

## Timber Transport Forum Meeting

Silvan House, West Board Room  
10.30 hrs, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

### Approved Minutes

#### Present

Ian Ross (Chair), Fergus Tickell, David Sulman, Steven Herriott, Neil Dyson, Andy Leitch, Roland Stiven, Cameron Kemp, Emily Maclean, Alasdair Ferguson, Mike Green, Jamie Farquhar, Kath McNulty (by phone), Margaret Horn, David Eaglesham, Jane Karthaus (by invitation), Darroch Lyon (for item on Code of Practice).

#### Apologies

David Hern, Syd House, David Spaven, Richard Scott, Crispin Thorn, Alistair Speedie, James Gilroy, Richard Evans, Will Anderson, Simon Oldham, Colin Mackenzie, Chris Edwards, Neil Stoddart (for John Scott), Stan Corcoran, Margaret Watson

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

Ian Ross welcomed Jane Karthaus (ConFor Regional Director for North England) who was invited to attend for item 7.

#### 2. New members

**David Spaven** in his capacity as the Rail Freight Group Scottish Representative has agreed to join the Forum. David replaces Bill Ure who has retired.

**Will Anderson** of Seafeld Estate has taken over the chair of Grampian Timber Transport Group replacing Jim Dewar.

**Colin McNicol** of Stirling Council has taken over the chair of Stirling and Tayside Timber Transport Group replacing Syd House.

#### 3. Previous Minutes

Margaret Horn noted that the draft budget proposed a £1m Freight Facilities Grant budget rather than the £2.9m in the draft minutes. With that correction the minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were approved.

#### Actions from previous minutes

- Information on SRDP support for timber transport to be collated for RDR. This will be carried forward
- Formal request to the STT Scheme for payments to support repair of winter damage to agreed routes. This was done by Neil Dyson and Alistair Speedie (and see item 4)
- Formal call for applications to the STT Scheme for 2011-2012. Issued by Andy Leitch and Roland Stiven (see item 4)
- TTF Project Officer work programme was circulated to the executive group
- Update paper for COSLA. COSLA has indicated they would be happy to view a paper in May. Ian Ross to take forward the action.
- Forthcoming meeting site visit is still to be arranged.

#### 4. Funding

- Freight Facilities Grant

Margaret Horn explained that after lobbying by the industry an extra £2m was allocated to FFG. Transport Scotland issued a call for notes of interest and subsequently a call for applications with a closing date of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Some notes of interest relate to timber projects. The funding available has to be spent in the financial year 2011-2012 but a post

election spending review may provide indicative budgets thereafter which would enable some continuity. Alistair Ferguson stressed the need for longer term continuity of grant funding to allow infrastructure projects to be developed.

- STTS support for repair to winter damage

Following a request from the Forum, the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme agreed to release £600k underspend from the Fund to repair winter damage to public road timber haul routes. Local authorities were invited on 28<sup>th</sup> January to submit applications by 14<sup>th</sup> February for grant assistance to works that could be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Applications were received from 8 local authorities for 33 roads. These were scored and ranked on stated criteria and available money allocated to the highest scoring applications. A further £200,000 was made available on the 16<sup>th</sup> March and a third tranche of £200,000 (underspend from the TimberLINK budget) on 17<sup>th</sup> March, allowing around two thirds of the roads put forward to be supported.

Claims for these projects are being submitted now and actual expenditure will be limited by the matching money, resources and contractors that local authorities could bring into play in the limited time available. Cold weather reduced opportunities for tarring in Highland.

**ACTION: Roland to prepare a statement on actual spend on support to winter damage for the next Forum meeting.**

Fergus Tickell said that the response from Argyll & Bute Council was very positive with the funding for repairs to the Dalmally road coming just in time to help defuse concern by local councillors. Steven Herriott and Cameron Kemp both confirmed that despite the challenges inherent in the limited timeframe the funding had been helpful in addressing the winter damage.

Jamie Farquhar asked if there was a public relations opportunity. Andy Leitch said that signs were required on all schemes receiving over £100,000. It was agreed that collaborative press releases should be issued in May (post election) regarding recent STTS grant awards.

- STTS 2006-2011

Andy Leitch reported that of the ongoing STTS funded projects (not winter damage), 18 were still active as of mid February. Andy, together with Roland Stiven, and Nikki Johnstone and Kathy Brown of FCS have been working hard to process the many last minute claims being submitted. It is expected that nearly all (98%) of the available funding will have been claimed and disbursed by the end of the financial year.

- STTS 2011-2012

Andy Leitch noted that around £2.2m is available through the STTS for the coming financial year with all funding required to be spent within the financial year. As for FFG it is hoped that a post election spending review may provide indicative budgets thereafter.

A call went out on 28<sup>th</sup> January for applications by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011. 27 applications were received (including 5 project officer posts) requesting around £5m. Ian Ross reported that the STTS assessment panel met on 22<sup>nd</sup> March to score applications, interviewing 9 applicants over a long day. An initial allocation of the available funding has been made and formal letters of offer will be sent out shortly. Neil Dyson said the number of applications shows strong evidence of demand which should support lobbying for further funding and the link between STTS and FFG should be highlighted.

**ACTION: Roland to report on the projects being supported by the new round of STTS funding at the next meeting.**

## 5. Regional Updates

- Wales

Kath McNulty reported that the Wales TTG met earlier this month and is taking forward the seminar in Wales on 26<sup>th</sup> May at Newtown in Powys. This is a key event for WTTG and an opportunity to bring in more local authority involvement to partnership projects to tackle timber transport issues in particular parts of Wales. Kath's post with ConFor is funded until the end of June and hopefully thereafter.

- Highland

Cameron Kemp reported that Highland TTG has been busy with 3 applications for winter damage and 8 for STTS funding and there is still unmet demand with projects being developed for Skeabost Bridge in Skye and at Strath Brora.

The group is liaising with HITRANS in undertaking a scoping study on timber destinations to help complete the picture of timber movements around Highland and Argyll. Funding is coming from HITRANS which has a small development budget.

- Argyll

Fergus Tickell reported that Ian Arnold the project officer to the Argyll TTG is retiring and an advertisement for his replacement has been put out based on initial funding for just one year. The group is also busy with 2 winter damage projects and 4 applications to STTS (3 successful).

The group is continuing to address the consequences of council restructuring and staff changes with timber transport issues a continuing cause of friction. With input from Syd House (FCS Conservator for Argyll) the ATTG held a summit meeting with local councillors to explain the work of the group, and to hear concerns and queries. Presentations described the £18m of investment into timber transport infrastructure in Argyll over recent years. The meeting was very productive with elected members offering general support for the approach of the group. This support is tied to demonstrated commitment by the industry to the continuing review of the Agreed Routes Map with particularly fragile (severely restricted) routes being subject to a set of agreed protocols for use, according to their capacity, allowing the timber industry to plan appropriately for use of these routes in the future. Protocols may specify seasonal working, CTI and low impact lorry configurations. There may be scope to link into the FC felling licensing process and current SRDP approval processes for new planting.

Fergus noted that TimberLINK and the growth of coastal shipping of timber from Argyll brought both benefits and disbenefits to Argyll. The reduced impact on trunk roads is countered by more concentrated use of local roads to ports. This does lend weight to the call for continued national funding to council roads used for timber haulage in Argyll.

Steven Herriott said that it was not always possible to predict the strength of U class roads over a long period. Fergus Tickell responded that the protocols would be for certain roads only and be open to review from experience. Jamie Farquhar agreed there was a role for such protocols but these should not result in overly restrictive felling licenses and should ensure there remains room to adapt protocols to circumstance and experience (working through the TTG processes). Ian Ross suggested that meetings to inform officials and elected

members should be considered by all TTGs and that protocols for road use continue to be developed and shared with other regions.

- South Scotland

Neil Dyson noted that South Scotland experienced high levels of timber traffic over recent months with roads not always standing up to the strain.

Steven Herriott reported that D&G council has been busy delivering a number of winter damage repairs and D&GTTG has submitted various applications to STTS.

There was significant damage to the B729 Carsphairn Road during the thaw earlier this year following timber haulage, which resulted in substantial repairs. D&G Council are questioning whether they can continue to maintain the road to cope with the desired level of forestry activity. Options may include closing the road during thaw periods and/or requiring use of CTI equipped lorries. Work is ongoing with hauliers and forestry interests in the road's catchment to develop an agreement on a sustainable level of road use for timber haulage and monitoring. Monitoring may involve log books or CCTV or web based booking schedules.

David Eaglesham offered the support of the Road Haulage Association in assisting hauliers in developing agreements for road use. Mike Green described how FES communicate with hauliers through dispatch systems over closed forest roads. Some roads may open and others close creating a surge effect as haulage moves to where timber can be picked up. Deliveries are pre-planned and there is considerable momentum in the system which does limit responsiveness to short term changes.

Fergus Tickell mentioned Argyll experience where local authorities communicated direct with hauliers when closing roads abruptly, without communicating with those people/companies contracting the hauliers. This puts hauliers in a difficult position.

Alistair Ferguson said that on some wind farm clearance sites, for example, there is deliberate management of hauliers through traffic liaison groups often relying for practical co-ordination on the crane operator. On smaller regular catchments hauliers will normally communicate between themselves and with local authorities as required but this may not be sufficient in busy areas where a number of hauliers/harvesting managers are working and where there is constant change.

**ACTION: Timber Transport Groups to discuss and provide suggestions to the Forum on how cumulative haulage on sensitive roads can be monitored and managed by the industry to ensure that protocols agreed through Timber Transport Groups can be effectively applied.**

Neil Dyson reported for Scottish Borders TTG noting that communities are getting more vocal over timber transport issues and in some cases this is reflecting more generally on the forest industry e.g. we have too much forestry here already; why are they planting more? Scottish Borders Council has delivered winter damage repairs and the group has been successful with some STTS bids to this round.

- Grampian and Stirling and Tayside

Emily Maclean noted that no road schemes were put forward for STTS funding. In some cases the criteria are not easily applied to Grampian woodlands. The scheme being developed for East Lochlomondside was not submitted as there was not community support

for the bid. The community had concerns that improving the road and passing places would encourage antisocial behaviour which is already an issue, and of greater concern than timber lorries! Still, there is considerable timber to come down this road in coming years and the scheme may be revisited in future. The STTS application for project officer support brought in considerable public and private sector co-funders. Recent S&T TTG and the forthcoming GTTG meetings will concentrate on plans for the coming year and ARMS map review and exit point mapping. Emily noted the appointments of new chairs to both groups (see item 2).

- Cumbria

Roland Stiven said that the ARMS consultation process is ongoing and the group meet next on 12<sup>th</sup> May.

- Northumberland

Neil Dyson noted that due to some long term changes that have been ongoing in the Council, no progress has been made on this. The forest industry and the Council still keen to progress. David Sulman noted that the processors would like to see clear links between any organisation dealing with timber transport in Northumberland and the Timber Transport Forum.

- North Yorkshire

The NYTTG is progressing council approval of a final draft of the ARM map. James Gilroy will retain some timber transport responsibilities on behalf of the group despite budget cuts to the department. There are two instances of 'extraordinary traffic' issues in N Yorkshire, one has been settled out of court the other still ongoing.

## **6. Code of Practice (revised consultation draft)**

Darroch Lyon has received comments on the draft and will work to incorporate these into a final document, discussing with the working group as required. The majority of comments are positive though a few respondents were less happy with the plain English style. DfT was the only organisation approached that could not endorse the booklet (because the person who reviewed it did not have responsibilities for all areas covered). Forum members asked Darroch to ensure that there was sufficient emphasis on communications between players. FC Publications are yet to reconfirm a date for production. The working group will propose launch and dissemination programme.

**ACTION: Roland to re-approach DfT for endorsement for Roundwood Haulage Code of Practice**

## **7. Extreme Traffic**

Ian Ross explained that Jane Karthaus raised a query with the Forum regarding the issue of Extraordinary Traffic and has been invited to the meeting to discuss this further. Jane is leading a submission on behalf of the Confederation of Forest Industries to the Forestry Regulation Taskforce. The Task Force will:

- look at areas of regulation affecting forestry in England, but will advise where issues relevant to devolved administrations are identified.
- advise on how best to achieve a proportionate, risk-based and targeted approach to regulations relevant to forestry-related businesses.

Jane has been asked by ConFor members in NE England to include in ConFor's submission the issue of roundwood haulage being treated as Extraordinary Traffic. There are currently two cases where N Yorkshire County Council is claiming the costs of road repairs from the forestry

sector, so feelings are running high. FC England is one of the parties that has been cited by NYCC. Jane is seeking the view of the Forum on whether this should be an issue for the taskforce.

There was discussion with various points made: It was noted that this has been a long standing issue in North Yorkshire. While there is a timber transport group it is still in the process of developing an Agreed Routes Map. Where TTGs are more established, the Forum's approach has a considerable track record in avoiding the use of the legislation. The Forum was set up because it was felt that the Extraordinary Traffic approach was not likely to be productive. The issue is more to do with money than regulation i.e. when money is short it is more likely to be used. How can we attract more funding for infrastructure improvement outside Scotland? The taskforce is unlikely to be able to alter such a long standing element of the road traffic act.

In conclusion the view of the meeting was that the Forum believes the partnership approach is the most appropriate way forward and that the Forum should be more active in support of the NYTTG and sharing best practice. Roland Stiven and Alistair Speedie should offer both informal discussions with those involved and act as a formal point of contact on behalf of the Forum to those seeking further advice on the issue.

#### **8. 2011 Seminars**

- Wales

Further to item 5, Kath McNulty mentioned that input from Forum members to the Wales Seminar on the 26<sup>th</sup> May would help to demonstrate that the Forum's approach has a track record and is effective. David Eaglesham offered to alert the RHA Bristol office to the seminar.

**ACTION: Roland to circulate details of the Wales seminar to the Forum and encourage those with a Welsh interest to attend.**

#### **9. Best Practice Guide on Timber Transport Management**

This 12 page brochure setting out the approach of the Timber Transport Forum is currently with the printers and will be available shortly [is now available!].

#### **10. TTF Project Officer Update**

STTS administration had displaced normal activity over recent weeks.

There is agreement to continue to fund the post for another year from FC in Scotland, England and Wales. ConFor is happy to continue with their contribution and the Scottish Enterprise contribution is being progressed.

#### **11. AOB**

- VOSA Powers to Stop

VOSAs new Powers to Stop are in force in Scotland as of today. In light of this and the revised Roundwood Haulage Code of Practice, the Forum and Groups should be looking to reinforce relations between VOSA, Police and timber hauliers. Neil Dyson noted the success of previous workshops with Police on strapping etc.

**ACTION: TTGs to consider holding VOSA/Police/Haulier Workshops**

**ACTION: Roland to approach VOSA to offer an update on timber transport**

- Core Paths

Fergus Tickell described an ongoing debate with Argyll and Bute Council about designating in-forest timber haul routes as Core Paths. The Timber Transport Group has made its case that this will not be appropriate in all situations and council staff are now reasonably understanding. Recently however there have been moves to also tag most forest roads as aspirational core paths and with this comes a requirement, for example, to inform the council if it will be blocked by timber harvesting and ensure it is re-instated within a given timeframe. This is seen as unnecessary given that Land Reform legislation already allows recreational use. It was agreed that we should ask other groups for their experience of this, take wider advice and revisit the subject at the next meeting. Jamie Farquhar will raise the issue at the next Access Forum meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May and let them know we will be discussing it.

**ACTION: Jamie Farquhar to notify Access Forum of our discussions on Core Paths on haul routes**

**ACTION: Roland to prepare information for further discussion on Core Paths on haul routes**

- Post election lobbying

The Forum should be prepared to lobby for support /continuing support post election in Scotland and Wales.

**ACTION: Alistair Speedie and Roland Stiven to prepare material and propose approach.**

- Borrowing Powers of the Scottish Government

Fergus Tickell asked if, as presumed, the Scottish Government is given borrowing powers through the Scotland Bill, could we lobby for borrowing to invest in timber transport infrastructure. Agreed to revisit this post election.

## **12. Next meeting**

Will be on **16<sup>th</sup> June 2011**, site visit to be arranged and agenda/programme circulated.

**ACTION: Roland to prepare and circulate programme for site visit on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011**