

Timber Transport Forum Meeting
10.30 6th October 2017
FCS, Silvan House
Edinburgh
Agreed Minute

Present

David Sulman (acting as Chair), Derek Nelson, Roland Stiven, Claire Glaister, Gillian Clark, James England, Neil Stoddart, Colin Mackenzie, Kirsty Robb, Robin Pope, Jamie Farquhar, Simon Oldham
Crispin Thorn ([on phone](#)),

And by invitation: Alex Murray (Glennons), Mike Yerbury (Egger), Tom Tryon (Land Energy, Girvan)

Also presenting; Heather Holmes and Amanda Fox (both Scottish Government)

Apologies

Will Anderson, Alan Christison, Keith McDowell, Athole McKillop, Fergus Tickell, Alistair Speedie, Alasdair Ferguson, James Macdonald, Julian Fryer, Chris Little

1. Welcome and apologies

It was noted that John Lyons has retired from his role running the Irish Forestry Industry Transport Group through which he liaised closely with the Forum, speaking at our conferences and sharing best practice. The Forum expressed their appreciation for his contribution to the Forum. Des Phelan has taken over as chair of the FITG.

2. Previous minutes

The minute of the previous meeting (30th June 2017) was agreed.

3. Matters arising

- A Forum response to the Scottish RECC Forestry Bill was prepared and circulated for comment prior to submission by Wed 16 August 2017. The response can be found online [here](#) and the RECC report [here](#).
- A Forum response to the National Transport Strategy call for evidence was prepared and submitted late without time for consultation with the Forum. A later amendment was made following corrections from Keith McDowell. The Forum response can be found [here](#).
- A submission was drafted, circulated, revised and submitted to the Scottish Parliament Petitions Committee in relation to Petition 1654. The submission can be viewed [here](#).
- Forum and group members were invited to send in examples of good driver's maps -whether paper or electronic. No feedback was received, and this item will be carried forward.

4. National Transport Strategy and ScotFLAG subgroup on rural freight

Roland Stiven attended the first meeting of NTS Enabling Economic Activity working group where there is significant support for the rural theme. The next meeting is on 30th November. The ScotFLAG group has met twice since June and agreed priority issues for rural freight. It is still hoped to draw in SRUC to help develop the evidence regarding the value or demand for rural infrastructure improvement.

5. Scottish Rural Infrastructure Plan

The Forum was joined by Heather Holmes and Amanda Fox of Scottish Government's Rural Economy and Communities Division (RECD) to update the Forum on progress with the Scottish Rural Infrastructure Plan (SRIP). The RECD is a new division of about 14 people, set up in February 2017. Heather and Amanda are the two officials assigned to SRIP.

The plan defines infrastructure in terms of the architecture of policy and delivery mechanisms (rather than hard infrastructure) and is looking to better co-ordinate existing and planned expenditure and resources through improved collaboration between public agencies and the private sector to progress key economic development projects. It is being developed first as a pilot project for 2017-18 covering the South of Scotland. There was other work going on that the SRIP could build upon to add value to on-going work. As things stand the SRIP has no budget for expenditure.

Forum members noted that the Forum itself and Agreed Routes Map is an example of collaboration between levels of government and private sector and, as the available timber resource continues to expand, there is an opportunity to further support the development of the forestry and timber sector through skills and other sector support through engagement with the Industry Leadership Group and the Scottish Forestry and Timber Technologies Group.

However there remains the fact that **the hard infrastructure** – roads, rail and port freight access and capacity - is deficient and limiting the efficiency of the timber supply chain and the creation of new forests. This is unlikely to be substantially addressed through local authority budgets where rural road modernisation is not generally prioritised. The STTS is helpful in this regard but not in itself sufficient. Heather and Amanda noted that this was recognised. Amanda mentioned the National Transport Strategy Review and that there were opportunities to influence this through the on-going work. In addition, work was on-going to review and update planning legislation.

The SRIP is encouraging engagement with rural sectors (by email to [Amanda](#)).

