



Department
for Transport

Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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From the Secretary of State
Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

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8 September 2026

Dear Ruth,

2040 Rail Freight Growth Target

I am writing to inform you that today I have formally announced, via written ministerial statement (found [here](#)), an additional target for rail freight growth of at least a 40% increase in freight moved by rail by 2040. This target will provide a milestone toward achieving the extant target of at least a 75% increase in freight moved by rail by 2050.

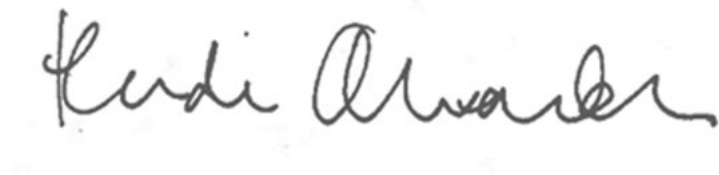
To further support our vision for the sector, I have also announced our expectation that there is potential for rail freight to increase volumes of different types of commodities by 2040. Namely:

- an increase of 65% in High Value Goods in net tonne kilometres;
- an increase of 45% in Construction Goods in net tonne kilometres;
- an increase of 7% in Critical Goods in net tonne kilometres.

I know you and the committee share our ambition for rail freight and recognise its importance in improving supply chain resilience, economic growth and decarbonising our logistics sector. For example, it is estimated that delivering the 2040 growth target will increase the value of goods moved by rail freight from £33.7bn to £49.5bn. It is also estimated that meeting the target would save a million tonnes of CO₂ per year compared to if the freight went by road.

As you know, the Railways Bill gives the Government's rail freight targets statutory status. It requires the Transport Secretary to set a rail freight growth target and for Great British Railways to have regard to this target. Our rail freight growth targets, therefore, will guarantee that rail freight growth is embedded in the new organisation's decision-making and ensure that the sector continues to prosper as an integral part of the railway.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Alexander', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT