

**Timber Transport Forum Meeting  
FC, Silvan House,  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2013  
Agreed Minute**

**Present:** Roland Stiven, David Sulman, Crispin Thorn, Hazel Newman, Andy Leitch, Claire Glaister, Colin Mackenzie, David Eaglesham, Simon Oldham, James England, Margaret Horn, Colin McNicol, Richard Scott, Neil Stoddart, Alasdair Ferguson, Kirsty Robb

1. Welcome and Apologies

In the absence of Alistair Speedie the meeting was chaired by Andy Leitch.

**Apologies** were received from Ken Sinclair, Victoria Hutchinson, Jamie Farquhar, Alistair Speedie, Fergus Tickell, David Spaven, Donald Maclean, David Hern, Steven Herriott, Neil Dyson, Simon Oldham, Kath McNulty, Margaret Watson

2. New Members

Cameron Kemp is standing down as chair of Highland TTG after two years of very able contribution. Colin McNicol is also standing down as chair of Stirling and Tayside TTG having served on the group since 1996! The Forum expressed their sincere thanks to Cameron and Colin. Robin Pope of Highland Council will take over as chair of HTTG. Jim McGregor will represent Stirling Council on the S&T TTG.

3. Previous Minute

The revised draft minute of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012 were accepted as accurate.

4. Opening of Annandale and Ae Haul Road

The Forestry Minister Paul Wheelhouse has agreed to open the haul road on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013 from 2pm – 3pm. Annandale Estates has offered nearby Raehills as a venue. We will invite representatives of the local partners and supply chain. It is also an opportunity to publicise the achievements of the STTS. Alistair Speedie, Roland Stiven, James England and David Sulman will attend on behalf of the Forum/STTS. A local planning meeting will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> January to finalise details and invites. Andy Leitch will advise and accompany Minister.

5. New Agreed Routes Map website.

This has been tendered and awarded to Gaist Solutions Ltd. A test site has been prepared. James England introduced the test site and explained its basic workings.

It was suggested

- we add a data layer with timber processing plants.
- We add data on weight restrictions and bridges
- We standardise forms – e.g. for timber transport management plans
- there would benefit from adding a route finder tool – as per AA route planner - that took account of the agreed routes. [*This would require significant additional cost >£8k*]
- the site could be used to prepare operations plans and risk assessments.
- That we should ask users to register- as a means of monitoring who uses it.
- We should provide training sessions through the timber transport groups.

Roland Stiven noted that that the site as contracted can enable individuals to login and create their own workspace. Also background information (as notes or pdf or photos) can be added to any categorised road by an administrator within each group.

**ACTION: Circulate login details for ARM webGIS test site (Roland)**

## **ACTION: Provide feedback on ARM webGIS test site by 28th February 2013 (All)**

### 6. Funding Update

**Strategic Timber Transport Fund** Andy Leitch noted that of the £9m STTF for period 2012-15 he was forecasting Timberlink spend of 2.5m. £3.5m was allocated to projects in May 2012 leaving £3m. The November 2012 round attracted 19 bids of which 10 have been made offers totalling £1.7m. While this would technically leave £1.3m for a subsequent round, the drawdown on this year's budget by existing projects has been slower than forecast and it is possible unspent funds from this year's grant allocation may be lost (returned to government). FCS tries to manage the budget profile but needs clear and accurate budget forecasting by project leaders to do so. Roland Stiven noted that projects do not always deliver as per budget forecasts or present claims and progress reports in a timely manner which hampers fund administration.

Colin Mackenzie noted that the 'usual' timescale for civil engineering project development tended to be longer than STTS can normally allow. James England noted that councils have their own challenges in terms of timely reporting of project works. It was suggested that requests for claims should be copied to project officers who can 'encourage' the process.

**Freight Facilities Grants** Margaret Horn reported that FFG awards are now funded through the Future Transport Fund. The current 3 active applications for freight grants have been slow in progressing to the stage where an award can be considered and the 2012-13 budget of £0.75m has been returned to the wider fund since it will not be drawn upon. The Mode Shift Revenue Support scheme deadline for applications for 2013/14 has now passed with no timber projects proposed but anyone interested should still discuss proposals with Scottish Government.

Alasdair Ferguson said that he had a current FFG application where costs issues have arisen which have delayed progress. Unlike STTS projects FFG ones involve modal shift and so are more complex in nature. .

