

Timber Transport Forum Meeting
FC, Silvan House,
14th June 2012 at 10.30
Agreed Minutes

Present: Jamie Farquhar, , Neil Stoddart, Ken Sinclair, David Sulman, James England, Kirsty Robb, Colin Mackenzie, Andy Leitch, Cameron Maxwell, , Neil Dyson, Roland Stiven, Pam Stott, Alistair Speedie, Ian Ross

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Margaret Watson, Steven Herriott Claire Glaister, Will Anderson, David Spaven, Donald Maclean, Fergus Tickell, Phil Flanders/David Eaglesham, John Paterson, Hazel Newman, Crispin Thorn, Alasdair Ferguson, Kath McNulty, Simon Oldham, Cameron Kemp, John Paterson, Hazel Newman, Chris Edwards, David Hern

2. Welcome

Alistair Speedie noted that Neil Stoddart has changed jobs and is no longer representing JST Services. He is now working for Scottish Woodlands and has accepted an invitation by the chair to remain on the Forum

3. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th March 2012 were accepted as accurate

Actions and Matters Arising

Outstanding action: Roland Stiven to work with FCS press office to issue formal press release on STTS. This is waiting for an opportune moment. STTS offers have been made but contracts are still being drawn up.

Outstanding action: Alistair Speedie and Roland Stiven to approach Scottish Renewables with a request that developers look for opportunities to link windfarm / timber access projects. This is ongoing

Outstanding action: Roland Stiven to progress Partnering Charter and circulate before finalising. This was done and copies of the final signed charter have been printed and disseminated.

Outstanding action: Project Officers to check with local access officers regarding the incidence of inclusion of haul roads in core path networks. This is ongoing.

ACTION: Alistair Speedie and Roland Stiven to write again to the (new) Forestry Minister Lord Holbeach asking for the Government's response to the task force on the Highways Act to be corrected. This was done and a response was received. The government's response has been amended and now suitably reflects the existing legislation, and promotes the local partnership approach of the forum and regional timber transport groups.

ACTION: Jamie Farquhar to take forward the promotion of SRDP funding for forest roads and inclusion in future SRDP round. Jamie Farquhar said the process is ongoing and the right wording regarding forest road infrastructure is still in place at this stage.

The **Woodland Expansion Advisory Group** will report next week and Jamie Farquhar has offered suitable wording regarding timber transport infrastructure and woodland expansion

Annandale and Eskdale Area Committee Community Meeting: Themed Meeting on Forestry Transport. James England and Alistair Speedie both felt that the Community Meeting had been useful in informing communities and members and that there were opportunities for the groups and forums to respond constructively to community concerns.

Alistair Speedie noted that subsequent to this meeting on 29th March 2012, Joan McAlpine MSP (for South Scotland) had written to the Transport Minister regarding some of the concern raised at the meeting regarding timber transport. Alistair has since met with her and explained the workings of the Forum and the timber transport groups.

Alistair has also been asked by his elected members to write to the Transport Minister requesting additional funding for D&G roads to address timber transport issues. Recognising that national funding (STTF) is already made available via the Environment Minister Alistair will consider how best to approach the Government subject to his Members' approval.

Andy Leitch noted that recent applications to the STTF suggest that the available national funding is sufficient to meet current demand for strategic infrastructure projects though recognised there was potential to support more generic work – drainage for instance - on timber haul routes.

Pam Stott noted that the ongoing Road Maintenance Review recognised the impact of HGVs generally on local authority roads. Ian Ross agreed that the challenge for timber transport is diluted by the wider challenge of improving the road condition. Newly elected members need to be approached and informed on these issues.

Neil Dyson said that STTS project proposals are limited by the time and effort involved in developing projects, the available local authority co-funding and the STTS criteria that limit single owner bids. Jamie Farquhar said that the strategic issue is to keep timber flowing and that STTS should support single owner bids. Andy Leitch noted that single owner bids are being supported where there are clear public benefits and a suitable sharing of costs. Clearer guidance to applicants may be appropriate on this subject.

