

Timber Transport Forum Meeting
FC, Dalby Forest Visitor Centre, near Pickering, North Yorkshire,
12.30- 15.30 20th June 2014
Agreed Minute

This meeting of the Forum was opened up to local interests and members of the north England timber transport groups. The meeting was preceded by a site visit to Bumble Wood which is described in Appendix 1.

Present

Alistair Speedie, D&G Council (**chair**), Claire Glaister, G&S&T TTG, Derek Nelson, FCS, Colin Mackenzie, Highland TTG, Ken Sinclair, FCS, Crispin Thorn, FC England, Victoria Hutchinson, North Yorkshire County Council, Andrew Douglas, Northumberland County Council
Dick Phillips, NCC, Barry Rowland NCC, Hazel Newman, Egger (and NE TTG), Roland Stiven, TTF
Keith Haywood, Taylormade Timber Products, John Lees, Tillhill Forestry, Will Richardson, Yorwoods, Alan Eves, FC England, Ian Brown, Forestry and Woodlands Advisory Committee Chair for the North East
Robin Pope, Highland TTG, Ian Tubby, FC England

Apologies

Margaret Watson, SE, David Sulman, UKFPA, Ian Farmer, SG, Richard Scott, BSW, Margaret Horn, SG, Alasdair Ferguson, Ferguson Transport Ltd, Steven Herriott, D&G Council, Chris Campbell, RHA, Kirsty Robb, Argyll, TTG, Jamie Farquhar, Confor, Fergus Tickell, Northern Energy Developments, Martin Bishop, Confor, Simon Oldham, Scottish Woodlands, James England, South Scotland TTG, Jeremy Walker, NYTFQP chair, Andrew Harper, CCC, Neil Dyson, Treelands and AyrTTG

1. Welcome and apologies

Alan Eves Forest Management Director for the Public Forest Estate in Yorkshire welcomed everyone to Dalby Forest Visitor Centre and gave some background to the management of this productive forest area for both timber, biodiversity and high levels of recreation.

Alistair Speedie welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. He noted that the draft minute of the previous meeting of 11th April 2014 had been revised following comment and recirculated to Forum members by email requesting final comment by 20th June. No comments have been received. The email had noted that two action points had been delivered:

- Roland Stiven has sent copies of Tread Softly to DVSA contacts
- Steven Herriott and Roland Stiven will present the Forum's work to SCOTS on 1st August 2014

The previous minute was agreed. All other action points will be carried forward to the next meeting.

2. Introduction to the work of the Timber Transport Forum

Alistair Speedie provided a short introduction to the work of the Forum describing the partnering charter, the good practice guidance, the use of agreed routes maps and the distribution of timber transport groups in Great Britain.

3. Introductions to

North Yorkshire Timber Transport Freight Quality Partnership (FQP)

Victoria Hutchinson presented the work of the FQP which was established in 2003 but reinvigorated in 2011 under the independent chair Jeremy Walker (formerly Chief Executive of N Yorkshire County Council and chair of Yorkshire and Humberside FC Regional Advisory Committee). Membership includes the Forestry Commission, North Yorkshire County Council Highways, the Executive Member for Highways, two National Park Authorities and private timber operators.

The FQP produced a voluntary [Agreed Routes Map](#) in 2012/13 developed in consultation with highways engineers, parish councils, FQP members and the timber industry. The ARM identifies suitable routes for extraction and provides estimates of forecast timber flows which are updated each year. The FQP is accompanied by [Working Together](#) a local good practice guide for timber transport in North Yorkshire setting out roles and responsibilities and communication protocols. An action plan template for managing sensitive timber routes is included as an appendix. The group has undertaken a survey of timber hauliers operating in North Yorkshire which confirmed that the majority are small businesses with limited access to new technologies such as tyre pressure control systems.

The FQP also produced an [Opportunities for Growth](#) leaflet setting out the case for investment in the timber transport sector to support the increasing importance of the forestry sector to the North Yorkshire economy.

Through the partnership there is now more open communication and dialogue between the timber industry, local council/national park authorities and local communities.