### 7. FES Servitudes for Timber Haulage

Forest Enterprise Scotland has been reviewing its policy on granting 3<sup>rd</sup> party access agreements across FCS land, moving away from in-perpetuity servitudes which are expensive and place long term burdens on land. They have agreed to offer another option of a 40 year transferable and extendable access lease, with minimum up-front costs and annual payments for use and administration. Details will be clarified and incorporated into the timber transport toolkit in due course.

### 8. Regional Updates

#### **Highland**

Colin Mackenzie noted that five out of the eight recent STTS applications have been made offers of award.

#### **Argyll**

Kirsty Robb noted that three of the seven bids from Argyll have been offered STTS awards.

#### **Grampian**

Claire Glaister reported that the group had its first meeting since last February in December 2012. Requests for exit point volume data updates have shown a poor return and Claire may request support from the Forum or from Confor and UKFPA to encourage private sector responses. Claire also requested whether case studies from previous STTS funded projects could be prepared to support promotional work of the group.

#### **Stirling & Tayside**

The group is looking for standardisation on Agreed Routes Maps protocols and timber transport management plans. The group will be adopting similar protocols to those developed by the Argyll group. Colin McNicol will be standing down as chair, and a new chair will be appointed. Two potential STTS projects have been identified and are being developed.

### **Dumfries & Galloway**

James England reported that the level of timber haulage activity remains high. However attendance at the two subgroup meetings (East and West) is reducing (because local issues are generally being dealt with effectively). The group intends to return to a single main D&G group meeting and will try to engage with more hauliers.

The Shinnel Glen STTS project is nearing completion. The STTS application to upgrade the last stretch of the B723 from Eskdaelmuir towards Steven's Croft has been offered STTS award. The future management of the Eskdaelmuir bypass is being discussed by the management group. Two other projects are being considered for future submissions - Laverhay and a timber haulage resources study.

### **Scottish Borders**

James England attended a public meeting in Hawick to present on the group's work - this generated discussion but was productive. Issues with timber traffic at Innerleithen prompted a councillor to attend a timber transport group meeting and subsequently council representatives and Simon Oldham (chair) attended a community council meeting on the issue – again with constructive outcomes. A timber transport management plan is being prepared for the Stobo road to set out timber traffic management measures to reduce community impact where possible.

### **Ayrshire**

South Ayrshire made a successful bid for STTS funding for improvements to the road through Straiton and will be looking to refresh the partnership approach locally. North Ayrshire Council has received an STTS award for further improvements to roads on Arran. South Lanarkshire is drafting an Agreed Routes Map.

### **Cumbria**

Richard Scott reported that the Cumbria group is continuing to deal effectively with the local issues arising.

### **North Yorkshire**

Crispin Thorn noted that the NY Timber Freight Quality Partnership will meet again on 30<sup>th</sup> January. The group continues to progress positively with constructive input from Councillor Gareth Dadd and Jeremy Walker the group chair. The group has agreed local best practice protocols for consultation and to align agreed routes map colours with the national map.

### **North East England**

Hazel Newman said that that the group meetings continue to be well attended. The Agreed Routes Map development is ongoing and the approach was presented to councillors to general support. Constructive engagement with local roads engineers is proving more challenging but the council representatives on the group are working on this.

### **Wales**

The timber transport group in Wales has not met recently. However the group is now represented on the re-vitalised Wales Freight Group. Forestry Commission Wales (to become part of the Natural Resources Wales in April) is expecting to be able to progress with an in-forest haul route to serve a critical area of the Tywi Forest.

#### **9. Guidance on Reduced Ground Pressure Vehicles in Timber Transport.**

A proposal for this was circulated in the autumn which came back with constructive and supportive comment. Roland and Colin Mackenzie have started on a draft and will consult with key practitioners in developing a draft to be circulated to the Forum.

**ACTION: Draft and circulate guidance on reduced ground pressure vehicles in timber transport (Roland Stiven and Colin Mackenzie)**

#### **10. Conference 2014**

This was discussed at a project officers meeting in November considering the option of regional events which would attract more local authority staff. The current proposal is that these should be additional to a national conference and could have overlapping content. FCS will consider

publishing a booklet of case studies of STTS projects and comparable work in England together with background on the Forum and the STTS. This could provide a basis for some of the national conference.