6. Grant support for coastal shipping

A Forum Action point from March 2017 to investigate barriers to domestic coastal shipping of timber was progressed by a meeting of interested parties in Arrochar in June. 27 people attended, and a paper was subsequently drafted for

discussion. The attendees gave initial feedback and a second draft for comment was circulated to the Forum for comment. The paper suggests that (Timberlink aside) the existing Scottish Government freight grants are constrained in their applicability to the infrequent shipping of timber from remote rural forests and could be usefully reviewed and adapted to increase uptake and take more timber of fragile roads. Keith McDowell (not present) who manages the Freight Grants had offered to provide further feedback on the paper and suggested that he believed that what little demand there is for domestic coastal shipping of timber could be progressed through existing grants. It was noted that while grant application processes can seem daunting there are consultants available to assist in developing good projects and appropriate applications.

ACTION: Roland to request that Transport Scotland Freight Group hold a workshop for interested parties describing and explaining the existing grants (Freight Facilities Grant, Waterborne Freight Grant and Mode Shift Revenue Support Grant) focusing on how they might support the domestic coastal shipping of roundwood from Scottish forests.

7. FISA Update

Gillian Clark gave an update on the FISA Haulage Working Group.

FISA is drafting a new 706 Timber Haulage Safety Guide. This new guide is sponsored by Volvo The FISA Forest Haulage Driver Safety Manual is also being refreshed and reprinted, again due to sponsorship from Volvo. Drafts of both will be circulated for comment. A short forest haulage safety video is also being developed, again with Volvo sponsorship. Thanks also goes to JST Services, Ayr for their help with the drafts and contact to Volvo.

FISA is focusing on landowner responsibilities for Health and Safety and this will encourage the landowner to consider safety hazards such as provision of suitable access routes, addressing road defects, ensuring cables are identified and goalposts in place, provision of good risk maps and information for drivers. This was discussed noting that road defects and incident reporting tends to be done by phone from drivers to haulage managers but it is vital that there is a recorded audit trail to ensure defects are formally reported to the appropriate people and responded to. The defect reporting form in the Code of Practice can be used even if it is completed by the haulage manager rather than the driver. The group agreed the Code of Practice defect reporting form can be added to the FISA website safety information.

A trial of wire watcher systems that alert drivers to overhead electrical cables is being done with input from FES, SSE and FTR. It is being overseen and reported on by FC Technical Development Branch. SCOTS is supportive of the equipment which costs in the region of £700 per vehicle.

8. Irish Timber Haulage Guidance

Recent Irish timber haulage related documents have been published and circulated to the Forum:

- [Drivers Handbook](#) - published by Coillte 2017
- Round Timber Transport – Guidelines for Hauliers and Drivers published by FITG 2017 [Link not working]

- Load Safety Series – Information Sheet – [Safe Load Securing of Round Timber](#) published by Health & Safety Authority 2017

This prompted discussion as the Irish guidance on load securing is more specific than the existing UK guidance set out in the Forum's [Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice](#) which defines the minimum required.

It was noted that there have been several incidents of logs coming off lorries – including videos posted online by the public. This is concerning and sends out a poor image of the sector to the public. Poor loading of logs can be as critical to load security as strapping. It was also noted that roadside inspections in force in the Highlands recently have taken several unsafe timber trailers off the road. FISA will consider whether revisions of FISA haulage documents and the proposed safety film warrant adjustment.

9. Exit/Entrance survey and guidance

A project to look at exit/entrance issues and specifications is being developed and a proposed brief will be circulated.

10. Funding

- STTS

Derek Nelson reported that STTF budget is fully committed. STTS allocations are shown in the previous minute. Letters are being sent to confirm planned expenditure and any underspend could be fed back into, for example, Preparatory Project Grants.

The Timberlink budget is under pressure due to additional costs associated with displacement of the service from Ardrisaig pier which is experiencing closures due to repair work.

- Future STTS

Alistair Speedie has spoken to the Cabinet Secretary and made him aware that councils expect they can co-finance a similar level of budget again in 2018 based on the same intervention rates and that demand for projects is there. This will be followed up by a letter. The private sector particularly would welcome a longer term budget period. Given that the 2017 round was oversubscribed should we ask for more e.g., £10m? It was noted that councils are seeing a further cut to roads authority budgets, with reductions of 20-50%. Derek Nelson noted that the 70% intervention rate for minor public roads in 2017 was seen as being an exceptional measure.

ACTION Alistair Speedie to write to Cabinet Secretary confirming request for continued STTF funding in 2018

- England

Crispin Thorn has requested continued support from FC England to the Forum for 2018.

The Woodland Creation Grant for 2018 offers support for infrastructure for future wood access and tracks.