North East England Timber Transport Group

Hazel Newman introduced the work of the north east England group which was initiated in July 2011. The group has attracted significant interest from both the forestry and timber industries and from Northumberland County Council. The process of engaging with highways department officers has taken some time but the initial objective of producing an Agreed Routes Map is almost complete. The group has also developed winter working arrangements and been supportive of the development of new vehicle technologies. Barry Rowland noted that the concentration of timber volumes in the area coupled with the substantial length of fragile local roads has created a need for investment in infrastructure improvement in the short term.

4. Roots to Prosperity North England Action Plan for Forestry

On behalf of the forestry and timber sector, Crispin Thorn presented the [Roots to Prosperity](#) headline report. The growth strategy has been produced by a partnership of northern England county councils, Forestry Commission England and industry representatives, UKFPA and Confor. This geographically rich document sets out the current and potential contribution the sector can make to jobs and economic growth. Timber processors in the region have already invested substantially in recent years and more than 2500 people are employed in primary processing of British-grown forest products in northern England, increasing market share and saving £1bn from the nation's import bill. The capitalised value of the environmental and social benefits derived from the industry in northern England is estimated at £3.4bn. The opportunities for growth lie particularly in extending active management to the substantial proportion of the resource that is currently under-managed.

An [action plan](#) for the growth strategy will be launched later in the summer. The action plan is expected to recognise the need for further investment to ensure there is suitable transport infrastructure and equipment in place to meet the increasing demands of the supply chain. The action plan aims to feed into the developing Strategic Economic Plans for the region.

5. Funding for Timber Transport Infrastructure in England

The discussion that followed noted that the Local Enterprise Partnerships tend to focus on urban issues and have limited funding. While this may serve to support manufacturing and services it is unlikely to be easily directed into public rural infrastructure. Similarly the EURDP Farming and Forestry Productivity Plan will focus mostly on forest management and businesses. There may be longer term benefit in linking the regional forestry growth plan to the national and European Forestry Strategy to gain more recognition of the value of rural infrastructure in the European Growth Strategy.

It was established that:

- The Forum and north England interests agree that a timber transport fund is required.
- The focus should be on the north of England where the bulk of the softwood resource is concentrated and the minor road network is extensive and more fragile.

Why do we need a fund?

- Investment in timber transport solutions complements and protects other private and public investment in forestry and timber manufacturing.
- Timber transport improvements will help increase economic use of the resource
- The language of 'pinchpoints' is persuasive illustrating the potential to unlock economic activity by addressing minor constraints.
- The expansion of the forest resource over the last fifty years is a major land use change requiring fit for purpose timber transport solutions for 21st Century needs.
- Forestry transport needs to become seen as normal rural traffic.
- Creating fit for purpose infrastructure will help to reduce the social and environmental impacts of timber transport.
- Co-finance from a timber transport fund will 'lower the bar' for the appraisal of local authority investment in rural roads solutions.
- There is scope to promote innovation in infrastructure and lower impact vehicles
- There is potential to support multi-modality such as the rail haulage from Ribbleshead
- A fund will provide focus and cohesion for the timber transport groups
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How might it work?

- The model of a central fund to which timber transport groups or partnerships within timber transport groups would apply is seen as valid.
- The Forestry Commission, a local authority or other public body could hold the fund.
- The governance of the fund needs to ensure there is appropriate representation and have mechanisms to avoid conflict of interest between those holding and bidding for funding. In Scotland this is addressed by an Advisory Panel that makes recommendations on fund allocations.
- Data on forecast timber flows can aid strategic targeting of the fund.

