

**Timber Transport Forum Meeting**  
**FCS Silvan House, Edinburgh**  
**31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**  
**Minute**

**Attending**

Gillian Clark, Roland Stiven, Simon Oldham, Derek Nelson, Roland Stiven, Alasdair Ferguson, Jamie Farquhar, Kirsty Robb, Alistair Speedie, James England, Colin Mackenzie, Neil Stoddart, Jason Hubert, Fergus Tickell, Neil Dyson, James Macdonald, Robin Pope, Keith McDowell

Crispin Thorn phoned in.

**Apologies**

Chris Little, Ken Sinclair, Claire Glaister, David Sulman, Athole McKillop, Hazel Newman, Rob Lewis, Neil Dyson, Alistair Prior

1. Welcome and apologies

It was noted that Ken Sinclair is to retire from FCS. Alistair to send a note of thanks for his contribution to Forum and STTS panel.

2. Previous minute (13<sup>th</sup> January 2017)

Accepted as accurate.

3. Matters arising

- Rail Strategy: Roland Stiven attended a very good workshop on Transport Scotland's Rail Infrastructure Strategy and submitted and circulated a [response from the Forum](#) largely referencing last year's response to the Rail Freight Strategy.
- Data sharing to input to vehicle tracking systems. This has not been progressed yet. The wider industry do seem to be taking an interest in tracking which may progress the agenda, so will maybe wait and see whether that takes off. We are reviewing how we present and share the Agreed Routes Map. FISA also has a project with FES looking at crane stowage and wire watchers which will relate to tracking systems such as those fitted to James Jones lorries. Ferguson Transport would be interested in contributing to this and is working to link Dynafleet tracking system to record Tyre Pressure Control System data CTI.
- Timber Transport Video – still to progress...
- Forest Road Engineering. The available English language guidance from home and overseas has been gathered and (apart from the FCS internal guidance) is [available on the website toolkit pages](#). We will need a new FCS representative and Michael Oliver of Ferguson Transport would be willing to be involved on the technical group.

4. Scottish Rural Infrastructure Plan (Alistair Prior by phone)

Alistair Prior was unable to phone in but will be asked to email an update on this as soon as possible and to present to the next meeting.

5. ScotFLAG subgroup on rural freight

The group has held two constructive meetings and the next is on 16<sup>th</sup> May. The group is engaging with various rural freight intensive sectors – Scotch Whisky Association, Scottish Land and Estates, NFUS, Calmac, Scottish Crofting Foundation, Visit Scotland as well as SCOTS, HIE, the RHA & FTA. Still to engage re. fish & quarries. Roland hopes to meet with SRUC next month to see where interests overlap. A survey is to go out as an initial process to scope and gather interest.

The Forum welcomed the creation of the group and discussed its potential to broaden interest in and create synergies with other rural freight issues. It was suggested the group involves Wildfish, Scottish Salmon Producers, Leiths Quarries, Scottish Renewables and P&O Stena at Cairnryan. Also consider

the A75 Euro route through D&G and the impact of proposed aluminium manufacturing development in Fort William. Rail potential should be included. It was suggested that the group could look to create a standing committee to continue to highlight and address rural freight issues. Argyll & Bute Council is developing a rural 'city deal', looking strategically at infrastructure investment to help lead sustainable economic development.

#### 6. Summer visit

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Forum at Inveraray in Argyll on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 with a visit to the STTS supported Ardcastle Floating Pier facility and perhaps some other Argyll timber transport highlights.

**ACTION: Roland to confirm venue and propose programme for Forum meeting in Argyll on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.**

#### 7. Conference 2018

The meeting discussed possible venues for the March 2018 Timber Transport Conference and proposed either Inverness or Northumberland – the latter particularly if successful in accessing infrastructure funding for timber transport (see item)

**ACTION: Roland to propose conference venue to next meeting**

#### 8. Funding

- STTF/ STTS update

The 2016-17 budget spend on Timberlink was on budget at £0.8m. The remaining £2m was fully committed but with underspend and withdrawal has an underspend of around £1m. Scottish Government aware of limitations of a one year budget but this is what we have again for 2017-18. Scottish Government recognise the growing concern on the condition of rural minor roads and the demands of the timber industry and has provided an additional £5m this year (total £7.85m (£7.05m STTS, £800k for Timberlink)). The available STTS funding will all be delivered through the existing STTS framework and rules.

