

North East England Timber Transport Group

**Meeting held at the Offices of Egger (UK) Limited, Hexham
at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 11th December, 2012**

Present:

John Paterson, Chairman (JP)	Egger Forestry Products Limited
Cameron Smith (CS)	Sheffield & Co. Limited
Athole McKillop (AMc)	Land Factor
Richard Pow	Forestry Commission
Andrew Harper (AH)	Cumbria County Council
Dan Barry (DB)	BSW Timber
Dick Phillips (DP)	Northumberland County Council
Carolyn O'Brien (CO'B)	Northumberland County Council
Jane Karthaus (JK)	Confor
Roland Stiven (RS)	Timber Transport Forum
Martin Craig (MC)	UPM Tilhill
George Nicholson (GN)	A & J Scott Limited
Peter Gilbertson (PG)	SGS Timber Transport
Robert Scott (RSc)	SGS Timber Transport
Stephen Swailes (SS)	Iggesund Forestry
Ian Robinson (IR)	Scottish Woodlands Limited
David Woodhouse (DW)	Forest Enterprise
Gary Leach (GL)	Durham County Council
Councillor John Riddle (JR)	Northumberland County Council
Keith Haywood (KH)	Taylormade Timber Products
James England (JE)	Dumfries & Galloway Council (South of Scotland Timber Transport Officer)
Tommy Milburn (TM)	Euroforest Limited
Mike Yerbury (MY)	Egger Forestry Products
Matthew Wilson (MW)	Egger Forestry Products
Hazel Newman (HN), Secretary	Egger (UK) Limited

Apologies:

Neil Dyson, Fountains Forestry; Jon Bates, Forestry Commission; Richard Scott, BSW Timber; Crispin Thorn, Forestry Commission; Cameron Scott, Northumberland County Council

<u>No.</u>		<u>Action</u>
1.	Chairman, John Paterson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.	
2.	Minutes of the Last Meeting held 4th September, 2012 It was noted that the meeting of the 'Agreed Routes' sub-group, pencilled in for 17th October, had been postponed awaiting feedback from NCC on the maps presented to them.	
3.	Timber Transport Forum Agreed Routes Map WebGIS – R. Stiven reported that a contract for development and maintenance of the website had been awarded to Gaist Solutions Limited, until March 2015. After which Timber Transport Groups would be expected to contribute approximately £300 per annum towards maintenance. A trial site was currently being prepared, and RS	RS

No.		Action
	would send links to Timber Transport Groups for members to access the preliminary version of the site. The North East map would not be included until it was agreed. • Type Approval for Timber Lorries – the Forum had written to the Department of Transport to request the reintroduction of exemption of timber lorries having to fit lateral side guards and spray suppression. The RHA and FTA have written letters in support. • The Forum was in the process of producing a guidance document on road friendly haulage technologies, which will address lorry configuration, axles, tyres, tyre pressure control etc. TTG's will be consulted on the draft. It was commented that the term 'road friendly' might be misleading – none of the available technologies would compensate for a poor road. • The next TTF Conference will be held in 2014, with the focus being on case studies of public road upgrading, road/traffic management, in forest haul road construction. RS invited ideas for case studies. • Health and Safety and Timber Haulage – one of the workstreams of the newly formed Forest Industry Safety Group addresses 'Timber Haulage in the Forest' with a view to setting guidelines. The TTF to maintain links to the Group. • Climate Change National Adaptation Programme – the Forum to share timber transport best practice with the England Woodland & Timber Partnership who are working with DEFRA on identifying potential solutions to the impact of climate change on road structures. • RS reported that with regard to Scotland only, the Forum had contributed to a response on the Consultation on Planning Consent for Hill Tracks and a decision was awaited from the Scottish Government. He also announced that 17 applications were currently being assessed for funding from the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme. Discussion took place regarding potential access to funds to support timber haulage in England. R. Pow stated that that the scope of the Rural Development Programme would not extend to road infrastructure. Councillor Riddle suggested that the North East Rural Affairs Forum be approached – Councillor Riddle to provide contact details to R. Stiven. J. Paterson reported that local MP for Hexham, Guy Opperman, was supportive of the forest industry and suggested he should also be approached. It was agreed that Cameron Scott, in his capacity as Local Growth Team Manager at Northumberland County Council should also be asked for input.	All JR RS
4.	North East England Agreed Route Map – Update The Chairman asked Carolyn O'Brien for an update on the status of the route maps following their presentation to the Council at the last meeting. C'OB confirmed that the maps had been handed to area roads officers in the North and West of the county, but went on to explain that their initial response had been disappointing and was not particularly supportive of the initiative (ARM). CO'B and DP acknowledged there was work to do internally to promote the advantages of working with the forest industry in adopting the map and road definitions. Currently the maps were still in the hands of roads officers, but in the meantime were also being presented to Council Members. The map had already been presented to the Northern Area Committee, where the concept had received a favourable response, and would be presented to Western Area councillors that evening.	

