



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 16 July 2015

Location: FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Rebecca Adair – Confor (RA)

Chris Bradley – Forest Enterprise Scotland (CB)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (ICo)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CaG)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Frank Tomlinson – UPM (FT)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons Ltd (LG)

Greig Houghton – Jacobs (GH)

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council (DM)

Andrew Nicol – RTS Ltd. (AN)

James Nott – Forestry Commission Scotland (start of meeting only)

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum (RS)

Apologies:

Steve Conolly – Cawdor Forestry

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands

Sam McNaughton – Transport Scotland

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Liaise with FCS to review Forest Plans to fill gaps in SCOTS project data	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Timber Transport Management Protocols to GTTG members and wider agent network	CG
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3. (23/03/15)	CG to clarify timber thresholds and prepare FISA-type checklist for comment	CG
3. (23/03/15)	Members to comment on/approve checklist for timber haulage/consultation	All
3. (23/03/15)	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RS
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
3.	Provide NFI data to Jacobs	CG
3.	Use the Timber Transport Mapping tool to highlight how much timber has been forecast to use the A96 and advise Jacobs accordingly	CG
3.	Identify exit points within a set corridor of current route options and encourage land owners to make contact with Transport Scotland	CG
4.	Arrange meetings with Local Authority representatives and provide Timber Transport Mapping tool software and User Guide	CG/IC/DM
5.	Update ARM website to show relevant B roads as Agreed Routes	CG
5.	Consider options for utilising Timber Transport Mapping tool in ARM update	CG/All

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

James Nott welcomed everyone to FCS Grampian and introduced himself as the new Grampian Conservator. James confirmed that ICo would continue to represent FCS on the GTTG.

WA also welcomed all those present, particularly GH who was attending to give a presentation on the A96 dualling project; all gave a short introduction as to their company/role. WA confirmed that a number of apologies had been received and that these would be added to the minutes.

2. Notes of last meeting on 23 March 2015 & matters arising

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct. Action table below has been amended to reflect current status (those now completed have been shaded); carried forward actions added to current action table.

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
4. (13/11/13)	Draft information flyer for dissemination to forest managers/agents	CG
4. (13/11/13)	Approve content of flyer and dissemination methods	GTTG
6. (20/03/14)	Prepare and circulate draft Good Practice leaflet for comments	CG
6. (20/03/14)	Approve Good Practice leaflet for circulate	GTTG members
3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
3. (20/11/14)	Aberdeenshire Council to liaise with James Jones and other land owners to discuss preferred timings for drainage and edge strengthening works along B976 & B9158	SMcF
4. (20/11/14)	Liaise with FCS to review Forest Plans to fill gaps in SCOTS project data	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Timber Transport Management Protocols to GTTG members and wider agent network	CG
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3. (23/03/15)	CaG to provide details of Highland Council consultation requirements to CG	CaG/CG
3. (23/03/15)	CG to clarify timber thresholds and prepare FISA-type checklist for comment	CG
3. (23/03/15)	Members to comment on/approve checklist for timber haulage/consultation	All
3. (23/03/15)	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RS
3. (23/03/15)	Circulate Jon Ritchie’s report/s on CTi to members	CG
3. (23/03/15)	All members to contribute to review of FES CAT AR assessment	All
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
7. (23/03/15)	CG to ask Local Authorities to provide prior notification of road closures on Agreed Routes	CG/LAs
7. (23/03/15)	CG to check status of interactive road closures map with Aberdeenshire Council	CG
7. (23/03/15)	IC to check road closures website for road permit/planned road closure overlap	IC
7. (23/03/15)	CaG to provide information on Highland Council’s risk assessment requirement to CG for discussion with HTTG	CaG/CG
7. (23/03/15)	Add SEPA to list of GTTG members	CG

Matters arising

CG to ask Local Authorities to provide prior notification of road closures on Agreed Routes - DM confirmed that Aberdeenshire Council are still considering the best way to provide this information but advised GTTG members that LAs have a legal responsibility to publicise road closures (14 days' notice required for closures of up to 5 days duration and 28 days' notice for closures of more than 5 days duration).

ICo asked if there was a way we could tap into an existing notification system. WA advised members that the Scottish Road Works Commissioner publish road work and road closure information on the [Scottish Road Words On-line](#) website; DM and IC confirmed they submit information to this site.

