
important that the industry has an integrated approach to taking decisions about RGSs, so that economic costs and benefits – and all other relevant factors – are considered appropriately at each stage when creating, withdrawing, changing, or deviating from standards. A review of the decision-taking process has been carried out and the results are now being incorporated into the revision of the RGS Code and Standards Manual.

**Theme IV: Communicating with the industry about standards**

3.6 One of the goals of the Strategic Plan is that the industry embraces standards as a ‘force for good’. As cross-industry standards, RGSs are owned by the industry and all decisions about them are taken by ISCC and the six SCs: cross-industry groups that obtain enthusiastic engagement from the industry’s chosen representatives. However, the idea that ‘standards are a problem’ – or even ‘the problem’ – continues to be advocated in some forums, notably the RVfM review and its aftermath. ISCC, supported by the SCs, is working hard to achieve a better understanding across the industry of standards and how to use them, and to obtain practical feedback from those who use standards. ISCC continues to promote engagement between standards makers and standards users, through further workshops with the front line, the promulgation of briefing materials, and other initiatives as needed. These efforts can be supported at the most senior levels in the industry by companies making sure that they engage fully with their representatives on ISCC and the SCs.

**Underpinning activity: revision of the RGS Code and Manual**

3.7 Supporting all four themes and following on from last year’s work, ISCC is revising the RGS Code and Manual. The revisions will respond to the changing legislative framework and will also consolidate improvements in response to recent reviews. Key issues being addressed include:

- Providing clarity about the role of RGSs in the context of the (European) legislative framework (see 3.2)
- Revising the decision framework to provide greater confidence that the purpose of standards is properly reflected in decision taking (see 3.5)
- Revising the eligibility requirement for SC membership, to explicitly reflect the need for an understanding of the business challenges facing the railway
- Clarifying how to deal with a situation in which an SC cannot reach consensus, should this arise in future
- Providing a more flexible framework for standards change in the interests of efficiency.

4. **Recommendations**

4.1 The board is invited to:

- **NOTE** ISCC’s activities and achievements during 2011
- **NOTE** the importance of companies engaging with their representatives on ISCC and SCs
- **ENDORSE** the ISCC Strategic Plan Issue 3, presented at Appendix 1.
Appendix 1

Industry Standards Coordination Committee

Strategic Plan 2010 – 2014

Issue Three

Approved by the

Industry Standards Coordination Committee

06 January 2012

ISCC/006

Email: enquirydesk@rssb.co.uk
www.rssb.co.uk

Issue record

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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>Updates to issue one to take account of work undertaken and the development of strategic issues during 2010 – 2011, and likely developments during the remaining years of</td>
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<td>Three</td>
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ISCC Strategic Plan – Goals
The strategic issues in this plan support ISCC’s strategic goals:

- ISCC and Standards Committees deliver cost-effective standards for use by GB industry.

- ISCC communicates effectively with industry about standards.

- GB industry embraces standards as a ‘force for good’ in managing the railway.

- ISCC engages effectively with Europe, UK Government and GB industry on strategic matters.
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1 Introduction

1.1 The Industry Standards Coordination Committee (ISCC) oversees cross-industry work on national and European standards. It is the senior governance group for Standards Committees, and reports to the Board of RSSB.

1.2 ISCC’s remit includes a number of specific governance functions under the Railway Group Standards Code. It is also the forum in which the GB mainline railway industry considers strategic issues relating to standards. During 2008 and 2009, it became clear that the number of strategic issues requiring attention was substantial and was unlikely to decline in the near future, particularly in the context of the drive towards European interoperability. In the latter part of 2009, ISCC therefore undertook a review of these strategic issues, resulting in the identification of a number of workstreams.

1.3 Many of the activities in these workstreams have been delivered over the two years since ISCC’s strategic plan was first developed. During this period, it has become evident that there are several themes that are at the core of ISCC’s purpose. The achievements over the last year are discussed in section 2 below while these core themes are examined in sections 3 and 5.