4. Regional Update

Argyll

Kirsty Robb reported that the Agreed Routes Map, protocol and timber transport management plans were working well. She noted the two STTS projects going ahead in Argyll at Glendaruel and Dalmally. The ATTF is holding a meeting in July to identify and develop further projects – one on sites for cross loading from specialised vehicles to articulated vehicles for longer distance road haulage.

Highland

Colin Mackenzie presented the various Highland projects put forward for STTS. Contracts are being prepared for public road improvements at South Loch Ness and Cannich, an in-forest haul road at Killiechonate near Spean Bridge and roadex investigations on further roads in Sutherland. A project to improve the public road at Loch Arkaig is being revised and re-presented. An offer towards costs of improving

the Glenelg floating pier is being considered and an application for drainage improvements to haul routes is being re-developed. Other projects being worked up again include the railside loading and haul routes in Sutherland and a transport project in Ardnamurchan. There have also been discussions with councillors in Portree regarding timber lorries coming through the town.

Cumbria

Richard Scott reported that the Agreed Routes Map (ARM) is now in place and published. It has generated some discussion and identified pinch points to resolve. The group will continue to develop the map looking at exit points and volume forecasts.

South Scotland

See Annandale and Eskdale Area Committee Community Meeting report (item 3). Otherwise very busy but relatively few public complaints. Unbranded lorries make it difficult and time consuming to follow up problems but processors are helping to identify hauliers. In D&G the B729 road and traffic management plan are holding up well and the traffic counter data at Eskdalemuir is being analysed for a report to the community and press release.

A meeting is planned with South Lanarkshire regarding the development of an ARM.

Scottish Borders has seen widespread use of a consultation route which is generating discussion and need for a review. Also a serious bridge strike (parapets) - related to forestry plant (not roundwood). Pam Stott noted Transport Scotland guidance on bridge strikes, which will be circulated.

Two offers of STTS funding in D&G are being considered and there are plans to develop further projects including one on drainage and sightlines.

Grampian & Stirling & Tayside

No report from either but the project officer post is currently being retendered.

Wales

Roland Stiven and Kath McNulty are meeting with Welsh Government officials (David Hern and other) on request of Transport Minister to discuss issues of concern. Transport department currently undergoing reorganisation so opportunity to highlight need for resource input to freight.

North Yorkshire

Roland Stiven reported that the NYTFQP is meeting on 22nd June to deal with responses to their public consultation on the ARM and will consider a draft Memorandum of Understanding for the group.

North East England

James England reported on a meeting of 12th June. Northumberland County Council has reaffirmed commitment to the group with new staff assigned to the group. ARM development is ongoing with James assisting with digitising draft maps.

5. Draft Business Plan

Roland Stiven presented the draft which retains the same structure as the previous plan but focuses on the new areas of work. Alistair Speedie commented that we need something concise and clear with a 'golden thread' from strategy to delivery. Pam Stott noted possible links with the Road Maintenance Review study by Halcrow on

sharing standards. James England noted it was (possibly too?) ambitious in scope given the resources and also noted a need to prioritise positive media and public relations, both national and local, e.g. with schools. Neil Dyson recalled previously presenting to three schools in Scottish Borders. – could link to Eco-schools?

ACTION: All to consider draft business plan and provide feedback by end of June 2012.

6. Consultation on Planning Consent for Hill Tracks (Scotland)

Jamie Farquhar introduced the circulated Scottish Government paper on the tracks issues raised by the Proposed Amendments to Secondary Legislation on Non-Domestic Permitted Development Rights. Problem is mainly with poorly designed high level open ground hill tracks and is politically sensitive but the draft legislation brings together all tracks – forestry, agriculture, upland and lowland and proposes they all go to planning. Also proposes that road maintenance involving material change would require planning consent. Cameron Maxwell noted there were no specific complaints regarding forest roads and that the existing FCS processes including forest plans and EIA regulation have been generally considered an appropriate process for screening and controlling forest tracks. Ian Ross noted the wild land agenda as a driver for the consultation and suggested that CoSLA could input through heads of planning. Alistair Speedie agreed to consult his planners. Jamie noted the existing SNH Guidance on Constructed Tracks in the Scottish Uplands. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 22nd June.

ACTION: Roland Stiven to draft and circulate response to SG consultation on Hill Tracks, focusing on an exemption for forest roads.