3. A96 and A9 Dualling projects

GH gave a presentation on the A96 dualling project which will involve the upgrade of 86 miles of single carriageway along the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness by 2030. The presentation provided background to the development of the business case for the work, option appraisals, operational phasing, community engagement and stakeholder liaison etc..

CG explained that the S&TTTG meeting had heard a similar presentation from Transport Scotland and AECOM yesterday regarding the A9 dualling project and that information for this project was also available via the Transport Scotland website. CG confirmed that the S&TTTG would be receiving updates on the project which she could forward onto the GTTG for information.

GH explained that Jacobs are the main consultants responsible for completing the first stage of the A96 dualling project. Stage 2, where stakeholders' views on a range of issues (e.g. frequency & design of laybys, provision of welfare facilities and impact of road works on normal operations) will be encouraged and considered, is starting now.

WA suggested that major landowners could usefully be identified now at the start of Stage 2. ICo advised that that FCS might not have the ability to provide owner details so WA suggested that the GTTG could encourage major landowners (where known) to make contact with Transport Scotland in order to engage fully in the process.

ICo suggested making the NFI data available to Jacobs and that information from the Timber Transport Mapping tool be used to highlight how much timber has been forecast to travel along the A96 and identify access points within a set corridor of each route option.

LG asked if there was potential for the old A96 to be retained for local use. GH indicated that this could be an option.

Further details on the project can be found [HERE](#), from where a wide range of information can be accessed, including the project strategy, community engagement principals, public exhibition materials, environmental challenges, FAQs and contact details. Information on the A9 dualling project can be accessed from [HERE](#).

WA summarised that the A96 dualling project was a great opportunity to improve access and safety along this key route for timber transport and highlighted that the industry needs to engage in the process to ensure their needs can be fully understood and considered.

4. Timber Transport mapping tool

4.1 Presentation of the mapping tool

CG demonstrated the timber transport mapping tool to members and highlighted its main benefits. The tool itself is not web-based but has been created as a software programme which can be installed on individual computers.

Whilst the tool is a forecast (in terms of timber production for the next 15 year period) of a forecast (with regard to the routes taken from the forest to processing destination/trunk road network), it provides useful information on where exit points are located, how much timber is likely to be coming out onto the public road network from these points and in which direction timber lorries are likely to travel.

The tool provides a range of functions including the creation of new exit points, the deletion or amending of existing ones and either individual exit point or catchment-level analysis.

IC suggested that the tool will show which roads are likely to deteriorate more quickly than others and DM saw it as an extremely useful tool for future road planning.

WA suggested that it could be used to argue against the Government's under investment in rural roads and that if the Scottish Government is serious about rural road use, then the information the tool provides should be used to highlight why future investment is important.

IC confirmed that Moray Council would be using the information for roads maintenance planning but both IC and DM advised that funding is currently being targeted at A and B class roads as condition surveys have identified that C and U class roads are in better condition; DM cited the example of the Agreed Routes in Moray where these were strengthened for forestry use in the 1980s but have had very little treatment in the intervening years.

RS confirmed that there seems to be a lack of focus on rural infrastructure as planners seems to speak about urban infrastructure but that the land use sector speaks about rural issues but not rural infrastructure.

4.2 Circulation of Data

CG and RS highlighted that Regional Timber Transport Groups are using/circulating the mapping tool in different ways in order to suit their own requirements but that for the GTTG (and the S&TTTG), the proposal was that CG visits each Local Authority representative and provides a copy of the User Guide and software, so that this can be installed on their machines, and provides a short demonstration of how it all works.

GTTG members were happy with this approach.

4.3 On-going collection and maintenance of data

CG invited any members still to provide their timber production data, to do so as she will now be able to input this information into the timber transport mapping tool.

LG asked if a change is made in one area, does this update the rest of the system automatically.

CG advised that any new information or amendments to existing data would be stored as new scenarios within the software on that individual computer only. Once approved however, any changes will be submitted to RS who maintains a Scotland-wide database and thereafter updated copies of the information circulated to all users.

5. Agreed Routes Map

WA sought members' views on whether the GTTG would like to change our approach to classifying Agreed Routes as the national position is that B roads should be considered Consultation Routes unless they carry another ARM classification.