**ACTION: Circulate proposals for 2014 conference and events and supporting material (Roland Stiven)**

Neil Stoddart asked if the Forum would again be promoted at Truckfest Scotland 2013 and it was agreed this should be progressed.

11. Improving the Web Presence of Timber Transport

Claire Glaister reported on a proposal from the project officer's meeting in November to improve the web presence of timber transport – in particular the information on council websites and the links between FCS, council and the timber transport forum websites. Claire is developing a paper to identify best practice and gaps and to draft some standard text which could be adopted / adapted by councils.

12. Independent Panel on Forestry Report

Crispin Thorn noted some of the key recommendations of the report and said that the Westminster Government was still expecting to provide a response to the report by the end of January 2013 [[now published](#)].

13. Consultation on Planning Consent for Hill Tracks.

The Forum submitted a response to this consultation and the Scottish Government has now stated that 'permitted development rights for agricultural and forestry private tracks will not be amended at this time but will be kept under review'. It is expected that guidance may be reviewed and promoted.

14. Scottish Planning Policy Review and the National Planning Framework

The Forum submitted contributions to both of these, focusing on the need to develop infrastructure to serve the requirements of the Scottish Government's Land Use Strategy – in particular relating to strategic timber haul routes.

15. Managing Woodland Access and Forest Operations (Guidance)

Forestry Commission Scotland asked for input to a draft of this guidance. The Forum submitted a contribution focusing on the need to consider carefully how public access was promoted in relation to busy in-forest timber haulage routes often designed to deliberately divert timber transport from routes frequented by the public.

16. Forestry Industry Safety Accord

David Sulman noted that the main group was meeting the following week. It is expected that the group will take on relevant existing HSE and AFAG guides. Alasdair Ferguson said that the timber haulage sub-group has had an initial meeting and is looking at all stages of timber haulage. The group will review existing material – with a view to ensuring there is suitable guidance for timber haulage. All organisations involved in forestry and the timber supply chain (including timber hauliers) are being encouraged to sign up to the [accord](#) and pay a subscription to help fund its activities. There will be an opportunity to provide weblinks from timber transport pages to FISA outputs on timber transport.

17. Type Approval Exemptions for Timber Lorries

Roland Stiven has written to the Department for Transport asking that they re-instate previous exemptions that allowed bespoke timber lorries to not fit spray suppression systems or side protection bars which can interfere with off-road working. The Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association have lent their weight to this. We are awaiting a response from DfT.

18. AOB

**Mull Timber Pier at Fishnish**

Neil Stoddart asked about the timber pier being built at Fishnish on Mull – by Forest Enterprise Scotland and a local haulage contractor on Mull. Andy Leitch noted that this was being progressed by Forest Enterprise Scotland without STTS funding to assist with their operations - although it would be open to use by others. Neil Stoddart noted that he had been asked to be on a user group for the pier.

#### **Rest and Be Thankful**

David Eaglesham asked about developments at Rest and Be Thankful on the A83 in Argyll. Kirsty Robb reported that work on the military road temporary bypass is progressing. The taskforce group has also prepared a report setting out the options for longer term remedial action for the landslip risk area focusing on work to maintain the existing road. The Argyll timber transport group should continue to press Transport Scotland to ensure that the impacts of landslip risk on timber haulage are minimised.

#### **Good Practice Compliance in Timber Haulage**

Alasdair Ferguson noted that there have been recent instances of operator's licenses being revoked from timber haulage operators for malpractice. Those procuring timber haulage should take account of a haulage company's record of compliance with good practice in their procurement process and monitor compliance with contract conditions. For example, issues such as hauliers consistently using unidentifiable vehicles could be dealt with through such measures. David Eaglesham added that while the VOSA budget for enforcement has been cut, the industry can adopt more rigorous audit procedures to ensure best practice is followed. David Sulman suggested that a checklist could be prepared to highlight elements of good practice that would be a condition of contract. Colin McNicol said that it was sensible to expect contractors to meet standards for having and implementing good practice management systems such as ISO 9000. Neil Stoddart agreed, but noted the practical difficulties in monitoring good management practice through contracted hauliers to the various levels of sub-contractors.

#### **Film on In-Forest Haulage with Tyre Pressure Control.**

John Miller Ltd has submitted a 5 minute film of a TPCS fitted timber lorry to the Confor 'Oscars' competition. This can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG3KrUQa2A>

#### 19. Dates of next meetings

19 April 2013  
28 June 2013  
4 October 2013