7. Developing the Agreed Routes Map website (paper)

James England referred to the paper, presented to the previous meeting, proposing the Forum take on responsibility for hosting the Agreed Routes Maps. The paper circulated for this meeting was a draft brief for tenderers. Richard Scott asked if groups would be able to make changes to ARMs – this is a possibility. Can also link in timber traffic management plans. Neil Stoddart asked if there could be an app for linkage to mobile phones, i-pads etc. Pam Stott noted the Freight Scotland map and traffic scotland mobile site. Similarly Scotland's Environment website has mapped environmental data including forest cover. The question of funding this work was raised. STTF would consider part funding this but would require an application.

ACTION: James England and Roland Stiven to refine the brief for developing the Agreed Routes Map, propose a funding model and prepare an application for STTF funding.

8. APF Show and Truckfest

The Forum will have a stand at the APF on 13/14/15 September in conjunction with James Jones Ltd showcasing a new lorry with CTI on all axles which will draw in hauliers. This stand will focus on handing out the Code of Practice. In addition there will be Forum space in the Confor tent highlighting other aspects of our work. Neil Stoddart and Roland Stiven are investigating the option of a similar stand at Truckfest Scotland on 4th and 5th August at Ingliston, again in conjunction with timber hauliers.

ACTION: Neil Stoddart and Roland Stiven to propose budget and plan for a Truckfest stand

9. Funding Update

STTF

Andy Leitch said that FCS was working to see if, and to what extent, it could spread the STTF funding of £9m across the three years so that annual budget constraints could be avoided. The Timberlink contract (with a ceiling of £1m/yr) has been awarded to ABP, the previous contract holders, for three years with a 2 year extension dependent on funding.

STTS

Andy introduced the circulated list of projects submitted to STTS. Nine projects (plus 5 project officer posts) have been offered STTS funding. Contracts are currently being drawn up. Not all projects were awarded the amount they requested and it is possible some projects will not be taken forward. One project (Loch Arkaig) is being revised by the applicant, three others were returned for reconsideration. One rejected. So far only £2,650,814 has been offered out of a total budget of £6m+ so a further round will be called. Project officers and groups should continue to play a role in ensuring that projects coming forward to STTS are well prepared and eligible. STTS will also require that the volumes of timber being addressed by STTS applications are confirmed within forest plans or, if plans have not yet been approved at the time of applications, volumes should be confirmed as reasonable by the conservancies, while forest plans are being prepared.

ACTION: Andy Leitch to propose a date for next round of STTS applications later in the year

ACTION: Andy Leitch to update guidance to STTS applicants.

Freight Facilities Grant Update

Pam Stott advised that 6 bids were submitted for FFG by the deadline of 20th April and these include one for round timber and two for sawn timber. If all six projects are successful then all the current budget will be taken. If not, another round will be called in 2013.

10. Links with Forest Industry Transport Group Ireland

Roland Stiven advised that he has been in contact with John Lyon of Coillte who leads the Forest Industry Transport Group Ireland. They are preparing an updated Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice and may also look to do a best practice guide equivalent setting out the approach to managing traffic and resolving issues. We have agreed to share minutes between the two groups and look for areas where closer liaison may be worthwhile.

11. AOB

Health and Safety and Timber Haulage

Neil Stoddart noted the outcomes of the forestry health and safety summit in March 2012 which highlighted the need to incorporate timber haulage better within the health and safety processes of the timber industry. A culture shift is needed as much as any improvements in guidance, risk assessments etc. David Sulman noted that he and others expect to be contributing to a forest industry safety group on health and safety.

ACTION: David Sulman to report back to the Forum from the forest industry safety group as a regular agenda item and highlight where the Forum can effectively contribute.

Ian Ross

Alistair Speedie explained that Ian Ross retired as a Highland councillor last month and has advised that he is also standing down from the Forum. Alistair thanked him for his enthusiasm and commitment to the Forum over the years and for his wise counsel. Ian has deputised as chair of the Forum on several occasions. In particular Ian has chaired the STTS advisory panel since its inception and has been key in ensuring the success and continuation of the fund. The Forum wished Ian every success for the future and demonstrated their appreciation in the usual manner.

12. Next meeting 20th September 2012