RSSB submits evidence to Level Crossing inquiry

RSSB was called to appear alongside rail industry colleagues at the House of Commons Transport Committee’s second session on its inquiry into level crossing safety.

Level crossings are a paradox. Britain’s level crossings are among the world’s safest according to international indicators and there is a substantial body of work supporting continued risk management, education and enforcement to ensure this risk reduction continues.

However, the behaviour of users at level crossings still present significant risk, and are a matter of considerable public concern, triggering the committee’s inquiry. At the same time Network Rail has been awarded an increase in funding to support risk reduction as part of the Rail Regulator’s final determination. Most of the risk at level crossings is to members of the public in vehicles or on foot. Last year there were nine public fatalities at level crossings compared to four in 2011/12. The average over the last 10 years is just over nine fatalities a year.

The call to provide verbal evidence alongside RAIB, ORR, the Heritage Railway Association and Network Rail, was an opportunity for MPs to question Anson Jack, deputy chief executive and Michael Woods, head of management and operations research on subjects ranging from comparisons with road safety performance in other countries – which is highly correlated, the role RSSB plays in collecting industry’s data, data analysis, risk modelling, human factors and research management tools which RSSB has supported, and had described in written evidence beforehand. Anson Jack explained how RSSB is owned by its members but maintains its independence from any particular part of the industry.

You can subscribe to Information Bulletin on the RSSB website.
RSSB subscriptions page

For details of changes to Railway Group Standards view the Latest Updates page on the RGS Online website www.rgsonline.co.uk

For details of forthcoming dates for RSSB consultations on standards and associated documents, please see:
http://www.rssb.co.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/pdf/rgs/Forthcoming%20consultations.pdf
or search at www.rssb.co.uk

Front page photo: Image courtesy of First Transpennine Express
The committee was also keen to understand from Network Rail specifically, in terms of how it was making step changes to the vigilance of management and the nature of risk assessment at level crossings, following the watershed of the Elsenham accident in December 2005.

For more information, contact RSSB Enquiry Desk, enquirydesk@rssb.co.uk. The proceedings can be viewed at Parliament TV.

RSSB Strategic Review

The RSSB Board has unanimously approved the way forward and a document titled Notice of Proposal for Change: A Members and Stakeholders Consultation was circulated on 14 November 2013 to Members for Consultation. This document is the final consultation on:

- Draft Amendments to the RSSB Constitution Agreement
- Draft Amendments to the RSSB Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association
- RSSB 5-year Strategic Business Plan 2014-2019
- Proposed 2014-2015 Budget for Member Funding

This Consultation will close at 1600hrs on Monday 16 December 2013.

Addressing risk at the platform-train interface

For station operators, train service providers and new projects, such as Thameslink and Crossrail, designing, maintaining and managing the platform-train interface is a very high priority as it strongly influences safety, operational performance, capacity, access by mobility impaired people and the type and speed of trains that can operate through a station. It is the part of the railway system where most passenger fatalities occur. There are over 2,500 stations on the mainline network, through which one and a half billion journeys begin and end every year in addition to those people who visit stations and do not travel.

Incidents can involve passengers when boarding or alighting or they can occur as a result of people standing, walking, running, or otherwise being too close to the platform edge. The time before, during, and after train dispatch is one of the most challenging times for train and station operators alike, because it is during this period that people naturally come to be at the platform edge. The role of the train dispatch process is important in both these areas. In the Annual Safety Performance Report for 2012-3, it was reported that the harm the Passenger Train Interface (PTI) represented that year was equivalent to 9.3 fatalities and weighted injuries (FWI).

Industry’s resolve to tackle the risk has strengthened both in the light of the data and high profile accidents, such as those at Gidea Park in 2007 and James Street in 2011.

Most recently, this has included setting up a dedicated PTI Strategy Group, chaired by Neal Lawson, Director of Maintenance and Operations Services at Network Rail and former Managing Director at First Capital Connect. The group is a senior level body reporting into the RSSB Board, and able to create and secure industry buy-in for a strategy that reduces safety risk, optimises operational performance, capacity and availability of access, in a manner that promotes the long-term best interests of the mainline railway system. It will be expected to reflect the wide range of performance and engineering issues surrounding the PTI.

Once the strategy has been created, the PTI Strategy Group will be disbanded; outputs and delivery of the strategy will be governed and overseen by the cross-industry System Safety Risk Group (SSRG).

The latest edition of the RED DVD (RED 37) has also focussed on PTI for the second time, and again with a fictitious scenario, to help communicate a new approach to train dispatch in the Rule Book. RED 37 demonstrates the importance of changes to the rules which came into effect in June 2013 which now require guards to stay at the door controls until the train has completely left the station.

