

North East England Timber Transport Group

**Meeting held at the Offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham
at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 6th March, 2012**

Present:

John Paterson, Chairman (JP)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
Mike Yerbury (MY)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
Dave Robson (DR)	UPM Tilhill
Gary Leach (GL)	Durham County Council
George Nicholson (GN)	A & J Scott Limited
Roland Stiven (RS)	Timber Transport Forum
Robert Scott (RSc)	SGS Timber Transport/ R&H Scott
Matthew Wilson (MW)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
Dan Barry (DB)	BSW Timber
Kenny Mackenzie (KMc)	A W Jenkinson Forest Products
James England	South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer
David Woodhouse (DW)	Forestry Commission
Cameron Smith (CS)	Sheffield & Co, Limited
Ian Hendry (IH)	Northumberland County Council
Hazel Newman (Secretary) (HN)	Egger (UK) Limited
Neil Dyson	Fountains Forestry
Athole McKillop	Land Factor
Tommy Milburn	Euroforest Limited
Andrew Harper	Transport Planning Officer, Cumbria County Council
Stephen Swailes	Iggesund Forestry

Apologies: Jane Karthaus, Confor; Cameron Scott, Northumberland County Council, Dick Phillips, Northumberland County Council, Jack Walton, Northumberland County Council, Ian Robinson, Scottish Woodlands Limited, Doug Howieson, Forestry Commission, Crispin Thorn, Forestry Commission, Jon Bates, Forestry Commission; Richard Pow, Forestry Commission, Andy Powell, Robert Tweddle Limited, Keith Haywood, Taylormade Timber Products Limited, Neil Campbell, A & J Scott Limited, Mike Yerbury, Egger Forestry Products Limited

1. John Paterson welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held 3rd November 2011

The following action points were reviewed:

- RS to place the minutes of future meetings of the North East England TTG on the Forum Website
- Terms of Reference had been obtained relating to other Timber Transport Groups, including North Yorks and Cumbria, on which to base a draft for consideration at this meeting
- Agreed Routes – two sub-groups (rather than three originally planned) had been formed and areas defined. Maps indicating areas of forest/woodland had been obtained from Northumberland County Council.
- JP had not yet been able to arrange a site visit to view a low ground pressure vehicle in operation on in-forest roads
- Winter working – due to the mild winter it had not been necessary to form a specific ‘winter working group’, although it was recognised that in future such a group should be set up and be in place to address issues if and when they arise each winter.

Action

RS

		<u>Action</u>
2.	Terms of Reference	
	A draft 'Terms of Reference' document was presented to the meeting for consideration. The proposed 'Aims and Objectives' were accepted. Discussion took place regarding membership of the Group – it was agreed that while the Police would not be approached regarding membership, a representative would be invited to attend if and when the need arose to address specific issues. It was agreed that meetings should be held three monthly in the first year of establishment of the Group, and every four months subsequently. HN to circulate proposed meeting dates to members for the next 12 months on this basis.	HN
	Mr. Ian Hendry proposed that the amended draft terms of reference were adopted by the Group, which was seconded by Mr. Gary Leach. A copy of the agreed TOR's to be attached to these minutes.	HN
3.	Agreed Routes – Update	
	The Agreed Routes Sub-Group had held a preliminary meeting on 10th February, chaired by John Paterson, who had invited the following to form the Group: Cameron Smith, David Robson, Ian Robinson, David Woodhouse, Mike Yerbury and Matthew Wilson. Athole McKillop had also agreed to assist but was not able to attend the meeting. D. Woodhouse offered the services of Jonathan Ferries, based at Rothbury and Mark Herbertson based at Spadeadam, in drawing up the maps. The Group had been split into two teams; one looking at routes north of the A69 and the other to the south, using maps supplied by NCC. Once marked up, maps to be exchanged between teams and a meeting of the full Agreed Routes group to be held at the end of April. Identifying colours used to be consistent with those adopted in Scotland and Cumbria. James England, South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer, offered to digitise the amended maps. Once the Agreed Routes Group had reviewed the digitised maps, they would then be passed onto the Council Highways Department for their input. JP pointed out that the development of the agreed routes map was one of continuous improvement and that the maps would evolve, rather than being considered complete on first publication. IH reiterated that reference to the agreed routes map should become part of the basis of felling licence application, and be an integral part of a developed protocol covering issues outlined in the last meeting such as pre-extraction road inspections, establishment of liability, restricted road use etc. Stakeholders to sign up to a 'Memorandum of Understanding' based on such a protocol. After discussion it was apparent that reference to the maps in other areas was the basis of consultation and dialogue with local authorities. Therefore, it was agreed that the maps should first be established before development of a protocol, which was more likely to address issues arising from identified 'consultation' and 'restricted' routes. GL would seek to obtain maps of Durham from the relevant Council department and would liaise with JE, although he was not currently aware of any issues arising from timber transport in the county.	
4.	The Cumbrian Experience	
	Andrew Harper related that the first meeting of interested parties had taken place in December 2009, following an approach by Neil Dyson, South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer at the time, who was keen to encourage authorities bordering on his area of Scotland to adopt the same processes. The Council had been encouraged by the willingness of people in the industry to reach amicable solutions and become involved in the Group.	