STTS bids are now invited for 2017/18 by 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

To assist with project preparation FCS has piloted a Project Preparation Grant offering 60% (of £8000) for in-forest or combined in-forest and public road projects, 80% (of £8000) for wholly public road works or modal shift projects). This could only be announced in February but uptake has been good. There have been seven applications for PPG; one was rejected, 1 has been progressed as a 'small project', five have been approved with expected spend of £43-44k to projects in Ayrshire, P&K and Highland. PPGs will be continue to be available in 2017/18 financial year to support bid preparation in advance of either a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid submission date on 31<sup>st</sup> July 17 if all budget not committed in April or for subsequent rounds.

It was agreed that there is an imperative for the Forum to maximise spend of the expanded budget this year while meeting the criteria of the STTS scheme. For this we need good projects and well-prepared bids. There was discussion regarding indicative STTS intervention rates. Could these be fixed at e.g. 50% 70% etc. or would this reduce flexibility in responding to different levels of social or environmental benefit. The STTS Panel is experienced at evaluating project benefits and can respond to well-crafted proposals.

Could STTS accept in-kind match funding from the private sector based on the additional costs of meeting voluntary Timber Transport Management Plans? – e.g. lower-impact, wagon and drag lorries with reduced capacity, reduced frequency of lorry traffic etc. FCS will consider this and respond in due course. While council funding can be difficult and time consuming to secure for competitive bids, there are creative solutions. Highland Council has agreed to offer STTS projects first refusal on an amount of funding which if unused will revert to other council priorities. Projects can sometimes be tendered through quickquote processes to minimise delay in delivery.

**ACTION: Kirsty Robb to outline additional haulage costs of meeting typical TTMP conditions**

- Timberlink

The Timberlink contract has been tendered and an award of the contract is now in standstill period. The contract is for 5 years with annual break clauses related to availability of public funding. The issues around definitions of coastal waters and how these relate to freight grant awards was raised. Could for example the coastal waters around the west of Scotland be redefined in terms of grants to allow inland shipping (around the coast and inner Hebrides) to attract grant. The assumption is that a timberlink-like support for coastal shipping outwith the Firth of Clyde would encourage more timber to move by boat rather than on the fragile and lengthy minor north-south roads along the west coast.  
**ACTION: Roland to engage with coastal timber shipping interests to define the issues and possible ways forward.**

- Freight Grant Status

The £2m for FFG and £1.3 m for MSRS has been confirmed. The process for renewing state aid permissions for Freight Grants through DfT is delicate and ongoing.

- England Innovation Fund.

The £1m Innovation fund to support productive forestry in England has so far mainly supported the Woodland Creation Planning Grant for productive forests > 30ha. The Woodland Carbon Fund is also available for larger schemes. There will be a review of the scope of the innovation funding which may create opportunities for bids relating to timber transport.

## 9. Regional Updates

### **North East England** (Crispin Thorn)

The Group last met in December. Northumberland County Council in partnership with the North East Combined Authority are in the process of applying for monies from the DfT through the Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund to be used to repair and strengthen key roads that underpin the rural and regional economy. They are asking for £5m from a £75m fund to target timber transport routes. Roads were prioritised by representatives from the timber transport group alongside the council. Good to see NCC give this bid priority.

### **North Yorkshire**

The group has not met since the autumn. Victoria Hutchinson of NYCC is on maternity leave and organisation of the group is being covered by others.

### **Highland** (Colin Mackenzie)

Around twelve roads projects are being prepared for the STTS 24<sup>th</sup> April round. The private sector has agreed to contribute £100k towards a bid for work on the B871 in the flow country. There is still potential for taking forward a rail trial but there remains a significant marginal cost above road even if it attracted all available freight grants support. The Great Glen Shipping Company is still keen for a mechanism to help subsidise the extra costs of coastal shipping to reduce timber traffic on minor roads.

### **Argyll** (Kirsty Robb)

The Argyll TTG which met last week agreed that it would be timely to review exit point timber production forecast data as markets are shifting quickly. D&G TTG don't see a need for review of exit point data at this stage. Given the strategic nature of the data it is not vital that all groups are in step; Argyll could go it alone and propose as a small project to STTS. Argyll TTG also keen to survey exit points onto public roads from an engineering perspective to look at current state and the extent of investment required to upgrade. This could also look at where cross loading points may be required e.g. for timber from low impact lorry catchment roads, transferring onto standard road haulage lorries.

In general we need clarity on FES plans for 'low impact catchment' to allow for haulage investment across Scotland. To that end a trailer / truck fleet survey (as previously proposed) might be helpful to stimulate discussion and focus on future investment. There could be an approach to HIE to support investment in low impact haulage sector (cf Irish grant for low impact lorries) or potential to widen scope of the harvesting and processing grants under SRDP.