11. Conference 2018

The Timber Transport Conference will be held in Inverness Drumossie Hotel on 23rd March 2018. Initial ideas for the conference have been circulated and were discussed. It was suggested that we may be able to attract sponsorship.

ACTIONS: ALL to suggest speakers and additional topics for conference.
ROLAND to circulate revised plan and consider sponsorship opportunities.

12. Updates

- Agreed Route Map online.

The Agreed Routes Map will shift from the current Gaist hosted site to an in house ARCGIS map as of April 2018.

- Timber Transport Video

Filming of a short 2 minute video on rural roads and freight is now done. Filmed on location at Kinloch Rannoch with Claire Glaister in the starring role, and product placement in the form of a James Jones lorry (many thanks to JJ & Sons). There is a cameo role by Roland Stiven. Produced and directed by Ewan Ferguson, Digital Manager, Agriculture and Rural Economy, Scottish Government, the film is currently being edited and will be circulated for final comment prior to a Christmas season release.

- Fleet survey

Ideas for a survey of the extent of lower impact vehicles in the UK timber fleet are being drawn together.

- RHA Conference.

Neil Stoddart attended the RHA national (Scottish) conference, sponsored by Scania, with Humza Yousef attending as Transport Minister. On the agenda was Brexit, driver shortage – particularly acute in rural Scotland – with very low numbers of new entrants - 2% < 25 years and 1% women, Low Emission Zones, Driver/Vehicle monitoring and the current claim against the vehicle manufacturing cartel.

13. Regional Updates:

- Highland: Colin Mackenzie noted a bridge collapse on the flow country roads reflecting our reliance on old Victorian infrastructure. Work to bring together a shared plan for timber transport on the Morvern peninsular is ongoing but proving challenging as there is a diversity of views. HTTG will be preparing further projects for STTS 2018 and seeking further STTS PPG support for the preparatory process.
- Argyll: Kirsty Robb noted a very busy Argyll TTG meeting the previous week. Argyll STTS projects are progressing well. A workshop is planned for January 2018 to help applicants prepare bids. Next year will be Argyll TTG's 21st birthday and this will be marked in some way – perhaps also at Conference?
- Stirling & Tayside & Grampian: STTS public road improvement projects are underway in Perth & Kinross and Morayshire. The timber transport groups are updating the local protocols for consultation using duty holder categories as per current guidance. Claire presented on Timber Transport to an FCS

agent liaison day and to the SFTT (industry group) Grampian meeting in March.

Exit point data has been shared with the A96 dualling team to inform design and there has been engagement with timber transport issues in both Fife and Falkirk council areas.

- Scottish Borders: Simon Oldham noted progress on both the public road improvement STTS project and one private sector project.
- North East England: Crispin Thorn noted the success of Northumberland County Council in securing £5m from the DfT's Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund delivering significant expenditure on two important timber transport routes.
- North Yorkshire: Crispin has been involved in discussions over an upgrade to a forest access which had received planning permission and grant support but not the local highway authority's approval. They were treating it as a new entrance and requiring sightlines that could not be delivered. Applicant now required to install a speed counter to confirm traffic speeds are sufficiently low to allow the entrance to be approved with the available sightlines. The issue will be raised at the next meeting of the NYTFQP. Robin Pope noted that such processes were vital as individual council officers could be charged over accidents related to permitted improvements, if safety requirements had not been met. It was noted that most councils had guidance on this but both industry and council officers would benefit from shared training.

14. Phytosanitary update.

Jamie Farquhar said that the EU plant health regulation is to be implemented in December 2019 and will require all round timber movements to be passported. Defra is setting up a working group and will define the unit of trade. Gillian Clark noted that this was already the situation for grain.

15. AOB

- Claire Glaister has asked for both engineering and timber transport to be included as elements in FES training workstreams
- Derek Nelson is revising STTS scheme sign guidance with a view to standardising requirements and making the role of Scottish Government funding more clear.
- A task force is meeting on 23rd October to discuss the Rannoch rail project, to be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary with a view to progressing this project. Jamie Farquhar and David Sulman are attending.
- Alex Murray thanked the Forum for the invite to attend the meeting and asked about the membership structure and whether the Ayrshire processing sector could be represented going forward. It was noted that this would normally be covered through regional group chair involvement in the Forum.

16. Dates of next meetings

12 January 2018

25th May 2018

5th October 2018