1.4 ISCC will seek endorsement of issue three of ISCC’s strategic plan from the Board of RSSB.

1.5 The plan will be reviewed in time for any revised plan to be approved early in 2013.

2 Achievements and Developments during 2011 – 12

2.1 Progress on issues in the Strategic Plan

2.1.1 The key deliverables in section 4 of issue two of ISCC’s strategic plan are set out below with a summary of progress.

a) **Improving the coherence of standards.** The project that looked at cross-industry standards for station lighting was a useful forerunner to further development in this area. Wider development work was placed on hold until the organisational structures resulting from the Rail Value for Money study became clearer. It has now been agreed to proceed with the work to examine the scope for simplifying the suite of standards used by the GB mainline railway and whether there is a case for a common standards regime for UK railways. This work will be undertaken during 2012 – 2013.

b) **The alignment of Railway Group Standards (RGSs) with the European framework of national technical rules (NTRs) and national safety rules (NSRs).** This subject has been addressed by two strands of work. First, the revision of the RGS Code and Standards Manual in 2012/2013 will revise the scope of RGSs so that they fully and explicitly align with the European framework of ‘national rules’. Second, work has progressed to establish the current position with RGSs; that is to say, which requirements in RGSs are NTRs, which are NSRs and which are neither. Future work will need to look at the withdrawal of requirements that fall into this latter category.
c) Improving industry’s understanding of standards and how to use them. RSSB and Network Rail are engaging routinely to discuss standards issues and a workshop on a topical issue was held with project managers. Further workshops are likely to be proposed with Network Rail and other companies on issues of the moment. In addition, RSSB and industry are developing together a series of briefing materials on standards, the aim of which is to improve industry’s understanding of standards and how to use them.

d) Improving the mechanisms for industry to provide feedback on standards. There are a number of mechanisms that have been put in place that will improve the ability of industry to provide feedback on standards. These include:

i) Asking all applicants who seek a deviation from a RGS to complete a feedback form on the suitability of the deviations process.

ii) Developing Guidance Notes to RGSs that set out the rationale for requirements in RGSs. This will assist industry in understanding the limits that have been set so that they are better able to challenge any limits that are sub-optimal. This, in turn, will lead to the cost-effectiveness of standards being confirmed or improved.

iii) Standards Committee Chairmen’s six-monthly reports to ISCC will draw attention to any significant areas of feedback from industry.

iv) The improved engagement with industry outlined in 2.1.1c) above.

e) A review of the mechanisms for managing changes to and deviating from standards. Several minor changes have been made to improve these processes including:

i) Implementation of the deviations feedback form outlined in 2.1.1di) above.

ii) Improvements to the deviations application form and RSSB website so that completion of the form is clearer.

iii) Increasing the visibility of the RGS consultation programme.

iv) Implementation of a mechanism that provides Standards Committees with improved information on which they can judge the suitability of a proposal for change.

The more substantial improvements for managing change and deviations will be introduced in the revision of the RGS Code and Standards Manual in 2012/2013.

f) Influencing the European process for the development of standards. The processes for developing Technical Specifications for Interoperability and Euronorms are under review by the ERA; ISCC will continue to monitor progress. It was concluded that the newly-introduced European process for dealing with critical errors in TSIs is sufficient for GB needs.
2.2 Further Developments during 2011 – 2012

2.2.1 The Rail Value for Money (VfM) study led by Sir Roy McNulty, reported in May 2011. Recommendation 6.8.2 for a Rail Systems Agency (RSA) may affect the structure and products of RSSB. However, it is not anticipated that this will affect the underlying responsibilities currently delivered by RSSB or industry’s committees for standards.

2.2.2 ISCC approved a proposal to revise the RGS Code and Standards Manual during 2012/2013. ISCC concluded that there was sufficient change in the industry including, in particular, the European context to merit proceeding with the recommended work. ISCC has established a sub-group that will review drafts of the documents to ensure that they reflect ISCC’s approved policies and they provide a coherent source of requirements and guidance for industry. This revision will be a key priority for work for 2012/2013.

2.2.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) has consulted on the draft Interoperability Regulations. As part of the consultation, DfT held a workshop with ISCC which presented a significant contribution to the exercise. The final regulations are expected to be published in February 2012; thereafter the consequential implications for standards and how they are managed will be examined and discussed with DfT.

3 Looking forward to 2012 – 2013

3.1 The goals, set out on page 3 of this plan, are unaltered from 2011 – 2012. They remain central to what ISCC intends to achieve. The strategic issues for 2012 – 2013 support these goals.

3.2 As noted in paragraph 1.3 above, certain themes have recurred over the past two years. These are envisaged to be the focus of ISCC’s activity over the medium-term:
   a) Aligning GB standards with Europe.
   b) Producing a coherent and efficient suite of standards for GB mainline railway.
   c) Improving decision taking on standards.
   d) Communicating with industry about standards.

