

# SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

I'm grateful for the opportunity to present the committee's report for 2020/21. Running a safe railway will always be our priority. We want everyone to feel safe whether they're working on, living near, or travelling on the railway. We've worked tirelessly to keep our passengers and workforce safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, while operating a railway to help key workers, transport much needed freight goods, and keep the rest of the country running.

Tragically, three people lost their lives on the 12 August 2020 when a train derailed at Carmont, near Stonehaven. Brett McCullough was driving the train, Donald Dinnie was a conductor, and Christopher Stuchbury was a passenger. In response, Network Rail set up two new external task forces, one aimed at its response to severe weather events, and the other aimed at management of earthworks and drainage along the railway.

Sadly, there were also three workforce fatalities in the year. On 8 April 2020 Aden Ashurst, working for AmcoGiffen, was struck by a train at Roade. On 30 November 2020, Kevin Mauger was fatally injured at the Long-Welded Rail Facility in Eastleigh. On 9 February 2021, Tyler Byrne was struck by a train at Surbiton. Investigations are underway to determine the causes and to prevent similar events from ever happening again.

The trackworker Safety Task Force has continued its work to improve our people's safety when working on our tracks through better task planning, increased use of safety equipment, and through the eradication of lookout working. The task force has completed 2,913 out of 6,463 key objectives that are to be delivered by 31 July 2022; and we've seen the use of unassisted lookouts decrease by over 75 per cent since July 2019. Near misses involving our workforce have also decreased by half during 2020/21.

The pandemic had a major impact on our safety performance this year. And we have been strengthening how we support mental health and wellbeing. At the end of 2020/21, 20 per cent of line managers had been trained. This is a 10 per cent increase on 2019/20. Because we've been socially distancing colleagues we've had more vehicles on the road; life-saving rules breaches rose and were mostly related to employees speeding in road vehicles.

The number of suicides and trespass incidents that took place on the railway was slightly below that of the previous year. Our partnership with Learn Live has educated over ten million children and young people in schools and colleges nationally, on the dangers associated with railway trespass; this has coincided with an encouraging reduction in reported child trespass. The remit for this relationship has now been extended to include level crossing and station safety.

The committee reviewed the safety performance data that makes up part of the performance related pay award for senior executives and made a recommendation to the remuneration committee (see page 126).



**Mike Putnam,**  
chair, safety, health and environmental  
compliance committee

15 July 2021

Committee members	Formal appointment to the committee	Number of meetings attended during the year
Mike Putnam	Feb 2018	6/6
Rob Brighthouse	Jan 2016	6/6
Sir Peter Hendy	Oct 2015	6/6
David Noyes	Dec 2018	6/6

\* Stephen Duckworth was appointed to the Board and committee on 1 April 2021

## Committee attendees

Several of our executives are invited to attend the committee's meetings including the chief executive, the group director for the Technical Authority, and the chief quality, health, safety and environment officer. Stephen Duckworth, non-executive director, has a standing invitation to attend meetings. Other executives and external visitors are also invited from time to time to report on specific areas that lie within the committee's areas of responsibility.

The general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (the RMT) is invited to attend all meetings. This adds scrutiny and challenge to the committee's business and is consistent with our commitment to remain transparent to the wider rail industry and its important stakeholders.

Ian Prosser CBE, chief inspector of railways and director of railway safety at the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), attends two meetings each year to present the regulator's view on our safety performance.

## Role and responsibilities of the committee

The environmental aspect of the committee's role has been redefined since the creation of the environmental sustainability committee in 2020. The SHEC committee now oversees environmental legal and regulatory compliance while the environmental sustainability committee has broader responsibility for environmental strategy and related matters.

The committee's role is to monitor how the company implements its responsibilities on safety and health through its everyday business activities, and how it complies with its environmental obligations. The committee needs to be

satisfied that the company's relevant strategies, policies and procedures are effective, reviewed and adapted as necessary to evolving business activities.

What the committee does:

- it reviews the group's strategies, systems, policies and practices for SHEC. It also makes sure that the governance and management structures support these being implemented effectively
- it considers the significant risks to individuals and the company's strategies for SHEC and whether the executive is managing them effectively
- it reviews internal audits, within its SHEC remit, that are carried out across the company on the effectiveness of strategies, systems, policies and practices. It makes sure that the audits have the correct scope and it follows up to confirm that any recommendations have been properly addressed and implemented
- it considers findings from internal and external investigations and how the executive has responded to them
- it makes recommendations to the nomination and remuneration committee on the company's SHEC performance to inform decisions about performance related pay.

After each meeting, the chair reports to the next Network Rail Board meeting.

## Principal activities during the year

In 2020/21 the committee discussed:

- quarterly SHEC reports from the group Technical Authority. These included scorecard data, information on workforce safety, workforce and contractor accidents, train accident risks, level crossings, health and wellbeing, public safety, and contractor performance
- quarterly updates on safety risks and internal audits on SHEC matters

- scrutiny of SHEC-related incidents including those at Carmont, Eastleigh, Surbiton, Margam, and Llangennech and what lessons could be learned and applied, and monitoring our business follow up to any SHEC related recommendations from the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB)
- the SHEC performance of our regions and functions, particularly focussing on how safety and health and wellbeing were being incorporated and devolved within Network Rail's Putting Passengers First programme
- quarterly updates on SHEC matters relating to the Covid-19 pandemic including keeping our workforce and the public safe and well
- safety, health and wellbeing strategies including the safety of the public on and around the railway network including on trains, at level crossings and in stations; track worker safety and the actions we're taking to reduce the number of near misses on and near railway tracks
- Lord Robert Mair's review of earthworks following the tragic accident at Carmont, Aberdeenshire on 12 August 2020
- Our business-wide programmes to improve safety culture in the workplace including the Safety Task Force which was set up following the tragic events at Margam in July 2019, and the safety culture programme conducted by JMJ consultants.

### Internal audit

Internal audit plays a key role in providing independent assurance in managing safety, health and environmental compliance risks. At each meeting the director of risk and internal audit updated the committee on any changes to the SHEC audit plan, notable audits, overdue actions, themes and key issues arising from Internal Audit's work.

Audits included our management of manual handling and spoken safety critical communications, and activities are now underway to address the risks. This includes updating both organisation wide standards and policies as well as route operational controls. Internal Audit has reviewed the progress of the safety task force, providing confidence that it is appropriately set-up to deliver, and will continue to provide independent assurance during 2021.

### Annual site visit, July 2020

The committee makes an annual visit to locations around the country to see first-hand the SHEC issues they discuss at meetings. In 2020 the committee visited Reading Station to review the recent developments at the station itself, Reading Depot, and the new technology and equipment that the Safety Task Force was trialling to keep track workers safe from the risk of moving trains.

## Planned activities for 2021/22

- Workforce safety and wellbeing including ongoing monitoring of progress made by the Safety Task Force and safety culture programmes.
- Public and workforce safety including an ongoing review of fire inspection compliance and procedures across the business.
- A review of signals passed at danger incidents (SPADs) and reviewing potential technical solutions.
- Environmental compliance and ongoing monitoring of how Network Rail is ensuring compliance with environmental legislation, regulation and best practice.
- Governance: monitoring SHEC issues and how they are being effectively addressed within Network Rail's evolving business structure.