1. Purpose of the paper

RSSB facilitates and supports the Sustainable Rail Programme (SRP). This paper provides the RSSB board with an overall review of the programme, current status, plans to the end of CP04 and some thoughts on future challenges for the rail sector.

2. Background

The SRP was initiated in 2005 in response to the Government’s Sustainable Development (SD) strategy “Securing the Future” and since its formal inception in 2007 has been steered by a group of senior industry executives. The SRP has delivered work to the ORR and DfT as well as to the industry itself.

The programme has identified the key industry sustainability issues and developed the industry’s ability to measure and monitor performance against them. It has led industry in a strategic conversation about the sustainable future of the railway against the backdrop of climate change. Future scenarios were developed that enabled the industry to better understand the choices available to make better long term decisions. The scenarios work was used by government as an input to the 2007 white paper “Delivering a Sustainable Railway” as well as by industry to test the route map of the Rail Technical Strategy.

In 2009 the SD Principles were developed and form the basis of what sustainability means to the GB railway. Since the publication of the SD Principles the RSSB SD team has been working with industry to successfully embed the principles in government policy, industry planning and within individual organisations.

A whole life cycle carbon footprint for the railway to better understand and prioritise its carbon management activity was also developed.

3. The Last Year

During the last year RSSB supported the SRP in delivering a number of key outputs including:

- Developing the plan for industry to manage noise and carbon in CP5 as part of the IIP; including a carbon trajectory and the Carbon Management Framework.
- A greatly improved coverage of SD in franchise policy and ITTs.
• The adoption of the SD Principles by Government in the recent Command Paper and HLOS.

• Supporting the industry in developing “Station Travel Plans” to support end to end journey and encourage modal shift.

• Publishing the second industry sustainability report - “The rail industry sustainable development review: 2011”.

• Collating a set of KPIs against the SD Principles to understand and monitor industry’s SD performance.

4. **Next Steps**

The SD Steering Group have promoted and agreed the following programme up to the end of CP04:

4.1 **Influencing policy at the UK and European level** – this currently includes:

4.1.1 Delivering against the request from the Planning Oversight Group (POG) to develop the sustainability input to the CP5 planning process, the SRP will identify the **best value interventions to reduce carbon emissions** in CP5 & 6. A separate but related project in response to an HLOS requirement may be the development of a suitable carbon accounting methodology.

In addition, working with DfT and industry a tool will be developed to automate the analysis needed to respond to government requirements for **noise action plans**.

4.1.2 Continuing to work with stakeholders and DfT to support the embedding of SD in franchise policy as has been successfully achieved in the West Coast Mainline, Essex Thameside and Great Western.

4.2 **Embedding widespread understanding and adoption of the industry’s SD Principles** - A web based SD self-assessment tool has been developed to assess how well individual organisations are performing in relation to the SD Principles and to provide a framework for measuring progress. TfL has approached RSSB to use this tool across TfL. The tool can be found using the following link: [http://sustainablerailprogramme.rssb.co.uk/home.aspx](http://sustainablerailprogramme.rssb.co.uk/home.aspx)

In addition RSSB jointly with DfT and ATOC is running SD seminars for franchise bid teams on the Carbon Management Framework, SD Principles and Station Travel Plans.

4.3 **Whole life cost guidance** – In response to an HLOS requirement guidance on accounting for the SD Principles in projects and programmes will be developed, taking account of good practice within and outwith of the industry such as the “Accounting for Sustainability” project. This is likely to include the development of whole life cost guidance and case studies on the practical application of whole life costing, including application to 15 year franchises and potential to address market failures.
4.4 **Rail’s impact on GB plc** – Seeking to maintain the rail sector’s sustainability advantage, this will document and analyse the wider socio-economic impact of rail on GB plc and explain the rail sector’s contribution to sustainability.

4.5 **Electric Freight** – Related to 4.4 will be research to identify the necessary actions and interventions to reach a tipping point for electric freight delivering lower costs and carbon.

4.6 **Scenario Planning** - The scenario planning research delivered in 2007 will be re-visited. This will focus on rail’s role in integrated transport, the impact of behaviour change on transport use and future challenges.

5. **Future challenges**

Although rail plays a key role in GB plc in promoting economic growth and efficiency, there are challenges ahead:

5.1 EU regulations, consumer demands and emerging technologies are driving unprecedented improvements in new car emissions. Car manufacturers are adapting quickly to the change, presenting a challenge to rail’s green position, with some cars emitting less than a 100gCO2/km.

5.2 The Coalition Government has highlighted the need for low carbon road vehicles to be a central part of the new green economy. There is a commitment to developing an electric vehicle battery charging network.

5.3 Although new vehicle technology alone will do nothing for congestion and other traffic impacts the highways sector is also making progress in linking vehicles as a road-train with each vehicle constantly monitoring the speed and direction from the vehicle ahead.

5.4 Energy is currently circa 4% of industry costs, but energy prices are likely to rise (based on DECC “central” predictions we could be spending 28% more on energy bills during CP5). The industry will, therefore, need to consider how to reduce its energy bills even further.

5.5 At a policy level the industry must work with Government to ensure that rail maintains its position at the centre of an integrated transport system. Further consideration will need to be given to the railway we want and constructive partnerships built with other modes and service providers.

6. **Recommendations**

The directors are asked to:

- **NOTE** progress on the SRP and;
- **DISCUSS** future challenges and where responsibility for addressing them may sit in future.