The GTTG have previously agreed that B class roads should be treated as Agreed Routes, unless otherwise classified and members were happy to continue with this approach. It was suggested however that the LAs identify any B class roads they consider may now need to carry another ARM classification and bring to the group for discussions/agreement.

Members discussed how the Timber Transport Mapping tool might be used to assist in this process (i.e. show where roads will be carrying timber but don't currently carry an ARM classification). CG to consider best way to do this and revert to the November meeting with suggestions.

CaG asked if anyone was responsible for checking the ARM maps (and if not, FT questioned whether this should be FISA) to ensure hauliers are using the correct routes and did agents specify which routes should be used.

GTTG members recognised that whilst the whole ARM system operates on a voluntary basis, individual harvesting/haulage managers should be ensuring that their hauliers were fully aware of ARMs, understood which routes should be taken and monitored this as part of the harvesting operation.

6. Regional Timber Transport Project Officer

ICo presented a paper which set out the current funding position for the RTTPO role to the end of March 2016.

The current contract for services was started in October 2012 – Initial contract length was 2.5 years with option of 6 month extension. That option was taken, so the current service provision ends September (inclusive) 2015. The partnership has the funds to extend the provision until Mar 2016.

STTS funding can only be claimed at 39% of total project cost and the partnership does not have enough match funding to draw down the full STTS award. In order to do this, a further £4,114 of partnership funds would be required to allow a full work programme for 15/16 and the claim of the full STTS grant.

With the addition of the 15/16 STTS funding, the RTTPO contract can run for an additional 6 months over the original term with no extra cost to the partners. However for this to occur there would need to be a reduction in the average contracted hours from 2.5 days/week to 2 days/week until Mar 2016.

IC posed two options for GTTG members to consider: -

Option 1: RTTPO service provision reduced to equivalent of 2 days/week until Mar 2016.

Option 2: Further funding is sought from partners to allow service provision to continue in its current form. This would equate to approximately £250 per partner.

GTTG members agreed that they wished to see the post continue into 2016 and asked what impact a reduction to 2 days per week would have in practice/could the work still continue to be carried out effectively. CG advised that it is difficult to profile the number of days required to carry out the work as whilst some is fairly fixed (e.g. organising meetings etc.), she also receives a variable number of more general enquiries/requests for information etc., and that if the days are reduced, it would just mean that less could be done.

Members agreed that they wished to see the post continue at its current 2.5 days/week level and that ICo should write to individual GTTG members to seek additional funding.

ICo also asked members how they wished to proceed post 31 March 2016.

RS suggested that he would be surprised if there wasn't any STTS funding for project officers after that time but that if such funding were available, this wouldn't be confirmed until after the current spending review (i.e. not likely until March/April 2016).

7. GTTG members updates

7.1 Joint GTTG/HTTG haulier liaison event

CB to follow up progress with Julian Evans and report back to the group.

7.2 Updates from GTTG members

RS circulated copies of the TTF update for July 2015 (see attached).

FT highlighted some concerns that have been expressed by hauliers regarding the promotion of CTi over other low impact technologies. There is concern that other low impact options (e.g. tyre and vehicle configurations) weren't being considered.

FT also confirmed that Alasdair Cameron was retiring imminently and that he would now be the UPM representative on the GTTG. WA wished to minute the GTTG's thanks for Alasdair's contribution to the group over the years.



DM confirmed that the B976 Burnroot to Dinnet STTS project was underway and that Aberdeenshire Council are looking to standardise their response to industry in terms of felling licence/Forest Plan consultations.

IC advised that the Buckie Harbour Master would be keen to promote the port for timber export and that the presentation on Moray's forest and timber industry, which was prepared with assistance from the GTTG, is due to be given to the Committee shortly.

CB advised that FES submitted a Prior Notification at the end of May, the decision for which is still pending.

WA indicated that if felling licence/Forest Plan or EIAs have been submitted, Local Authorities should not require further information as it is understood that liaison will have taken place with Forestry Commission Scotland. He also advised that agents/owners should ensure they have a defensible position when undertaking maintenance on roads and/or road accesses if they have not submitted a Prior Notification.

8. Dates of Future meetings

WA confirmed that the date of the remaining GTTG meeting for this year is Thursday 19 November 2015