This change is to allow the guard to quickly respond to visual or audible signals of alarm that come from the platform, whether from dispatch staff or the general public on the platform. Also, dispatch staff must position themselves on the platform so that the whole length of the train can be seen.

For more information about the PTI Strategy Group, contact Helen Costello, Helen.costello@rssb.co.uk, and for more information about RED, contact Catherine Gallagher, Catherine.gallagher@rssb.co.uk, and for enquiries about the Rule Book, contact enquirydesk@rssb.co.uk
RISQS - the Rail Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme.

The rail industry has a long term vision for improving supplier assurance arrangements. Research published in 2009 (ref T833) has shown that there is an opportunity to realise an estimated annual time-cost saving of £35million per annum, which broadly equates to some 375 person years of effort, by making arrangements more simple, effective and efficient.

One of the steps industry has taken has been to establish new governance for arrangements for qualifying suppliers. The Rail Delivery Group and the RSSB Board has supported the creation of the Rail Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme (RISQS) with its own cross-industry Board. The RISQS Board is responsible for overseeing management of the scheme as well as third party service providers, such as Achilles which provides the Link-up platform and audit service.

This follows the same principle as sister scheme RISAS (Railway Industry Supplier Approval Scheme) which also operates with a cross-industry Board, supported by RSSB. The difference is that RISAS focusses on acquiring proof of capability via in-depth on-site assessment of safety critical product suppliers, whereas RISQS is about a desk-based qualification of suppliers’ credentials.

The RISQS Board comprises Network Rail, train operators, infrastructure contractors, and suppliers as well as other supporting bodies like RSSB, ATOC, Railway Industry Association (RIA), the Rail Industry Contractors Association (RICA), Rail Alliance and the Rail Plant Association (RPA). It has already initiated some improvements to the way qualification works including simplifying the audit regime and better cooperation with other schemes like RISAS.

The long term vision for RISQS includes:

- Adoption of the new Rail Industry Commodity Classification List (RICCL), a set of universal definitions all the products and services that industry buys
- Rationalisation of supplier qualification requirements
- Streamlining the audit activity
- Enhancement of qualification arrangements to embrace sustainable development
- A new IT platform to support the more effective operation of the scheme

Current activities are more about bedding down the new governance and establishing the mechanics of the scheme to support users.

For more information and updates go to www.risqs.org or email andy.tandy@rssb.co.uk

Supporting RDG’s new Technology and Operations working group

The Rail Delivery Group has established a Technology and Operations working group, and RSSB is providing support to it, along with others in the industry.

The working group has been set up following consultation throughout the industry during 2013 to take a lead on decisions and planning around the introduction of critical cross-industry, cross-system innovations – technical, operational and business - into the rail industry. It will be working closely with and supporting the range of cross-industry and supply chain activities that are focused on research and innovation and their related projects and programmes.

On behalf of RDG the group is providing oversight of the Technical Strategy Leadership Group (TSLG) and championing the Rail Technical Strategy, to ensure industry’s vision for the future railway can be realised by integrating it into other planning and leadership functions.

The group is chaired by Alastair Gordon, Chief Executive of Keolis UK and member of RDG, and the remit includes:

- Providing a unifying vision and strategy for the industry and its innovation
- Seeking out and enabling the introduction of key system-wide innovations
- Encouraging and connecting research, development and innovation in the rail industry and from other industries and sectors
- Providing oversight to the work of TSLG
- Identifying cross-industry opportunities with regard to information systems and communications technology
- Supporting the industry sustainability agenda where the group can add real value

RSSB’s Guy Woodroffe formerly head of research and development is seconded to RDG to work as the ‘programme lead’ for the Tech&Ops working group.

Several RSSB personnel are involved on the group reflecting our varied and extensive roles in support of industry research, development and innovation. Len Porter is a member as chair of the Sustainable Development Steering Group, Anson Jack who is responsible for all research and development and innovation activities, and David Clarke as director of the Enabling Innovation Team. RSSB non-executive director, Malcolm Brown (CEO of Angel Trains) is also a member alongside a range of business leaders and champions of innovation from across the industry, including the chair of TSLG, Jerry England and Susan Cooklin from the Chief Information Officers Forum.
RSSB will also continue to provide the management of a range of relevant cross-industry research, development and innovation services, which have supported the development of the Rail Technical Strategy and continue to contribute to fulfilling it. Luisa Moisio takes over from Guy Woodroffe as head of R&D, and David Clarke is now heading up a consolidated delivery team for TSLG which includes the Enabling Innovation Team. RSSB continues to support TSLG, and other cross-industry groups such as the system interface committees, in terms of managing their meetings and programmes as well as providing relevant technical expertise.