It was agreed that

- Representatives from the Forum and north England groups should continue to approach ministers and make the case for a timber transport fund.
- Alistair Speedie, Cripsin Thorn, Barry Rowland, Alan Eves and Roland Stiven will meet with Robert Goodwill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport later in the day to follow up on the letter sent to Dan Rogerson Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management. See Appendix 2

6. Date of next meeting 3rd October

Appendix 1: Timber Transport Forum Site Visit to Bumble Wood

Present

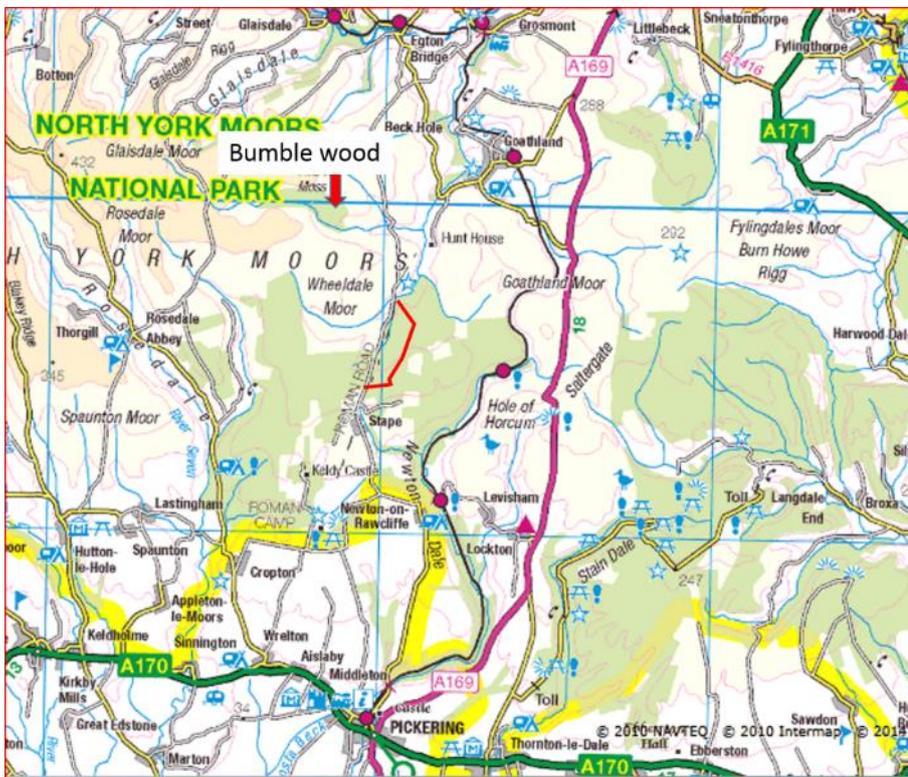
Alistair Speedie, D&G Council (**chair**)
Claire Glaister, G&S&T TTG
Derek Nelson, FCS
Colin Mackenzie, Highland TTG
Ken Sinclair, FCS
Crispin Thorn, FC
Victoria Hutchinson, North Yorkshire County
- Council,
Cllr Helen Swiers NYCC
Andrew Douglas, Northumberland County Council
Dick Phillips, NCC
Barry Rowland NCC
Hazel Newman, Egger (and NE TTG)
Roland Stiven, TTF
Keith Haywood, Taylormade Timber Products,

John Lees, Tillhill Forestry
Will Richardson, Yorwoods
Alan Eves, FC England
Ian Brown, Forestry and Woodlands Advisory
- Committee Chair for the North East
Robin Pope, Highland TTG
David Creek, NYCC Highways
Alan Brown NYCC Highways
Mark Weston, FC England
Jon Bates, FC England
Martin O'Vaster FC England
John Harkness FC England
Robert Scott, SGS Timber Haulage
Iwan Williams, UPM Tilhill
Brian Nugent, UPM Tilhill

Transported to North Yorkshire

It was a warm June morning when the Timber Transport Forum gathered at Bumble Wood near Pickering in North Yorkshire. The Forum was departing from its usual Edinburgh meetings at the invitation of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership (timber transport group) for a site visit and Forum meeting.

Jon Bates, Operations Manager for Forestry Commission in the area talked us through the Commission's plans for Bumble wood.