<u>No.</u>	<u>Action</u>
JP commented that the apparent lack of progress in agreeing the route maps was a source of frustration to those members of the Group who had spent time in developing them to this point, and pointed out that the momentum of the initiative should not be lost. It was suggested that the Cumbrian model was adopted whereby members of the Group met up with roads engineers to discuss concerns. DP agreed that this was a good idea – dates to be arranged. Councillor Riddle commented that the Council recognised the importance of the forest industry to the county, and that DP may have to 'knock some heads together'.	JP/DP
CO'B confirmed that there had been a successful outcome in the case of Crammel Rigg reported in the previous meeting, once communication lines had been established. In the end there was only a small amount of damage to the road, and even that could have been prevented by prior consultation. However, it was a good example of the advantages of the Council and forest industry working together.	
JE reiterated that once the maps had been approved, they could very quickly be uploaded onto the Website- initially on the existing site hosted by the Forestry Commission, but soon to be available on the new site. (JE requested NCC to indicate TRO's, bridge and height restrictions on the map).	DP/CO'B
5. Consultation with the Highway Authority and Felling Licenses	
CO'B had been advised by the Planning team at the Council that they did not have access to felling licence applications. R. Pow stated that felling licence and stocking details were available on the public register for a 28 day consultation period. The Council would be able to view the register and if any applications related to woodlands in areas where there were concerns, these could be passed onto the Forestry Commission who would raise them with the owner. RP also recommended to CO'B that another starting point would be applications relating to larger volumes of timber, which could be assessed from the number of hectares detailed in the application.	
RP offered to talk CO'B through the register. However, DP pointed out that there was not enough information on the application for the Council's purposes, in particular the start date for extraction. It was agreed that reference to the public register was an interim measure, and the sooner the agreed routes map was approved the better. It was pointed out that for routine felling and stocking on the public estate there was no requirement for FC to consult the local planning authority. However, DW commented that the bulk of the forest estate access points were well used and well maintained.	RP
A. Harper (Cumbria CC) confirmed that the public register was a secondary tool, one which was referred to by Highways managers to keep an eye on potential activity, but much better information was gained by communication between the industry and the Council as a result of reference to the ARM.	
RP suggested that in future, when felling licences were granted in cases where timber would be extracted on a consultation route, the notification of consent could include a letter requesting the applicant to contact the Highways Authority as a matter of course.	RP
6. Highways Issues in Northumberland	
There were no new specific issues to discuss. MY pointed out that this demonstrated that most timber was moving in Northumberland with few problems.	

<u>No.</u>	The matter of including reference to the ARM in sales particulars was again discussed, although it was not clear how this could be achieved.	<u>Action</u>
7.	Winter Working A short meeting had been held prior to the main meeting, to discuss areas where problems could occur. DP to ensure that grit heaps were available on roads such as the A696, Hauxty Bank, Kielder, the C200 to the Borders, Deadwood/Saughtree etc. JR commented that he had received complaints from bus operators/hauliers that the current level of gritting was not sufficient, and asked the opinion of timber hauliers. R. Scott stated that the main problem was that there seemed to be no salt/grit available on steep banks to enable drivers to put it down themselves when having problems. He pointed out that if timber lorry drivers applied salt early in the morning when they were travelling, that members of the public/school buses would benefit later. There appeared to be a particular shortage of grit heaps in the North Tyne area. RSc also commented that the salt applied to roads did not seem as effective as in the past DP confirmed that the type of salt applied by the Council had not changed, but that due to budget restrictions it was being applied in reduced volumes. He would follow up the shortage of salt/grit heaps with his colleagues at County Hall.	DP DP
8.	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held at the offices of Egger UK at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 12th March, 2013.	