For more information, about the Technology and Operations Group email Guy Woodroffe, guy.woodroffe@rssbraildeliverygroup.org

The FuTRO Challenges are now open!

The FuTRO (Future Traffic Regulation Optimisation) programme has been gathering a speedy pace over the past few months. RSSB has been working alongside 100% Open to build an ambitious open innovation programme on the future of rail traffic management. The programme portrays a vision for a future of advanced traffic management where train position and speed management will deliver a high capacity, on-time railway.

The challenges opened for application on Monday 4 November at Bloomsbury House, London and up to five applicants for each challenge will be selected and offered:

- Support for the development of feasibility studies
- An opportunity for subsequent demonstration projects
- It is envisaged feasibility studies will be funded up to £50k each and demonstrator projects in the range of £150k - £400k

You can find out further information on how to apply and download a copy of the application pack via the Future Railway website.
£3 million competition seeking remote condition monitoring solutions

In October, the Enabling Innovation Team launched a competition which seeks to support the industry in improving the efficiency, health, safety, commercial and operational performance of the railway. RCM (Remote Condition Monitoring) is already widely used on both trains and rail infrastructure, for example through Network Rail’s Intelligent Infrastructure Programme. RCM is a necessity as it sets out to help the future railway carry more passengers and freight – a key rail industry concern.

The RCM competition was launched to target 10 challenges and offers innovators the opportunity to prove their solutions on the operational railway. The challenges, identified through a series of industry workshops, are how to:

1) Further reduce operational incidents by (near real time) analysis of existing data sets leading to predictive trend analysis
2) Yield RCM alerts and alarms which are relevant, help ensure the right operational response happens in real time, and to use the data for predictive purposes to optimise safety and performance
3) Detect and prevent potential safety risks using 24/7 High Definition visibility of the network
4) Detect early the likelihood of flooding in risk areas with information provided in a timely fashion
5) Secure the railway boundaries and monitor access gates
6) Detect voids in the track at an early stage to prevent asset failures and to be able to identify the speed at which the asset is deteriorating from the impact loading of trains, particularly at critical, high risk junctions
7) Achieve a validated system that monitors crack propagation in rail crossings
8) Prevent trains running across track which is rendered unusable by movement of earthworks such as cuttings and embankments
9) Achieve improvements in track circuit reliability
10) Achieve improvements in signalling power supply reliability.

Innovators are invited to apply for any number of challenges and the closing date for submissions is Friday 17 January 2014. Further information on the live competitions currently running can be found on the Future Railway website.

Helping people understand standards

RSSB have recently published two leaflets in the ‘Tell me about …’ series of standards leaflets that are produced to support industry’s understanding of standards issues.

Deviations from Railway Group Standards

Issue 02 is now published. This leaflet has been revised to align it with the latest issues of the Railway Group Standards Code and the Standards Manual.

This leaflet explains what a deviation is, who can apply, how and when to apply for a deviation and the process once submitted.

It may be of interest to people who manage projects in the rail industry, the managers of rail industry staff who carry out operational duties set out in the National Operations Publications and manufacturers of parts, assets and vehicles.

National Safety Rules for the GB Mainline Railway

This leaflet explains why National Safety Rules are needed, what they are, what areas they cover, and the reason for notification to the Commission.

It may be of interest to people who manage the operational railway, people responsible for the Safety Management Systems of infrastructure managers or railway undertakings and people who manage projects to change or introduce new railway vehicles or infrastructure.

EIT partner with ATOC to launch innovative new app

EIT’s RISE (Rail Innovation Support Engine) team recently partnered with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOÇ) and innovators from across the UK to develop a new NRE (National Rail Enquiries) cycle app.

The new app functionality grew out of an idea submitted to the team as part of the Expressions of Interest scheme where innovators can submit proposals to bring an idea to market. The need for this app was recognised because since 2009, the number of people cycling to and from railway stations has more than doubled to over 53,000. In response to this increase, the industry identified that cyclists need to have easily accessible, clear and relevant information relating to their journey.

A joint project by the Cycle Rail Working Group, the app received funding from ATOC, EIT, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Bicycle Association and was developed and tested in partnership with key cycle groups including CTC and Sustrans. The app is available to download free on iPhone and Android phones and further information is available on the Future Railway website.

Printed leaflets are available and are small enough to carry, or they can be found on the RSSB website www.rssb.co.uk in electronic format. To obtain printed copies please contact standardsleaflets@rssb.co.uk
RSSB would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas in 2013 and good wishes for the New Year and to say that, as in previous years, we have made a donation to charity instead of sending Christmas cards.

Our chosen charity in 2013 is the Disasters Emergency Committee Philippines Disaster Appeal http://www.dec.org.uk/. The donation will help provide food, clean water and shelter for those who have lost everything.