



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 7 March 2013

Location: Forestry Commission Scotland, Grampian Conservancy Office, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson – Seafeld Estate (WA)

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (IC)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Sandy Hogg – James Jones

Stuart McFarlane – Aberdeenshire Council (SMcF)

Johnny Morren – Moray Council (JM)

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum

Alastair Young – Forest Enterprise Scotland (AY)

Apologies:

Alasdair Cameron – UPM Tilhill

Stephen MacDonald – Fountain Forestry

Douglas Murray – Fountain Forestry

Andrew Nicol – DWP

Graeme Ralph – Euroforest

John Thomson – Forest Enterprise Scotland

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
4. (11/12/12)	Current route classifications to be reviewed and changes submitted to CG	All
6. (11/12/12)	<i>Members to review new ARMs website and feedback comments to RS/CG</i>	All
6. (11/12/12)	Members to suggest potential case studies for 2014 Conference to RS	All
6. (11/12/12)	Potential STTS applicants to contact CG for guidance and advice	All
9. (11/12/12)	Members to put forward additional names for new group members	All
3.	Status change of U108H to be made on ARM	CG/RS
3.	Status change of U108H to be notified to forest owners	CG
3.	Request for timber volume forecasts and wishing to use U108H to be issued to forest owners so that MC can programme any maintenance works accordingly	CG
3.	Information on timber production forecasts for woodlands in the area to be sought from forest owners/managers	CG
3.	Local Authorities to identify “highest risk” roads with a view to considering a pre-emptive STTS application	JM/SMcF
3.	Issue to be raised with forest owners by managing agents	Forestry agents
3.	Timber production data collection exercise to be initiated	CG
3.	Paper to be presented to TTF in order to request support to approach Scottish Government	WA/IC/CG/RS
4.	Link to ARM test site to be circulated	RS
4.	Members to review new ARMs website and feedback comments to RS/CG	All
5.	Members advised to respond to draft timber transport consultation protocol by end April 2013	CG/All
7.	Contact HTTG/HITRANS to request information on timber production/timber flow data collection project	CG
8.	Dates for next two meetings to be sought and confirmed	WA/CG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present and confirmed apologies received

2. Notes of last meeting on 11 December 2012 & matters arising

Action table below reviewed and amended to reflect current status

Item	Action	Appointed person/s	Status
3.	Match funding invoices to be raised and issued	IC	Complete
3.	Match funding arrangements and schedule to be circulated	IC/CG	Complete
4.	Issue of data collection to be raised at TTF and request made for TTF and ConFor to issue Letters of Support to encourage return	CG	Complete
4.	Current route classifications to be reviewed and changes submitted to CG	All	Carried forward
4.	Paper on Timber Transport on the Internet website to be circulated for review/information	CG/All	Complete
6.	Members to review new ARMs website and feedback comments to RS/CG	All	Carried forward
6.	Comments on Access and Forest Operations publication to be highlighted to Local Access Forums	IC	Complete
6.	Members to suggest potential case studies for 2014 Conference to RS	All	Carried forward
6.	Potential STTS applicants to contact CG for guidance and advice	All	On-going
6.	Check to be made on decision timescales for Consultation on Planning Consent and circulated to members	CG/RS	Complete
9.	Members to put forward additional names for new group members	All	Carried forward
9.	Police to be notified of GTTG for information purposes	CG	Complete
10.	Date for next meeting to be confirmed	WA/CG	Complete

3. Agreed Routes Map Classification – Request to de-classify U108H Gownie Road

Apologies were received from Alasdair Cameron who would have spoken to this item. Information from Alasdair has previously been circulated, together with that from JM, for members to review and consider.

Members discussed background to Moray Council's request that the U108H Gownie Road ARM status be changed from an Agreed Route to a Consultation Route; this due to significant failure of the road surface after a relatively low-level timber haulage operation.

JM provided information on the strengthening works carried out by Moray Council in the 1980s using specific EU forestry funding, subsequent maintenance operations and possible reasons for the road failure. He recognised that in this case, all reasonable steps had been taken to minimise any road damage and that neither the forest manager nor Moray Council would have foreseen the level of damage that occurred.

SMcF mentioned that in some industrial sectors – e.g. quarry and wind farm developments – the Council can seek a contribution towards road maintenance costs from the road user. GTTG members felt that this would not be appropriate for normal forestry operations and highlighted how the industry has invested in new technologies (e.g. lorry configurations, CTi, Maxi tyres etc.) and sought and secured additional funding to support public roads infrastructure via the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Fund.

After a lengthy discussion, GTTG members felt that given the specific circumstances, there was no alternative but to temporarily re-classify the U108H as a Consultation Route; this being done on the understanding that the road would be reinstated as an Agreed Route within a limited period of time. The “period of time” has yet to be set but members agreed that the GTTG would review the position each year and at the first meeting of the year (when any winter damage would likely be most evident) and seek to assist MC in obtaining funding to enable re-classification of the route.