The elected Chairman of the Group was Richard Scott, of BSW Timber, with the local authority providing administration support.

The ARM process started with James England identifying areas of forest, the road network and exit points. The County had been split into six areas with a team responsible for each and once the maps had been marked up they were issued for consultation with elected members and the Parish Council, during which process most issues had been identified and resolved. The completed map was now ready for publication.

A major benefit arising from the establishment of the Group from the Council's point of view, has been the greatly improved liaison between the Authority, the industry and local communities; with the key to success having been co-operation by all parties involved. CS confirmed that the process had been one of confidence building between the industry and the County Council and vice versa. By working together it had been possible to identify in advance what is expected from each party.

IH pointed out that Northumberland had a large amount of road in poor condition. AH stated that Cumbria County Council took the view that the roads are there for use by everyone, and the Council had responsibility to maintain public roads in a suitable condition for legitimate use. An ARM identified a road hierarchy, and better communication with the industry via the Timber Transport Group would enable better planning of road maintenance projects.

7. Consultation with the Highway Authority and Felling Licenses

IH commented that prior to the establishment of an agreed routes map, those submitting an application for a felling licence should contact the Highways Department in advance. Reference by the Council to the online Register of New Planting and Felling in order to identify proposed forestry activity was felt to be unsatisfactory because details of applicants were not shown, whom the Council could contact with any concerns regarding extraction routes. JE suggested that details of felling licence applicants could be obtained from the Council Planning Department. It was agreed that the web-site could be improved and that Scotland were already looking to revise theirs. It was acknowledged that although contact with the Highways Department prior to application to fell could be encouraged, this was on a voluntary basis.

8. Highway Issues

Two recent issues were discussed. One involving a harvesting site at Threestoneburn in the Cheviots, and one at Sweethope. In both cases the Highways Authority had met with those carrying out extraction and reached a satisfactory resolution.

Discussion ensued regarding this Group's role in the resolution of specific disputes, and whether a sub-group should be formed to deal with such issues. However, it was not felt to be in this Group's remit to resolve individual cases - owners and purchasers should liaise with the Highways Authority direct. However, Group members could assist by providing links to appropriate persons, and advising a way forward on an informal basis.

9. Timber Lorries – Driving

Discussion took place regarding the various complaints received by the Council regarding timber vehicles; varying from over-running verges, exceeding speed limits when going through villages, and vehicle noise, to bringing stone and mud onto the highway from forest roads.

It was agreed that specific issues could be brought forward to the Group to identify any trends in certain areas, with a view to resolving issues where possible. However, for complaints to be followed up details supplied must include: date, time and location of the incident together with the registration number of the vehicle concerned (or at least the name of the haulage company displayed on the vehicle).

	<u>Action</u>
10. Timber Transport Forum – Update RS advised the meeting that the Timber Transport Forum Conference was due to be held on 15th March, at the Rheged Centre at Penrith, last held two years ago in Perth. The programme will cover such areas as the experiences of Cumbria and North Yorkshire in identifying agreed routes; traffic management plans in Argyll, vehicle tracking systems, the launch of the 4th edition of the Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice, health and safety in timber haulage and driver CPC training. RS also announced that the Partnering Charter had been updated and industry bodies such as the Forestry Commisison, UKFPA, Confor, Road Haulage Association and the various timber transport groups would be asked to sign the new Charter – copy attached. RS also briefly outlined consideration by CONFOR as to whether it would be possible for the timber sector to access the Regional Growth Fund for North England, for investment into timber processing and the timber transport infrastructure. To meet the criteria was necessary to demonstrate that such use of the fund would create jobs. However, it had not been possible to demonstrate a direct link between improving roads and increased jobs, and an application had not been submitted.	HN
11. Date of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held at the offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham, on Tuesday, 12th June, 2012 at 1.30 pm.	