**ACTION: Project officers to develop and propose timber fleet survey**

### **Stirling & Tayside**

Last meeting held 15 March 2017 focused on good practice and STTS/applications. Joined by Kate Howie, Perth & Kinross Councillor for Highland Perthshire, to discuss concerns regarding Loch Rannoch area. A meeting is to be arranged between industry and community representatives.

Two 2016/17 STTS projects Upper Grainston and Kirriemuir now complete. For 2017/18, discussions around the Rannoch rail project, Kirriemuir Phase II and a Perth & Kinross Timber Transport Route Improvement project which is being developed through a PPG.

Discussions regarding the contract hosting for the Regional Timber Transport Project Officer post are progressing.

[Forestry and Water Scotland](#) initiative information was circulated.

The Biomass plant under construction at Killin will change timber flows in Perth and Kinross and may require review of ARM.

### **Grampian,**

Last meeting held on 16 March 2017 focused on STTS applications and recent ARM classification review.

Three 2016/17 STTS projects; Moray Council, Suie Hill and Coynachie Road now complete. STTS projects for 2017/18 will most likely consist of a suite of roads included in one application per Council; Moray and Aberdeenshire Council have been identifying potential roads/works to include and further discussions with industry is taking place. PPG funding not required at this time. Local Authorities had reviewed ARM classifications on a number of routes across Moray and Aberdeenshire. All suggestions were agreed and the ARM website is to be updated.

Long standing Aberdeenshire Council representative, Ralph Singleton, is retiring at the end of April.

Update to be sought from Transport Scotland regarding routing options for A96 dualling.

Discussions regarding the contract hosting for the Regional Timber Transport Project Officer for 2017/18 are progressing.

[Forestry and Water Scotland](#) initiative information was circulated.

### **Scottish Borders (James England)**

A new protocol for evaluating public road issues in relation to new woodland creation applications in South Scotland is being progressed with the Conservancy and Council with a draft proforma for information on new planting or infill planting.

James attended the Scottish Borders Scrutiny Committee on timber transport in January.

Scottish Borders is drawing together an STTS bid for a package of public road works

### **Dumfries and Galloway**

Community complaints even where there has been full consultation. A local timber haulage event is to be held at Dalbeattie in April. Police will be visiting timber haulage companies to better understand timber haulage. A package of STTS bids is expected from D&G.

### **Ayrshire**

A consultant has been engaged with support from an STTS small project grant to draft a revised Ayrshire timber transport strategy, engage with councils and industry to identify areas of concern

for timber transport and draft bids for the STTS. James England attended a meeting with Barr village community council. The South Lanarkshire Agreed Routes Map is nearly done and is with the Council for signing off.

#### 10. Phytosanitary update (from John Morgan)

The new EU plant health regulation was published in December with an implementation date of December 2019 and FCS is working on the presumption that we will follow the process of implementing this regulation. Working on an update on plant passporting issues that relate to timber movement for the Scottish Tree Health Advisory Group meeting on 3rd April. The new plant passport format has been produced (circulated with minute) and FCS will be asking through Defra colleagues in Brussels how this is supposed to apply to movements of timber and bark. The presumption is that all plant passports will follow the same format. Still no clarity on movement within GB so this still relates to the movement of roundwood from the pest free area to Ireland and Northern Ireland. [by means of a further update we had a positive telephone conference between ourselves Defra's Head of Plant Health Policy, James Smith, Defra colleagues and Stuart Goodall with Confor representatives from the 3 Countries. It was agreed that Defra should set up a Technical Working Group to look at the forestry issues arising from implementation of the new plant health regulation]

Derek Nelson noted that D Micans has moved up M74 corridor so it is vital we keep lorries clean to prevent infected material being taken back into Argyll. The meeting recognised that there is very poor adherence to phytosanitary good practice e.g. cleaning boots, sweeping vehicles and washing machines. A voluntary best practice approach is unlikely to be effective on this issue unless it is backed up with rigorous checks and enforcement measures.

#### 11. FISA (Gillian Clark)

The Forest Haulage Working Group is due to meet soon. A project is progressing with FES funding to trial timber crane powerline 'wirewatchers' which warn of proximity of powerlines and can prevent use of crane. Also trialling camera use on lorries to monitor loading and public access issues. Ferguson Transport also trialling wirewatchers and will give feedback. New vehicles are fitted with cameras. Irish work is looking at the need for double strapping of loads and this may suggest the need for review of strapping in UK.

#### 12. AOB

Date of next meeting

- Friday, 30 June 2017 Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray 10am
- Friday, 6 October 2017