GTTG members requested that awareness of this situation (and potentially others) be raised with the Timber Transport Forum and ultimately the Scottish Government so that any potential funding to re-instate Agreed Routes could be identified.

In reaching this conclusion, members were very aware of the implications that revising the ARM status of an Agreed Route could have on the industry, particularly as there are a number of roads in Moray which were part of the same 1980s road strengthening programme and could therefore now be facing the same difficulties. These, together with possible actions that could be taken, were discussed further and summarised below.

Members also recognised the severe constraints on Council budgets and that the open Forum offered by the GTTG and wider timber transport group network provided the best means of highlighting these issues and seeking solutions at a local level.

A paper is to be presented to TTF in order to request support to approach Scottish Government



Local Impact	Action required	Action Owner
De-classification of Agreed Route to Consultation Route	1.ARM to be updated to reflect change 2. Forest owners to be notified of change	CG CG
Future U108H maintenance programmes to take account of likely timber haulage requirements	Request for timber volume forecasts and wishing to use U108H to be issued to forest owners so that MC can programme any maintenance works accordingly	CG
Increased pressure on Beatshach exit point/road through increased timber haulage	Information on timber production forecasts for woodlands in the area to be sought from forest owners/managers	CG
Requirement for improved drainage on “highest risk” roads	Local Authorities to identify “highest risk” roads with a view to considering a pre-emptive STTS application	LAs
Increased haulage costs to alternative exit point/s	Issue to be raised with forest owners by managing agents	All
Need to have up to date timber production figures to assist with roads maintenance planning	Timber production data collection exercise to be initiated	CG/All
National Impact	Action Required	Action Owner
Increasingly limited Council funding to maintain Agreed Routes to suitable standards	Paper to be presented to TTF in order to request support to approach Scottish Government	WA/IC/CG/RS
Current mitigating measures (e.g. CTi, lorry frequency & timings etc.) may have only limited benefit where roading infrastructure not fit for purpose	Point of information only; paper being prepared in order to provide advice and guidance on control measure options for different roading situations	RS
Implementation of Stopping Up Orders (Council roads de-adopted where maintenance costs of road considered to outweigh public benefit)	Point of information only; no action required	N/A

4. Agreed Routes Map – presentation of new ARM website

RS provided background to rationale for/progress of new ARM website. Pilot website has been developed but not quite ready for testing as a few issues with print out functions need to be resolved. In summary, new website will mimic what we currently have through FCS site – e.g. drawing, measuring tools – but will have potential to do more; including option for administrative functions to be carried out by individual RTTG representative/s.

Suggestions already made for website to provide hazard map/risk assessment templates. GTTG members thought this was unnecessary as individual companies would wish to use their own templates/processes rather than standardised approach and could overcomplicate the main website purpose.

Once pilot site up and running, RS to forward link to all RTTGs for their review and feedback.

5. Timber Transport Protocols

CG summarised background to development of standardised Timber Transport Consultation Protocol and referred members to draft document which has been circulated for review/comment. A number of responses have been received from GTTG and S&TTG members - including notification that a similar protocol has been developed by Perth & Kinross Council although P&KC acknowledge their protocol could be seen as being more prescriptive than the proposed draft.

WA confirmed it was good to see standardised approach where dialogue between Local Authority was encouraged but that it was important to highlight that any protocol should stress such dialogue is advisory; not regulatory.

CG to advise members that comments sought by end of April and if nothing heard by this time, it would be assumed that members happy that document be finalised/publicised.

6. Project Officers updates

6.1 GTTG update – following discussions with the TTF PO, RTTG POs and Chairs across Scotland, a funding proposal was submitted to the SCOTS Scottish Roads Research Board to research and test a consistent methodology and robust system for gathering, storing and updating a range of timber haulage-related information on a national level. It is anticipated that the project would, in conjunction with our usual data collection exercise, enable information on predicted timber production and subsequent timber haulage requirements from both the public and private forest estate to be collected more efficiently, be more readily available and have greater accessibility.

The SCOTS assessment board were due to meet on 5 March so updates will be provided as and when received.

6.2 TTF – see TTF Update March 2013 attached

6.3 STTS - RS advised that there will probably be another call for STTS applications early in the next financial year. This cannot be confirmed until all current/committed projects have been finalised and the level of grant remaining confirmed.



7. Update from GTTG members and on regional developments

- i. AY advised that the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) have established a forest haulage working group. The group have met but are currently focusing on in-forest driving rather than haulage through towns or on the public roads network.

It was acknowledged that some companies are providing training in these areas and that the issue of verge damage is being raised

- ii. SH advised that HTTG, in partnership with HITRANS, are collecting data on timber production/flows. As this could be relevant to the SCOTS proposal, CG to contact HTTG to find out more.

8. Date of next meeting

Suggestion made to organise dates for next 2 meetings; Doodle Poll to be circulated to establish members' availability.