Bumble Wood is a Forestry Commission woodland where the forest design plan, agreed with consultees and particularly the National Park, aims to convert conifer plantation to moorland and native broadleaves. Felling was planned to take place over a number of years to allow the haulage frequency to stay within the carrying capacity of the county road and to avoid interference with tourist traffic. The haulage route runs through the NY Moors National Park and is a popular tourist drive. Timber lorries travel the first 4.5km on the public road. To avoid the weakest stretch of the public road, haulage is then diverted onto a 3.6km forest road, up-graded by the FC at a cost of £40,000 before re-joining the public highway to Pickering.

Despite these measures, a severe winter freeze following a very wet autumn left sections of tarmac raised. County council highways officers called operations to a halt when the damage was noticed and claimed damages from both FC and the harvesting company. The dispute has been resolved, the road repaired and timber haulage is continuing under a carefully monitored regime.

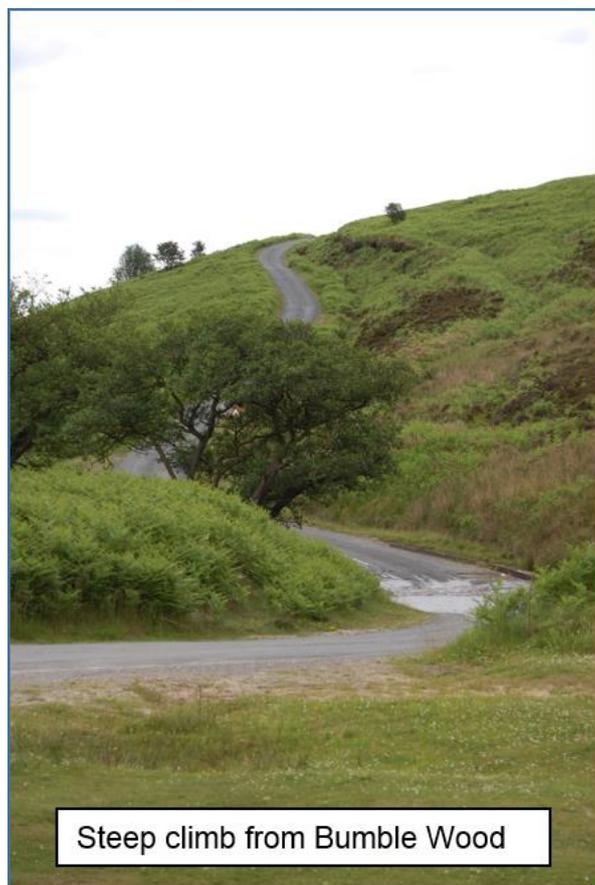
The road has been surface-dressed to help provide a visual baseline for future monitoring. Highways officers and FC staff check the condition of the public road weekly and hauliers are asked to report any signs of problems starting to occur. The aim is to provide prompt minor repairs where necessary and to avoid any significant damage and road closures.

Haulage is mainly done using lower impact timber lorries, with tyre pressure control, driven by two regular drivers. Uplift is limited to four loaded lorries per day, five days a week; two loads in the morning and two in the early evening, avoiding most of the tourist traffic. A few extra informal passing places of unbound material have been created to ease traffic and signs are put up asking car drivers to use the passing places to let the timber lorries pass.

The process of resolving this dispute has strengthened the working relationship between the Forestry Commission, their customers, the hauliers and the highways officers.



Discussing road management above Cropton Forest



Steep climb from Bumble Wood

It has also helped to re-invigorate the wider workings of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership. In recent years the group has finalised an agreed routes map (after public consultation) and prepared local protocols to guide communication between the various parties.

Discussion

There was good discussion throughout the site visit. The measures adopted have been effective and harvesting and haulage continue with minimal further impact on the road to date. Complaints about timber haulage to the local councillor, which were a regular occurrence, have largely stopped.

The parties have established an effective management plan for the road, controlling traffic levels and timings and establishing monitoring and communications. This is made easier by the fact that the harvest is from a single Forestry Commission woodland and the in-forest bypass is also on Forestry Commission land. In this case it is clear who can call a halt to operations if the road starts to deteriorate. Comparable situations with multiple parties using a stretch of road can be more complex to manage and monitor. Private owners may be less willing to extend the harvesting period and third party use of in-forest bypasses will add cost to the haulage. However it is clear that the sorts of road and traffic management solutions being progressed and the

effective level of communication and trust that has been established are transferrable to other situations and that managed haulage can enable extraction from difficult sites over weak roads.

