

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Timber trade routes map launched

17 September 2014 (Archived)



A new map of the agreed routes for timber lorries to take through Northumberland has been officially launched this week by the North East Timber Transport Group and Northumberland County Council.

The new 'Agreed Routes Map' (ARM) was signed this week by John Paterson, chair of the North East Timber Transport Group and director of Egger Forestry Ltd, and Barry Rowland, Northumberland County Council's executive director of local services.

Northumberland County Council is a partner in the North East Timber Transport Group, which has produced the maps.

The group has worked with Northumberland and other local authorities to consider the transport infrastructure and plans to facilitate timber transport and reduce the impact of timber vehicles on rural roads and communities.

The ARM will steer timber wagons along the most suitable roads, avoiding wear to other carriageways as well as conflict with other road users in traffic sensitive areas.

Councillor Ian Swithenbank, policy board member for streetcare and environment at Northumberland County Council said: “In Northumberland and the north east the forestry industry is very important to the rural economy, and we are working in partnership with the industry including other key players such as the Forestry Commission to look at issues around how timber is transported on rural roads.

“The launch of these official maps is very good news. We hope that they will be very helpful to the timber trade and are also designed to take into account the council’s highways maintenance programme – allowing us to target resources appropriately across our road network.”

The transport of timber to market is an important part of a plan for the growth and development of the forestry sector in Northern England, which has recently been launched.

The council has been working with other authorities and the timber industry as a whole in a bid to unlock the full economic potential of the forestry sector in Northern England, helping to put the case for more support for the industry.

Launch of the maps follows on from the recent launch of ‘Roots to Prosperity’* a new strategy and action plan which proposes investment of around £23million to unlock in excess of 1,000 jobs and deliver low carbon growth and sustainable economic development across rural and urban communities.

Northumberland is home to a large proportion of the forestry in Northern England – including Kielder, the largest man made forest in Northern Europe, together with other key strategic forests. These forests feed into a significant processing sector in the region.

John Paterson, is director of Egger Forestry Ltd and chair of the North East Timber Transport Group. He said: “This is a great step forward for our industry. We have reaped the benefits of similar ARMs in various parts of the UK for a number of years, and now these benefits can be realised by our region.

“It is vitally important to keep the ‘life blood’ of the wood processing industries flowing, without negative impacts on our rural communities, whilst maintaining the sustainability of our roads infrastructure.”

Graham Gill, forest manager for the Forestry Commission’s forests in the north of England said: “Kielder and the other Forestry Commission forests in Northumberland are award-winning destinations for tourism and a great recreational resource, and are also important for biodiversity with species such as red squirrel, osprey and goshawk.

“But it is the timber production which pays for their management. These are highly productive forests, and the timber needs ready access to market, which these route maps will help to provide.”

The agreed routes map shows those roads which can be used for timber haulage without restriction. The maps also include consultation routes – which are those recognised as being key to timber extraction but which are not up to agreed route standard. If hauliers wish to use these routes they will need to consult with the local authority and it may be necessary to agree limits of timing and/or tonnage transported before the route can be used.

Northumberland County Council has appointed a timber transport liaison officer who will act as a point of contact for matters relating to the agreed routes map. Anyone with queries should contact Andrew Douglas on 01670 623861 or Andrew.Douglas2@northumberland.gov.uk

[Click here to find out more about the agreed routes map.](#)