3.3 In addition, the two issues highlighted at 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 above will need further ISCC attention during 2012 – 2013:
   a) The revision of the RGS Code and Standards Manual will be reviewed by the ISCC sub-group but ISCC will maintain overall governance responsibility.
   b) The impact of the Interoperability Regulations may need to be considered further with DfT, depending on any delegations of responsibilities to industry.

3.4 These strategic issues are considered in greater depth in section 5.
4 Communication activities

4.1 ISCC has produced a communications plan that supports the activities contained in issue two of ISCC’s strategic plan. The communications plan will be updated following publication of issue three of ISCC’s strategic plan.
5 Strategic issues

| 01 – Aligning GB standards with the European framework of standards |

**Issue description**
Continue to align GB standards more closely with the European framework of standards.

**What success would look like**
Standards for the GB mainline railway (as defined in the RGS Code) are aligned with the European framework of national technical rules and national safety rules as set out in the directives on interoperability and safety.

**Key activities for 2012 – 2013**
- Amend the scope of GB standards in the revised RGS Code and Standards Manual so that it aligns fully and explicitly with the European framework of standards.
- Build on the work of 2011 – 2012, which established the status of requirements in RGSs as either national technical rules or national safety rules, to develop a programme of work which ensures that RGSs correctly reflect this status.
- Carry out the programme of work on national rules for 2012 – 2013 and in the following years if necessary.
- Monitor the development of European standards and standards processes, and influence their development where necessary.
02 – Producing a coherent and efficient suite of standards for the GB mainline railway

Issue description
Examine the steps required to improve the suite of standards used by the GB mainline railway so that they provide a more coherent series of documents.

What success would look like
A suite of standards for the GB mainline railway (TSIs, RGSs, Rail Industry Standards (RISs), company standards and project standards) that, together, provide a set of coherent documents where any current gaps, duplication or perceived contradictions are resolved.

Key activities for 2012 – 2013

- Within the GB mainline railway network, examine in greater depth:
  - To what extent the number of requirements in RGSs can be reduced by reference to the parameters in TSIs.
  - To what extent the content of company standards can be reduced by reference to requirements in RISs.

  The aim is to deal with issues at the highest possible level in order to simplify the standards system.

- Develop proposals that examine:
  - What the mandatory standards regime could look like, including the scope of applicability of national rules. Can we manage with one set of rules for all the networks?
  - The implications of such a regime.
  - The case for change.
  - Implementation.

- Support the Technical Strategy Leadership Group in its consideration of a differentiated railway, that is to say a railway that caters for current GB business needs and those needs that can be reasonably foreseen, by developing any necessary proposals relating to standards and in particular TSIs.

- Assess any implications arising from the Interoperability Regulations and develop proposals to deal with any resulting changes in the management of standards.
03 – Improving decision taking on standards

Issue description
Industry should make decisions about standards in a manner that ensures that standards promote a cost-effective, efficient and compatible means of rail system delivery.

What success would look like
One integrated approach to decision taking on standards so that the economic benefits and all other relevant factors of delivering the rail system are incorporated appropriately when considering proposals, drafting standards, compiling impact assessments and taking decisions.

Key activities for 2012 – 2013
- Integrate the principles set out in ISCC paper on decision taking (22 July 2011 meeting, item 2.2) into the revision of the RGS Code and Standards Manual.
- Brief Standards Committees on the principles of decision taking in the revised RGS Code and Standards Manual.
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**Issue description**

Improve industry's understanding about the need for standards, how to use them, and how to provide feedback on their effectiveness.

**What success would look like**

GB industry has a well developed understanding of the benefits that standards bring to the rail industry and how standards work.

GB industry – individuals and groups at all levels of industry – provides Standards Committees and ISCC with useful and enthusiastic feedback and Standards Committees and ISCC act on that feedback.

**Key activities for 2012 – 2013**

- Continue to progress the standards briefing material project to improve industry's understanding of standards:
  - Develop and refine the briefing material, including format and branding.
  - Develop and implement a launch programme for the material.
  - Distribute the material and obtain feedback from users.
  - Standards Committees, ISCC and RSSB utilise the briefing material to brief industry.
- Communicate with industry about the proposed changes to the RGS Code and Standards Manual.
- Communicate with industry about changes to the management of standards as a result of the implementation of the Interoperability Regulations.
- Seek opportunities to engage with standards users to discuss topical issues on standards.
- Produce and implement a communications plan that takes account of the activities in this strategic plan and any other issues required by ISCC.