

MINUTES OF THE GRAMPIAN TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP (GTTG)



14th September 2009

- Date:** Monday 14th September 2009
- Location:** Grampian Conservancy, Forestry Commission Office, Huntly
- Present:** John Risby - JR (Forestry Commission Scotland) (Chair)
Matt Young - MY (Forestry Commission Scotland)
Malcolm Christie - MC (Aberdeenshire Council)
Keith Stratton - KS (Moray Council)
Will Anderson - WA (Seafield Estates)
Bob Main - BM (Forestry Commission Engineering)
Roland Stiven - RS (Timber Transport Forum)
Andrew Nicol - AN (Andrew Nicol Chartered Forester)
John Sutherland - JS (Scottish Woodlands)
Rab Dickson - RD (NESTRANS)
Emily Maclean - EM (Rural Development Initiatives)
- Apologies:** Sandy Hogg (James Jones)
Claire Glaister (Rural Development Initiatives)

1. Notes of last meeting on 7th May 2009

S&TTTG Strategic Assessment and Action Plan was reviewed by members and feedback indicated a shorter and more concise version would be useful for Grampian. Draft to be worked on and circulated to members for review.

2. Matters arising

Bob Main has now replaced Frank MacCulloch as FC Civil Engineer representative.

3. Timber Transport Project Officer Update

Emily Maclean

Please see attached Progress Report for more details of current RTTPO work over recent months. Focus has been heavily on ARM discussions and SRDP funding options. Future priority is on organising 2006 timber production data collection update which will commence in January 2010.

Roland Stiven

Welcomed to the Group and introduces his role as newly appointed Timber Transport Forum Project Officer for next 2 years. Responsible for promoting the work of the Forum and holding an annual timber transport conference in Spring 2010. UK wide post to include liaison with Wales and England.

4. Future of Strategic Timber Transport Scheme

At this stage STTS is currently fully committed, but funds potentially available from two projects which may not achieve partnership agreement within timescale. If these projects do not go ahead then potentially £800,000 would be available for other projects that can be completed by March 2011. Both KS and MC point out that timescale is extremely tight - most contracts would take at least 6 months to complete due to lengthened procurement procedure and EU regulations for projects over €137,000.

KS mentions that most important timber routes in Moray Council region are usually minor dead end roads. Require large sums of money to be spent and involve several landowners, which can make agreements difficult, but is essential requirement for STTS. Often very difficult to meeting general rule of thumb of £1 of STTS support per tonne harvested.

5. Support for timber transport stakeholders under the Scottish Rural Development Programme

JS has recently applied under a few Land Manager Options (LMOs) but would appreciate more clarification on guidelines and terminology. Also plans to submit application under Rural Priority - Development and Restructuring. LMOs have a modest allowance of approx £5000 per year, but payment can take up to 18 months to be delivered. EM to assist with providing further information on alternative funding options. See attached information paper compiled by Jamie Farquhar of ConFor which covers potential timber transport options under Tier 2 and 3.

Action Point: EM & JS

6. Agreed Routes Maps

Update procedure

FC only committed to update on annual basis and there is no budget to process further requests for information analysis. Information to be submitted to FC Edinburgh by end of January.

Data collection

Time intervals for data collection to request first 5 year figures on an annual basis and three 5 year blocks to follow, thus providing data for next 20 years. Introduction letter to owners from 2006 collection to be revised and include focus on success of last survey. To be circulated to owners and agents by end of year with collection process to commence in January 2010. Data collection frequency to be addressed out on national level to see if protocol can be established to ensure ease of completion for participants. Current list of new forest plan applications would be useful and EM to ask Grampian office to supply information. Old forest plans had no requirement for including production figures, but new applicants to Rural Development Contracts must provide production data regionally. Suggestion raised by JR to hold another timber transport seminar to showcase results in Autumn 2010.

Action point: EM

Haulier engagement

ARM leaflet to be circulated to hauliers, agents and owners to increase awareness of online portal - www.timbermap.org

Exit points

JS asks if it would be possible to include exit point data within felling licence application of long term forest plan. Information not currently captured spatially and could then be put into GiS for reference. Information on current and old exit points contained within spreadsheet, which has been passed to council representatives for reference. Would be in public interest to view exit points in relation to location along Agreed Route and would be valuable tool to indicate direction of travel.

7. Vacancy - Chair of GTTG

Jim Dewar, new Forestry Commission Scotland Grampian Conservator, to fill vacancy until next meeting in December where issue will be discussed again.

8. Update from GTTG members

Malcolm Christie, Aberdeenshire Council

Out of three successful STTS projects within region two have now been completed - Suie Hill and Coynachie - and the third at Tough (Nr. Alford) is currently undergoing a consultation process. Letter drop to local residents has been carried out and Area Committee has now approved next stage of public meetings to take place before the end of the year. EM to obtain production figures for Bennachie Forest from FCS to assist with consultation.

Action point: EM

Rab Dickson, NESTRANS

First attendance at GTTG meeting and is welcomed to the group by JR. Currently in process of preparing Freight Action Plan (FAP) and establishing Freight Quality Partnership (FQP). Useful link now established with hopes to attend future meetings and EM to attend FQP meetings once launched.

Will Anderson, Seafield Estates - CTi/TPCS

Comments have been made by Sandy Hogg of James Jones concerning CTi use in timber extraction. Extremely positive solutions where roads are fragile, but increased costs are not being fully considered by industry. These are estimated to be a premium of 35p/tonne and could be a price worth paying in order to reduce road damage. In some cases it is default option, but Councils should be aware this can disadvantage certain hauliers. Still a lack of awareness in some cases with other departments within Council and suggestion of circulating James Jones report to other departments was raised and EM to follow up via email.

Potential funds could be available under SRDP to fund purchase of CTi units, but there is still lack of national legal clarification on the matter from VoSA. Regional status is positive, but has not been confirmed on wider level. EM to liaise with Jonathon Ritchie of James Jones to ascertain if further update has been received.

Action point: EM

9. AOCB

Possibility of joint NEFIC meeting to focus on opportunities for increasing planting figures to be discussed at next meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 17th December, 2pm at Grampian Conservancy, Huntly.