Acknowledgements Alistair Speedie thanked everyone for the great turnout and good discussion. Thanks particularly to Mark Weston, Jon Bates, Alan Eves, Crispin Thorn, Victoria Hutchison, David Creek and Jeremy Walker for helping to organise the site visit.



Appendix 2: Meeting of Forum and North England Timber Transport group representatives with Robert Goodwill MP

The meeting was held at Dalby Forest Visitor Centre on 20th June 2014 6pm -7pm

Present

- **Robert Goodwill** is Conservative MP for Scarborough and Whitby (since 5 May 2005). He is also Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport with responsibility for (amongst other things) local roads (and maintenance).
- **Alistair M Speedie** is the Director Planning and Environment Services for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Alistair has been chair of the (GB) Timber Transport Forum since 2004 and was a key player in developing and securing the implementation of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme and Fund in Scotland.
- **Crispin Thorn** is Forestry Commission England's Area Director for Yorkshire and the North East. He represents Forestry Commission England on the GB Timber Transport Group and is also a member of the North East Timber Transport Group and the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Partnership
- **Alan Eves** is the Forest Management Director for the Public Forest Estate in Yorkshire. He is responsible for the strategic planning and overseeing the operational delivery of the work on Forestry Commission managed land in Yorkshire.
- **Barry Rowland** - Executive Director – Place (Northumberland County Council). Barry is the former Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council and as Executive Director Place has the responsibility for the road infrastructure across Northumberland.

Apologies

- **Jeremy Walker** is chair of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership. He was Regional Director of the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber in 1994, and then Chief Executive of the County Council from 1999 to 2005. He currently chairs a number of bodies including the Slowing the Flow Partnership in Pickering. He is also a member of York University Court.

Robert Goodwill MP has recently taken on ministerial responsibility for local roads in England and Wales. He was copied into a letter from the Forum, on the subject of creating a timber transport fund, sent to Dan Rogerson MP the minister with responsibility for forestry. The meeting with Robert Goodwill MP was requested by Jeremy Walker to take advantage of the Forum meeting in the locality.

The aim was to inform the minister of the work of the Timber Transport Forum and Groups and highlight the opportunity to create a timber transport fund in England.

Alan Eves gave a brief introduction to Dalby Forest.

On behalf of the forestry and timber sector, Crispin Thorn presented the main points of the [Roots to Prosperity](#) headline report. This growth strategy has been produced by a partnership of northern England county councils, Forestry Commission England and industry representatives, UKFPA and Confor. This geographically rich document sets out the current and potential contribution the sector can make to jobs and economic growth. Timber processors in the region have already invested substantially in recent years and more than 2500 people are employed in primary processing of British-grown forest products in northern England, increasing market share and saving £1bn from the nation's import bill. The capitalised value of the environmental and social benefits derived from the industry in northern England is estimated at £3.4bn.

The opportunities for growth lie particularly in extending active management to the substantial proportion of the resource that is currently under-managed.

Alistair Speedie highlighted the issue of timber traffic on rural roads, the work of the Timber Transport Forum and Groups and the benefits that have been gained from having a timber transport fund in Scotland.

Barry Rowland reflected on the progress being made in addressing timber traffic issues in Northumberland and the clear need for directing investment into Timber Transport solutions involving the minor road network serving concentrations of commercial timber.

The Minister is from a local farming family and was aware of issues surrounding HGVs and rural roads. He welcomed being informed of the economic opportunities arising from the forest industries and the work of the Timber Transport Forum. He noted that he had just allocated additional funds to local authorities for the repair of potholes. He agreed to share the briefing notes we provided on timber transport with his officials in the Department for Transport.

Alistair Speedie offered further support from the Forum as required.



Alistair Speedie, Alan Eves, Crispin Thorn, Robert Goodwill MP, Barry Rowland